Anarchism in Japan

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Contents

It would seem curious to an outside observer that the dissolution of the *Nihon-Anakisuto-Kenmei* (Japanese Anarchist Federation) should be formally announced in January 1969, at a time when militant students were determined to defend their 'fortress', the Yasuda auditorium of Tokyo University, which they had occupied for several months, against an attack by the riot police. The anarchists themselves called the dissolution 'a deployment in the face of the enemy'. Yet they had to admit at the same time that they had reached a deadlock in their attempts within the Federation to formulate new theories of anarchism and to hit upon new forms of organization for the new era of direct action which they believed had begun.[1] Indeed, they remained very weak numerically, and they had only a limited direct influence among the student movements which appeared in their eyes to have ushered in this era.

It has been said that acceptance of democracy in post-war Japan encouraged the spread of anarchism as a sentiment, and this, in turn, rendered anarchism as a movement 'superfluous'.[2] One of the stalwarts of the *Todai-Zenkyoto* (Council of United Struggle, Tokyo University) cheerfully declared that they were 'aristocratic anarchists'. Their struggle, he said, was 'not the one fought by the maltreated, nor even on their behalf, but was the revolt of the young aristocrats who felt that they had to deny their own aristocratic attributes in order to make themselves truly noble'.[3] It has also been pointed out that the concept of student power and the tactics of campus occupation were in the line of anarcho-syndicalism in spite of the professed political sympathies (Trotskyism or Maoism) of the movement's leaders. Yoshitaka Yamamoto, the leader of the *Todai-Zenkyoto* admitted that the term anarchism had been used as an epithet as derogatory as 'left-wing infantile disease' or 'generational struggle'. These, he said, had been freely levelled by the 'bureaucrats' of the Communist Party and the 'authoritarian' professors of universities (both formerly champions of the post-war democracy) against what he called 'incalculable human (revolutionary) passions'. He felt, however, that anarchism had been unduly neglected and ought to be re-examined.[4]

Indeed, there was an element of anarchism in all this. Anarchism, or rather nihilism, as a sentiment, however, flourished in post-war Japan not so much because of the apparent progress of democracy, as because of the fact that parliamentary democracy, still a delicate plant in a hostile soil, began to show signs of atrophy under the perpetual rule (or misrule) of conservative governments. Moreover, there was nothing novel in nihilism as such. As the pioneer anarchists sometimes remarked, the spirit of total negation can be traced to the influence among other things of Buddhism and of Taoism,[5] and it provided a moral seedbed for the introduction of anarchism as a body of European thought. This was a profound shock to the authoritarian government of Meiji, which drew its sustenance from another national tradition, that of conformity.

In the following account I propose to deal mainly with anarchism as an intellectual movement in Japan and its bearing on the students' revolt in the 1960s.

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[1] *Jiyu#-Rengo* ('*Libera Federacio*'), 1 January 1969.

[2] Michio Matsuda, *Ana#kiz#umu (Anarchism),* Tokyo, 1963, p. 61.

[3] *Jokyo# (Situation),* No. 8, 1969, p. 37.

[4] Y. Yamoto, *Chisei-no-Hanran (Revolt of* ☒☒☒☒)☒Tokyo, 1969, p. 195; *Asabi Jouma/,* 6 July 1969.

[5] For instance Shusui Kotoku in *Hikari* (L☒▪☒☒15 December 1906.

Historical Background

It is noteworthy that anarchism in Japan has been closely related to the movement against war. In fact, it had its origin in an anti-war campaign during the Russo-Japanese war, when Shusui Kotoku, editor of the anti-war socialist paper *Heimin (Common People)*, read Kropotkin while in prison. It is also significant that Kotoku approached socialism and anarchism in terms not of working-class politics but of the self-sacrificing devotion of the high-minded liberals of lower Samurai origins. Within the short-lived Socialist Party of Japan, he led the 'hard' faction of direct actionists against the 'soft' parliamentarians, at a time when neither parliamentary action nor direct action in the form of a general strike was possible for the socialists. He was involved in a premature plot against the Emperor Meiji, and in the treason trial of 1910–11, which was largely rigged by the prosecution, 26 anarchists (including three Buddhist priests) were indicted, 12 of whom, including Kotoku, were executed.

Some anarchists were spared, simply because they were already in prison for other offences. Sakae Osugi, one of the prisoners, who was destined to succeed Kotoku, came from a family of distinguished soldiers and had introduced himself as 'the son of a murderer' when he joined the anti-war movement led by Kotoku. For some time after the treason trial he concentrated upon literary work, and in this less provocative way he was able to develop his own anarchist thought under the influence of Bergson and Sorel, Stirner and Nietzsche. The nature of the social system which would come as the result of economic progress, he argued, would depend upon 'an unknown factor' in man's reasoning to be developed by 'a minority who would strive for the expansion of each one's self.[6] He applied his philosophy of life to the labour movement which, he declared, was 'an attempt on the part of the working man to regain himself' and consequently 'the problem of life itself'.[7]

During the first world war, the Japanese socialists and anarchists remained too powerless to raise even the feeblest voice of protest. The rapid expansion of industry during the war, and the inspiration given by the Russian revolution, however, led to a real awakening of the labour movement. Osugi flirted with the Comintern for a while, but soon broke with those who organized the clandestine Communist Party in 1922. This *Ana-Boru Ronso#*(dispute between the anarchists and bolsheviks) culminated in a bold attempt by Osugi to capture the nascent trade union movement for anarcho-syndicalism, but all his efforts in this line were frustrated by government intervention. Meanwhile, some anarchists, especially those organized in a secret society called *Girochinsha* (Guillotine Society), were driven to acts of terrorism. Ironically, Osugi himself fell, victim to the 'white' terrorism of the military police which followed the Kanto earthquake of 1923. He was murdered in an army barracks.

