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PREPARING OFFICE WILL TYPE HERE CLEARLY THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE MESSAGE:

Collect

Department of State

Charge Department:

Washington

PLAIN

Charge to

PLAIN

DEC 4 1946

SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS

TOKYO  
596 FOURTH  
FOR THE POLITICAL ADVISOR

894.5045/12-346

Following is Moscow's 4307 DEC 3 to DEPT repeated for your info.

(Code Room: Please repeat to Tokyo Moscow's 4307 DEC 3 to DEPT)

*Re strikes in Japan - action taken by U.S. military Govt.*

894.5045/12-346

Acheson

Acting

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*Handwritten initials: WKS, EJP, LK*

DEC 4 1946  
RELEASE DESIRED  
(FBI)

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UNITED STATES POLITICAL ADVISER  
FOR JAPAN

002055

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Tokyo, March 4, 1947.

RESTRICTED *file*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
MAR 25 1947  
OFFICE OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
INTERNATIONAL LABOR AND HEALTH AFFAIRS  
*933*

No. 889

SUBJECT: Proposed General Strike, Including Japanese Government Employees, Planned to Begin on February 1, 1947.

*933*  
*ocr*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
APR 4 1947  
DIVISION OF FOREIGN REPORTING SERVICES

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

OFFICE OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
APR 2 1947  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Sir:

I have the honor to state that a general strike of labor unions, including those representing employees of the Japanese Government, was expected to begin on February 1, 1947, and was prevented by the issuance, on January 31, 1947, of a statement by General MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, prohibiting the proposed strike.

894.5045/3-447

The National Government and Public Office Workers Union, a confederation representing the Government Railway Workers Union, the National Communications Workers Union, the National Council of Teachers Unions, and staff unions of the Japanese Ministries of Agriculture, Education, and Transportation submitted demands to the government for increased pay and allowances as early as November 1946. The National Government and Public Office Workers Union appealed on December 6, 1946, to the Central Labor Relations Committee, a tripartite committee composed of equal numbers of representatives of labor, management and the public, the latter being appointed by the Ministry of Welfare. Although the Committee's mediation plan, announced on December 18, 1946, was accepted with reservations by the Ministry of Transportation, it was rejected by the National Government and Public Office Workers Union.

Early in December the National Government and Public Office Workers Union refused the invitation of the Social Democratic Party to join a demonstration against the Yoshida Cabinet and stated that the workers were seeking wage and economic changes, not political revolution. The Communist Party announced, on January 9, 1947, support for a proposed strike of the Government Railway Workers Union. On January 11, 1947, KATO Kanju (Social Democratic Party) and TOKUDA Kyuichi (Japan Communist Party leader) addressed a meeting of an estimated 40,000 persons, said to be members of the government workers unions. Emphasis appeared to be shifting to political aims.

By January 18, the National Government and Public Office Workers Union had been enlarged to include representatives of the Japanese Federation of Labor, the National Congress of Industrial Unions, the Municipal Government Workers Union, and the National Medical Workers Union. Announcement was made on January 25 that this body had been given absolute authority by the unions it represented to conduct a proposed general strike in February. Cabinet members met with representatives of the National Government and Public Office Workers Union for the first time on January 26, which apparently constituted

tacit

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March 4, 1947

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tacit recognition of the latter's authority to represent the above-mentioned unions in collective bargaining with the Government. Final terms of arbitration presented by the Central Labor Relations Committee were accepted in principle by the representatives of the Government but were rejected by the National Government and Public Office Workers Union. A meeting on January 28, 1947, said to have been comprised of members of all the previously mentioned unions, was attended by an estimated 300,000 persons. The reported "unanimous" passage by this group of a resolution censuring the Yoshida Cabinet seemed to indicate that political motives had become uppermost.

1/ Although the support of the Social Democratic Party and the Japanese Federation of Labor was withdrawn from the proposed strike at the first oral instructions issued on January 22, 1947, by the Chief of the Economic and Scientific Section of General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, representatives of the National Congress of Industrial Unions and the government workers unions (as well as the Communist Party) continued to support the strike. In view of the firmness of the leaders of the latter-mentioned unions, it was deemed necessary for General MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, to issue a statement (copy of which is enclosed) on January 31, 1947, prohibiting the proposed strike. Thereupon the remaining unions cancelled strike plans.

2/ According to a statement made by INAGAKI Masanobu, member of the National Council of Teachers Unions, and GOTO Denichiro, member of the National Government and Public Office Workers Union, during a call on a member of this Mission (copy of a memorandum of which is enclosed) on January 31, 1947, the labor unions "decided to demand a written instruction signed by General MacArthur". An indication of the aggressive attitude of some of the union leaders can be obtained from this memorandum.

3/ There is also enclosed copy in Japanese and in English translation of a petition dated February 1, 1947, signed by TSUMURA Kakuzo (purportedly representing a local "Joint Labor Strike Committee"), which was delivered at the office of the Allied Council for Japan and addressed to Ambassador Atcheson in his capacity as Chairman of the Council. Some twenty members of the Government Railway Workers Union called upon a correspondent of the weekly publication "World Report" to request that he publicize the fact that this petition had been delivered to the Allied Council for Japan. The "appeal" to the Allied Council and the Far Eastern Commission appearing in this petition is representative of similar statements contained in other petitions received by this Mission and may be interpreted as an attempt to "go over the head" of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.

4/ There is enclosed copy of a self-explanatory "check sheet" from the Economic and Scientific Section of General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, containing a memorandum of a telephone conversation which took place on January 28, 1947, between a member of the Labor Division of that Section and The Honorable Yorkson C. T. Shen, Chief Adviser, Chinese Mission in Japan. Mr. Shen discounted a rumor that the Chinese Mission was supporting the general strike

movement

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March 4, 1947

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movement and apparently desired to prevent possible misunderstanding of a call made upon the Mission by a Japanese trade union delegation.

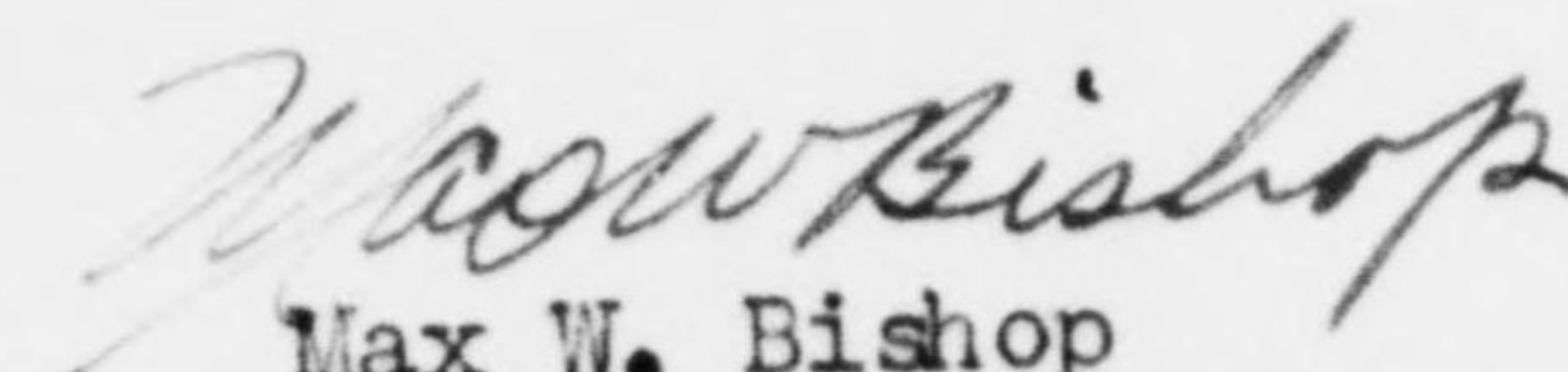
5/ As illustrative of Japanese press comment on this subject,  
there is enclosed a copy in Japanese and in English translation  
of an editorial comment relating to General MacArthur's statement  
which appeared in the Yomiuri Shimbun, February 1, 1947. It is  
notable that the press discussed the subject cautiously and made  
no inflammatory remarks. There are also enclosed in Japanese  
6/ original the editorial comments of the Jiji, Mainichi, Asahi, and the  
Nihon Keizai and copies of a general concensus thereof compiled by  
7/ interpreter MATSUO Chuhei of this Mission.

From unofficial statements made by members of this Headquarters it may be assumed that actions of the leaders of the National Congress of Industrial Unions and of the government workers unions during the final week before January 31 were no longer representative of rank and file opinion within the unions themselves. At present, proof exists of but one case of actual physical coercion but it is felt that undue influence exerted upon union leaders by political minorities (with especial mention of an organization called "The Youth Action Corps") resulted in continuation of strike plans until the issuance of General MacArthur's statement.

Available information indicates that the original demands for pay increases for the workers were based on the inflated cost of daily necessities. With reference to page 6 of a report entitled "Food Situation During the First Year of Occupation", transmitted to the Department with this Mission's despatch No. 847, dated February 1, 1947, attention is invited to the statement that the standard Japanese ration diet is below subsistence level and "the only means of supplementing the rationed diet is by home production, gift, and black-market purchases". Also contained in the report is information that "over 70 percent of a family's budget had to be devoted to the purchase of food". In as much as food remains limited and the inflationary trend continues, it is believed that the statements quoted above apply with equal force to present conditions in Japan.

It appears that the original factors in bringing about the proposal of a general strike were economic but that the apparent lack of discipline among union leaders during the week immediately preceding the cancellation of the strike was due to political pressure exerted by Communist and left-wing extremists.

