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SECTION XI.

POLITICAL PARTIES

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

At the time of the surrender all organized political activity in Japan was carried out on a totalitarian, one-party basis under the auspices of the Great Japan Political Society, successor to the Imperial Rule Assistance Society. Shortly after the Occupation began the Great Japan Political Society dissolved itself and in its place arose a number of new parties of which the major ones represented re-groupings of political forces around former leaders or influential members of the pre-Tojo political parties. Thoroughly unrepresentative of and unresponsive to the popular will, boss-dominated and venal, these old political factions had never inspired the respect or trust of the Japanese people. Nevertheless the establishment of representative government in Japan required the intervention of a political party system. The problem was to encourage democratic practices in political party organization and activities. An appraisal of this task and an understanding of the manner and direction in which political parties developed during the first two and one-half years of the Occupation requires a brief review of the historical background of political movements in Japan.

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The limitations on political activity existing during the pre-constitutional period may be readily summarized by noting that at the beginning of the Meiji Era in 1867, a meeting of even two people for the discussion of a political matter was prohibited as a conspiracy, and that no individual was allowed to criticize the government or its officials. The introduction of Western ideas of government during this period, however, generated some discontent among a segment of the population, fostered by a growing conviction that these new ideas should be adopted in Japan. This grew into a movement among a group outside of the government which criticized and attempted to challenge the power of the entrenched bureaucracy and the ruling clans, and which culminated in the establishment in 1880 of the first political party, the Jiyu-to or Liberal Party. The reaction of the ruling groups to this movement was the promulgation in 1881 of the Emperor Meiji's solemn pledge to establish a constitutional government within ten years. These two events marked the beginning of political party activity and representative government in Japan.

In 1882 a second political party, the Kaishin-to or Progressive Party was established. These two first political parties were practically identical in their statement of purposes, i.e. both aimed to prepare the people for a representative system of government, and on behalf of the people to watch over and prevent excesses by the government. The bureaucracy, understandably alarmed, countered with the establishment of a government-controlled party, the Teisei-to or Imperialist Party. When this move failed to counteract the growing influence of the two non-government parties, a law was enacted which so restricted the normal

activities essential to the growth and effective functioning of political parties that both the Liberal Party and the Progressive Party were forced to dissolve. The Liberals did not give up, however, but continued their efforts unofficially to strengthen their ranks in anticipation of the fulfillment of the Emperor Meiji's pledge. Consequently in 1890, following the first general election and the convocation of the First Imperial Diet, they resumed their attacks on the government groups with the result that the government finally compromised by making it possible for the two dissolved parties to reorganize. In September 1900 the Liberal Party assumed the new name of Constitutional Liberal Party or Rikken Seiyukai.

These developments, along with the growing industrialization following the adoption of western technology and the dislocation of the economic and social status of the laboring classes, released the quiescent discontent of the workers and gave the first impetus to the establishment of a labor movement. The government's reaction to this movement was the enactment and severe enforcement of a Public Peace Police Law (1900) suppressing organized labor activities. This law specifically prohibited industrial workers and tenant farmers from "agitating in their own interest and against the employers and landowners", and was subsequently interpreted to make any labor movement a crime. This repressive action by the government led on the one hand to the establishment of an association to promote the effectuation of universal suffrage and, on the other, to the formation by labor leaders and reformers of various groups for the study and discussion of socialist theories since the mere study and academic discussion of such theories was not at that time specifically prohibited. In 1901 a Social-Democratic Party was formed but was immediately disqual-

ified as a political party by the government and subsequently was transformed into the Socialist Association which assumed the role of championing the cause of the working classes.

The advent of the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese wars with the accompanying assumption of power by strong war cabinets and the stirring up of warlike enthusiasm among the people temporarily suspended the progress of political party movements until the fall of the Terauchi Cabinet in 1916 when Takashi Hara, Liberal Party leader, became Prime Minister. The hopes engendered by this appointment that the day of non-party administration was over, were fortified in the general elections of 1920 when the liberal party obtained an overwhelming majority. This hope, however, proved to be elusive. Immediately following the assassination of Hara in November 1921, his successor and the acknowledged deputy leader of the Seiyukai, Korekiyo Takahashi, failed to maintain discipline within the party and consequently the Cabinet collapsed. Furthermore, the development of dissident factions within the Seiyukai resulted in the loss of its Diet majority in 1924 and the formation of three non-party cabinets in succession.

The situation may be summarized by stating that in 1924--seventeen years before the outbreak of war with the United States--no political party system such as is found in representative democratic states had as yet been established in Japan.

The members of both houses of the Diet were organized into informal groups based upon personal leadership rather than upon adherence to definite political principles or programs. In the dominant House of Peers, for example, there were six different factions; in the House of Representatives there were many informal groupings, the number and size of which

continuously varied and all of which belonged to one or the other of two main sub-divisions in the House, namely, the pro-government group or the anti-government group. Furthermore these informal alignments were effected not only by considerations of personal loyalty and self-interest but also as a result of pressure and even intimidation by the factions themselves,, the government, or powerful special interests, all of which did not hesitate to resort to acts of violence when considered necessary.

This condition of political immaturity was accentuated by the abject status of an uninformed and indifferent electorate which, in the words of a contemporary observer, was "unable to realize how the vote has a direct bearing upon the policy of the state and therefore upon his own interests". The pattern of political activity for the next twenty years was one of incessant strife between the government and entrenched special interests on one side and outside groups advocating political, economic or social reforms on the other. These struggles were characterised by irrationality and violence on both sides and marked by the increasing severity of measures taken by the government to eliminate opposition by suppressing all movements attempting to express the political, economic and social aspirations of the people. In spite of these repressive measures and resultant setbacks, however, progress in the direction of normal political activity continued until cut short by the physical and moral mobilisation of the Japanese nation during the expansionist phase beginning in the early 1930's and culminating in the totalitarianism which accompanied the Pacific War. At the end of two decades of continuing and increasing repression--just two years before the termination of the war with the United States and fifty-three years after the inauguration of parliamentary government in Japan--the Japanese people were completely in the

grip of an absolute totalitarian system. Political parties as such had ceased to exist. There remained only factions within a state-controlled political machine whose objective was the direct antithesis of political party machinery in a representative democracy.

This totalitarian machine was first created under the leadership of Prince Fumimaro Konoye with the inauguration of the New Structure Movement in the summer of 1940. Konoye's motives are not clear, but whatever his motives, the concept of coalescing and rationalizing all political, social and cultural movements into one directed toward a nationalistic end provided a ready instrument for the use of the militarists and ultra-nationalists. In October 1940 the movement was formalized by the establishment of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA) whose organization permeated all levels of government -- national, prefectural, city, town and village. The IRAA was under the presidency of the Prime Minister or a person appointed by him, and dominated by the top political officials of government, the army and the navy. The governor of Tokyo, the governors of prefectures, the mayors of cities and towns, and the headmen of villages were made heads of the local branches of the Association and were responsible for regimenting the people in the areas of their respective jurisdictions in accord with the policies formulated by the central organization at the national level.

The IRAA in effect abolished political parties by incorporating them, along with social and cultural organizations into its structure and reducing them to impotent factions. These political factions, however, continued to exist and the internal strife engendered by their activities resulted in the establishment of the Imperial Rule Assistance Political Society (IRAPS) in May 1942. The distinction between the

Imperial Rule Assistance Political Society and the Imperial Rule Assistance Association was summarized by Prime Minister Hideki Tojo in 1942 as follows: "...the IRAA is an organization for public service, serving as a nucleus in spiritual movements among the people to insure the participation of all the people spiritually and actively toward assistance to the Imperial Throne, and the IRAPS is a political organization in which the nation's political strength is unified, thereby extending assistance to the Imperial Throne in national policies." The result of this step was in effect to establish a government political party whose leadership, objectives and methods were incompatible with many factions in the Imperial Rule Assistance Association.

The ensuing internal conflict resulted in the establishment in March 1945, of the Great Japan Political Association, which was merely a reorganization of the Imperial Rule Assistance Political Society to exclude those persons antagonistic to the dominant government faction.

These three major organizations were dissolved before the Occupation Forces landed in Japan; the dissolution dates were - IRAA, June 13, 1945; IRAPS, March 29, 1945; GJPA, August 15, 1945. At the time of dissolution, Admiral Kantaro Suzuki, then Prime Minister, was ex officio president of these organizations.

This brief review of the historical background of the development of political activity in Japan during the pre-occupation period may well be concluded by a comparison of statistical indexes. The following charts are based upon statistics submitted by the Cabinet Secretariat during April 1946.