Thereafter, there was a revival of anarchism as a form of reaction against the political achievements of 'Taisho Democracy' embodied as they were in the Universal Suffrage Act of 1925, which was accompanied by a safety measure, an act for the maintenance of internal security. While the inaugural conference of the Peasants-Workers Party was dispersed by the police, anarchist stalwarts of various factions arrived on the scene to denounce the beginning of the workers' participation in parliamentary politics, and from this rather unseemly protest was born the Black (Youth) Federation. Sakutard Iwasa, a veteran anarchist, who had set up a Social Revolutionary

[6] Osugi, '*Kusari-Kojo* (The Chain Factory)', *Kindai-Shiso (Modem Thought)*, September 1913.

[7] Osugi in *Rodo-Undo (Labour Movement)*, October 1919, June 1920.

Party among the Japanese immigrants in San Francisco when Kotoku visited there, now exerted a decisive influence upon the Federation. He was an exponent of 'pure anarchism', according to which all the socialist parties and trade unions would only assist the progress of capitalism with the ideology of class war, which was 'a sham'. 'The workers who work under big capitalists', he declared, 'are sharing and promoting their masters' exploitation.' They themselves would exploit the people if they were successful in revolution; only an anarchist minority could achieve a revolution for the people because they desired freedom and emancipation, but not power for themselves, and consequently would attain their aims by freeing other people from exploitation and from power.[8] By calling for a boycott of all forms of organization, however, Iwasa and the Black Federation crippled the newly created syndicalist federation, the National Association of Trade Unions, which had had an auspicious start with a combined membership of over 10,000 in 1926.[9]

Shortly afterwards, yet another syndicalist federation came into existence with the assistance o£ among others, Sanshird Ishikawa. Ishikawa's anarchist convictions, which dated from before Kotoku's, had been strengthened by reading *Towards Democracy* and other writings of Edward Carpenter. 'I have for a very long time been dissatisfied with mere mechanical materialistic Socialism and the parliamentary movement', he wrote to Carpenter in 1909.[10] Like Osugi, he was spared because he had been in prison at the time of the treason trial. After his release, he spent eight years as an exile in Europe, mostly with the Reclus family in Brussels. With a knowledge of the French syndicalist movement, he now exhorted his followers to ally themselves with working-class organizations.

During the years of great depression, the syndicalist unions, formed mainly among the workers employed in small firms, fought a series of desperate struggle, the most celebrated of which was the workers' occupation of a dyeing factory in Tokyo in 1930, when an anarchist worker sat on the top of a tall chimney for 15 days with a black flag flying. After the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, government action against left-wing bodies became more ruthless and frequent. The tenacity with which the Left held out is attested by an attempt made in 1935 to form a united front, an 'alliance to smash Nazism and Fascism' as it was called, among the left-wing social democrats, bolsheviks, anarchists and syndicalists, though it was at once suppressed by the police. In the same year, the syndicalist unions received a fatal blow, the arrest of the members of a secret society called the Anarchist Communist Party, which had been formed to organize an armed uprising against the government. Characteristically, the 'self-righteousness and adventurism of the intellectuals' of the 'party' were condemned by the syndicalist workers.[11]

After the Second World War

In 1945, unconditional surrender and the physical destruction of the country seemed to promise a new era when, free from the old government and the old ruling classes that had

[8] Iwasa, *Kakumei-Danso (Thoughts on Revolution)*, 1958, quoted in Kiyoshi Akiyama, *Nihon-no Hangyaku-Shiso Rebellious Thought in Japan)*, Tokyo, 1968, p. 164; Iwasa, 'Kaiho-nitaisuru-Anakisuto-no-Yakuwari (The Anarchist Role in Emancipation), *Jiyu-Rengd-Shinbun liberal Federation Newspaper)*, 1 May 1930, Matsuda, *op. cit.*, pp. 376, 382.

[9] Kensuke Yamaguchi, 'Nihon-niokeru-Anaruko- Sandikarizumu (AnarchoSyndicalism in Japan)', *Shiso-no-Kagaku (Science of Thought)*, November 1966.

[10] Ishikawa to Carpenter, 14 December 1909, Carpenter Collection, Sheffield City Library.

[11] Yamaguchi, *loc. cit.*, 4.

gone, as it seemed, for ever, the anarchists might be given a chance to try their ideas for the reconstruction of society. It was with such hope that the aged Ishikawa wrote an anarchist 'Utopia' entitled *'Gyunen-gp-no-Nihon* (Japan 50 Years Later)' shortly after the end of the war. In this work, democratic reorganization of post-war Japan, itself a pale imitation of the European experience of the last hundred years, is followed by a peaceful revolution; the extensive use of mutual exchange banks and the growth of mutualist trade unions lead to the emergence of a new society, in which the old Diet building is used only for meetings of the unions, and culture and the economy are conducted on a co-operative basis so as to enable each individual to live a life of artistic creation. Most of Ishikawa's fellow anarchists, however, do not appear to have shared his belief in nudity as the symbol of natural freedom nor his peculiar view that the emperor should be maintained even in an anarchist Utopia as the symbol of communal affection.[12]

The Japanese Anarchist Federation came into existence in May 1946, at a time when millions of hungry workers were taking part in demonstrations all over the country demanding food and a 'democratic popular front'. The revived anarchist movement, however, failed to make an impression on the Left; their programme of action remained academic, in spite of some attempts made by syndicalist unionists to establish workers' control of production. The anarchists favoured 'a revolutionary popular front' but quarrelled among themselves over their attitude towards the Communist Party. Their organ, *Het□tn,* unlike its predecessors edited by Kotoku and Osugi, 'did not create a great social shock'.[13] It seems that the anarchists, lacking an adequate theory of transition, could not compete with the communists or socialists in practical proposals for the reconstruction of society. Thus they were driven either into political and industrial struggles outside their own ranks or back into the realm of the ideal, in which they were unrivalled. By the end of 1946 the tone of the *Heimin* had become more intellectual and idealist and more conspicuously anti-Marxist than before.