Respectfully yours,

  
Max W. Bishop  
Counselor of Mission

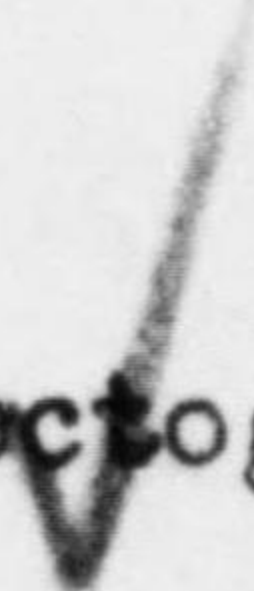
Enclosures:  
(See page 4)

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AA  
Enclosures:

1. Statement by Supreme Commander,  
January 31, 1947;
2. Memorandum of Statements by  
INAGAKI Masanobu and GOTO Denichiro,  
January 31, 1947;
3. Petition in Japanese, with English  
Translation, February 1, 1947,  
Signed by TSUMURA Kakuzo;
4. "Check Sheet", January 29, 1947, from  
Economic and Scientific Section,  
General Headquarters, SCAP, to  
Diplomatic Section;
5. Editorial Comment appearing in the  
Yomiuri Shimbun, Tokyo, February 1,  
1947, Japanese with English Transla-  
tion;
6. Editorial Comment from Jiji, Mainichi,  
Asahi, and Nihon Keizai, February 1,  
1947, in Japanese;
7. Concensus of Editorial Comment mentioned  
in Enclosure No. 6.

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Enclosure No. 1 to Despatch No. 889, dated March 4, 1947, from the United States Political Adviser for Japan, Tokyo, on the subject "Proposed General Strike, Including Japanese Government Employees, Planned to Begin on February 1, 1947".

COPY

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
FAR EAST COMMAND  
Public Relations Office

Immediate Release:

14:30  
31 January 1947

GENERAL MacARTHUR HAS ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

"Under the authority vested in me as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, I have informed the labor leaders, whose unions have federated for the purpose of conducting a general strike, that I will not permit the use of so deadly a social weapon in the present impoverished and emaciated condition of Japan, and have accordingly directed them to desist from the furtherance of such action.

"It is with greatest reluctance that I have deemed it necessary to intervene to this extent in the issues now pending. I have done so only to forestall the fatal impact upon an already gravely threatened public welfare. Japanese society today operates under the limitations of war defeat and allied occupation. Its cities are laid waste, its industries are almost at a standstill, and the great masses of its people are on little more than a starvation diet.

"A general strike, crippling transportation and communications, would prevent the movement of food to feed the people and of coal to sustain essential utilities, and would stop such industry as is still functioning. The paralysis which inevitably would result might reduce large masses of the Japanese people to the point of actual starvation, and would produce dreadful consequences upon every Japanese home regardless of social strata or direct interest in the basic issue. Even now, to prevent actual starvation in Japan, the people of the United States are releasing to them quantities of their own scarce food resources.

"The persons involved in the threatened general strike are but a small minority of the Japanese people. Yet this minority might well plunge the great masses into a disaster not unlike that produced in the immediate past by the minority which led Japan into the destruction of war. This in turn would impose upon the Allied Powers the unhappy decision of whether to leave the Japanese people to the fate thus recklessly imposed by a minority, or to cover the consequences by pouring into Japan, at the expense of their own meager resources, infinitely greater quantities of food and other supplies to sustain life than otherwise would be required. In the circumstances, I could hardly request the Allied peoples to assume this additional burden.

"While I have taken this measure as one of dire emergency, I do not intend otherwise to restrict the freedom of action heretofore given labor in the achievement of legitimate objectives. Nor do I intend in any way to compromise or influence the basic social issues involved. These are matters of evolution which time and circumstance may well orient without disaster as Japan gradually emerges from its present distress."



Enclosure No. 2 to Despatch No. 889, dated March 4, 1947, from the United States Political Adviser for Japan, Tokyo, on the subject "Proposed General Strike, Including Japanese Government Employees, Planned to Begin on February 1, 1947".

COPY

Tokyo, January 31, 1947.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Representation Concerning a Threatened General Strike.

On January 31, 1947, the following-named persons called at this Mission to request an interview with the United States Political Adviser:

INAGAKI Masanobu,  
Zen Nihon Kyoin Kumiai Kyogi Kai  
(National Council of Teachers Unions),  
Lecturer in the Economics Department,  
Keio University.

GOTO Denichiro,  
Zen Kanko Shokuin Rodo Kumiai Kyogi Kai  
(National Government and Public Office Workers Union),  
Non-regular member of the staff of the  
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

The above-named men were received by a Foreign Service Officer of this Mission and informed that the United States Political Adviser was enroute to Washington. Although they were advised to approach the Labor Division, Economic and Scientific Section of General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, which has jurisdiction in such matters, the men proceeded to make a statement, the principal points of which are summarized, in translation, as follows:

Representatives of the labor unions were called to the Labor Division on January 30, 1947, at 11:00 P.M., and were informally instructed to call off the general strike. They convened the instruction to the labor unions which decided to demand a written instruction signed by General MacArthur. This decision was delivered to the Labor Division at 2:00 A.M. (sic), January 31, 1947.

In giving the informal instruction did the Labor Division obtain approval of the Allied Council for Japan? Mere oral instruction from the Labor Division was insufficient to pacify or satisfy the union members. The strikers are acting within the right and liberty guaranteed by the Far Eastern Commission for the protection and enhancement of their political and economic interests.

The existing Government is protecting the interests of bureaucrats, militarists, and capitalists who collaborated in the war which has plunged the Japanese people into the depth of misery and hardship.

The

Encl. No. 2 to  
Tokyo's 889,  
March 4, 1947

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The Government holds in its statement that the strikers' demands, if accepted, would increase the inflation and aggravate the economic crisis. However, our stand is that the Government's policy of protecting the interests of capitalists and permitting black marketeering through grants of subsidies, issuance of bonds, etc., is the cause of the inflation.

The Government is not carrying out purge directives and disbandment of the Zaibatsu faithfully.

(At this point, the above-mentioned Foreign Service Officer of this Mission suggested that labor unions should make such demands through regularly constituted channels rather than waste time. The men continued to make their statement.)

Just as in the past the Diet is controlled by the bureaucrats, militarists and the capitalists, and the public opinion is barred from full expression. We consider that the action we are now taking is the only process for achieving our aims. The bureaucrats and the capitalists are selfish and look to their own interests at the expense of the masses. If we leave the government in the hands of such classes, we will be unable to save Japan from the crisis and post-war rehabilitation will be impossible. We are working for increased welfare of the general public and for Japan's reconstruction along the line of democracy.

The Government and the interests it is eager to protect bars the public from free expression of will by controlling the press throughout Japan and not only that, the Government also obstructs real emancipation for the enslaved peasants by various controls exercised through various organizations.

Under the circumstances, we have to fight the Government to carry through our aim and we are firmly convinced that we are acting within the right and liberty granted by the Far Eastern Commission.

MATSUO Chuhei  
Interpreter

Enclosure No. 3 (in English) to Despatch No. 889, dated March 4, 1947, from the United States Political Adviser for Japan, Tokyo, on the subject "Proposed General Strike, Including Japanese Government Employees, Planned to Begin on February 1, 1947".

TRANSLATION

TO:

His Excellency, General MacArthur,  
Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.

His Excellency, George Atcheson,  
American Representative, Allied Council for Japan.

His Excellency, MacMahon Ball, British Representative,  
Allied Council for Japan.

His Excellency, CHU Shih-ming, Chinese Representative,  
Allied Council for Japan.

His Excellency, Kuzma Derevyanko, Soviet Representative,  
Allied Council for Japan.

Members of the Far Eastern Commission.

Petition

Government workers, led by the National Railroad Workers Union and All Japan Communication Workers Union, because of the breakdown of living conditions brought about by inflation, have opened negotiations with the Government and presented demands for a minimum wage scale and other measures. The attitude of the present YOSHIDA Cabinet, in consort with financiers and landowners who made huge profits during the war is such that no attention is given to the precarious living conditions of the workers. The cabinet's insincerity is manifested by the fact that, despite three months of negotiation, no settlement has yet been made. Therefore, the 2,600,000 government workers, together with workers of various other industries, decided to carry out a general strike resolutely as of 1 February to seek the dissolution of the YOSHIDA Cabinet, a group that is obstructing the democratization of JAPAN. However, on 31 January, by an order of General MacARTHUR prohibiting the general strike, leaders of each union were called individually and were ordered to suspend the general strike. Consequently, a satisfactory conclusion to the demands of the mass of people was not attained, and the YOSHIDA Cabinet, combining with the bureaucrats, is strengthening its feudalistic and reactionary character more and more. Even now, we cannot understand the order issued by General MacARTHUR.

I. We believe that freedom of political action by labor unions is completely recognized by the Potsdam Declaration and/or by the 16 principles laid down in regard to labor unions by the Far Eastern Commission.

II. We believe the aims of the Occupation Forces of the Allied Powers is to liberate the Japanese people from feudalistic and bureaucratic oppression and to bring about a complete democratization of JAPAN.

III. The general strike has its inception in the people's desire to probe to the bottom of the war responsibilities of the military ruling class and to establish a peaceful JAPAN. This has the support  
of

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Tokyo's 889,  
March 4, 1947

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of world public opinion and is in line with the desire of the peoples of the world.

IV. If the general strike, which is an indispensable measure for the democratization of JAPAN, can be denied, the Japanese people will lose hope in democratization and there is the fear that the militaristic reactionary forces will emerge gradually and a dark period for JAPAN will begin again.

V. It is a known fact to most people that the general strike will not obstruct the restoration of production of JAPAN today, but that the black-market economic policy of the YOSHIDA Cabinet is responsible for this obstruction.