COMPARATIVE SUFFRAGE QUALIFICATIONS*

ELECTION LAW REVISION DATES	ELECTORS				CANDIDATES			
	SEX	AGE	PROPERTY REQUIREMENT	RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT	SEX	AGE	PROPERTY REQUIREMENT	RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT
1889	Male	25	To have paid more than ¥ 15 Direct National Tax for more than one year or To have paid an income tax for more than three years	1889: To have official residence as well as actual residence within prefecture for more than one year.	Male	30	Same as for Elector	None
1902	Male	25	To have paid more than 1. ¥ 10 Land Tax for more than one year 2. ¥ 10 Direct National Tax, other than Land Tax for more than two years 3. ¥ 10 of land Tax and other Direct National Taxes for more than two years		Male	30	None	None
1919	Male	25	To have paid more than ¥ 3 Direct National Tax for more than one year.	1919: Period reduced to six months	Male	30	None	None
1925	Male	25	None	1925: To register on elector list actual address within city, town, or village from which he voted for more than 1 year. (Period reduced to six months in 1934)	Male	30	None	None

*The use of the phrase "UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE" in connection with the suffrage qualifications noted above during the period from 1889 through 1942, is a misnomer in view of the fact that women did not have right to vote until the amendment of election laws in 1945.

COMPARATIVE ELECTION RESULTS * HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
(1890 - 1942)

	First Election 1890	1902	1st Census Taken 1920	1928	2nd Census Taken 1930	1932	1936	1937	1942**
Population	39,902,000	45,990,000	55,963,053	62,122,200	64,450,005	66,296,000	70, 258,200	71,252,800	75,114,400
Males	20,153,000	23,226,400	28,044,185	31,257,700	32,390,155	33,321,000	35,224,000	35,709,700	37,550,300
Females	19,749,000	22,763,600	27,918,868	30,864,500	32,059,850	32,975,000	35,034,200	35,543,100	37,564,100
Eligible Male Voters	450,852	982,868	3,083,090	12,405,056	12,651,785	12,014,963	14,303,780	14,074,888	14,595,267
Eligible Female Voters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Eligible Voters	450,852	982,868	3,083,090	12,405,056	12,651,785	12,014,963	14,303,780	14,074,888	14,595,267
Male Votes Cast	423,400	868,772	2,676,370	9,968,162	10,544,286	9,813,668	11,294,496	10,317,730	12,135,217
Female Votes Cast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total No. Votes Cast	423,400	868,772	2,676,370	9,968,162	10,544,286	9,813,668	11,294,496	10,317,730	12,135,217

*For comparison with occupation period, see supplementary comparative election results 1946-1947.

**The 1942 election figures are highly misleading and not indicative of democratic progress in that the number of votes cast were primarily the result of pressures exerted by the totalitarian political machinery of IRAA and IRAPS to "turn out the vote."

Furthermore, the Tojo-dominated National Service Political Council nominated 466 candidates, one for each vacancy in the House of Representatives, and of that number 382 were successful; only 84 of the successful candidates were "non-recommended" by the Tojo machine and of this number only 33 had not been members of previous Diets and the majority of them had reactionary records.

II. POLITICAL PARTIES DURING THE OCCUPATION

1. Preliminary Phase. The groundwork for the revival of political activities and political parties was laid by the Supreme Commander's memorandum of October 4, 1945, directing the Japanese Government to remove restraints on freedom of thought, religion, assembly and speech, to release political prisoners, and to abolish the agencies engaged in carrying out measures or activities repressive of civil liberties.[1] Upon receipt of this directive the Higashi-kuni Cabinet resigned. The Prime Minister is reported to have stated at the time that he could not govern Japan without thought control and the thought police.

By the end of November 1945, thirty-five political parties had been publicly organized, thirty of them in Tokyo. Party organizers had been extremely active in conducting meetings and demonstrations, and both holders of and prospective candidates for public office had shown marked interest in their first real opportunity to engage in unrestricted political activity. Political party platforms, however, were for the most part ambiguous. Some of the parties had not even formulated public statements of policy.

The first of the major parties to be formally inaugurated during the Occupation was the Social Democratic Party (Nippon Shakai-to) under the presidency of Komakichi Matsuoka, a long-time leader in labor movements. This party, whose membership in the Diet included fifteen members, took the initiative in advancing specific proposals for dealing with national problems such as inflation, housing, administration of elections, extension of the franchise to women, protective labor legislation, and agricultural land reform.

1/ See Appendix B: 24, Removal of Restrictions on Political, Civil and Religious Liberties, SCAPIN 93, October 4, 1945.

2. On November 9, 1945, the Japanese Liberal Party, (Nippon Jiyūto), with fifty members in the Diet, was inaugurated. This party was headed by veteran conservative political leaders. Its platform, however, was couched in general terms favoring woman suffrage, lowering the voting age, reorganisation of the House of Peers, the Privy Council, and the educational system, and buresucratic reform. Its program reflected its conservative views on the Constitution and the powers of the Emperor by suggesting that the existing Constitution was democratic and did not require the transfer of powers from the Emperor to the Diet.

The third major party was formed on November 16 with the organisation of the Progressive Party (Shimpo-to). This party, with 240 members in the Diet, was composed of a heterogeneous collection of old-line politicians belonging to the pre-war Minseito and Seiyukai parties, most of whose members had been absorbed in the war-time Imperial Rule Assistance Association. Its platform had as yet not been specifically formulated, although its members indicated that they advocated the retention of economic controls by the government and opposed the Social Democrats by advocating an increase in compensation to landlords under the land reform bill.

The Communist Party, while not yet formally organized, had been extremely active since early part of October 1945 in advocating a popular front with the Socialists, expropriation of idle land and its redistribution to farmers, confiscation of industries, retirement of bureau heads, resignation of members of the House of Peers, investigation of war expenditures, and the elimination of the Emperor system.

The minor parties were politically insignificant and had failed to attract independent Diet members to their ranks. The "independent" group,

however, increased in number, chiefly at the expense of the Progressive Party. During this early phase, most of the activity centered around the maneuvers of political leaders and Diet members. Popular participation was negligible, most people being concerned with the everyday problems of food, clothing and shelter and ignorant of or indifferent to political processes and their right to participate in them.

The "Civil Liberties Directive" of October 4, 1945, previously referred to, was followed by a memorandum of December 19, 1945, which directed the Japanese Government to restore civil rights (including the right to vote and to hold office) to former political prisoners released under the directive of October 4.[2/] Most of these persons, numbering 434, had been imprisoned for activities, affiliations or beliefs considered subversive by the Japanese authorities. These released political prisoners were the first to take advantage of the freedoms conferred by the SCAP directives, and regardless of the subsequent defection of many of them from the advocacy of truly democratic or constructive principles, it may be observed that they contributed materially to the awakening of a much larger circle of Japanese people to the significance of political freedom.

The Japanese people in general are apathetic toward political affairs and are not accustomed to exercising individual initiative in political activity. Those in control, both in and out of the government, consisted mostly of old-line politicians and bureaucrats not sympathetic to new concepts and practices which might weaken their power and influence. Under such circumstances, without the active intervention of SCAP, progress toward the development of democratic organization and practices among the political parties would have been slow at best and might not have been

2/ Appendix B: 2e, Restoration of Electoral Rights to Released Political Prisoners, SCAPIN 458, December 19, 1945.

realized during the Occupation. But certain actions of the Supreme Commander, not aimed directly at the problem of democratizing political practices, but designed generally to remove identifiable undesirable elements from positions of leadership in Japanese public life to make room for a leadership untainted by responsibility for Japan's previous aggressive policies, proved profoundly effective in the field of political party activities. The first of these was the so-called Purge Directive of January 4, 1946.* Nine days after this directive was issued three Cabinet ministers, six Cabinet executives and a number of other high government officials resigned because their records made them subject to removal from office under the terms of the directive. In March 1946, following a Cabinet interpretation of the clause in the Directive which called for the removal of "additional militarists and ultra-nationalists", the entire political scene was altered by changes in political party leadership, shifts in political alliances and substitution of new candidates for those who had previously been slated to run in the general elections for the House of Representatives which were scheduled to be held the following month. All former members of the Diet who had been "recommended" by Prime Minister Tojo in the elections of 1942 were automatically disqualified for candidacy in the April 1946 election, and a large number of other candidates, most of them also old-line politicians or former government officials rooted in the old order, were disqualified following screening by the Japanese Government under the provisions of the Purge Directive. Simultaneously with the Purge Directive another memorandum was issued by SCAP directing the abolition of parties and other organizations whose character, objectives, or purposes tended to support militarism and ultranationalism and their attendant manifestations.*

* See Section II REMOVAL OF ULTRA-NATIONALISTS.

While this memorandum prohibited the formation or continuance of secret terroristic, militaristic, ultranationalistic and other anti-democratic organizations, and provided for the registration of political parties and other organizations and their filing of information whereby their nature and purposes could be disclosed, it specifically provided that it was not to be interpreted nor applied in such manner as to interfere with "freedom of assembly, speech or religion except with respect to the purposes and activities specifically mentioned [therein]".