When SCAP (Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers) issued an injunction against a general strike prepared by a Joint Action Committee of communists, socialists and their trade union allies on behalf of the underpaid governmental workers, an industrial offensive which threatened the overthrow of the conservative government, the anarchist organ indulged in *Schadenfreude* by criticizing what they called 'the conservative nature of the strike of the bureaucrats (namely governmental workers)'.[14] SCAP sought to contain communist influence among government employees by depriving them of the right to strike,[15] to the relief of the government and to the delight of the anarchists, who insisted that the civil servants were 'the agents of authoritarianism'. The anarchists, it seems, failed to see the nature of the power wielded by S□AP, just as the communists had for some time after the war regarded the American forces as an army of liberation.

In the meantime, the pre-war debate on the difference between 'pure anarchism' and anarcho-syndicalism was revived, and the resulting division within the handful of participants in the debate led to the dissolution of the Japanese Anarchist Federation in October 1950. The disintegration, however, should be considered against the background of the cold war and the change in American policy towards Japan. The implementation of the new democratic peace constitu-

[12] Published in *Sbisd-no-Kagaku,* December 1966.

[13] Michio Osawa, 'Sengo-Nihon-no-Anakizumu-Undd (The Anarchist Movement in Post-war Japan) IV'. *J^ii-Re□'*i October 1964.

[14] *Heifnin-Shinbun*$_y$ 12 February 1947.

[15] *Ibid.,* 9 August 1948.

tion gave way to measures for the swift recovery of the national economy which encouraged employers to take the offensive against the workers. The virtual suppression of the Japanese Communist Party by SCAP in June 1950 preceded the outbreak of the Korean war, and the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in the following year cleared the way for the return of war-time leaders in almost all spheres of national life. Indeed, 1950 marked a turning-point in the post-war history of Japan, and the decline of anarchism was only part of the general crisis which threatened the Japanese Left about this time.

The Students

The post-war student movement had consolidated its strength by 1948, when the students set up the Zengakuren *(Zen-Nihon-Gakusei- Jichikai-Sdren^p* or All Japan General Federation of Student Unions) with a militant tradition already established through a series of struggles against an increase in tuition and fees and against those whom they regarded as the enemies of peace and democracy. Their relations with the Communist Party were tenuous from the start, though their militancy was encouraged for a while by the latter when the party, confronted with the Cominform criticism of 1950, abandoned its previous policy of peaceful revolution and adopted one of guerrilla warfare and armed insurrection. It is, however, noteworthy that the students' demands for 'local communes' and their insistence that 'it was high time to take over university power by themselves' can be traced to their struggles of this period.[16] The Communist Party's futile policy of 'extreme-leftist adventurism', and its dismal failure, left the student movement in low spirits and confusion.

It was not until 1956, when the revelation of the Stalinist enormities in Russia stirred world opinion, that left-wing forces outside the Communist Party found strength to stand on their feet again. In this year, what was called 'the second foundation congress' of the Zengakuren was held, and it was decided that the prime responsibility of the student movement was to promote the struggle for peace. In the same year, the anarchists revived their Federation with the *Kurohata (Black Flag)* as its new organ. Meanwhile, the cautious response of the Communist Party to the events of 1956 (they regretted that the criticism of Stalin had gone too far in Hungary) led to the rise of 'Independent Marxism' which politically took the shape of a Japanese Trotskyist Federation, formed in January 1957, soon to be known as the *Kakukyodo (Kakumei-Kydsanshugisha-Ddmei* or Revolutionary Communist League). In the following year, a muddled debate over the new draft constitution of the Communist Party further encouraged the 'Independent Marxists' as the draft appeared too 'nationalist' and conservative. Japan, it declared, was still a 'semi-dependent' country 'half occupied by American imperialism', and would require a two-step revolution: a people's democratic revolution through the establishment of a 'National Democratic United Front' (itself a re-statement of a similar 'front' advocated in 1949) which would allow an alliance with 'national' capitalists; and a socialist revolution which would follow. It was under these circumstances that the revived Anarchist Federation at its annual conference of 1958 reviewed its whole attitude towards revolution. The delegates argued that the people would soon be forced to choose between atomic death and social revolution, and peaceful co-existence would only serve the interests of the rulers of the two world states. They would support the militant students and workers 'from behind' with an advocacy of 'People's Direct

[16] Akira Yamanaka, *Sengo-Gakusei-Undoshi (History of the Post-war Student Movement),* Tokyo 1969, p. 154.

Action' against the danger of a nuclear war.[17] The anarchists, however, remained a group of devotees without allies. The workers on the whole were engaged in their own struggles for higher wages, which they were assured as long as they would work for higher productivity; while the militant students came largely under the influence of the Trotskyist movement.