VI. The statement by General MacARTHUR says that people connected with this general strike represent only a small minority of people. We feel this is a misunderstanding. The vast number of participants in this strike, of whom government workers alone number some 2,600,000, consist of workers of the machine tools industry, electrical industry, chemical industry, electric plants, shipbuilding industry, publication industry, newspapers, communication and traffic facilities, to say nothing of the families of these workers. With the exception of large-scale black marketeers, it is the general public, together with the farmers, who are earnestly crying for the dissolution of the YOSHIDA Cabinet.

VII. General MacARTHUR's statement says: "The persons involved in the threatened general strike are but a small minority of the Japanese people. Yet this minority might well plunge the great masses into a disaster not unlike that produced in the immediate past by the minority which led JAPAN into the destruction of war."

We cannot help feeling that this statement will result in inviting misunderstanding among the Japanese people regarding General MacArthur's sincerity in the liberation of the Japanese peoples. We believe such words are applicable only to bureaucratic cabinets that are not for the people, such as YOSHIDA Cabinet.

The general strike is supported by the honest working class of people; the YOSHIDA Cabinet is supported only by a group of evil bureaucrats working in unison with black marketeers and obstructing the economic reconstruction of JAPAN. In order to democratize completely the Japanese people as it was made clear to us in the Potsdam Declaration, we earnestly desire the protection of the peoples' political freedom and thereby make this appeal to the Allied Council for JAPAN and the Far Eastern Commission.

1 February 1947

TSUMURA, Kakuzo  
(TN Seal), representing KANAGAWA  
Regional Joint Labor Strike Committee  
and YOKOHAMA District Joint Labor  
Strike Committee.

Enclosure No. 3 (in Japanese) to Despatch No. 889, dated March 4, 1947, from the United States Political Adviser for Japan, Tokyo, on the subject "Proposed General Strike, Including Japanese Government Employees, Planned to Begin on February 1, 1947".

(Petition, February 1, 1947, Signed by TSUMURA Kakuzo)

陳情書(寫)

今回國鐵、全遞を先頭とする官公勞組の従業員がインフレーションに依る先活の破綻から最低賃金制の確立、その他の要求をか、けて政府と交渉を始めました。現吉田内閣は戦争中雇入を利益を得た金融資本家、地主と結んで勤勞者の生活危機をかへりみず交渉は三月の長期に亘つても尚解決をみせぬ程の不誠意を示してゐるのであります。茲に官公勞二百六十萬の勤勞者は其の他の各産業の勞働者と共に二月一日を期してゼネストを決行し日本の民主化をはばむ戦犯グループ

たる吉田内閣の退陣を求めた様になりました。  
ところが一月三十一日マ司令部の指令に依つて  
ゼネストをやつてはならぬと組合指導部を個々に  
呼び出しゼネスト中止を命令して来ました。その  
結果は勤労大衆の要求は満足な結論をみづ  
吉田内閣は官僚と結合して益々封建的及動性  
を強めて居ります。  
吾々は今も尚マ司令部の指令に對しては今も諒解  
することが出来ません。  
一) 吾々はポツダム宣言或は極東委員會の勞働  
組合に對する十六原則に依り勞働組合の政治的  
活動の自由は完全に認められてゐると信じて居り  
ます。

(二) 聯合國進駐軍の目的は日本人民を封建的、官僚的壓迫から解放して民主化を徹底せしむるを目的と信じて居ります。

(三) ゼネストは軍國的支配階級の戦争責任を追求し平和日本を建てやうとする人民の要望に出發するものであり、これは世界の輿論の支持を受け世界人民の希望に添ふものであります。

(四) 日本民主化に不可欠の手段であるゼネストが否定せられるならば日本人民は民主化に希望を失ふ軍國的反動勢力が次第に頭を上げて再び日本に暗黒時代の始まるおそれがあります。

(五) 現在日本の生産復興をはばむものがゼネストにあらずして吉田内閣のヤミ経済政策にあること

多くの人が承知してゐるところであります。

(六) マ元帥の聲明の中に今回のゼネストに關係するものが國民中の小數にすぎないと言はれて居りますが、これは誤解ではないかと思はれます。スト参加の人々は官公勞だけで二百六十萬、その他機器、電工、化學、電産、造船、出版、新聞通信、交通がそれに加はりその家族を加へるならば實に龐大な人民が参加し更に大がかりなヤミ屋を抜かした一般人民が農民と共に吉田内閣打倒を切實に叫んでゐるのであります。

(七) 同じく聲明文の中に「小數の人々が戦争の慘禍に導いた爲に主じた同じ様を状態に大多數の人々を導込む」と云ふ言葉はマ元帥が日本國民解放の誠意を日本國民に誤解せしめる結果を招く様に



考へられてなりません。これは吉田内閣の如き人民を  
離れた官僚の内閣に對してのみ用ひられるべき  
言葉と思れます。ゼネストは眞面目な勤勞  
階級に支持せられ吉田内閣は日本經濟の再建  
をばむむヤミ商人やそれと結託せる悪い一部の  
官僚の支持があるのみであります。  
吾々はポツダム宣言に明らかた日本民主化を  
徹底させるため飽くまでも人民の政治的自由を擁護  
せられんことを希望して四ヶ國理事會、極東委員會  
に陳情する次第であります。

一九四七年二月一日

神奈川地方労働者共同闘争委員会  
 横浜地区労働者共同闘争委員会

右代表者

津村格三 (印)

聯合國最高司令官マッカーサー元帥閣下  
 對日理事會米國代表ジョージアチソン閣下  
 對日理事會英國代表マクマホンボール閣下  
 對日理事會中國代表朱世明閣下  
 對日理事會ソ聯代表クズマテレビマンコ閣下  
 極東委員会御中

(ノート)

誤字と思はれるものを、二三、原文中に発見し  
ました。そのまゝ、寫しました。

(石川)

Enclosure No. 4 to Despatch No. 889, dated March 4, 1947, from the United States Political Adviser for Japan, Tokyo, on the subject "Proposed General Strike, Including Japanese Government Employees, Planned to Begin on February 1, 1947".

COPY

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS

Check Sheet

File No. 004.07(29 Jan 47)

WFM/TC/SDO/mo  
Subject: Report of Mr. Shen, Chinese Mission

From: ESS

To: DS

Date: 29 January 1947

1. In accordance with the request of Mr. Bishop, Diplomatic Section, in telephone conversation 28 January 1947, with Mr. Collett, ESS/LA, the following is transmitted.
2. Mr. Shen of the Chinese Mission telephoned Labor Division at approximately 1515 hours, 28 January 1947, to say that a Japanese trade union delegation had requested his opinion of the proposed 1 February general strike. Mr. Shen stated that the delegates were told that he could not give them an official opinion from Chinese Mission. However, his personal opinion was that it would be most advisable if the general strike could be avoided.
3. Mr. Shen then stated that he was calling ESS/LA at this time because he had heard that the Japanese union delegates were spreading rumors that the Chinese Mission supported the general strike, and he wanted to prevent this erroneous information from being represented to GHQ as fact.
4. Mr. Shen further stated that the Japanese union delegates asked him to bring the question of the general strike before the Allied Council on Wednesday, 29 January 1947. Mr. Shen stated that he told the union delegates this was impossible because the Allied Council does not meet again until a week from Wednesday, 29 January.
5. This is for your information.

-----W.F.M.-----

Enclosure No. 5 to Despatch No. 889, dated March 4, 1947, from the United States Political Adviser for Japan, Tokyo, on the subject "Proposed General Strike, Including Japanese Government Employees, Planned to Begin on February 1, 1947".

JAPANESE EDITORIAL FROM YOMIURI SHIMBUN

Yomiuri Feb 1, 1947  
(1) 3版 ☆☆☆

社説

労働者諸君に

訴え

労働者諸君、全労組ストはよく実行せられた。これは労働者諸君の生活に致命的な影響を及ぼすことはいさぎもない。...

改革の結果、日本全体が経済的に豊かになる。労働者の生活も向上する。...

労働者諸君、われわれは政治的・経済的・社会的自由を求めたい。...

労働者諸君、われわれは政治的・経済的・社会的自由を求めたい。...

労働者諸君、全労組ストはよく実行せられた。これは労働者諸君の生活に致命的な影響を及ぼすことはいさぎもない。...

Enclosure No. 5 to Despatch No. 889, dated March 4, 1947, from the United States Political Adviser for Japan, Tokyo, on the subject "Proposed General Strike, Including Japanese Government Employees, Planned to Begin on February 1, 1947".

TRANSLATION

Editorial from Yomiuri Shimbun, February 1, 1947, Entitled "Appeal to Laborers"

A general strike of all government and office workers scheduled to take place on February 1 is bound to strike a vital blow to the livelihood of the nation and the workers. The Government and the political parties have to be partly blamed for bringing on this situation. The Government should have more seriously taken up this question promptly and the political parties should urge the Government to prevent the strike. Only the Communists have been urging the workers on toward the general strike. The strike could have been avoided and if the leaders of the National Government and Public Office Workers Union realize their heavy responsibility to the state and the community, they will compromise on the basis of the proposition made by the Central Labor Committee. The average wage of ¥1,200 proposed by the Central Labor Committee is not low compared with general wages. The minimum wage of ¥600 demanded by the Teachers Union is recognized. Moreover, the Government proposed to fix the salaries of government and public office workers on an appropriate scale on the basis of recommendations by the Committee for Consideration of Salaries and Allowances which is charged with working out of a wage standard that is rational in comparison with general wages and price levels.

We have been anxious to have the destructive effect of the general strike avoided. Are we mistaken in urging the leaders of the Government and Public Office Workers Union to compromise with the recommendations of the Central Labor Committee? Japan now faces a serious crisis. Associated Press News of January 31 reports an interview with Ambassador Atcheson, United States Political Adviser, who is thus quoted:

"Unless the economy, shattered by the war, is speedily reconstructed, Japan will face a critical--almost a desperate situation."