In addition to the protection and encouragement extended to pro-democratic forces among the Japanese by the promulgation of the Civil Liberties directives of October 4 and December 19, 1945, and the Purge Directive and Secret Societies Directive of January 4, 1946, the democratization of political activity was given a powerful boost on December 17, 1945, when the Japanese Government, with the encouragement and advice of General Headquarters amended the Election Law for members of the House of Representatives to provide for universal adult suffrage. Under the law as amended the right to vote was extended to women, the voting age was reduced to twenty years and the minimum age for candidates for the House of Representatives was reduced to twenty-five years.*

Perhaps no single achievement of the Occupation or action of the Japanese Government, unless it be the new Constitution, may be pointed to as the major critical determining factor in political reform or the development of political consciousness among the electorate. Nevertheless, let it be stated that the SCAP directives and the amendments to the election law described above were basic steps in liberating the Japanese people from regimentation under authoritarian controls and in accelerating the development of their political capacities.

*/ See Section X POPULAR ELECTIONS.

2. Political Effects of the Election of 1946. The stage was now set for the next important step, -- the replacement of the pre-surrender "lame duck" House of Representatives by democratically elected representatives whose selection reflected the free choice of the people. Accordingly, on January 12, 1946, the following instructions (SCAPIN 584) were transmitted to the Japanese Government.

"1. You are hereby authorized to hold a general election of members of the House of Representatives, fixing the date of election not earlier that March 15, 1946.*/

2. It is of greatest importance that every step possible be taken looking toward a free and untrammelled expression of the people's will in this election. To such end you will give fullest publicity to the penal provisions of the law, and will take such steps as may be necessary to ensure their vigorous enforcement, to preserve inviolate the secrecy of the ballot, and to further such other safeguards as may from time to time be communicated to you by the Supreme Commander."

The ensuing period pending the final determination of the election date was characterized by preparatory activity by the government, political parties and political organizations. Finally the Government announced that the general elections for the House of Representatives would be held on April 10, 1946.

On the eve of the elections 2,500 so-called political parties with approximately 1600 local branches had been registered, and 257 of them had nominated candidates. Subsequent analysis by Japanese government officials

*/ The date was set far enough ahead to allow the Japanese Government to complete the screening of important public officials and all candidates before election day.

disclosed, however, that of the total 2,500 so-called political parties, only 278 could logically be considered as such, since practically all of the remainder turned out to be "one-man parties" consisting of independent candidates each of whom had a party consisting of himself and perhaps a few backers; and only 32 of the 257 parties which nominated candidates were successful in electing representatives.

The party alignments in the House of Representatives as a result of the 1946 elections were:

Liberal	139	People's Cooperative	14
Progressive	93	Communist	5
Social Democrat	92	Other minor parties	38
Independent	83	Disqualified	2
		Total	466

A contemporary analysis of the 1946 electoral campaign by Government Section officials led to the following conclusions:

1. The latent power of the electorate to effectuate basic reforms had been partly dissipated and misdirected by three main factors:

a. General unfamiliarity with democratic concepts

b. Lack of understanding of basic political, economic and social issues.

c. Difficulty in choosing among the multiplicity of parties and independent candidates whose stated objectives and platforms were ambiguous and sometimes interchangeable.

2. The power of political parties was dissipated by:

a. A multiplicity of parties organized primarily on the basis of personal leadership rather than on political principles and policies and whose status was established solely by self-declaration rather than

by any demonstration of public support.

b. Internal conflicts in leadership and on party policy resulting in ambiguous platforms and policy statements resulting from compromises effected to hold dissident factions together.

c. Lack of definite programs for the solution of the political, social and economic problems of the country and lack of confidence in such programs as were advanced.

d. Lack of understanding and acceptance of democratic concepts and practices, with particular reference to the inter-relationships between the people and the political parties, the political parties and the Diet, the executive and judicial branches of government, and to the necessity of applying democratic principles in the administration of the parties themselves.

e. Political corruption.

The following editorial from the Nippon Times on April 6, 1946, which is typical of the sentiment of a large segment of the Japanese press before the elections, furnishes contemporaneous concurrence in the above conclusions:

"As the pre-election campaigning swings into its closing days, it is disappointing to note that most of the candidates are not conducting their campaigns on the basis of the really fundamental national issues. The situation attest to a sad immaturity and inexperience on the part of the general electorate as well as on the part of the politicians.

"Most of the candidates are blithely promising the impossible, and they are all promising the same things in the same manner regardless of their party affiliations. They are all for peace and democracy. They

are all in favor of more food for the people. They are all opposed to inflation and in favor of faster reconversion and reconstruction. They all accuse the present Government of ineffectiveness. They all promise that if they are elected they will improve everything.

"But as to just exactly what measures they propose to advocate, as to just how they expect to put such measures into practical effect, as to what fundamental principles or social philosophy underlies their political views, as to how they differ from their opponents, there is very little being said. It is all sound and fury, and all of it is very vague and very general.

"All the things that the candidates are talking about can be taken for granted. They are the things upon which everyone agrees. They do not constitute any issue for debate. Everyone knows that all these things which are being promised are desirable. The question is how they are to be attained.

"The fundamental issues are, therefore, whether there is to be more government control in economic affairs; whether the reforms which everyone agrees upon as necessary are to be rushed vigorously or to be advanced cautiously; whether the interests of agriculture or of industry are to be placed first; whether 'sound' business or social reform is the more pressing immediate need of the nation. More specifically what the people ought to know are what ideas the candidate has about specific modifications of the proposed draft constitution, how determined the candidate is in the defense of the people's civil liberties, what specific taxes the candidate believes should be levied or abolished, just where he stands - on the right wing, slightly to the right of center, in the center, to the left of center, or clear over on the left wing.

"Yet instead of clarifying these points, most of the candidates merely

promise that if they are elected they will in some unexplained manner force the government to increase the rice rations, curb inflation, speed reconstruction, and strengthen democracy - whatever that means. From their talk, all the candidates might as well belong to the same party.

"The fault does not lie with the candidates alone. The candidates would not dare confine themselves to such glittering generalities if the public demanded more specific commitments. But the public apparently does not know enough to demand more from its candidates. To be sure, there is general disrespect and cynicism toward the candidates, and there is a widespread mild deprecation of the hollowness of the political activities. But there is not burning indignation and no imperative demand for improvement. There is no irresistible force welling up from the public which impels a drastic change. And in the absence of such a force the public must shoulder a good part of the blame for the sorry state of Japanese politics. The inescapable conclusion must be that the Japanese people are still pretty far from being competent to carry on a real democratic government.

"The only consolation is that, despite all these shortcomings, the coming election will not be in vain. Democracy is not something which can be mastered in a day; it can only be acquired through experience. The sooner and the oftener the Japanese people go through such experiences the better will they learn. The coming election is the necessary first lesson, and the sooner it is gotten over with, the sooner will the Japanese public become ready to take the next and more advanced lesson. It is the necessary and desirable step to progress.

"But in the meantime, insofar as they are able to comprehend it, the Japanese people should realize how deficient their political abilities still

ore. And with this comprehension they may be able to squeeze the maximum profit out of their first lesson. As long as they are willing to learn, no matter how great their shortcomings, there is always hope. At least there is no evidence of any unwillingness to learn, and the prospects for democracy in Japan, therefore, though distant, must nevertheless be considered bright and encoureging."

Following the election of 1946 the president of the Liberal Party, Shigeru Yoshida, became Prime Minister, and his Cabinet then devoted its major effort toward drafting a new Constitution for Japan. The new Constitution was promulgated on November 3, 1946, to become effective six months later on May 3, 1947. The implementation of the new Constitution required drastic revision of the Japanese criminal and civil codes and other laws, the extension of local autonomy, as well as changes in the structure of government and in the relationships between the major branches of the government and between the government and the people; and in addition required extensive educational activities to acquaint the people with the significance of their new charter of civil liberties and its attendant reform measures.

3. The Elections of 1947. By the end of 1946 it became evident that the Yoshida government lacked sufficient public support or approval to permit it to be considered representative of the people or responsive to their needs and desires. There had been demonstrations and near riots in protest against the Government's inertia in meeting the urgent economic and social issues pressing for solution. There were demands for reform of the government system and bureaucracy in the interest of clear policies and effectiveness in their execution. A general strike directed against the Government and scheduled for early February 1947 was averted only by the direct inter-

vention of the Supreme Commander. A new general election to give the people a chance to vote for new Diet members on the basis of the issues of the day was clearly in order. This need was explained by the Supreme Commander in a personal letter to the Prime Minister on February 6, 1947.3/

Under Chapter 8 of the New Constitution and its initial implementing legislation passed by the Diet in September 1946 which provided for greatly enhanced home rule in the local governments, new governors, mayors, headmen and assemblymen were to be elected in the kens, cities, towns and villages on or before May 3, 1947. Consequently, after making the necessary provisions and establishing the machinery for screening (under the purge directive) candidates at all levels, the Government announced that general elections would be held in April 1947.