From the 'Renaissance' of the student movement there emerged greater militancy and vehemence in the 'Main Stream' or 'Anti- Yoyogi' faction (Yoyogi being the name of the district in which the headquarters of the Communist Party is located) of the Zengakuren. Militant students now declared 'the Kishi government, tied as it was to the forces of international imperialism', to be their 'enemy at home', and sought to turn the peace movement into a class struggle. They saw 'the crucial phase of a decisive battle in class war' in every issue that cropped up. A pattern of protest was formed at that time, when the government, in a rash attempt to strengthen the police system, failed to pay due respect to parliamentary opposition, and thereby provoked extra-parliamentary opposition by the indignant workers and students. The crisis was overcome by an agreement among top politicians to drop the matter altogether: this was a 'compromise' (itself an immoral concept in Japanese terms) that appeared to the students to be a criminal 'betrayal' on the part of the working-class 'establishment', the Socialist Party and its ally the So#hyo# *(Nihon-Rddd-Kumiai-Sd-Hyo#ikai* or General Council of Trade Unions of Japan), the major trade union federation. The range of negation for the militants was thus greatly extended.

The pattern was repeated on a much larger scale, with more serious results in 1960, when the nation was given for the first time a chance to decide its attitude towards the Security Treaty (or military alliance) with the United States. The 'Main Stream' Zengakuren had tried to invade the premises of the Diet, and had been at loggerheads with a National Council of socialists, communists, Sohyo, and some intellectuals, who favoured orderly petition against the treaty. In May when Kishi enraged his adversaries by rushing the controversial treaty through the Diet with the aid of the police, overthrow of his government and defence of parliamentary democracy became the immediate targets of the national movement. Huge demonstrations were organized almost daily around the Diet, and a series of protest strikes was staged by the Sohyo and other unions, involving 4 t0 6 million workers, with considerable public support. Although the magnitude and vehemence of the protest led to the cancellation of Eisenhower's proposed visit and also to the resignation of Kishi, the opposition forces failed in their primary object of destroying the Security Treaty. And what had become of democracy?

The *Kurohata* had been appealing for a general strike. Now the anarchist organ commented that 'we have learned by experience ... that politics which plead for democracy in the form of political parties, parliament, and political power, must inevitably lead to dictatorship'. The Anarchist Federation had joined with the 'Main Stream' Zengakuren in demanding fighting rather than demonstrations, and in this, it claimed, they were supported by 'the people' who had 'surpassed' those who had in the past acted as their leaders. In this sense 'the anarchist revolution had begun', and had been suppressed by the National Council.[18] Hence the charge of dictatorship. However fanciful many of the anarchist claims may now seem, there is a grain of bitter truth in their allegation: belief in parliamentary democracy was now seriously shaken, and the gap between the militants and the existing left-wing parties was unbridgeably widened, especially as

[17] *Kurohata,* 1 December 1958.
[18] *Kurohata,* 1 July 1960.

the communists condemned 'Trotskyist tactics as responsible for the death of a Zengakuren student in a skirmish with the police.

The *Kurohata* also pointed out that the ruling party, the liberal democrats, had amassed many votes by bribery and other means and therefore the demonstrations around the Diet had also been directed against 'dirty politics?[19] Yet there was a temporary lull after the storm. As 'doubling of income' and 'high economic growth' became not only the shibboleth of the government but also the signs of actual prosperity that marked the years after the 1960 struggle, the unbroken rule of the liberal democrats seemed assured in the Diet. At the same time the oposition parties consoled themselves with the modest achievement of retaining one third of the Diet seats, which would enable them to forestall an attempt to eliminate the peace clause of the constitution. The Zengakuren militants busied themselves with endless debates over the niceties of revolutionary theories and tactics which divided and subdivided their forces into warring sects.

The anarchists seem to have had second thoughts on the Zenga- kuren sects and the movement of the 'New Left' in general, which they thought were making their leaders into 'little Stalins'. They were particularly suspicious of the Trotskyist *Kakukyodo* (Revolutionary Communist League) whose allies among the students, the *Maruga- kudo (Marukusushuff-Gakusei-Domei* or Marxist Student League), had captured the Zengakuren executive. In fact, at the general election for the House of Councillors in July 1962, the Trotskyists put forward one of their leaders, a young philosopher who preached a 'subjective materialism' of human alienation. 'Extravagant', said the anarchists, 'is the farce of the *Kakukyodo* twisting anti-Stalinism into a dogma, suppressing the creative opinions of its members in the name of building a true and only party of the advance guard ... and enshrining its sacred founder in the bourgeois temple.'[20]

The excitement of the early summer of 1960 had by now been replaced by a bitter feeling of frustration among the Left, which led to recrimination, confusion, and apathy, but also to some soulsearching attempts to find a new basis for fresh and possibly more successful activities. The socialists began to talk about 'vision' and (together with some communists) about 'structural reform'. The anarchists, too, launched an ambitious debate on 'the need for emancipating anarchism from the classical theories of revolution'.

Among the anarchist ranks, those who had joined the movement after the war had by now come to the forefront of its activities. Masamichi Osawa, one of the leading theorists of the younger generation, started questioning the validity of the revolutionary ideas that his predecessors had inherited from the 19th century. The cult of fixed principles had hampered the revolutionary movement in Japan, he declared, taking his cue from Professor Maruyama's famous analysis of the subject. In the pages of the *Jiyu-* Re *Ribera Federacio')* which had succeeded the *Kurohata^* Osawa dealt with the new type of poverty in mass society, dehumanization or alienation. It was a novel argument, certainly among the anarchists, and from it he drew lessons for revolution: the upper, rather than the lower, strata of the proletariat would fight for the control, rather than the ownership, of the means of production; multiplication of free associations and communes rather than the seizure of political power would be the form of revolution. The change, he went on, would be gradually carried out through structural changes in various social groups, in each industry, school and university, local community and individual family; hence revolution would be social and cultural rather than political, and arts and education would play

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] *Kurohata,* 1 February 1962.

an important role in it.[21] Osawa's propositions were soon under attack as 'an anarchist variety of reformism' or revisionism. He was rightly criticized for his neglect of Japanese realities, the mixture of elements both new and old, the contrast of modern technology and semi-feudal social relationships; and it was indeed against this curious mixture that new revolt was soon to raise its ominous head. The lively debate that followed, however, made it clear that the anarchists agreed to differ on the vital question of how to achieve revolution.

