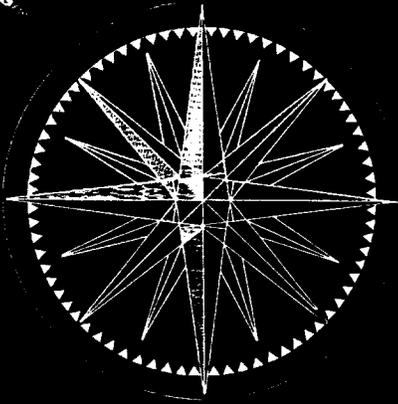


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12 April 1963

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# SPECIAL REPORT

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

PROSPECTS FOR THE LEFT IN JAPAN

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## PROSPECTS FOR THE LEFT IN JAPAN

Japanese leftists, represented mainly by the Socialist Party (JSP), have showed steady gains since World War II. Strongly imbued with Marxism and competing with a small, energetic Communist party, the JSP has advocated many international policies similar to those of the Communists. Japan's economic boom and increased international contacts have recently tended to moderate the party's line, however. Continuation of the leftward trend of Japanese voting would give the left-wing parties as a whole a majority within six or seven years. While the deep divisions among them might make it difficult to translate a bare majority into control of a government, their greatly augmented strength would jeopardize Japan's current role in the free world. The left has been united in denouncing the US-Japanese Security Treaty and espousing a neutralism that is in most cases benevolent toward the Sino-Soviet bloc.

### The Drift to the Left

The tendency of the Japanese to vote left has remained unaffected by the changes that have taken place in Japan and in its place in the world. This leftward drift, which is relatively unaffected by current political issues or shifts in public opinion, reflects basic sociological and psychological phenomena.

A primary factor in this gradual development is the continuing shift of population from rural areas to urban centers. Agricultural workers traditionally support the conservatives, and industrial and commercial employees through their unions have staunchly supported the left. Agricultural and forestry workers decreased by more than 400,000

in 1962 (when they totaled slightly over 13 million) and are expected to decrease by more than 5 million by 1970.

In contrast, other workers gained by nearly one million in 1962 to total 32.6 million. Union membership is the dominant factor accounting for most of the urban leftist vote. The new workers join a labor union and, despite their conservative rural background, seem to fall readily into the political patterns of their adopted group.

Most new voters initially vote for the left. Any tendency to switch allegiance to the conservatives as they age is more than offset by the greater number of new voters in each election--a development that

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will be more pronounced as the high birth rate of the early postwar period is felt in the late 1960s.

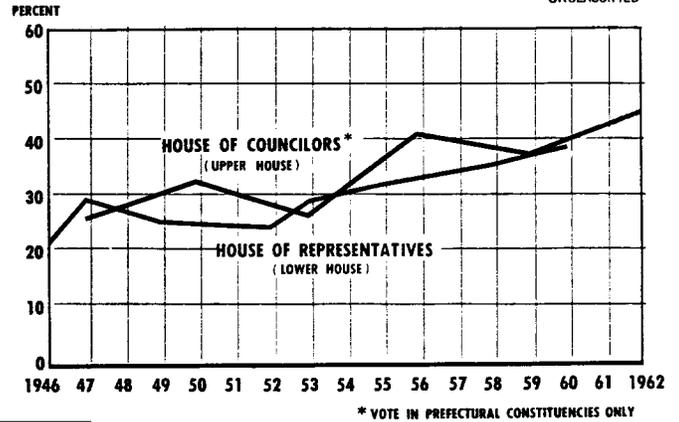
Youthful radicalism has been especially persistent in Japan, perhaps as a result of the discrediting of the old order by Japan's defeat. It is also a product of the long-standing maladjustment of the intellectual in Japanese society. After Japan's defeat, underpaid teachers, writers, and journalists, expounding Marxist doctrine, quickly gained a dominant influence among students and jobless graduates. Leftist influence remains strong among these groups.

### Marxist Ideology

Japan's defeat and ensuing democratization gave the long-suppressed Marxist-oriented socialists, labor leaders, and Communists the opportunity to emerge as liberated martyrs who had consistently opposed the old order. They claimed the right to lead Japan on a prescribed course conceived in Marxist terms. Marxism became, and has generally remained, the prevailing philosophy, not only of the small Communist minority, but of the great majority of leftists who are supporters of the JSP. The only leftist party which has disavowed Marxism is the small Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), which was formed in January 1960 by secession of part of the JSP's right wing.