The elections of 1947 are fully discussed in another section of this report.2/ Certain significant aspects indicative of the development of political party movements and of the growth of political participation by the people will be noted at this point. In a series of elections held at intervals during the month of April the people of Japan for the first time in their history by universal suffrage elected not only the members of the House of Representatives but also the members of the second House of the Diet, as well as the chief executives and assembly members of their prefectural, city, town and village governments.

In the gubernatorial elections, 207 candidates contended: 116 Independents, 34 Social Democrats, 13 Liberals, 6 Democrats, 9 Communists, 5 Peoples Cooperatives and 24 minor party candidates. Thirty-two former governors ran for office, 22 of these other former public office holders were elected,

2/ See Section X, POPULAR ELECTIONS.

3/ Appendix E: 5, General MacArthur's letter to Prime Minister concerning new elections, February 6, 1947.

6 ex-governors were defeated, and 4 obliged to participate in run-off elections. A tabulation of the votes cast for gubernatorial candidates indicated that nearly 54 percent went to Independents, 24 percent to Social Democrats, 8 percent to Liberals, 5 percent to Democrats and 1 percent each to the Peoples Cooperatives and the Communists. The strong support accorded Independent candidates showed a tendency to choose local officials not because of party affiliation but because of previous administrative experience. Most of the governors who resigned their offices to run for election had campaigned under the label of independent, attracting numerous electors who preferred experienced executives, and thus swelled the non-partisan total vote to the disadvantage of the parties.

At the national level the party alignments in the National Diet resulting from the 1947 election were as follows:

	House of Representatives	House of Councillors
Social Democratic	143	47
Democratic	126	30
Liberal	132	39
People's Cooperative	31	9
Communist	4	5
Minor Parties	18	10
Independents	12	110
TOTAL	466	250

On the basis of these results the Social Democrats replaced the Liberals as the leading party in the House of Representatives and also had a plurality of the members in the new House of Counsillors, but did not enjoy a majority in either House. Tatsuo Katayama, President of the Social Democratic Party was elected Prime Minister to head a coalition government led by the Social Democrats.

The election of Katayama as Japan's new Prime Minister was greeted by a statement issued by the Supreme Commander on May 24, 1947, reading in part

as follows:

"Mr. Katayama's selection as the new Prime Minister emphasizes the middle of the road course of Japanese internal politics. Of no less significance is the searching effort made to find a workable formula to mold the public needs. These internal political developments reflect basic Democratic principles and practices and shows how far Japan has progressed on the road of free government."

4. Party Politics in Action. In the election of April 1947 the Social Democratic Party emerged as the leading party in both Houses of the Diet but did not enjoy a majority. This called for a coalition of two or more parties strong enough to command such a majority. The negotiations leading up to the necessary inter-party agreements on the policies and personnel of the new government lasted over a month. Kijuro Shidehara, top advisor of the Democratic Party, had suggested continuation of the Liberal-Democratic alliance which had controlled the previous House of Representatives. Other Liberal and Democratic leaders had suggested a Liberal-Democratic-Social Democratic coalition cabinet with each party controlling five portfolios. The People's Cooperatives and most of the Democrats, including Hitoshi Ashida, newly elected President of the Democratic Party, agreed with the Social Democrats that their plurality in the Lower House entitled them to the initiative in nominating the Prime Minister and forming a new cabinet.

As a basis for a coalition policy agreement the Social Democratic Party submitted to the other parties a six-point statement which represented decided concessions to the views of those parties in that it omitted suspension of interest on war bonds and freezing of new yen, measures which the Social Democrats, especially the left-wing group, had championed during their opposition to the previous government. The six points were:

(1) State-controlled economy.

(2) Democratic state control of vital key industries.

(3) Cooperation between capital and labor under an enlarged and strengthened Economic Stabilisation Board.

(4) Controlled banking and a sound financial policy.

(5) Rigid control over wages and prices and enforcement of a rigid rationing system.

(6) Fulfillment of all staple crop delivery quotas and elimination of the black market.

In response to questions from both the Liberals and the Democrats the Social Democrats explained that "key industries" included only coal, steel, fertilizer, shipping and electric power, with coal coming first. They also denied any intention of nationalizing the banks and insurance companies or of putting them under state control.

The People's Cooperatives offered as a counter-proposal that key industries should be brought under state control "only when necessary", that the need for increasing production should be stressed, also the need for strengthening and rejuvenating education.

The Democratic Party agreed with the People's Cooperatives' suggestion regarding the control of key industries and added:

(1) Top priorities for essential critical industry.

(2) Elimination of bureaucracy.

(3) Absorbing excess income of new-yen profiteers without freezing of the new yen.

The Social Democrats accepted these counter proposals, and the following ten-point policy statement embodying the demands of all the major parties was published as the basis for a four-party coalition government, including the Liberals.

(1) Effective state controls in accordance with overall economic plans based upon the present economic system of the nation.

(2) State management of key industries only when necessary to effect a concentrated industrial policy for increasing production. Past bureaucracy to be abolished in favor of democratic state control.

(3) Industrial recovery through voluntary cooperation by capital and labor.

(4) Healthy finance to cope with inflation but financial controls only whenever necessary.

(5) In coping with inflation profiteers from inflation and black-marketing will be asked to bear the burden. The new yen shall not be frozen or blocked and interest payments on war bonds shall not be suspended.

(6) Definite control over wages and prices with daily necessities placed under strict rationing to stabilize the livelihood of the people.

(7) To solve the food problem, fertilizers, fishing facilities, equipment and necessary farm implements shall be equitably distributed for the purpose of increasing food production.

(8) Black-marketing to be eliminated for the purpose of industrial recovery and for stabilization of the people's livelihood.

(9) Strengthening and improvement of land and marine transportation.

(10) Betterment of the moral and cultural standard of the people through education.

After agreeing to this statement as the basis of a four-party coalition, Shigeru Yoshida, speaking for the Liberal Party, on May 19, the eve of the convocation of the new Diet, pressed for a commitment from Katayama that not only would left-wing members of the Social Democratic Party be excluded from the projected cabinet, but that the party rid itself of its left-wing elements. Katayama agreed to exclude leftists from cabinet membership, but the Social Democratic Party Executive Committee would not consent to expel its left-wing members nor would it agree that the left-wing supporters should be driven from the party. These unexpected demands destroyed

the prospects for a four-party coalition government. The Democrats and People's Cooperatives adhered to their position that Katayama as leader of the plurality party was entitled to organize the cabinet. During an evening session of the Diet on May 24, 1947, Katayama was designated Prime Minister, receiving 420 of the 426 votes cast in the House of Representatives, and 205 of the 207 cast in the House of Councillors. Even the Liberals had voted for Katayama. The task then remained for Prime Minister Katayama, who was invested by the Emperor on the following afternoon, to select the members of his cabinet. For the time being he temporarily held all portfolios.

On May 31, 1947, the Prime Minister announced the formation of a cabinet consisting of 7 Social Democrats, 7 Democrats and 2 People's Cooperatives. Thus was formed a three-party coalition government bound by a policy statement arrived at after bargaining among the four major parties, one of which at the last minute failed to join. To achieve agreement the Social Democratic Party had sacrificed important planks of the platform on which its candidates had run and had agreed to exclude an influential faction of its members from the Cabinet.

Although the Liberal Party stayed out of the government, it did not immediately go into open opposition. In fact the statement was made that the Liberal Party would not actively oppose the government's program so long as the government adhered to the four-party policy agreement. This promise was not kept, however, and before long the Liberal Party was seen striving for the downfall of the Katayama Cabinet both openly by opposing and criticizing the Government's program and administration and covertly through political manipulations to reduce the coalition's working majority in the Diet.

Only four months after the formation of the Katayama Cabinet there were indications that the existing political alignments and forces were such as to limit the life expectance of the coalition government led by the Social Democrats to a fairly short span of time. A Government Section report dated September 19, 1947, furnishes a contemporary view of the political situation:

"Subject: Impending Political Crisis

1. Political developments have reached the period of impending crisis.

2. Fundamental differences in basic political ideologies and policies of administration have created dissension within major party ranks and are resulting in a re-alignment of political forces.

3. A struggle for power to control Japan's political and economic destiny is being and will be waged between two major aggregations of political forces whose composition cuts across party lines.

4. These forces may be described as the conservative bloc and the socialist bloc.

5. The conservative bloc advocates laissez-faire capitalism, modified in periods of extreme emergency by limited state control of key industries under private ownership.

6. The socialist bloc advocates state socialism under democratic processes on various modifications of socialism ranging from

   a. State ownership of all key industries and control over spheres of activity affecting the public welfare, to

   b. Rigid state control of all key industries under private ownership with limited control over spheres of activity affecting the public welfare.