The Vietnam Issue

The American bombing of North Vietnam which began in February 1965, and the menace of total war thus created, provided the occasion for the left-wing forces to intensify their campaign against war. Thus they were able to recover from the effects of the years of disarray which had been worsened by the impact of the Sino- Russian dispute. As for the anarchists, however, their attitude towards the Vietnamese war was rather complex: they believed, as the *Jiyu-Rengo* put it, that struggle for national emancipation in underdeveloped countries would lead to world war rather than world revolution, and nationalism in these countries would lead to national capitalism in spite of its socialist mask. The anarchist alternative to the nation states should be village communes that would provide centres for the development of agricultural societies. Therefore, the anarchists should work for immediate cessation of hostilities, and they were prepared to join in forming an anti-war movement which would be a loose federation of various left-wing opinions.[22]

In fact, such a movement had just begun in the form of *^etonamu-□ Heiwa-wo Shimin^Ren^p* (Citizens' Federation for Peace in Vietnam) soon to be known as *Beheiren^* and the anarchists, bearing the black flag, had participated in the demonstrations which led to its formation in April 1965. Its founder, Minoru Oda, who had studied in America, drafted what he called 'a Citizens' Pact between Japan and America for Peace and against War', in which he declared for 'international civil disobedience'. He distinguished between 'democracy for the people' and 'democracy of (and by) the people', and saw in the latter the principle of his own movement which was to be translated into demands for direct democracy and direct action by the citizens.[23] Indeed, Oda's views had much in common with anarchism, but the anarchist movement as such does not seem to have exerted much influence on the activities of the *Beheiren^* which sought to attract attention by publishing an advertisement for peace in the *New York Times* and by actively aiding the American soldiers who deserted while on leave in Japan.

In 1965, the anti-war movement was further accelerated by events which appeared to confirm Japan's deeper involvement in the war in Vietnam: her *rapprochement* with South Korea, including close economic co-operation, and the dispatch of the Korean 'Tiger' Division to South Vietnam. Ratification of the treaty with South Korea was forced through the Diet in the teeth of opposition both inside and outside. It was a repetition of the 1960 struggle, another crisis in parliamentary democracy. It was said, argued Osawa, that the government's rash action was an 'outrage', but a bill on internal security or on foreign and military affairs had rarely been passed

[21] *JiyU-Rnego,* i June 1965.

[22] *Jiy^~^en^>* i June 1965.

[23] Oda, ^enri-toshiteno-Minshushugi-no-Fukken (Rehabilitation of Democracy as a Principle)', *Tenbo (Prospect),* August 1967.

without such an 'outrage'. Each time an 'outrage' took place, he went on, a 'threat to parliamentary democracy' was talked about by journalists, and two camps of party politicians inveighed against each other and then contrived a truce. 'This is the scene we have tirelessly watched for the 20 years since the end of the war.' He asked whether parliamentary democracy could thrive at all in Japan, where class division was so intense and involved that mediation or moderation through parliament appeared almost impossible. Moreover, he believed, parliamentary democracy was becoming outdated, as a dominant political institution throughout the world and was sooner or later to be replaced by direct democracy and federalism. So he urged his followers to raise the voice of no confidence in political parties and the Diet.[24]

From the protest against ratification of the treaty with South Korea was born a new working-class organization called the *Hansen- seinen-i (Hansen-Seinen-Iinkai* or Anti-War Youth Committee), which was soon to provide young activists from the ranks of trade unionists to co-operate with the Zengakuren militants in a series of direct actions against war. It is true that the initiative in launching the *Hansenseinen-i* was taken by the Youth Section of the Socialist Party in August 1965, in conjunction with the Youth Department of the Sohyo and the *Shaseidd (Shakaishu^-Seinen-Domei* or Socialist Youth League connected with the Socialist Party) with a view to creating a nation-wide youth movement against the war in Vietnam; and militant trade unionists played a prominent role in several demonstrations and sit-ins around the Diet during the Korean Treaty struggl In spite of the socialists' pretence of patronage, however, the new organization developed into a movement for protest against the very existence of the Socialist Party and the Sohyo. 'Post-war democracy', remarked one of the movement's leaders, 'has come to mean the existing political order for petit-bourgeois life ... "Democracy" has been emaciated into the petty act of voting, and trade unions, which had been highly valued as a blessing of post-war democracy, have become service organs which would secure for us sufficient wages to maintain the standard of petit-bourgeois living through "democratic" parleys between capital and labour?[25] Thus the campaign of the militant unionists against war was also a form of protest against the 'false' prosperity of the workers. Moreover they were ready for direct action in the streets, but apparently not in the factories.

Direct action in the factories was left in the hands of more professional revolutionaries, the anarchists. They had, however, no following among organized labour, and consequently their 'propaganda by deed' took the daring form of a few determined men sneaking into a munitions factory and cutting off the supply of electricity for io or 15 minutes. This was what actually took place when twelve or thirteen anarchists raided a machine-gun factory at Tanashi, Tokyo, in October 1966. This raid, and another in Nagoya, were organized by a *Behan-i (fietonamu-Hansen-Chokusetsu-Kodo-Iinkai* or Anti-Vietnam War Direct Action Committee), which consisted mostly of anarchist students. This body published details of the munitions industry in Japan under the heading of 'Group Portrait of the Merchants of Death', and called for 'factory occupation' and 'sabotage' against them.[26] Indeed, bold action earned sympathy and support for the anarchist students, but some anarchists distrusted what they called 'the prelude to terrorism' and irresponsibility.[27] In fact, the *Beba"* soon disintegrated, with the disturbing result that the leader of a

[24] *Jiyu-Rengo,* 1 December 1965.