Marxism gives a revolutionary color to the programs

LEFTIST VOTE IN JAPANESE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS  
(IN PERCENT OF TOTAL VOTE)



and policies of the left and creates a deep chasm in Japanese politics, across which there is little communication. Ideological conflicts, moreover, have provided the theoretical framework for the factionalism that plagues the parties of the left.

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### The Communist Party

The Communist Party (JCP) is the smallest of the left in parliamentary representation and influence, with three members in the lower house and four in the upper. In the series of local elections throughout Japan which will come to a peak in the latter part of April, the JCP is making an effort to increase its present one percent of local officeholders. As often in the past, however, it is supporting many candidates put up by the JSP.

Through penetration of popular movements and placing its supporters strategically in

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labor unions and government offices, the JCP wields significant indirect influence. Its troublemaking potential was best shown in the staging of large-scale leftist demonstrations and riots in 1952 and 1960.

The JCP suffers from its reputation [redacted] for subservience to foreign control, and has been hurt in trying to keep up with the fluctuations in the international Communist line. It now is trying to straddle the fence in the Sino-Soviet controversy. Its heart appears to be in Peiping, but Moscow's financial assistance and stress on the popular "peaceful coexistence" theme compel the JSP to protest its neutrality.

The Socialist Party

The JSP holds the bulk of the leftist support. Between 1946 and 1958 it nearly doubled its percentage of popular vote in national elections, reaching almost one third of the total.

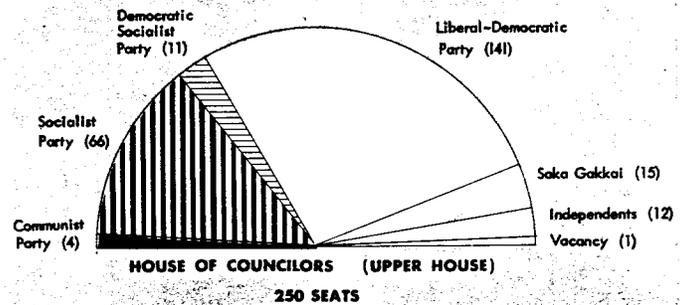
Cast continually in an opposing role and lacking any immediate prospect for gaining power, the party generally couches its pronouncements in doctrinaire Marxist terms. Its foreign policies are similar to the Communists', although it calls for "positive neutrality" and opposes the possession of nuclear weapons by any power, including the Soviet Union and Communist China. The JSP has remained largely isolated from the anti-communism and moderating currents which have affected the

socialists of Western Europe. Instead, it has occasionally looked to the Communists of Italy and Yugoslavia for contemporary inspiration.

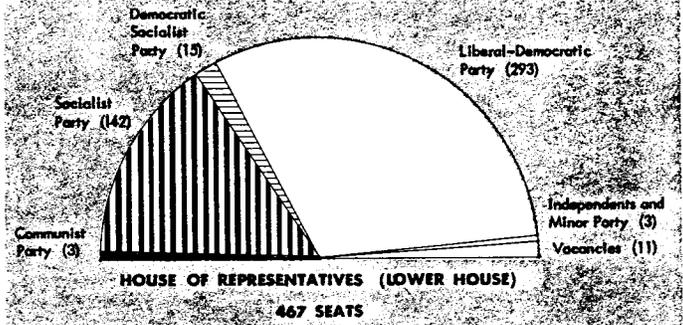
The party relies heavily on the organizational and financial support of the four-million-member General Council of Trade Unions (Sohyo). Far the largest labor organization in Japan, Sohyo has long been controlled by Marxist militants and, until recently, was firmly wedded to a program of radical political action.

The JSP shies away from united-front action with the Communists, but contains a

PARTY STRENGTHS IN THE JAPANESE DIET



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strong left wing eager for close ties with them. Competition with the Communists for the Marxist intellectuals' vote and the influence of Communist renegades contribute to its extremism.

The existence of the middle-of-the-road Democratic Socialist Party has probably kept the JSP from straying further to the left. Moderate, non-Marxian Socialists have been kept in the JSP by timely compromises on immediate issues and by the attraction of office in the far larger organization.