The majority of private firms and companies are in a difficult situation through shortage of materials and power. They are almost on the verge of bankruptcy. Strikes or production management cannot remedy this situation. Both the capitalist and the laborer will be equally ruined without speedy rehabilitation. This situation is not a class crisis but a racial crisis. As a result of the lost war, the whole of Japan's economy faces bankruptcy. What is most important is to increase production. As regards individual enterprise, increased yields through greater efficiency are desirable and any increased profits should be applied to better treatment of workers. If the increased profits from greater efforts by the workers are not divided among them, then they should take the profits by strikes. For that purpose they should demand participation in a management council for the thorough-going investigation and understanding of corporate accounts and consultation with the management concerning methods of increasing profits. They should demand that a greater proportion of profits thus increased be distributed to them. You laborers should know best of all in what a bad state Japan is economically. If the Government were absolutely against compromise the question might be different; however, the Government comes close to the proposals of the Central Labor Committee.

If

Encl. No. 5 to  
Tokyo's 889,  
March 4, 1947

- 2 -

If it is improved treatment which is demanded by the workers, we think that they can come to terms to avoid a strike which gives such a serious blow to the nation. To carry out the general strike may be interpreted as an attempt to destroy the Government and to establish a "democratic people's government" advocated by the Communists. In fact, Communist factions in each union are propagandizing and furthering this aim. Let us consider this question with a cool head. If political changes through such means are permitted, there will be no use for a Diet. The result will be a despotic government of the Communists; all freedom of politics and thoughts will be lost. Will such bring real happiness for the workers? Communists claim a despotic government by the proletariat but power will actually fall into the hands of their leaders, among whom is a large number of men of intellect; workers and all people will have to kneel before their orders; one thought will be coerced upon them. Will this bring happiness to the people?

We Japanese are too ignorant of the nobility of liberty. Free expression of one's own will, government by men who are elected by free choice, and free attacks on criticism of and support for the existing government are the rights of people to whom liberty is granted. To be deprived of this freedom must be absolutely prevented. To protect individual freedom, that of others must also be respected, and each should assume responsibility for his speech and actions. A free community is built upon mutual respect and responsibility. True happiness is found only in a free community.

We have acquired freedom in politics and thought. A way has been opened for socialism or communism through peaceful and democratic means if supported by a majority of people. What is the use of resorting to such destructive means as the general strike in taking over governmental power? Rome was not built in a day. An ideal community cannot be realized soon. Life is a compromise. A person cannot govern as he wishes, -the home, the community, the state. If he chooses to govern thus, the only way is to resort to despotism as did the militarists. We are all tired of despotism. Workers are advised to know that a democratic community is possible through compromise. Arguments considered right should be carried out only after expression of opinion and with majority support. To try to realize by a general strike that which is opposed by a majority means destruction of democracy. Let us mutually avoid the folly of destroying democracy before we fully appreciate the true worth of freedom or democracy. Let us obtain the happiness of the working class through the protection of freedom. To do that let us first of all reconstruct Japan's economy which is on the verge of bankruptcy. Let us demand of the capitalist and the Government improvement of our living side by side with the economic reconstruction.

We desire prudent action of the workers and if our arguments are wrong, we welcome their frank criticism.

Enclosure No. 6 to Despatch No. 889, dated March 4, 1947, from the United States Political Adviser for Japan, Tokyo, on the subject "Proposed General Strike, Including Japanese Government Employees, Planned to Begin on February 1, 1947".

Asahi Feb 1, 1947

Feb 1, 1947

B版

社説  
ゼネスト中止  
命令

であつて、一般国民の憂るべき... 政府の当否と責任を決定する... 労働争議の手段に訴へて、政変を...

社説

総辭職して政  
局を一新せよ

マッカーサー元帥は、廿一日... 内閣の政治的責任は、正に重大な... ストライキは回避されても、政...



Encl. No. 6 to Tokyo's No. 889, March 4, 1947.

3版 第25367号

(明治五年創刊)

社説 敗戦の現実に 徹せよ

戦後二年三時廿分、セネスト... 敗戦の現実に徹せよ... 戦後二年三時廿分、セネスト...

時代逆行する改造

行するものであった。國民の九面... 時代逆行する改造... 行するものであった。國民の九面...

kuizai 7-19-47

社説 官公労争議をめぐって

官公労争議を中心とする労働... 官公労争議をめぐって... 官公労争議を中心とする労働...

労働組合の最大の武器である... 官公労争議をめぐって... 労働組合の最大の武器である...

現在のように政府と組合側の意見... 官公労争議をめぐって... 現在のように政府と組合側の意見...

の立場に立つ政府、学者等から... 官公労争議をめぐって... の立場に立つ政府、学者等から...

Enclosure No. 7 to Despatch No. 889, dated March 4, 1947, from the United States Political Adviser for Japan, Tokyo, on the subject "Proposed General Strike, Including Japanese Government Employees, Planned to Begin on February 1, 1947".

TRANSLATION

Consensus of Editorial Comment  
(Mentioned in Enclosure No. 6)

1. The nation has been saved from grave unhappiness by the directive issued by General MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. The general strike, if carried out, would have given a vital blow to the nation, including the laborers themselves.
2. The Yoshida Cabinet and the political parties are responsible for negligence in not taking up the question more promptly for an amicable settlement. We would have preferred a solution before the prohibition order was issued by the Supreme Commander. Upon reading the statement issued by the Liaison Section as an accompaniment to the order, we feel greatly ashamed that the strike question had to bother General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. The statement clearly points out that the order has been issued to avoid the destructive effect of a general strike at this time when the whole of Japan is in a critical situation and that it is not intended in any way to restrict the freedom of workers to fulfill their aims in other ways than by such a general strike.
3. Japanese should realize that they were defeated in the war and that Japan is under the occupation of the Allied Powers. If all Japanese realized that they have been saved from starvation by relief supplied from scarce food resources in the United States, they would never have resorted to such a general strike. As rightfully pointed out in the directive, Japan has been thrown into the present disaster by the militarists and minor factions. The majority of the Japanese must not be permitted to repeat the same fault by the leadership of strikers who are, in comparison with the rest of the nation, a small number. To ask unlimited relief from the Allied Powers on top of the general strike is against our conscience. The Government is responsible for the situation but reflection of the leaders of the workers is desired as to the proper course for the labor movement.
4. It is not General Headquarters that reconstructs Japan but we Japanese. A general resignation of the Yoshida Cabinet is advised. The Government should change its fundamental attitude. The reshuffling of the cabinet has weakened the position of the Government instead of strengthening it. The issues still remain to be solved and they cannot be settled by the Government which regards labor movements as hostile. The Yoshida Government is too weak to tide over the crisis.
5. General MacArthur's statement is quoted thus: "...nor do I intend in any way to compromise or influence the social issues involved."
6. Compromise on the basis of the arbitration plan of the Central Labor Relations Committee is advised.

# INCOMING AIRGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS TELEGRAPH BRANCH

UNRESTRICTED

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
*Int 3/19*  
 MAR 19 1947  
 IN CHARGE OF THE  
 AND HEALTH AFFAIRS

3028

Z ACTION: ITP

INFO:

DC/R

U-E

EUR Secretary of State,  
FE Washington.

DC/L

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FSP

FC

A-540, March 11, 1947.

From: London

Date: March 11, 1947

Rec'd: March 18, 12:01 p.m.

894.5045/2-2647

1. Reference Embassy's Airgram A-400, February 28, 1947, on subject of threatened labor strike in Japan.

2. Following questions and answers on this subject, with particular reference to possible issuance of instructions to Commonwealth representative on Allied Council to press for investigation into labor conditions, exchanged in House of Commons on March 10, 1947:

Mr. John Paton (Labor M.P. for Norwich) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if, in view of the recent strikes and general unrest amongst industrial workers in Japan, he will instruct the Commonwealth representative on the Allied Council to press for an investigation into working conditions.

Mr. McNeil (Minister of State for Foreign Affairs): "Working conditions in Japan are under constant study by the Labour Division of General MacArthur's Headquarters, acting on behalf of all the Allies. His Majesty's Government are kept fully informed on the labour situation and my right hon. Friend does not consider any useful purpose would be served by pressing at this stage, for any additional investigation to be made. The principles which now govern trade union activity in Japan were laid down by the Far Eastern Commission in an important policy decision dated 6th December, 1946, which has the full support of His Majesty's Government. I have arranged for a copy of the text to be placed in the Library of the House."

Mr. Paton: "While I accept from my right hon. Friend that there is machinery for investigating these conditions, may I ask him whether, in view of the fact that these conditions recently were such as to give rise to a threat of a general strike, which was only quelled by the action of the Supreme Commander, he would see that the Allied Commission in Washington give a directive to remedy these conditions?"

Mr. McNeil:

PERMANENT RECORD COPY.— This copy must be returned to DC/R central files with notation of action taken.

UNRESTRICTED

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Page 2, A-540, March 11, 1947, London UNRESTRICTED

Mr. McNeil: "It is to that directive that I am directing the attention of my hon. Friend. If he will read it, I think he will agree that it is a good basis for the development of trade union policy there."

Mr. King (Labor M.P. for Penryn and Falmouth): "Is it not a fact that this country has no representative on the Allied Council and, therefore, we cannot instruct? There is an Australian representative on the Council, who is representative of all the Dominions. Further, is it not a fact that we have withdrawn all troops from Japan, thereby limiting our responsibility and that we cannot limit our responsibility and increase our influence?"

Mr. McNeil: "I will reply to the first part of my hon. Friend's supplementary question, which I think is the only relevant part. It is true that we would not seek to instruct the Australian representative, who represents the Dominions as well as ourselves, but we have a Commission in Washington on which we are represented."