[25] Keishi Takami, *Hansen-Seinen-Iinkai₉* 1968, p. 131.

[26] Behan-i (ed.), *Shi-no-Shonin-e-no-Chosen (Challenge to the Merchants of Death),* 1967, passim.

[27] *Jiyii-Rengd,* 1 February 1967.

group called *Haihansha* (Revolt Society), who had taken part in the Tanashi raid, later became a police spy.[28]

The 1967–8 Climax

1967 was the year when the militant students, with the aid of activist workers of the *Hansenseinen-i^* started a series of direct actions against the war in Vietnam: a sit-in demonstration at the American air base at Tachikawa (Sunagawa) in May, and the 'Haneda Incident' in October when, in an attempt to prevent Premier Sato's visit to South Vietnam, about 2,500 students and their working-class allies clashed with the *Kidotai* (riot police) near Haneda Airport. Direct action, which inevitably meant a battle with the well-armed police, now fashioned the style of their protest: the students armed themselves with wooden staves and helmets painted with the colours and name of the sect to which they belonged.

By this time the Zengakuren had recovered from the chaos that followed the 1960 struggle and the ceaseless transmutation of its various sects now yielded temporarily to relative stability, as the sects were grouped into three Zengakurens, each with an esoteric name: the *Kakumaru-Zen^akuren* dominated by the *Kakumaru (Kaku- meiteki-Marukusushuff* or Revolutionary Marxist) faction of the Trotskyist *Maru^akudd (Marukusushuff-Gakusei-Ddmei* or Marxist Student League); the *Sanpa-kei* (Three School Faction) *Zengakuren* which consisted of three sects — the *Chukaku* (Central Core) fiction of the same Marxist Student League, the *Shagakudd (Shakaishuff-Gakusei-Ddmei* or Socialist Student League), consisting primarily of those students who had been expelled from the Communist Party (formerly Communist Student League), and the *Kaiho* (Emancipation) faction of the *Shaseidd (Shakaishuff-Seinen-Ddmei* or Socialist Youth League), a body which had been expelled from the Socialist Party but maintained its original aim of establishing an alliance of the students and workers; and finally the Communist Zengakuren which was then called the *Heimin-Gakuren (Heiwa-to-Minshushuff- wo-mamoru-Zenkoku-Jichikai^en^p* or National Federation of Student Unions for Defence of Peace and Democracy) and soon to be called the *Minsei-kei-Zengakuren,* Minsei being the communist sponsored *Minshu-Seinen-Ddmei* or Democratic Youth League. The above outline of the Zengakuren may be confusing enough for the uninitiated; it suffices to add that divisions could and did go further as differences of opinion developed as to the degree of militancy or the relative priority of each article of faith, such as anti-imperialism or antiStalinism, or priority in actions, such as extra-campus struggles or confrontation within each university. Indeed, the *Sanpa^* the most heterogeneous of the three, later split, and the anti-imperialist Zengakuren, a motley collection of Trotskyists and Maoists, emerged. It seems that the students were utterly incapable of stable alliance, and their intolerance was illustrated by *uchigsba* (internal violence), physical fights between the sects and factions including several cases of brutal beatings. The anti-communist Zengakuren remained a minority, and the communist students, who took a more active interest in campus democracy and student welfare, were said at the time of the Haneda incident to have controlled nearly 80% of all the student unions.[29]

In the following year (1968) the students' extra-campus struggles 'escalated' as they fought increasingly violent batties with the *Kidd tai* \ the massive demonstrations in January against the

[28] *Asahi-Shinbun,* 7 August 1969.
[29] *Asabi-Sbinbun,* 9 October 1967.

visit to Sasebo of the American nuclear submarine *Enterprise* \ the raid on the Oji US Field Hospital in Tokyo; support for the stubborn resistance of the peasants who refused to sell their land as a site for a new international airport at Narita in the spring; and the riotous demonstrations in Shinjuku (Tokyo) on 'International Anti-War Day' in October when more than a thousand students and others were arrested.

'The Opening of the Era of Direct Action' encouraged the anarchists as it coincided with the radicalization of student movements abroad, in particular the 'May Revolution' in Paris. In Japan, too, 'it is a well-known fact', remarked the *Jiyu* Re'...that university education is becoming a process of mass production as in the factories, and resistance to such tendency provides the mainspring of the students' revolt... It is only natural that they should lead the revolt against the system because they are intellectual workers under training, soon to be sent to the key positions in the process of dehumanization now developing. From this point of view we may say that the time will soon come when the student movement will unite with the workers' movement.'[30] Yet the students did not appear anxious to co-operate with the workers. Militant students, especially those in the Trotskyist sects, began to regard themselves as the main army of revolution rather than the advance guard or even the 'detonator' of the working-class revolution.[31]

Student Power and Intellectual Trends

The immediate issue within the campus was redress of such grievances as increases in fees, the internship system for medical students, the reluctance on the part of the university authorities to give full autonomy to the students in the management of their hostels and union buildings, and more generally the inevitable defects of mass education: enormous classes and overworked professors, and resulting 'alienation'.[32] When the students believed that they had discovered the ultimate cause of their complaints in 'alienation' and combined this with theoretical 'situations' provided by Japanese 'Monopoly Capitalism', 'American Imperialism', and 'Russian Stalinism', it required little mental exercise for them to conclude that they should strive for revolution, even world revolution, total negation of all their enemies. Yet this mental process, which is in fact more nihilist than anarchist, wrought havoc in the Japanese universities. At the height of the campus disputes it was estimated that i io out of the 489 universities in Japan were in serious trouble, nearly a half of them occupied by the students.[33]

One of the strongholds of student power was *Nichidai* or Nihon University, the largest example of 'private enterprise' in education, where irregularities in university finance incurred the wrath of a good many of its 86,000 students, who repudiated the spirit of 'money-making' in a 'mass-production university'.[34] Another, and more symbolic, battlefield was provided by *Todai* or Tokyo University, where a dispute over the status of graduate students in the notoriously autocratic faculty of medicine and an allegedly erroneous judgement passed by the governing board on one of the militant students led to devastation of much of the campus.