#### Democratic Socialist Party

The DSP has remained a sickly splinter party, kept alive only by the funds of the million-odd-member Congress of Trade Unions (Zenro) and by the zeal of a few Western-oriented intellectuals.

It has been close to the socialists of Western Europe, and is patterned along the lines of the West German Social Democratic Party. Inaugurated to repudiate the pro-Communist proclivities of the JSP, it has failed in its aim of attracting a wide segment of the growing Japanese middle class.

The decline of its Diet representation from 40 to 17 (since reduced by deaths to 15) in the 1960 general election for the lower house was a blow from which it has not recovered. In the 1962 upper house election

its vote fell further and it lost four seats; it may not survive another election.

#### The Rightward Mood

The trend toward the left in voting has been lately accompanied by what the Japanese refer to as a "rightward mood" on the part of the socialists, e.g., a shift in emotional and intellectual attitudes and a resulting moderation.

In the mid-1950s the Hungarian uprising and Khrushchev's denunciations of Stalin raised the intellectuals' doubts about Communism. Subsequently Communist China's economic setbacks, the Sino-Soviet dispute, and the increased foreign contacts of the intellectuals have encouraged moderation. The most significant internal development which has brought about at least a temporary detour to the right by both the JSP and JCP was the widespread revulsion to the violence and excesses marking the struggle over ratification of the US-Japanese Security Treaty in 1960.

A more basic if slow-working force has been Japan's phenomenal economic growth over the past decade, which has benefited all levels of society. Increased foreign acceptance and growing pride in Japan's new place as a partner in the free world also are influences for moderation.

The present moderation could be nothing more than a passing mood. Nevertheless, considerable

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evidence suggests a deep and continuing trend. The JSP's trade union base, Sohyo, has gradually shifted to an emphasis on primarily economic rather than political issues, more like its American and West European counterparts. Younger and less doctrinaire leaders appear to be gaining rank-and-file support. The influx of conservative-minded rural workers into the unions may slowly be having some moderating influence.

JSP policy actions have been increasingly concentrated on immediate, concrete issues affecting the welfare of the masses. There is growing interest in a concept known as "structural reform," which calls for avoiding class war and revolution and introducing a "mass" party with a program of broader appeal to a wide public. The term is borrowed from Italy's Communist chief, Palmiro Togliatti, to make it palatable to at least some of the extreme left.

At the same time the JSP now is trying to distinguish its program clearly from that of the Communists. Last summer it broke openly with the Communist-controlled antinuclear-bomb organization and has moved recently, with Sohyo support, to reconstruct this popular movement free of Communist control.

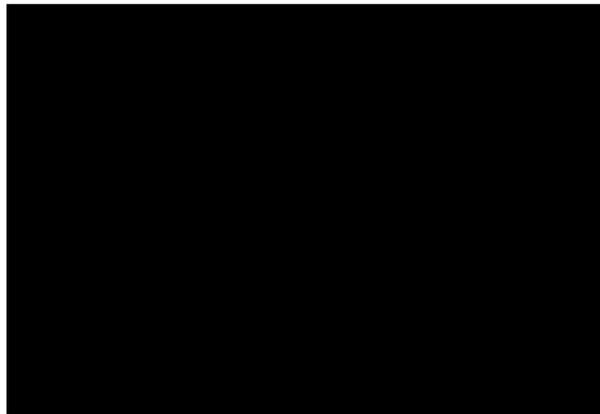
#### Outlook

Either of these trends in Japanese political behavior--

the continued growth of the leftist vote and the recent rightward drift in left-wing attitudes--is subject to influences in the social, economic, or international milieu which could check, divert, or reverse it.

If Japan's domestic and international position continues relatively stable and prosperity spreads, the JSP is likely to become an increasingly formidable factor, as its share of the vote and of the seats in the Diet gradually grows. In the process, its stronger popular position might cause the governing Liberal Democratic Party to gain new vitality out of the necessities of competition.

The JSP's chances of gaining power in the foreseeable future would be enhanced by a continuation of the present trend toward modernization. This would enable it to reduce the deep divisions within the socialist camp and to compete for votes outside the ranks of urban workers and intellectuals.



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