Mr. W. Fletcher (Conservative M.P. for Bury): "Is not this a matter for our Special Commissioner in the Far East, who sends his representatives to Japan? If not, what other functions does he perform?"

Mr. Ronald Chamberlain (Labor M.P. for Norwood): "Did General MacArthur consult the Allied Council before issuing his orders to forbid the recent strike?"

Mr. McNeil: "May I say, in reply to the hon. Member for Bury (Mr. W. Fletcher), that I have just pointed out that we have a representative on the liaison mission."

Mr. Chamberlain: "May I have an answer to my question?"

GALLMAN

Copy to U.S. Political Adviser, SCAP, Tokyo  
EFDrumright/wg  
RETYPE

# INCOMING AIRGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS TELEGRAPH BRANCH

AIRGRAM

2678

FROM: Moscow, U.S.S.R.

DATED: April 9, 1948

DESPATCHED: April 11, 1948

RECEIVED: Apr. 19, 1948 8:09 AM

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OFFICE OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
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STATE  
UNCLASSIFIED  
ARTMENT  
Secretary of State,  
Washington.

A-361, April 9, 1948

True, April 3, two-column article entitled "The Strike Movement in Japan" claims strike wave in March was designed as warning to government of worse to come if strikers' demands rejected. Article also claims that economic position of workers and employees constantly worsening and present government like predecessor refuses consider interests of workers.

Article states that "US finance capital intends suppress democratic movement of Japanese masses" under guise of building up Japan as Far Eastern bulwark against Communism.

Alleging that the four greatest Japanese corporations--Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo and Yasuda--have already been exempted by the American authorities from decentralization, the article charges that Japanese and American capitalists hope to continue colonial exploitation of the workers.

The article sharply attacks Right-wing Socialists as betrayers of the working masses and agents of American and Japanese capitalists, trying to split the Japanese labor movement. Communist strength in the labor movement is said to be high, as evidenced by 25 Communists out of 50 members of the Executive Committee of the National Congress of Industrial Trade Unions and 11 out of 19 members of the Presidium of the Executive Committee. The article concludes on the theme that "only the Communist party is fighting for the independence of Japan and the real interests of the workers."

SMITH

Tireland:rvm

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
APR 26 1948  
DC/IR  
LIAISON OFFICE

894.5045/4-948

APR 22 1948

HI

JMA

Form DS-302 (7-2-46)

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS TELEGRAPH BRANCH

DEPARTMENT OF STATE DIVISION OF INCOMING TELEGRAMS NORTH EAST ASIAN AFFAIRS

ACTION COPY

PLAIN

AUG 12 1948 DEPARTMENT OF STATE Control 3741 Rec'd August 12, 1948 6:39 a.m.

Office of FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS AUG 12 1948 DIRECTOR Department of State

15

- Actions: FE
- Info :
- P
- O
- SAM
- OLA
- CIA
- DCL
- ITP
- OPD
- FC
- POS
- PA
- DCR

FROM: Shanghai TO: Secretary of State NO: 1797, August 12

Following is Central News Agency item distributed August 10:

"82,000 Japanese Government workers in Osaka sent delegates to Tokyo this morning to petition the Chinese Mission here for help in restoring their constitutional rights of collective bargaining and strike. The petition on similar contents will also be sent to the heads of the British, Russian and French missions here this afternoon the delegates told Central News.

Describing the Japanese Government's No-Strike Ordinance as 'unconstitutional' the petition claimed General Douglas MacArthur's letter to Premier Ashida is 'not an order but merely a suggestion to the Japanese Government.' The Japanese Government is attempting to rebuild the 'Fascist regime' in Japan through ruthless suppression by police force of the 'Democratic' labor union movement which is recognized by Japan's new constitution charged the petition.

Contacted by Central News this morning the union delegates said Osaka is practically 'a police city' ever since the end of July when Japanese authorities announced a municipal ordinance banning demonstration parade and assembly without five days prior notification. The wartime secret police system is revived in suppression of the labor movement and plain-clothes police planted in factories and the vicinity of union leaders homes revealed the delegates. The delegates said secret

police agents

PLAIN

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894.5045/8-1248

CS/A

894.5045/8-1248

AUG 17 1948

DCR - ITP Unit [Handwritten initials]

PLAIN

-2- #1797, August 12, from Shanghai.

police agents appear at every labor meeting and every post or placard for publicity purposes is subject to police censorship."

Sent Tokyo 154, repeated Department 1797.

CABOT

SW:ML

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UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

*cc retained by Mr. Ray*

*(1) FE  
(2) Ray  
(3) S/S R*

Memorandum of Conversation

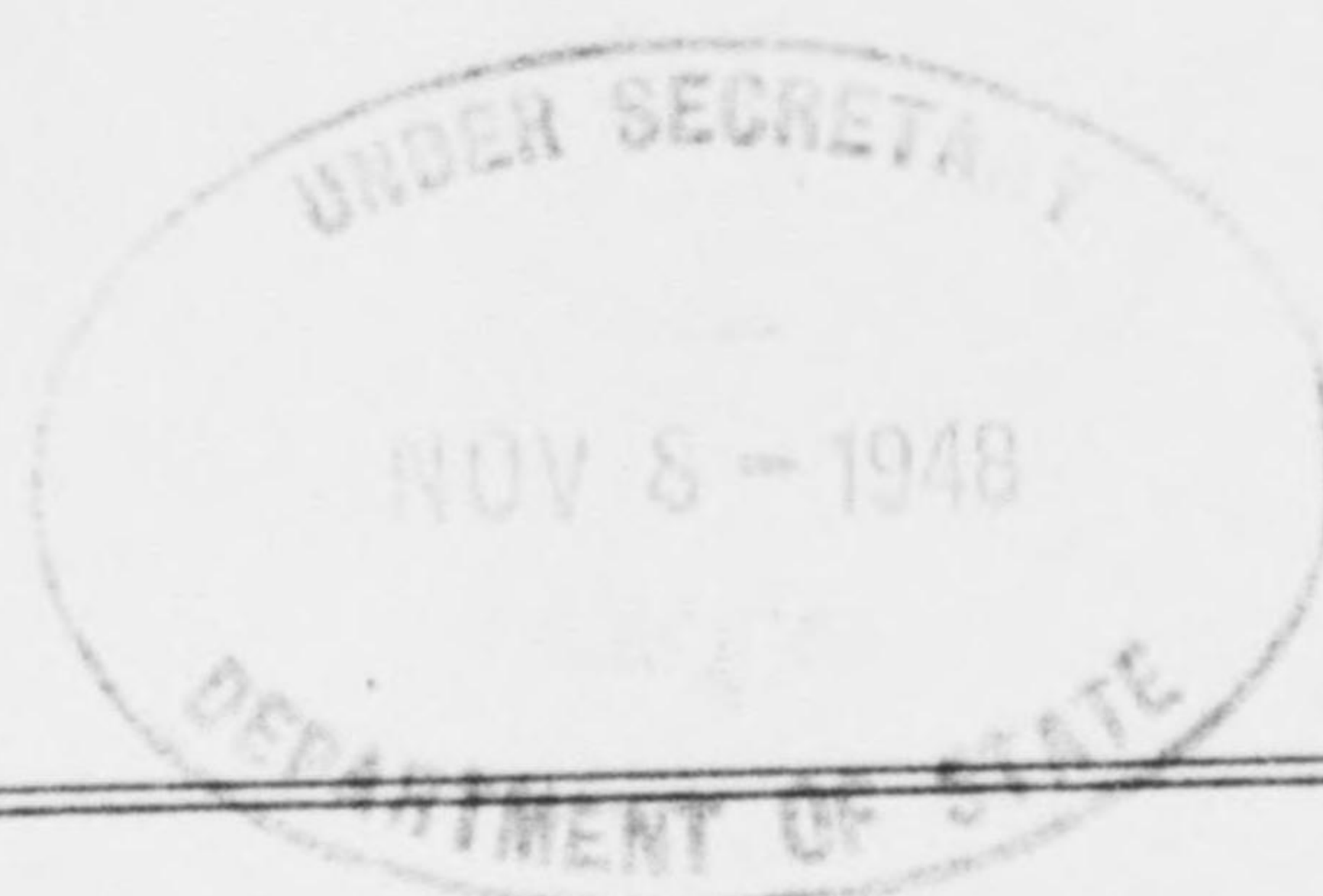
TOP SECRET

DATE: October 27, 1948

SUBJECT: Labor Law Prohibiting Strikes in Japan

PARTICIPANTS:	The Secretary	Mr. Ernest Bevin
	Dr. Jessup	Sir Alexander Cadogan
	Mr. Bohlen	Mr. Roberts
		Mr. Dean

COPIES TO: Gen. Carter  
Mr. Lovett ✓



*See file*

894.5045/10-2748

During the conversation this morning Mr. Bevin raised the question of the new labor law in Japan prohibiting civil servants from striking against the Government. He said that it was clear that Government employees had no right to strike but that some form of redress involving arbitration should be provided for. He said there was strong feeling in labor circles in England that the present law in Japan which MacArthur had put in was somewhat unfair to the Government employees; that in England several years ago the question had arisen and while the principle that Government employees could not strike prevailed they had set up a system of arbitration based on a neutral tribunal which would provide methods of redress in the event of disputes. He hoped that some such change could be introduced in the new Japanese law in order to offset an adverse reaction in labor circles. He said he was not asking for any immediate action but hoped that we would bear this in mind.

The Secretary told Mr. Bevin that we had had similar complaints concerning this law from our own labor organizations.

TOP SECRET FILE

A/MK  
MAY 18 1949

FILED 5045/10-2748

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*Checkmate*



DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS TELEGRAPH BRANCH

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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*Pass to Tokyo no other action file news*

INCOMING TELEGRAM

PLAIN

Office of FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS  
DEC 2 - 1948  
DIRECTOR  
Control 781

Rec'd December 2, 1948  
2:18 p.m.