"7. Specifically, the Social Democratic Party is in the untenable position of failing to define its long-term policy with respect to those two related, but basically incompatible, theories of state socialism. This situation is also aggravated by the fact that the Social Democratic Party is apparently split into four factions:

a. One faction advocates state ownership of all key industries and state control over spheres of activity affecting the public welfare now and in the future;

b. The second faction advocates state control of all key industries under private ownership, with limited control over spheres of activity affecting the public welfare now and in the future;

c. The third faction advocates a continuation of the present policy of limited state control of certain key industries under private ownership and limited control over spheres of activity affecting the public welfare now with the objective of eventually achieving rigid state control of all key industries under private ownership, with limited control over spheres of activity affecting the public welfare;

d. The fourth faction adopts the policies of the third faction as the first two steps in its program towards pure socialism as advocated by the first faction.

"8. This diversity of opinion not only complicates the relations between the leaders of the Social Democratic Party but prevents their concentration on the implementation of a common program.

"9. Furthermore, the failure of the Social Democratic Party to commit itself to any one of these clearcut alternatives is weakening its position among the informed electorate, and, conversely, its failure to inform the general public of these alternatives has prevented the development of public opinion which would serve as a guide to party officials in the determination of its current and eventual policy.

"10. This situation is hazardous in that it sets a premium upon leadership based upon personalities rather than upon advocacy of definitive policies; it perpetuates the necessity of compromises based upon expediency, and plays into the hands of special interest groups which, if they do not usurp leadership and power politically, will definitely exert a preponderant influence. This latter fact is clearly evident in union activities with particular reference to unions of government employees who have and are exercising power which similar organizations have never had and do not have in the United States.

"11. Political, social and economic conditions in Japan justify and warrant the co-existent rivalry of political forces advocating laissez-faire capitalism on one hand and state socialism under democratic processes on the other. They

do not warrant the development of a political force advocating communism, even to the extent of a militant policy influencing minority groups.

"12. Communism by self-determination in Japan is a definite impossibility in this generation, at least, and highly improbable in future generations if successive democratic governments, regardless of whether they belong to the conservative bloc or the socialist bloc, are able effectively to resolve current economic and social problems and establish a culture which gives every Japanese citizen an opportunity to enjoy a constructive and happy life under the protection of the new Constitution.

"13. It is ironic that the leaders of the Social Democratic Party who have demonstrated to date that they are fundamentally sympathetic with democratic ideals and processes should themselves be jeopardizing the attainment of these ideals and the perpetuation of these processes by their dissension, indecision and apparent lack of foresight and courage."

Two months later in November 1947 amidst mounting public dissatisfaction with repeated delays and ineffective compromises in the solution of pressing public issues, reflecting continuous conflicts within the Cabinet, there appeared a number of public statements by political party officials regarding possible political realignments. In this connection a Government Section report observed that "...the formation of a new party by the consolidation of even a substantial portion of the Democratic and Liberal parties is considered improbable due to the basic conflicts in the personal ambitions of the party officials even though there is little distinction in the political objectives and policies of either party. There is little question of some realignment in both the Liberal and Democratic parties. Regardless of whatever alignments take place within and between the Democratic and Liberal parties it appears inevitable that a three party coalition will again be indicated....It looks like Ashida."

The impending crisis came to a head early in 1948. The four-party policy agreement, on which the coalition government stood, called for

moderate policies of economic reconstruction with state control where necessary. Suspension of interest on war bonds and monetary freezing had been expressly forbidden. At the Social Democratic party's national convention late in January, the left-wing members of the party, charging that the coalition agreement, which had already been repudiated by the Liberals, prevented adoption of vigorous emergency economic policies, succeeded in obtaining repudiation of the agreement by the party's convention and the adoption of a resolution calling for suspension of interest payments on war bonds and opposing increases in postal or railway rates.

The Liberals then intensified their efforts to wean conservative members away from the government camp to a projected new centrist party to include the People's Cooperatives and others. The People's Cooperatives preferred to remain as a separate party but to continue in alliance with the Democrats and Social Democrats.

On January 29 the government introduced into the Diet a supplementary budget bill providing for a 100 percent increase in postal and railway rates to raise revenue to cover payment of a special cost-of-living allowance to government workers previously agreed to with the workers' unions.

The left-wing group of the Social Democratic Party in the Diet opposed the proposed postal and railway rate increases. The Liberal Party joined the opposition to the increases which it termed a menace "to the livelihood of the masses". Party discipline failing to move the left wingers' opposition, the government on February 5 announced that it would withdraw the budget bills and formulate new ones, but before the government could act on this decision, the House of Representatives' Budget Committee approved a resolution demanding that the bills be withdrawn. Demands arose from both

the Democrats and the conservative members of the Social Democratic party, that the left-wing Social Democrats be expelled. But they were too strong to expel without destroying the party and the coalition. The resignation of the Katayama Cabinet was tentatively decided bythe Prime Minister at a cabinet meeting on February 8. On February 10, Prime Minister Katayama resigned with the statement that:

"In view of the prevailing situation I have decided today on the resignation of the Cabinet. I believe this is a large manifestation of the difficulties of the internal situation of political parties into which it is easy to fall, particularly in the case of a coalition Cabinet. The decision to resign without resorting to dissolving the national Diet is due to a serious consideration for the existing situation both within and outside the Cabinet."

There followed eleven days of political wrangling and maneuvering over the election of a new prime minister. The Liberals requested the Democrats and People's Cooperatives to join a Liberal-headed coalition; the Democrats rejected the offer, the People's Cooperatives demurred. On February 16, the Democratic party formally invited the Social Democrats to join a coalition cabinet headed by Hitoshi Ashida. The Social Democrats, meanwhile, had composed its internal differences and had taken action to maintain party unity in the future. The Liberals denounced the Democrats' plan as a scheme to "rotate the prime ministership among the government parties". They charged that all the government parties were equally responsible for the failure of the Katayama Cabinet and insisted that under "constitutional principles" when a cabinet resigned it was incumbent upon the Diet to designate the leader of the chief opposition party as prime minister. The negotiations between the Democrats and Social Democrats

continued.

On February 21, the Central Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Party offered to support Katayama but he countered with the opinion that in the circumstances he could not succeed himself. Thereupon, the Committee agreed to support Ashida for the premiership.

On February 22, the House of Representatives designated Ashida on the first ballot with 216 votes out of 421 cast. In the House of Councillors no candidate received the required majority vote on the first ballot. Out of the 218 votes cast, Yoshida received 101 and Ashida 99. A runoff election between the two leading contenders resulted in 104 votes for Yoshida and 102 for Ashida. Following prolonged negotiations, the presiding officer ruled that Yoshida had received a majority of the votes and should be considered the prime minister designate of the House of Councillors. A joint committee of the two Houses then met to effect agreement, but failed. On February 23, the Speaker of the House of Representatives reported before a plenary session that as a result of failure by the joint committee to settle the disagreement, the designation of the House of Representatives became the decision of the Diet under Article 67 of the Constitution. Hitoshi Ashida was thus formally designated as prime minister. It was indicated, however, that he would not assume office until members of his Cabinet had been appointed. Until that time the Katayama Cabinet would continue to function.

On March 9, 1948, Ashida announced the formation of a coalition cabinet consisting of seven Democrats, including himself, eight Social Democrats, and two People's Cooperative Party members. Like its predecessor, the Ashida Cabinet was formed on the basis of a pre-determined policy agreement. In view of the marked improvement in definiteness of statement and specifi-

cation of policy over the preceding ten-point, four-party policy agreement under which the Katayama Cabinet had been formed, the Ashida coalition agreement merits attention. The Tripartite Policy Agreement as announced on March 8, 1948, by the Social Democratic, Democratic and People's Cooperative Parties included the following points:

Political

Faithful observance of the Potsdam Declaration
Democratic readjustment of the nation's internal position
More foreign loans
More foreign capital
Acceleration of industrial rehabilitation
stabilization of the people's livelihood
Democratization of central and prefectural administrative machinery
Renovation of the government service
Election Law revision
Corrupt practices act
Support of Irregular Property Transactions Special Committee
Elevation of ethical standards
Education reform
Enforcement of the 6 - 3 system
Workmen's education by part time schools

Economic

Two-year plan for production increase
Sound finance

Counter-measures against Inflation

Curtailment of expenditures
Stronger tax collection machinery
Prevention of tax-evasion
Equitable distribution of the tax burden
Possible suspension of interest payment on war bonds
Reduction in income taxes for laborers and farmers
Rationalization of special accounts for government railway and communications system
Reduction of corporation taxes
Addition of property tax and other new taxes
Democratization of banking institutions
Revision of the Bank of Japan Law
Democratization of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation

Measures for Production Expansion

Priority to vital industries
State control of coal mines

Overall land-and-sea transportation plan
Unitary operation of electric power and industry
Possible state control of petroleum, steel, fertilizer, etc.
Abolition of inefficient bureaucratic controls
Issuance of production bonds
Encouragement of voluntary cooperation of labor unions
Support of Labor Union Law, the Labor Administration Law and the Labor Standard Law
Rational wage system
Administrative readjustment and industrial reorganization
Public works for land conservation and flood control
Increase of food production
Democratization of delivery control system
Farmland reform
State-operated farms for land reclamation
Establishment of an Agriculture-Forestry Rehabilitation Bank
Fostering of Agricultural cooperatives
Establishment of a Small and Medium Enterprises Board
Promotion of democratic cooperative unions
Utilization of hoarded commodities