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[30] *Jiyu#-Rengo#,* 1 July 1968.

[31] Koken Koyama, 'Zengakuren-no-Senryaku-to-Senjutsu (The Strategy and Tactics of the Zengakuren)', *Rodd-Mondai,* July 1968.

[32] It is interesting to note that the students did not complain much about the defects of meritocracy: the intense competition for more promising schools, universities, and jobs, which distorted their adolescent life.

[33] *Asahi-ShMun^* 4 August 1969.

[34] *Hangyaku-no-Barikeido (Barricade for Revolt),* 1968, passim.

The movement for student power was led by an organization called *Zenkyoto (Zen^iku-Kydto-Kaiff* or All University Council for United Struggle). This body, a loose alliance of some of the anticommunist sects (especially the *Chukaku)* and 'non-sect' radical students, attracted attention when the disputes at *Nichidai* and *Todai* took a serious turn in May-June 1968. A *Zenkyoto* sprang up in each storm-centre and was acclaimed by its supporters as an excellent example of the activists uniting with the 'student masses'. After the dramatic battle fought between the *Zenkyoto* students who had occupied the Yasuda Auditorium of Tokyo University, and the *Kidotai* who attacked them from the land and the air, their influence further extended, and occupation of many other campuses followed. The National Federation of *Zenkyoto₉* which was set up at a rally held at Hibiya Park in September 1969, appeared perhaps most menacing of all the student organizations, an alliance of eight offshoots of the former *Sanpa-kei-Zen^ikuren.* Yet the National Federation was a sign not of the strength but of the weakness of each sect. Yoshitaka Yamamoto, the leader of the *Todai-Zenk^0to$_i$* who came to take the chair at the rally, was arrested by the *Kidotai* ☒ it was reported that he 'even seemed to have come to be arrested'.[35]

Yamamoto, then a 27-year-old graduate student of physics, had played an important part as a 'non-sect' radical in co-ordinating the warring sects of the 'New Left'. The ideology of those whom he represented has been described as that of 'seEnegation', 'a subspecies of anarchism'.[36] In his opinion, campus occupation with barricades signified 'negation of the university which produces men to serve capital as if in a factory, and also negation of the existence of students whose only future was to be cogs in the power machine thus created'. Occupation of professors' studies and research laboratories had to be carried out as an act of negation of scientism, which he regarded as the achievement of the 'hollow' post-war democracy and also as a prop of neo-imperialism. The university struggle was only 'a form of manifestation of social contradictions' ☒ therefore 'there is no halt way house in the struggle before the establishment of student power', the 'power of fighting students with a clear perception of the whole social struggle'.[37] A mixture of elitism and nihilism can easily be discerned in these bold assertions. Characteristically, he took little interest in history. These peculiarities would explain the absence of reference in his writings to a theory of transition. Indeed, history meant to him and to his fellow students only the history of the ignominious post-war democracy that ought to be rejected if possible by direct action. When action seemed doomed, it appears, he surrendered himself an act which could be construed as motivated again by the same spirit of negation.

The activist students, especially 'non-sect' radicals, sought emotional as well as theoretical justification of their action in the translations of Marcuse, Guevara, and Cohn-Bendit. Their intellectual needs were also met by some Japanese writers, such as Takaaki Yoshimoto with his doctrine of the state as a system of communal illusions, and Gord Hani with his panegyric of autonomy in free universities as well as free cities.

Yoshimoto has been referred to as 'an anarchist intellectual', and has published *An O☒ of Resistance* in support of the anarchist *Behan-i* (Anti-Vietnam War Direct Action Committee). The son of a shipwright, he was very much concerned with the indigenous ideas and attitudes, the hopes and sorrows of the silent masses. His wartime experience taught him to tackle seriously the doctrine of ultranationalism which he regarded as highly suggestive for a pure theory of

[35] Asahi-Shinbun$_t$ 5 September 1969.

[36] Shingo Shibata (ed.), *Gendai-lSiwon-no-Radikari^mu (Japanese Radicalism Today),* Tokyo, 1970, pp. 342, ☒6.

[37] Yamamoto, *op,*☒.☒pp. 86, 92, 138.

the state. His studies of Marx after the war led him to conceive of the state as illusion or fantasy: the political state, as he saw it, was a 'communality reached through evolution of religious alienation'.[38] Yoshimoto was against classical Marxism of 'class' and 'proletariat, and assigned to the intellectuals the role of assimilating the unexpressed desires of the masses and standing up against the system of common illusion, the state.

The 'old' Marxist Hani exerted considerable influence on the activist students through his popular book *The "Logic of the Cities* (1968), which is said to have sold 800,000 copies in one year, and through other writings and speeches. He pleaded for a federation of autonomous cities, the modei of which he saw in Renaissance Italy, and which he believed would provide the foundation of future socialism. He held that the students, like the citizens of free cities, had the right to arm, and did no more than exercise their rights when they erected barricades in their universities.