DIVISION OF NORTHEAST ASIAN AFFAIRS

DEC - 2 1948  
*MMB*  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

4

Action: FE  
Info :  
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FROM: Moscow  
TO: Secretary of State  
NO: 2809, December 2

PRAVDA December second carries brief Tokyo Tass despatch stating Japanese Lower House has accepted project calling for review law depriving government workers right to strike in accordance MacArthur's letter Ashida July 1948.

Sent Department 2809. Department pass Tokyo 47.

SMITH

BB:PAF

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No dict*

RECEIVED  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE  
DEC 2 1948

Re: six

Repeated to Tokyo, December 2, 3:10 P.M., F.N., DC/T.

894.5045/12-248

DEC 20 1948

HH

PLAIN

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STANDARD FORM NO. 64

CONFIDENTIAL

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : NA - Mr. Bishop

FROM : NA - Mr. Green

SUBJECT: Strike by Certain Japanese Government Railways Workers

DATE: June 13, 1949

*State Dept.  
Northeast Asian  
Affairs Office  
from Green*

*FE: WDB  
JATA  
NA: MB  
MS*

Reconstructing the strike story briefly from press accounts (no official report has yet been received), the 2,800 members of the Kanagawa Chapter of the National Railways Workers Union went on strike on June 10, closing all train communications between Tokyo and Yokohama and interrupting traffic on the Central East-West Japan lines. Synchronized with the strike were statements by most of the unions affiliated with the Communist-dominated Sambetsu (the Japanese CIO) to the effect that they had "completed mobilization plans to assist the railways workers".

*This Document must be returned to the RMR Central Office*

However, 8 hours after this illegal strike started -- illegal, because all strikes by Government workers are proscribed by Japanese law -- the Labor Division of SCAP directly ordered all strikers back to work. Some of the workers were slow in complying with SCAP's order, but by the following day normal train services were resumed.

Comment

The strike was obviously Communist inspired. It was timed to take advantage (1) of the absence in Paris (at the ILO meeting) of the anti-Communist President of the National Railway Workers Union, Mr. Kato Etsuo, (2) of the widespread resentment among Government workers toward the personnel retrenchment program, the longer hours, the low pay, etc., during the first week of the enactment of the Public Corporations Labor Relations Law.

There is no indication that the Communists planned to go through with any general strike. The ominous statements of the Sambetsu affiliates are believed to represent militant posturing and muscle-flexing by the Communists - a warning of the critical strength of the Communist-dominated unions without bringing the JCP into a direct test of strength with SCAP. The Communists were also able to pose as the vanguard of labor's prerogatives.

Not to be overlooked is the fact that SCAP moved directly to quash the strike without consulting or seeking to work through constituted Japanese authority. The inference is that such Japanese authority would have been ineffective.

*NA will prepare a full study and evaluation as soon as we get all facts together*

CONFIDENTIAL

894.5045/6-1349

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894.5045/6-1349

*5V*  
*Cat*

STANDARD FORM NO. 64

CONFIDENTIAL

*Mr. Bond*

*Office Memorandum* • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : FE - Mr. Allison  
FROM : NA - Mr. Bond  
SUBJECT:



DATE: July 14, 1949

At NA's request, the attached study on the Japanese Government railway strike has been prepared by DRF. The summary and conclusions are worth reading.

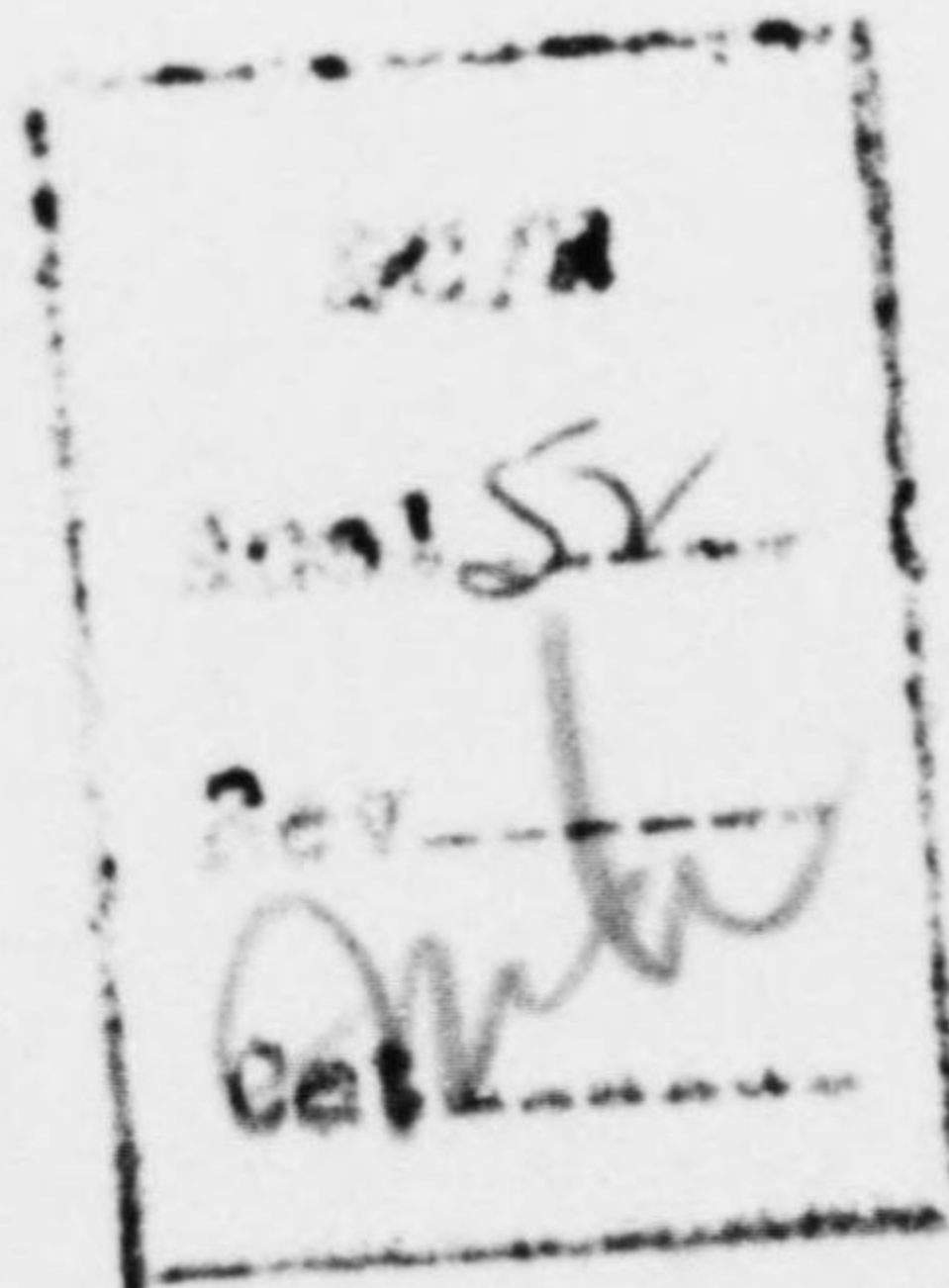
DRF emphasizes that SCAP's position in the strike controversy is made delicate by the danger that Yoshida, if given full SCAP support, might by accident or design turn an anti-Communist campaign into a general anti-labor campaign. Such a development, DRF warns, would almost certainly undercut SCAP's role as protagonist of organized labor, push most trade unions to the left, and militate against political and economic stability.

The burden of the U.S.-imposed stabilization program, with its mass layoffs, wage-fixing, and increased hours of work, has unquestionably fallen heavily on the shoulders of labor. NA would question, however, the basis for the supposition that Yoshida may promote a "general anti-labor campaign" during this period of unrest arising from the stabilization program.

*NH  
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file*  
Department must be returned to the RM/R Central Files.

FW 894.5045/6-1349 CS/MDR

*State Dept.  
Northeast Asian  
Affairs office  
from Green  
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FE:NA:MGreen:clh*



CONFIDENTIAL

*FW. 894.5045/6-1349*

Copy No.   /  

CONFIDENTIAL

JAPAN: THE RAILROAD STRIKE OF JUNE 9-12 AND ITS AFTERMATH

PRELIMINARY VERSION

OIR Report No. 5002 (PV)

July 7, 1949

*FW 894.5045/6-1349*

THIS IS AN INTELLIGENCE REPORT; NOTHING IN IT IS TO BE CONSTRUED AS A STATEMENT OF U.S. OR DEPARTMENTAL POLICY OR AS A RECOMMENDATION OF ANY GIVEN POLICY.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Division of Research for Far East

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OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH

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CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIALSUMMARY

The recent strike of government railroad workers in the Tokyo area was inspired and exploited by Communist influences and halted by SCAP order. Although the ostensible issue was one of collective bargaining over a new working schedule, the dispute was really a manifestation of the union's militant attitude toward the government personnel retrenchment program enacted in law. In the implementation of this program, a direct consequence of the economic stabilization measures directed by the United States, collective bargaining and grievance and appeal procedures otherwise applicable are specifically denied to the government workers' unions affected.

In the strike, the pro-Communist leadership of the railroad union demonstrated the course of action espoused by the extreme left for combating the program. Moderate elements, equally opposed to layoffs, favor collective bargaining without resort to strikes and hope for rescission or modification of the program at an early special session of the Diet.

The conservative government and the Communists are both hoping to profit from this situation. The government apparently aspires to gain SCAP support for a dual program of increasing the effectiveness of the police force and launching a general anti-Communist campaign. The Communists are apparently counting on the prospective restriction of labor activities by police and SCAP action to generate further tension and turmoil favorable to achievement of their objectives. While general

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improvement in economic conditions would tend to compose the situation in the long run, evidences that legitimate labor interests will be protected would have a speedier effect in strengthening the position of the anti-Communist forces in the trade unions. Otherwise, extensive police action may be expected to accelerate the polarization process and to increase the prospect of a showdown between Right and Left.