Social

Large-scale housing construction at state expense
Utilization of idle grounds and houses, high-class restaurants and big residences
Establishment of a Housing Board and a Housing Committee
Realization of the Consumer Livelihood Co-operative
Repatriation of Japanese nationals
Relief measures for war sufferers
Public works for unemployment relief
Extension of the unemployment insurance system

It is interesting to note that this three-party policy agreement represented considerable concessions on the part of Prime Minister Ashida, in that it incorporated statements of major policies previously advocated by the Social Democratic Party but opposed by the Democratic Party. This "flexibility" in matters of policy in order to meet political necessity is further demonstrated by the inclusion in the new Cabinet of Kanjo Kato, as Minister of Labor, and Masuro Momiso, as State Minister and Chairman of the Local Finance Committee. Both of these men were members of the left-wing faction of the Social Democratic Party. This inconsistency appears even more marked when it is recalled that during the formation of the Katayama

Cabinet in 1947, Ashida as one of the conditions for joining the Katayama Cabinet, had insisted on assurances from Katayama that no member of the left-wing faction of the Social Democratic Party be appointed to a Cabinet post. Thus in 1947 Katayama, leader of the Social Democratic Party, had been forced, in order to compose his coalition government, to exclude left-wing members of his party from the Cabinet, thus sowing seeds of intra-party discord which was later to contribute to the downfall of his government. One year later his successor, leader of the more conservative Democratic Party, for the same reason placated that faction both by including two of its members in the Cabinet and by incorporating some of their objectives in the coalition government's policy agreement. This extreme flexibility illustrates the tangled maze of personalities, political cross currents and compromise which fashion current Japanese politics.

The following tables indicate the political alignments following the election of 1947 and formation of the Ashida Cabinet in 1948:

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL ALIGNMENTS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SINCE THE ELECTION OF APRIL 1947

Political Designation	STRENGTH Ashida Cabinet 7 May 1948	Ashida Cabinet 16 March 1948[1]	Katayama Cabinet 23 June 1947[1]	Remarks
Democratic-Liberal Party	151	153	125	Obtained 7,295,242 votes or 26.7% of total vote cast, under name of Liberal Party
Social Democratic Party	123	122	144	Obtained 7,168,888 votes or 26.2% of total vote cast
Democratic Party	91	90	129	Obtained 6,857,480 votes or 25.1% of total vote cast
People's Cooperative Party	30	29	31	Obtained 1,862,755 votes or 6.8% of total vote cast
Social Renovationist Party	21	20	non-existent	Faction split off from Social Democratic Party
Independent Club	9	10	16	Members elected as independents[2]
Japan Farmers Party	7	7	8	Obtained 258,854 votes or .009% of total vote cast[3]
Japan Liberal Party	6	6	Non-existent	Faction split off from Democratic Party
Communist Party	5	4	4	Obtained 1,002,883 votes or 3.7% of total vote cast
Non-affiliated (True Independents)	5	5	2	Elected as independents[2]
(Vacancies)	19	20	7	Resignations, deaths or disqualifications

(See explanatory notes below)

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. - Immediately after formation of Cabinet

2. - The 138 elected independent candidates (25 in the House of Representatives and 113 in the House of Councillors) obtained 1,614,295 votes or 5.8% of the total vote cast, and only 3 of these independents (2 in the House of Representatives and 1 in the House of Councillors) retained their status by the convocation of the Diet on 25 June 1947 immediately after the elections; the rest having already affiliated themselves with one of the successful political parties or the independent (bargaining) groups. At the present time there are 5 non-affiliated independents in the House of Representatives and 4 in the House of Councillors, and 3 bargaining clubs, 1 in the House of Representatives with 10 members and 2 in the House of Councillors with a total of 103 members.

3. - The Japan Farmers Party is the only one of the 30 minor parties successful in the election (19 in the House of Representatives and 11 in the House of Councillors) which has retained its identity, the others having dissolved and their members affiliated themselves with other parties or independent bargaining groups. However, it is interesting to note that this party only elected 8 representatives, the other 5 joining the party subsequent to election but prior to the convocation of the Diet, immediately following the election.

Party	Branch Offices April 2, 1948	Membership Dec. 1946	April 1947	July 1947	Mar. 1948	April 1947 Votes Recd.	Percentage	Contributions Reported Jan. - Dec. 1947	
Democratic Liberal	223	10,097	17,358	23,566	37,966	7,295,242	26.7	Hq. Br. Total	¥ 7,342,400 4,945,474 12,287,874
Social Democratic	591	60,183	73,847	93,242	98,906	7,168,888	26.2	Hq. Br. Total	572,100 2,218,010 2,790,110
Democratic	164	6,435	8,341	15,007	18,898	6,857,480	25.1	Hq. Br. Total	2,497,474 3,609,515 6,106,989
Peoples-Cooperative	77	3,537	4,776	5,545	5,652	1,862,753	6.8	Hq. Br. Total	818,181 843,700 1,640,510
Communist	214	8,685	12,072	16,144	18,088	1,002,885	3.7	Hq. Br. Total	4,905,316 8,642,785 13,548,101

Comments

1. The Communist Party was first in the amount of financial contributions reported received; third in the number of branch offices, only 9 less than the Democratic-Liberals but more than the Democratic Party (at least one in every prefecture); fourth in reported membership, only 900 less than the Democratic Party and half of the Democratic Liberal Party; and was last in the percentage of votes received, only 3.7%.

(Above statistics based upon official government reports)

Comments (Contd)

2. The socialist bloc (the Social Democrats and Peoples Cooperative) was first in number of branch offices, with a total of 668 as against a total of 387 for the conservative bloc (the Democratic-Liberals and the Democrats); first in the number of reported members with a total of 104,588 as against 46,864 for the conservative bloc; but second in the votes received in April 1947 with a total of 9,031,641 as against a total of 14,152,722 for the conservative bloc; and a very poor second in the amount of contributions received with a total of ¥4,450,620 as against a total of ¥18,394,863 for the conservative bloc.

Significant Points

a. The Communist Party is extensively organized and well fortified by funds, half of which are collected by the local branches.

b. The socialist bloc, impoverished financially, is most intensively organized, with maximum dispersion.

c. The conservative bloc commands a clear majority of electoral votes with 51.8% of the total vote cast as against 48.2% for the socialist bloc, the Communists, other minor parties and independent candidates combined, and possesses by far the greatest amount of financial backing.

5. Incipient Mass Movement. The elections of 1946 and 1947 in Japan inaugurated a period of unprecedented freedom fostering the growth of political consciousness in the people. Under the stimulus of reform measures enacted by the Japanese government pursuant to the Supreme Commander's instructions or advice for the institution of democratic processes, the Japanese people reacted enthusiastically with the result that over 72 percent of the nation's eligible electors participated in the elections of 1947. In the 1946 election women showed unexpected political interest and potentialities. In the 1947 elections their political activity and influence increased at all levels of government. They utilized fully their first opportunity to participate as voters and candidates in the elections for the House of Councillors and for the chief executives and legislative assembly members of all local government posts. This manifestation of an awakening political consciousness was an indication of the political potential of the Japanese electorate, of a power which, if intelligently directed towards democratic objectives, would give life to the blueprint for democracy furnished to the Japanese people by the Occupation.

That the political potential of the Japanese people required intelligent direction is borne out by the mass contagion engendered by the 1946 May Day demonstration which precipitated a series of spontaneous public demonstrations, some of them culminating in incidents of violence. The climax of this potential mass movement was reached on May 19 when an estimated 250,000 people held a May Day food rally in the Imperial Palace Plaza in Tokyo. After the main rally the demonstrators broke into groups and one group of about 1000 demonstrators, intent on bringing a petition to the Emperor, attempted to force its way through policemen guarding the Sakashta Gate, where five days before another delegation of some 800

demonstrators had demanded entrance in order to seize food stores in the Palace grounds. Another group marched to the Prime Minister's official residence where a delegation of 30, headed by the Communist leader Kyuichi Tokuda, entered the building and demanded to see Prime Minister Yoshida. Failing to obtain an audience with the Prime Minister, the delegation refused to leave the premises and spent the night in the reception room. They left the following morning after handing the Prime Minister's secretary a statement demanding either the distribution of an "overdue rice ration or the Prime Minister's resignation."

Recognising the dangers inherent in this tendency to mob action, the Supreme Commander, on May 20, 1946, issued the following public statement:

"I find it necessary to caution the Japanese people that the growing tendency towards mass violence and physical processes of intimidation, under organised leadership, present a grave menace to the future development of Japan.

"While every possible rational freedom of democratic method has been permitted and will be permitted in the evolution now proceeding in the transformation from a feudalistic and militaristic state to one of democratic processes, the physical violence which undisciplined elements are now beginning to practice will not be permitted to continue.