Hani was only one of many apologists for the students. Under the post-war democracy which the students detested, flourished the type of publishing house which specialized in 'anti-system' intellectual commodities. Indeed, the intellectual origins of student power in Japan should be traced to the combined influence of all these and similar writings. The latest commodity in vogue was nihilism. Within the framework of nihilism and the ideology of negation, the students were eclectic enough to pick up novel ideas and slogans from whatever books and articles they happened to lay hands on: 'university commune', 'university revolution', 'the illusory state', 'the role of the intellectuals', 'direct democracy', 'direct action', and so on.

At the height of student power, Osawa, the anarchist writer, who was on the look-out for signs of anarchist revival, welcomed what he called 'the recrudescence of revolutionary violence'. The 'Epoch of Great Revolt', as he called it, coincided with the period of automation, and rationalization, and it is significant, as he rightly pointed out, that 'the first really rebellious violence' in post-war Japan should have occurred during the heroic struggle of the armed miners against the closure of the pits at Miike in 1960. This was, however, a romantic view of the desperate fight of unhappy men trapped in a declining industry, the rationalization of which, under existing arrangements, resulted in the flight of capital, leaving the men half starving by the unwanted pits. Osawa hoped that 'revolutionary violence' to which the students had resorted at Haneda, Oji and Narita, would soon spread into the ranks of the workers. He felt, however, that the 'detonator theory' of students' violence had little to do with anarchism. Violence would become oppressive and reactionary rather than revolutionary, he said, 'when it is separated from the revolutionary masses and concentrated in the hands of a party of the advance guard', and also when it became excessive and constant. It is for this reason that he called the violence of the anticommunist Zengakuren 'half revolutionary'. 'Even if it succeeded, it would come to a new Stalinism; if it failed, it would be absorbed by a new Fascism.'[39]

What Osawa feared was already taking place: there was frequent and outrageous violence which became really oppressive; the *Zenkyoto* began to lose the support of the 'student masses' as the campus disputes seemed stuck in the bog of impossible demands and the real danger of dissolution of universities loomed on the horizon. There were extravagances everywhere, not only among the students but also throughout the 'New Left'. Oda of the *Beheiren* nonchalantly proclaimed that he would start a citizens' movement from outside to smash Tokyo University if

[38] Yoshimoto, ^iritsu-no-Shiso-teki-Kyoten (Intellectual Basis of Independence', *Tenbo (Prospect),* March 1965, 27.

[39] Osawa, 'Yomigaeru-Kakumeiteki-Bdryoku (Resuscitation o£ Revolutionary Violence)', *Kuro-no-Techo (Black Notebook),* January 1969.

the *Zenkyoto* failed to destroy it.[40] One sect of the *Sba□kudd* (Socialist Student League) called the *Sekigun-ha* (Red Army faction), a body of three to four hundred extremist students, went so far out of its senses that it decided to organize an army of revolution to turn metropolitan Tokyo into a battlefield in November, 1969, the date of Sato's scheduled visit to the United States for extension of the Security Treaty. According to this plan, 'an armed rising and the assassination of the Premier would lead to the establishment of a revolutionary provisional government'.[41] Their leaders were arrested, and there were many other arrests throughout 1969, which almost crippled the fighting capacity of the militant sects, though apparently not enough to prevent the remaining Red Army students from hijacking a JAL plane to Pyongyang in the following year. The militants' strength began to collapse under the weight of their own provocations, especially under the pressure of legislation they had provoked: the University Temporary Measures Act which was rushed through in August 1969 after the already too familiar spectacle of the government simply ignoring opposition both inside and outside the Diet.

Extravagance also marked the form of their apostasy. One of the leaders of the Anti-Yoyogi *Zen□kuren* at the time of the 1960 struggle is known to have received funds from right-wing sources and he later became the manager of a yacht training club. It is indeed an ominous sign that *Zenkyoto^s* 'irrationalism' was admired by a novelist of the new Fascism.[42]

The new radicalism of the 'New Left' had sprung up mainly because post-war democracy had not functioned as its critics thought it should. The militants' protests and direct action appear to have contributed to the impairment of the already weakened democratic institutions and practices. It was of no use the anarchists holding out the millenarian mirror of direct democracy, as if it were a practical alternative to parliamentary democracy. The anarchists, like many others, often had second thoughts. Some of them despaired of the 'emotional rebels', and proposed a more realistic attitude towards political democracy and Marxism. The voice of realism, however, was too weak to make much impression at the time.

As for the students' revolt in the late 1960s, it was clearly not anarchism as such but emotional anarchy of nihilism that sustained student power and its violence. Anarchism, apart from the 'pure' type which is always inclined to terrorism, has played the role of a sympathetic critic of the 'New Left', although the anarchists' sympathy with direct action, especially at an early stage of student power, seems to have somewhat blunted the edge of their criticism. In fact, they remained as critics of the political left, both new and old. In this respect, the views of Tatsumi Soejima, a doll-maker and an anarchist of 40 years' standing, expressed shortly before his death in 1963, are worth recording: 'I cannot imagine a social revolution taking place in human history. All the revolutions of the past were political revolutions, and so will those of the future be. Anarchism, which denies political revolution, will become a moral force and deal with the problem of how to live, and I believe in such anarchism... I do no mean that there ought not to be a political revolution; it is a necessity, and the essence of anarchism lies in how to participate in that revolution?[43] Although the new generation of anarchists is still groping its way towards new theories of autonomy and federation, anarchism itself, it seems, has become somewhat ethical, and this is no doubt its strength as well as its weakness.

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[40] Oda in *Gendai-no-Me (Contemporary Witness),* March 1969.

[41] *Asahi-Shinbun,* 13 September 1969.

[42] Shibata (ed.), *0□.cit.,* 40.

[43] □□□-Re□4 i February 1963.

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