CONFIDENTIALJAPAN: THE RAILROAD STRIKE OF JUNE 9-12 AND ITS AFTERMATHBackground Factors

Enactment of the controversial Table of Personnel Organization bill at the end of May made large-scale layoffs of government employees certain and imminent. This measure, stipulating in the case of the government railroads a reduction of some 100,000, or about a sixth of the working force, was required in order to bring government personnel expenditures within the limits of the balanced national budget, which in turn had been tailored to implement the economic stabilization program directed by the United States Government.

Failure of the left-wing opposition representing labor's interests to shelve or defeat the bill left government workers' unions without effective legal means of preventing or modifying the implementation of a program they have unanimously and bitterly opposed. Their opposition has stemmed in part from simple fear of economic dislocation; in part from apprehensions of the conservative government's intentions; and in part from the persistence of traditional Japanese employment relationships in which social responsibilities have generally outweighed the economic arguments for employee layoffs. Already denied the right to strike and, in most cases, the right to bargain collectively, these unions were also without benefit of protection of the National Public Service Law, whose provisions for appeal against involuntary dismissals were suspended for the purposes of the Table of Personnel Organization Law.

CONFIDENTIAL

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On June 1, when the government railroads became a public corporation and the Public Corporation Labor Relations Law went into effect, the government railroad workers' union (Kokutetsu) regained the right to bargain collectively in a wide area of labor relations questions. However, Kokutetsu was in no better position than other government workers' unions with regard to the personnel retrenchment program, since collective bargaining and grievance procedures were specifically denied in that connection. Otherwise Kokutetsu, at the beginning of June, was in a relatively unfettered position, since grievance, mediation, and arbitration machinery did not come into being simultaneously with the Public Corporation Labor Relations Law nor were the provisions of that law governing union composition and operation immediately implemented.

In its national convention in April, Kokutetsu came under pro-Communist left-wing control by a relatively narrow margin. Although KATO Etsuo, a Socialist, was re-elected chairman, the new vice chairman was a Communist Party member and the secretary general was a member of the pro-Communist Reform League. In the new Central Committee and the reconstituted Central Struggle Committee, the leftist "unity faction," consisting of Communists and Reform Leaguers, gained control by margins of roughly 3-2 over the anti-Communist Democratization League. Among other things, the convention pledged the union to fight the projected personnel layoffs and the 48-hour week. The strategy adopted was the so-called "reflex struggle," in which the function of union headquarters is to organize and develop disputes initiated by the locals; the tactics specified were "collective bargaining, propaganda activities, and mass campaigns." All

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Kokutetsu campaigns were to be coordinated with the National Liaison Council of Government and Public Workers' Unions.

Origin of the Strike

During the latter part of May, reports of the Communist journal Akahata, to some extent substantiated by other newspapers, indicated that Kokutetsu headquarters and some of its locals anticipated that large-scale lay-offs would begin early in June. During the first few days of June, some locals reportedly resolved to combat such dismissals by "force" (a characteristically vague term usually connoting strikes), and were goaded in this direction rather than checked by the Kokutetsu vice chairman, who was acting head of the union in Kato's absence. Kokutetsu headquarters, moreover, warning that railroad authorities intended to carry out personnel dismissals "unilaterally," instructed locals to reject "investigations and examinations" in connection with lay-offs, pending issuance of further instructions.

Some basis for fears of immediate and unilateral lay-offs in the Tokyo area was provided by the effectuation on June 5 of a new and more efficient working schedule that apparently lengthened working hours slightly and also made some of the current force dispensable.<sup>1</sup> While most of the railroad workers in the Tokyo area acceded to the new schedule, some apparently intimidated their superiors into signing statements that no discharges would ensue. In two cases, however, some union members refused to follow the new

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1. Although a 48-hour week had been inaugurated in the government service on January 1, its enforcement had been delayed in the government railroads, which continued to observe the 7-hour day and 35-hour week provided by the previous labor agreement.

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schedule. On June 7, the Shimbashi local ordered its members to follow the old schedule and was in effect backed in this position by a 16-9 vote of the Kokutetsu Central Struggle Committee. Railroad officials next day accordingly warned that failure to observe the new service regulations would be punished by dismissal according to the maximum legal penalty for strikes, slowdowns, or "any other acts of dispute hampering the normal course of operation."

The Strike of June 9-12

On June 9, the National Railway Corporation dismissed 19 conductors who had for several days refused to follow the new work schedule and who were considered ringleaders of the opposition to it. The Corporation's announcement charged that the men, none of whom was more than 33 years of age, had acted under "outside" influences and warned that further dismissals would be effected if necessary.

This action led one local to walk out immediately, and several others followed shortly thereafter. Some 2,800 workers were reported to be involved, and much of the rail service in the Tokyo-Yokohama area was tied up or disrupted. The strike, itself a challenge to the authority of the Japanese Government, showed throughout the militant posture of the extreme left toward not only the government but also the occupation. Further dismissals, which brought the total to 66, evoked a defiant response. Police attempts to halt the strike resulted in scrimmages and were ineffective. "People's trains" flying red flags were operated, some sabotage was attempted, and placards bearing Communist slogans appeared.

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on station platforms. Kokutetsu headquarters, and subsequently the National Congress of Industrial Unions (Sanbetsu), instructed all members to assist the strikers in any way possible, although only scattered sympathy rallies and strikes took place.

In defiance of the occupation authorities, transportation facilities reserved for occupation personnel were delayed and at least one attempt was made to halt the movement of an occupation car in direct violation of orders of Army transportation authorities. The first step taken by the SCAP Labor Division to halt the strike was fruitless. On June 10, when the chief of the Division's Labor Relations and Education Branch advised the union to call off the strike, Kokutetsu responded that it had not ordered the strike but that it would enter collective bargaining for the purpose of ending it. On the following day the acting chief of the Division, speaking for SCAP, ordered the union to suspend the strike and the government to suspend collective bargaining until normal service was resumed. He also demanded that the government set up speedily the disputes settlement machinery stipulated in the Public Corporation Labor Relations Law. This order halted the strike, although Kokutetsu took the position that its action was voluntary and inspired by a desire to settle the issues through collective bargaining.

Labor Issues

The technical issue involved in this dispute was one of the scope of the union's right to bargain collectively under the Public Corporation Labor Relations Law. Since the real occasion of the dispute was labor opposition to the lay-off program rather than to the new working schedule,

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however, the strike raised the deeper issue of the role of government workers' unions in the personnel retrenchment program.

As already noted, Kokutetsu enjoyed collective bargaining rights denied to most other government workers' unions, although the extent of the rights had not yet been tested.<sup>1</sup> In this dispute, the National Railway Corporation took the view that the determination and enforcement of the new working schedule fell in the category of operational matters excluded from bargaining.<sup>2</sup> The union considered the matter an aspect of working conditions subject to collective bargaining. The union did not attempt to argue that the disciplinary discharges were illegal, but considered them unjustified in view of what it charged to be management's violation of union rights.

On the first day of the strike, Kokutetsu laid down three conditions for its termination, as follows:

1. Reemployment of those dismissed.
2. No further dismissals.
3. Collective bargaining on the new working schedule and continuance of the old schedule until agreement was reached.

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1. Article 8 of the Public Corporation Labor Relations Law specifies that "matters affecting the management and operation of the public corporation shall be excluded from collective bargaining," but permits collective bargaining and agreements with respect to wages, hours, and working conditions; working rules and regulations; overtime pay; holidays and vacations; rules concerning disciplinary actions and priority of promotions, demotions, transfers, discharges, lay-offs, rehiring practices and seniority; grievance machinery; safety practices; termination date of collective bargaining agreement, renewal and extension clauses."
  2. The Corporation supported its interpretation of the collective bargaining clause by reference to Article 31 of the National Railways Law, which permits the dismissal of any employee violating "any provision of this law or any operational regulation laid down by the Japanese National Railways."

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Negotiations were fruitless until the strike ended. At that point, the acting chief of the Labor Division reportedly advised both sides that, in his opinion, the reorganization of the government railroads into a public corporation did not necessarily invalidate the previous agreement on working conditions and that, in general the three points laid down by the union might well be handled by collective bargaining. However, apart from an agreement negotiated on June 12 stipulating that the Corporation would dismiss no more than the 66 employees already discharged, collective bargaining has as yet failed to bring about a settlement. The Corporation has expressed its willingness to negotiate certain questions of working conditions arising under the new working schedule, but not the question of the new schedule itself. Meanwhile the government has been expediting the establishment of the disputes settlement machinery specified by law in the hope that a resolution of the dispute can be effected thereby. On its part, the union appears to have become more rather than less intransigent and to have increased rather than decreased the issues under dispute. In ordering its locals back to work, Kokutetsu specified that those who had been discharged should also resume their duties. On June 14, moreover, the union directed its locals to reject the new working schedule until agreement was reached. Latest reports indicate that any prospects of settlement will hinge largely on mediation and arbitration, although the requisite agencies are not yet in being and the union has given every indication of desiring to protract rather than to settle the dispute.