"They constitute a menace not only to orderly government but to the basic purposes and security of the occupation itself.

"If minor elements of Japanese society are unable to exercise such self-restraint and self-respect as the situation and conditions require, I shall be forced to take the necessary steps to control and remedy such a deplorable situation.

"I am sure the great mass of the people condemn such excesses by disorderly minorities, and it is my sincere hope that the sane views of this predominant public opinion will exert sufficient influence to make it unnecessary to intervene."

This statement was prominently reproduced in the Japanese press, and subsequent reactions indicated that it had had the desired calming effect. Following this statement, there was a striking decline in the number of mass demonstrations.

Editorial opinion in two Japanese newspapers reflects the general sentiment. Nippon Keizai expressed strong approval of the Supreme Commander's statement saying that "most of the people were beginning to think that any kind of mass demonstration was justified under democracy." "We must distinguish," the paper added, "between peaceful mass movements.....and disorderly mass movements accompanied by violence and intimidation." Jiji Shimpo declared that "the Supreme Commander's warning should be heeded by persons or parties who claim that they alone represent the will of the people."

6. A Note on the Communist Party. Communism as an ideology, and the Communist Party as an effective political force in the National Diet, are not a serious threat to the establishment of political institutions in Japan. They do, however, offer some threat of disturbance in the local government areas and are a possible hindrance to the understanding and proper use of democratic processes by individual citizens and groups. The Communist Party is extensively organized; at least one branch office exists in every prefecture, and its members are relatively well trained and highly disciplined. This party has carefully analyzed the economic, social and political conditions in an effort to identify every possible public issue

with particular reference to those which are a source of discontent among the working people, and has incorporated them in the form of specific corrective proposals as planks in a detailed platform. The Communist Party maintains an incessant barrage of criticism against the Government, the other political parties and particular officials thereof in a campaign to lower their prestige and to fan public discontent and impatience. These attacks are threefold in form and usually concurrent: (1) they attack the propriety, adequacy and priority of the measures proposed or undertaken; (2) they attack the competency and efficiency of government officials; and (3) they attack the motives of the party factions in the Diet and the Government collectively, and Diet members, government officials and political party leaders individually. Communist party members who are generally conversant with the concepts and processes of democratic government and glib in the use of its characteristic terminology, assume leadership in instructing the uninitiated, and exploit their knowledge by perverting their interpretation of democratic concepts and processes whenever convenient or in accordance with the current "party line." They have a ready answer as to the causes of issues creating public discontent. And finally, they lead, instigate and otherwise abet discontented groups, most of whose members are politically confused, into taking improper and often illegal action, or action which, if legal and not democratically improper, is nevertheless highly detrimental to the general public welfare.

For example, Communists were active in the May Day Food riot in 1946 and in the threatened general strike of January 1947 which was called off after SCAP's intervention. They were also active as recently as April 1948 in connection with the Korean riots in Kobe and Osaka which resulted in the declaration of a state of limited emergency in those areas by the Commanding

General of the U. S. Eighth Army.

The Communist influence within the labor unions is of special importance. The 29,378 unions now existing in Japan, -- 29,346 in private industry and 32 in government bureaus, -- command a total membership of 6,243,117, or 7½ percent of the total population of Japan. Of these, 1,744,832 are government and municipal employees. Granted that organized labor has legitimate grievances and justification for demanding improvement in working conditions and the economic status of workers, the influence of Communist-inspired action has served as a deterrent in achieving these ends and has injected a generally discordant, factious and disorganizing element in government and industrial relationships. Recognizing the dangers inherent in this situation, the two chief labor organizations in Japan, the National Congress of Industrial Unions and the Japan National Federation of Labor, have launched democratization drives and established a "Democratization League," designed to oust all Communist cell activities from labor unions.

III PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL RECONSTRUCTION

The two electoral campaigns had revealed a number of practices in the organization and operations of political parties which tended to defeat the objective of democratizing political activities. Reform of these practices was undertaken through informal negotiations with the Home Ministry in the course of which the Government Section sought to secure first a recognition of the existing problems and the necessity for their solution, and second the active cooperation of the Japanese themselves in democratizing political party practices. The result of these negotiations was a set of informal recommendations by the Japanese Government, approved by the Supreme Commander on December 9, 1946, which were designed to achieve the following:

1. Reduce the excessive number of "political parties" by requiring them to demonstrate a reasonable degree of public support as evidenced by the number of votes secured in the last preceding general election or by a petition signed by a certain percentage of the eligible electors.

2. Promote the adoption of a printed ballot.

3. Democratize the internal organization and functioning of political parties.

4. Election of party officials at all levels by secret ballot.

5. Unrestricted right to make nominations for all members and delegates authorized to vote for party officers at all levels.

6. Nomination of party candidates for public office in a manner similar to the election of officers.

7. Mergers or other changes of party affiliation to be submitted to a party convention of democratically elected delegates and not to be left to the discretion of self-appointed party leaders.

8. Adequate bookkeeping and regular auditing of party finances and pertinent financial reports to the membership.

9. Approval of party policies and platforms.

10. Full reports of all campaign receipts and expenditures.

The chief aim of these proposals was to limit the inordinate number of "splinter" parties which grew like mushrooms during the first year of the Occupation and to channelize the people's political energies through a limited number of recognized politically significant parties without restricting the constitutional right of the voter to cast his vote for others than party members. The countless political "clubs" and other groups in existence could still continue their educational work and new ones could be formed freely but they would not be classed as political parties with the right to put candidates in the field.

Based upon these proposals the Home Ministry in the first week of January 1947 submitted a draft of a proposed political parties bill. This draft was found deficient in many respects. It left loopholes which would nullify the effect of the law and in some cases it imposed unreasonable procedural requirements on party candidates. With respect to penalty provisions, the proposed bill overgeneralized the definitions of punishable offenses and failed to provide minimum penalties and provided inadequate maximum penalties. Lastly, it failed to provide adequate standards for the democratization of the internal organization and functioning of political parties.

Shortly before the April 1947 elections the Home Ministry submitted a revised bill incorporating some of the minimum standards suggested by Government Section, but before this bill was acted on by the Cabinet for submission to the Diet, the Home Minister Seiichi Ohmura was replaced by Etsujiro Uehara, Liberal Party advisor to Prime Minister Yoshida. The new Home Minister was

opposed to the proposed reform bill and on his recommendation the Cabinet did not submit the bill to the Diet before the scheduled elections of April 1947.

During the discussions on the political parties bill, Government Section in direct conferences with representatives of the major political parties stressed the need for those parties to democratize their internal structure, to define their political platforms in concrete terms and to report their financial affairs publicly and fully in order to minimize corrupt practices in connection with elections. These recommendations made direct to the representatives of the political parties resulted in the voluntary adoption of some important reforms by the parties themselves. On the eve of the 1947 elections the major parties published statements of policies and platforms in form and language more specific and meaningful than they had attempted before.

The basic problems, however, remained unsolved. For example, some 1,400 so-called political parties registered. Of these only 129 nominated candidates and only 35 were successful in electing members to the Diet. Only 5 out of these 35 could be considered major parties and only 3 of the 5 major parties obtained important representation. The remainder were minor parties of little consequence.

The chaos engendered by this situation was dramatically illustrated by the necessity of developing an inter-party ten-point policy agreement in order to form a cabinet. The difficulty arose from the fact that the three major parties, Social Democratic, Democratic and Liberal, each polled approximately 25 percent of the total vote cast, and that the two conservative parties, the Liberals and Democrats, were scarcely distinguishable both in respect to their platforms and to the publicly enunciated political philosophy of their leaders. Furthermore, the unstable and generally questionable character of the minor

parties and independent candidates was clearly demonstrated by the fact that as of June 20, 1947, barely one month after the formation of the Cabinet and less than two months after the election, only three of the 138 independents in both houses of the Diet retained their independent status, the remainder having joined some one of the major parties or combined into a bargaining group. Similarly, of the 30 successful minor parties only one retained its identity; the others having dissolved and joined some one of the major parties or an independent bargaining group.

The negotiations immediately succeeding the drafting of the ten-point policy agreement were characterized by a good deal of politically unscrupulous bargaining among members of both major and minor parties and the independents in an effort to shift the balance of power in the Diet and thus distort the situation as created by the results of the election. So long as maneuvers of this kind, motivated by reasons of personal gain to individual Diet members and accession of power to the political parties, were possible, the forces for reform of political party practices in the direction of responsibility and accountability to the members would be deterred. Accordingly, a two-fold program of education was necessary: to increase the level of political understanding among the general public as well as to influence governmental and political party officers with the objective of developing public opinion to the point where it would demand and press for reform and, at the same time, stimulate the exercise of initiative towards reform within the government and the political parties.