Kokutetsu's behavior in the dispute over the new working schedule may be considered an indication of its probable behavior when the

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personnel reduction program actually begins. Although the union was badly split between right and left wings over the propriety of the strike, it was united on the question of its right to bargain collectively. The provision of collective bargaining rights and of other disputes settlement machinery offers channels through which a peaceful resolution of differences may be sought. In the case of the retrenchment program, however, the Table of Personnel Organization Law specifically forbids any collective bargaining or grievance procedure in connection with dismissals. Under these circumstances, Kokutetsu has taken two important steps since the strike. On June 17, the union filed suit in Tokyo District Court to prevent the dismissal of workers without consultation with the union, arguing that the lay-offs required by the Table of Personnel Organization Law would violate collective bargaining provisions of the Public Corporation Labor Relations Law and of Article 28 of the Japanese Constitution. Second, and more in keeping with the reported mood of some of its locals, Kokutetsu's Central Committee on June 26 voted 66-45 to continue its struggle against lay-offs by all available means and to strike "when collective bargaining by the headquarters of the union ruptures."

The extremists favoring this decision patently realize that collective bargaining cannot prevent dismissals and therefore aim only to cloak their ulterior motives behind a suitable formula. The moderates opposing it, however, have favored at least a negotiated application of the program. Should the union be denied any voice in the implementation of the lay-off program, as required by law, it seems likely that the moderate position would be seriously jeopardized and the extremist counsel of total opposition would be strengthened.

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Political Issues

The railroad strike and the union's position on the impending lay-off program -- a position taken also by other government workers' unions -- have accentuated the simultaneous political struggles between the conservative government and the left-wing parties and between the Socialist and the Communist Parties as well as their respective trade-union sympathizers.

The Yoshida government has minimized the labor issues involved in the dispute and has maximized its political aspect as a Communist challenge to law, order, and the position of the government. Accordingly, the cabinet has taken a strong stand, proposing to strengthen public security measures and to foster an over-all anti-Communist campaign among the political parties and the general populace. At the same time, it has done little to placate labor, and, in consideration of the bases of Democratic Liberal Party support, is not likely to try to do so. Official allusions to the possibility of a stronger program to cope with unemployment have been matched by repeated assertions that the lay-off program will be enforced as scheduled.

The government's intransigent stand reflects its strong position with regard to the occupation authorities, who have hitherto turned down Yoshida's pleas for a stronger police force. Moreover, under the economic stabilization program SCAP officials have closely supervised the appropriation and allocation of Japanese Government funds. Since Yoshida has accepted responsibility for the stabilization program, he is in a position to argue that its success requires the measures he advocates, and he is doubtless counting for support on growing anti-

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Communist sentiments within the SCAP organization. In the event of SCAP refusal to go along with him, Yoshida would be able to transfer responsibility for the maintenance of public safety and for the implementation of the stabilization program to SCAP by means as effective for his purposes as resignation. SCAP's position, on the other hand, is made delicate by the danger that Yoshida, if given full support, might by accident or design turn an anti-Communist campaign into a general anti-labor campaign. Such a development would almost certainly undercut SCAP's role as protagonist of organized labor, push most trade unions to the left, and militate against political and economic stability.

If the Yoshida government has, in a sense, thrown down the gauntlet, the Communist Party has promptly picked it up. The use of police action in the strike and the threat of stronger policies have been cited to confirm Communist predictions that the "Fascist" government would seek to repress "popular movements."<sup>1</sup> The possibility of investigation of the strike by the Examination Committee, which has two Communists as members, has been welcomed as a chance to "expose those who are planning to destroy Japan." The party has, of course, repeatedly lauded the "heroic struggle" of the railroad workers. However, the lesson invariably drawn from the strike is that the railroad dispute must be integrated with the mass anti-government

1. The fact that only three Communist representatives were on the floor at the final vote on the Table of Personnel Organization bill has been adduced as evidence that the party in fact desired enactment of the law as an aid toward the generation of "popular movements" against the government.

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struggle that the party is seeking to promote by supporting and coordinating the "struggles" of all aggrieved elements in the populace. The conclusions of the party's Central Committee meeting on June 19 made it clear that, although the trade unions are considered now as always the vanguard and carriers of the revolutionary movement, Communist labor activities are to be conducted in such a way as to consolidate the party's position not only within but also outside of the trade unions. Perhaps the best indication of Communist labor policy is contained in the program announced by the Sanbetsu on June 28, which calls for an "industrial defense" struggle organized on the local workshop level, expanded to embrace basic industries on a regional level, and culminating in a national political struggle of "progressive capitalists, citizens and farmers" against the government.

The Socialist Party has suffered, as usual, the difficulties of pursuing an anti-Communist course while sharing with the Communists the role of political opposition to the conservative government and spokesman for labor interests. Socialist statements have placed about equal blame on the government and on the Communists for the railroad strike, echoing the position taken by the Kokutetsu Democratization League. However, the party and its supporting labor factions have had little to offer in advocating the use of collective bargaining to implement the retrenchment program and to prevent any consequent deterioration of working conditions. Latest policy statements indicate some stiffening of position: while continuing to oppose "regional strikes" and "destructive" Communist tactics, the party now counsels rejection of discharge notices, followed by collective bargaining on

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a workshop basis. It evidently hopes that these means may forestall execution of the retrenchment program and extremist labor activities and make possible the rescission or modification of the program at a special Diet session, which the party desires to have convened at the earliest possible moment.

Conclusions

The railroad strike, fostered by Communist influences and halted by SCAP order, was a foretaste of labor reaction to the government personnel retrenchment program required by law. The labor issue in the dispute was one of the scope of the union's collective bargaining rights in a change of working schedules that the union construed as a forerunner of the lay-off program. This issue is subject to settlement by mediation or arbitration in the event of failure of collective bargaining. Apparently no such means will be available in the lay-off program, since negotiations with the union are specifically enjoined by the Table of Personnel Organization Law, which the government expressly intends to enforce to the letter. The Communist leadership of Kokutetsu has committed the union to strike to prevent the implementation of the program. A similar course has been adopted by other government workers' unions, most of which are under Communist influence and all of which are without effective legal means of recourse.

Both the Yoshida government and the Communists seek to profit from this situation. The government's primary reaction to the strike and to the threat of further labor trouble has taken a forceful anti-Communist direction, with special reference to stronger public safety

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measures. In the event of large-scale labor action, it is certainly questionable whether police forces as constituted at present would be effective without the moral or physical aid of the occupation. Avoidance of SCAP intervention would seem to require a rapid change in the police organization. The danger of this course lies not so much in reorganization itself as in the extent to which Yoshida might be able to create the impression of full SCAP support for his position and to use the police not only against the Communists but also against organized labor as a whole. Such a development would almost certainly push the trade unions to the left and militate against political and economic stability.

On the other hand, it may well be the Communist design to seek to involve the occupation further in labor disputes and to align it fully on the side of the conservative government. Such involvement, whether by force or by fiat, would serve Communist purposes by prolonging and enhancing the tension and turmoil in which the party could best continue its efforts to consolidate its position in labor, without bringing about a revolutionary situation, which, by all evidence, it does not yet desire. The party's major problem is that of combining vigorous labor activities with the expansion of its national support. Solution of this problem would be facilitated by a clear-cut and far-reaching division of the nation into Right and Left in which now moderate leftist elements would be drawn to the extreme Left or at least alienated from the Right and from the occupation. Suppression of the Communist Party would, of course, scare

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off much of its potential national support, but would solve neither the problem of Communist influence in labor nor that of the restiveness of organized labor as a whole.

A general improvement in economic conditions would, of course, fundamentally undercut the Communist program and give less cause for the potentially risky anti-Communist campaign of the Right. Short of that, however, evidence that legitimate labor interests will be protected, as by the use of conciliatory means in implementing the lay-off program, would go far to strengthen the position of the anti-Communist elements in the trade unions. Otherwise, extensive police action may be expected to accelerate the polarization process and to increase the prospect of a showdown between Right and Left.

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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

4A  
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TO : FE - Mr. Allison  
NA - Mr. Bond  
FROM : NA - Mr. Green  
SUBJECT: Developments in Japanese Strike Situation

DATE: 7/21/49  
Office of  
FAR EASTERN AFF.  
22 1949  
DIRECTOR  
Department of State

Today's radio intercepts from Tokyo carry two items of interest bearing on the mass dismissals of Government workers.

The first is a Kyodo report that the dismissal of 17 leftist members of the Central Strike Policy Committee of the Government Railway Workers Union has resulted in "breaking the back" of the long-threatened railway strike. Although sectional disturbances are anticipated during the next few weeks, the danger of an organized strike is viewed by Kyodo as having passed away completely.

The second intercept contains the text of a noteworthy speech by Yoshida - noteworthy for the fact that it departs from the recent Yoshida line of threatening left-wing troublemakers in Government unions with sharp police counter-measures. In this speech, Yoshida, in language strongly smacking of SCAP draftmanship, denounces the leftist labor trouble-makers but goes on to enjoin the nation to be calm. Yoshida endeavors to prove how the stabilization program will in the long run benefit the workers and how adequate measures (unemployment insurance, separation allowances, public works program) are being taken to meet short-term unemployment resulting from stabilization measures. Nowhere does Yoshida mention strong-arm measures to cope with strikers. Nowhere is the word police mentioned.

Interpretation: On the basis of the scant information available, there is reason to suspect that Yoshida was persuaded by SCAP during the recent series of Yoshida-SCAP conversations (one of them attended by the Emperor) to desist from his insistence on strengthening the police as a means of coping with labor unrest and, in general, to pursue a less vigorous line toward labor. In return, Yoshida may have been given the green light to proceed with his plan to use the lay-off program as a means of dismissing the principal troublemakers from the Government unions. Yoshida may also have received intimations that limited counterpart funds might be diverted to the payment of unemployment relief and/or that the Shoup Mission is to recommend some tax relief. Either measure would, of course, enhance Yoshida's position with the electorate. I hasten to add that the above is only a conjecture as to the true nature of what appears to be quite clearly an understanding reached between Yoshida and MacArthur as a result of their several recent talks.

FE:NA:MGreen:aw

State Dept.  
Northwest Asian  
Affairs Office  
From Green

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