When negotiations on the political parties bill were resumed in June 1947, it was with the leaders of the political parties rather than with the Government. At a conference between representatives of Government Section and representatives of the various parties in the Diet, a Government Section representative made the following comments:

"The greatest problem facing the government and the political parties in connection with the legislative and administrative implementation of the new Constitution, is that of developing the political consciousness of the people: their understanding of democratic ideas and processes and in developing their skill in participating in the affairs of government....

"The next few months are of critical importance from the standpoint of public education. The action of the people in the recent election, as well as letters which they have written to the Government, to SCAP, and to the press have indicated an awakening political consciousness.

"Unfortunately many of those letters and many of the statements made by well-meaning people indicate a widespread lack of comprehension of the exact meaning of democratic ideas, of democratic processes, of their rights and duties. It is imperative that their understanding of democratic processes and of their duties and responsibilities as well as their privileges and rights should be brought home to them, and at the same time, the manner in which they can participate effectively in the government by bringing their opinions to the attention of the political parties and the government should be made absolutely clear.

"The important problem before us is mainly that of agreeing as to the information to be submitted to the public. As most of you probably know, from the beginning of the election campaign various members of the Government Section have made formal press statements. The subject matter covered in these various conferences referred to the principles and philosophy of the purge, election procedure, reform of criminal procedure, the new constitution, civil liberties and other major governmental problems. These statements were not exhaustive, nor do they include all possible subjects of political education.

"They do include, however, certain basic conceptions and values which would be useful in the development of any educational program by the parties. The suggestion that I wish to submit for discussion this morning is the possibility of developing a cooperative program on a non-partisan basis on the fundamental elements of political education which should be disseminated to the public. This program should in no way be construed as affecting the rights of the individual parties to conduct their own educational program insofar as particular issues are concerned. The scope of the suggested program is limited to those ideas and suggestions to the public which are non-controversial, namely, the obligations of the people and their rights under a democratic form of government, the manner in which they can bring their criticisms to the attention of the parties and the government. In other words, if by a cooperative effort on the part of the parties here represented we could develop a common denominator of information in which there is no partisan issue, then the efforts and energies of all the parties could be devoted to the dissemination of that information for the mutual benefit of all."

The Japanese party representatives expressed unanimous agreement as to the need for such a program and undertook to present suggestions to their respective parties, coincident with the opening of the new Diet session on June 23, for the selection of a working committee to develop plans. Following this and subsequent meetings there was inaugrated on August 25, 1947 the "League for Political Education for Democracy" composed of over one hundred Diet and non-Diet members representing both major and minor parties and independents as well as professional and social groups. Two Social Democrats, Komakochi Matsuoka, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jiichiro Matsumoto, Vice President of the House of Councillors, were elected president and vice-president of the League. Among the Directors were Chief Cabinet Secretary Suehiro Nishio, a Social Democrat, and the Vice-Speaker of the House

of Representatives, Minitsu Tanaka, a Democrat. The Government Section, in collaboration with the Civil Information and Education Section of General Headquarters, SCAP, actively assisted the League in the program by advising on plans for wide-scale political educational measures.*/

Concurrent with the political education program the representatives of the major political parties undertook consideration of legislative measures by studying the draft of the proposed political parties bill prepared by the previous Cabinet together with the recommendations advanced by the Government Section. The original informal committee composed of members representing the major parties, in June 1947 invited representatives of the minor parties and independents to join in the study. This committee was succeeded by a Special Committee on Political Parties and Election Laws established in the House of Representatives with the "aim to foster and build up a sound and democratic political party system and establish democratic election processes."

The first draft of a proposed political parties' bill submitted by the House Committee to the Government Section for criticism and advice was found deficient in several important respects. It lacked effective provisions against corrupt practices; it failed to establish adequate election administration machinery; it failed to provide against shifts of party memberships during periods of cabinet formation; it failed to recognize local parties; it applied no restrictions to independent candidates; it discriminated against the House of Councillors, and it made no provision for a printed ballot.

The Government Section, at a conference on November 5, 1947 with members of the political parties' sub-committees of the two Houses of the Diet, advised the Japanese representatives that the Diet was completely free to enact

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*/ See Section XII on POLITICAL EDUCATION.

or not a political parties' bill, but if it did, and if the bill was to accomplish the purpose for which it was intended, then it should incorporate certain principles previously recommended by the Government Section. If qualifying restrictions governing political parties and independent candidates were adopted such restrictions should be inclusive, applying to all political elements such as national parties, local prefectural parties, and independent candidates, and such restrictions should be equitable and should apply uniformly to all pertinent elements. Second, complete and effective anti-corrupt practice provisions and penalties should be incorporated either in a political parties' bill or amendments to the election laws. Third, a national election administration commission should be established to supervise elections, to enforce anti-corrupt practices provisions and to handle other functions concerning elections and political activities heretofore handled by the Home Ministry which was about to be dissolved. Lastly, a printed ballot was desirable if found feasible.

Illustrating the worth of the conference method in dealing with the Japanese on matters of political reform, this conference proved fruitful in that one month later, on December 7, 1947, the Diet passed a government-sponsored bill establishing a National Election Management Commission based in general on the recommendations put forth by the Government Section.4/ Some significant aspects of this law are:

1. It concentrates all responsibility for the supervision of political parties and election administration machinery in an independent commission, the chairman of which is responsible directly to the Prime Minister.

2. The commissioners are nominated by the political parties in the Diet, designated by joint resolution of the Diet, and automatically appointed by the Prime Minister, thereby providing inter-party checks and balances and

1/ See Appendix D for full text of the National Election Management Commission Law

4/ Appendix H: National Election Management Commission Law, Law No. 154, December 7, 1947.

requiring the acceptance of joint responsibility.

3. It authorizes the commission to obtain reports and other data from government organs, national and local, as well as political parties and associations, and to promulgate rules and regulations considered necessary for the execution of its business.

The National Election Management Commission immediately began studies for further revision of the election laws and for the preparation of anti-corrupt practices provisions as well as the compilation of accurate election statistics. Four months later it produced a "Bill Concerning the Regulation of Political Contributions and Expenditures" which was found acceptable by General Headquarters and which the Commission, relinquishing its claim to authorship, offered to the House of Representatives' Special Committee on Political Parties and Election Laws as the basis for a member bill. The Committee set aside its own former draft and accepted the one submitted by the Commission. This bill with some minor modifications and refinements was passed by the House of Representatives on April 30, 1948.[5/] It meant all of the minimum and some of the optimum standards recommended by Government Section and may be considered a significant contribution to political reform in Japan. In June 1948 the National Election Management Commission and the Special Committee of the House of Representatives were both engaged in preparing further revisions of the election laws and amendments to the Political Parties' Bill.

5/ Appendix No. 43, Bill concerning the Regulation of Political Contributions and Expenditures, Law No. 94, July 29, 1948.

IV APPRAISAL

The changes in the political structure of Japan wrought during the first two and one-half years of the Occupation may be fittingly described as a revolution. During that brief period, government based upon divine right gave way to one based on the will of the governed. The people, formerly subjects, became citizens with the right to determine how and by whom they should be governed. The totalitarian political, governmental and administrative machinery by which the Japanese people were ruled was demolished. In its place was erected a system of social justice, individual liberty and respect for the essential rights of man within the framework of democratic institutions founded upon an enlightened constitution. By SCAP action or governmental orders based on SCAP directives the war leaders and their influential supporters were removed from positions of leadership in public life. In the course of two great popular elections in which an overwhelming majority of the greatly enlarged electorate participated, many other old leaders were replaced by newcomers more keenly aware of the trends of the times and responsive to the needs and desires of the people.

All this is not to say that Japan today is a mature democracy, in which the formal structure of representative government is supplemented by genuinely competitive, popularly supported and democratically run political parties effectively mobilizing and leading the political power of the voters toward constructive ends. Political party activities in Japan today still display a number of the very deficiencies and vices which once before brought them into disrepute and eventually reduced them to impotence. Equally disturbing is that far too many people in Japan accept these conditions with equanimity,

as if government and political activities were still matters beyond their ken or their power to influence. Yet this was to be expected, for the tough hard core of custom, habit and tradition is not swiftly demolished, even by revolution. Only with any increasing awareness in the individual Japanese citizen of his new stature and of his corresponding duty to follow the issues of the day and to exercise control over those who are chosen to serve his will political parties in Japan develop into effective instruments of democratic government.

Hope for the future lies in the further development of trends already manifest during the first two and one-half years. The power of the electorate has been increased; its knowledge concerning political, social and economic problems and their inter-relationships has enlarged; its critical faculties toward political promises and statements have been sharpened, resulting in increasing popular demand for clarification of public issues. On the other hand, political parties and political leaders have displayed a growing awareness of their public responsibility and of their accountability to their constituencies. The way has been cleared and some progress already made toward democratic internal organization and practices by political parties. The most encouraging factor of all is the growing number of Japanese who are convinced of the need to democratize their institutions, who are growing in their understanding of the principles involved, and who are firmly determined to modernize Japan in the political sphere as swiftly as their fathers did in the industrial.