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**ASPECTS OF
JAPAN'S LABOR PROBLEMS**

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**ASPECTS OF
JAPAN'S LABOR PROBLEMS**

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With a supplement by
WILLIAM T. MORAN

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FOREWORD

Along with the work of demilitarization, political and educational reform, and the breaking up of the Japanese industrial combines, the spectacular growth of organized labor is one of the truly striking developments in present day Japan under the American military occupation. In planning a series of coordinated studies on post-war Japan, the research officers of the Institute of Pacific Relations accordingly arranged for the preparation of the present concise survey of Japanese labor and trade unions during the first three years of the occupation. For this study they were fortunate in obtaining the services of Miss Miriam S. Farley, who in addition to her qualifications as a research worker on Japan's economic and political problems for the American IPR, had the advantage of having worked for a year on Japanese labor and other problems in SCAP Headquarters in Tokyo. She is the author of *The Problem of Japanese Trade Expansion* (1940).

This book constitutes part of a group of studies on the post-war political and economic problems of Japan which have been or are to be published under the auspices of the Institute of Pacific Relations, including such volumes as the *Allied Occupation of Japan* by Edwin M. Martin, *Japan: Enemy or Ally* by W. Macmahon Ball, *Prospects for Democracy in Japan* by T. A. Bisson, *Japan's Economy in War and Reconstruction* by Jerome B. Cohen and the forthcoming supplement to Mr. Martin's book, *The Occupation of Japan: Second*

Phase, 1948-50, by Robert A. Fearey. Other forthcoming volumes in the same series will include a Survey of Japan's Agricultural Problems, a Report on Leftwing Movements in Japan and a study of Japanese Banking.

Miss Farley's brief survey, which was completed in 1949, covers the more significant developments in the Japanese labor movement for the first three years of the occupation. In order to bring the study more nearly up-to-date, arrangements were subsequently made to have a supplement covering the principal events of 1949 and the first half of 1950 written by Mr. William T. Moran, who had spent a considerable period of time as a military government labor officer in Japan.

This book must necessarily be regarded as only an introductory survey of a large and complex problem which is bound to manifest important new changes as the occupation controls are relaxed and eventually ended. The eventual form and political significance of organized labor in a fully sovereign Japan cannot now be predicted but certainly it will be greatly influenced by its remarkable expansion and the other developments between 1946 and 1950 described in this book.

Although the volume is issued under the auspices of the International Secretariat of the Institute of Pacific Relations, it should be noted that the authors are solely responsible for all statements of fact or opinion expressed herein.

WILLIAM L. HOLLAND
Secretary General

New York
September, 1950

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Advisory Committee Report—GHQ, SCAP, Advisory Committee on Labor, *Final Report*, July 26, 1946.

CIU—National Congress of Industrial Unions.

First Interim Report—GHQ, SCAP, Economic and Scientific Section, *First Interim Report on Treatment of Workers' Organizations in Japan since the Surrender*, June 30, 1946.

JCLU—All Japan Council of Labor Unions.

JFL—All Japan General Federation of Labor Unions (later General Federation of Japanese Trade Unions).

Japanese Economic Statistics—monthly bulletin published by GHQ, SCAP, Economic and Scientific Section, Research and Statistics Division.

Jiji—*Jiji* Press (a news service).

Kyodo—*Kyodo* News Service.

Labor Division Activities—GHQ, SCAP, Economic and Scientific Section, Labor Division, *Labor Division Activities and Labor Development in Japan*, prepared for the Far Eastern Commission, January 29, 1946.

Press Analysis—daily analysis of Japanese press prepared by GHQ, SCAP, Civil Information and Education Section.

SCAP—Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Technically

INTRODUCTION

The rise of the labor movement is one of the most significant phenomena in post-war Japan. While many changes have come about as a result of external pressure applied by the occupation forces, the rapid growth of labor organization is the product of Japanese initiative. The labor movement has attained considerable economic strength, and has made itself felt as a political force. Torn between conflicting factions, it is still uncertain of its course and direction. Moreover, it has yet to prove its staying power in severe adversity. It is the first popular movement of mass proportions to appear in modern Japan. Whether it will prove to be a democratic force as the word is understood in the West remains to be seen.

In the following chapters no attempt has been made to give a complete account of the post-war Japanese labor movement. Such a book, which is badly needed, would require further extensive first-hand investigation in Japan. The author's aim has been merely to make available to students of Japan certain materials on the object which have been collected in no very systematic fashion. They deal chiefly, though not entirely, with the initial phases of occupation labor policy and with labor activity in the first year and a half after the surrender. Most of the material has been assembled from official SCAP publications and Japanese press reports, supplemented by private information and some first-hand obser-

vation. Incomplete as they are, these notes serve at least to suggest the great variety and fluidity of labor activity in Japan and the complexity of the problems which it raises. A short account of pre-war labor organization, and a sketch of the post-war economic and political background, have been added.

I

PRE-WAR LABOR ACTIVITY

The Japanese labor movement arose in the 1890's, soon after the introduction of modern industrialism. It continued to grow slowly up to the time of the China Incident of 1937, but never attained great strength. The peak membership of 420,000 in 1936 represented only 6.9 per cent of all non-agricultural workers. Organization ran as high as 40 per cent in transportation (especially among seamen and municipal transit workers), and was fairly strong also in metals and machinery, chemicals and communications. Textiles were largely unorganized, owing to the prevalence of girl workers and the dormitory system.

The growth of labor organization was hampered by three main factors: the weight of tradition, the economic position of labor, and government repression.

Evolving rapidly out of the small domestic workshop employing only family members or a few apprentices, Japanese factory industry carried over from feudal times the idea that the proper relationship between an employer and his employees is that between a stern but wise father and his obedient children. These mutual loyalties were reinforced by a similarly paternalistic attitude on the part of the state toward its citizens. Though subject to grave abuses, paternalism had some advantages for the workers. The more enlightened, and more prosperous, employers did recognize a certain responsibility for their employees' welfare and provided

them with some material benefits as well as with cultural and moral guidance. They did not recognize the right of employees to think or act for themselves, and discouraged any attempts in that direction. There was plentiful evidence in post-war Japan of the persistence of such traditional attitudes among both employers and employees.

A second source of weakness in the Japanese labor movement was the chronic excess of supply over demand in the labor market. The well-known reservoir of cheap labor on Japan's impoverished farms gravely impaired the bargaining power of industrial workers. This condition (which the after-effects of war only intensified) goes far to account for the fact that collective bargaining remained in the embryo stage, although labor disputes and strikes were fairly frequent, occasionally reaching proportions where they had to be broken by troops. As in many other countries where labor's economic bargaining power is weak, Japanese labor sought also to improve its condition by political action.

Union-busting tactics on the part of employers were not a major factor in Japan. They were not necessary; the police did the job. The greatest obstacle to the development of the labor movement was the attitude of the government, which regarded all labor organization as potentially or actually subversive. A law of 1900 condemned persons guilty of trying to organize a union to imprisonment at hard labor. Other laws, notably the Peace Preservation Law of 1925, as extended in 1928, gave the police power, which they vigorously exercised, to keep all labor activities under close surveillance, suppress strikes, break up union meetings, dissolve unions, and imprison labor leaders. The settlement of labor disputes was generally a function of the police, whose attitude was not that of an impartial arbitrator. Although it won few victories, the labor movement continued to grow as a protest against such arbitrary treatment.

During the more liberal twenties some union activity was

tolerated, though harassed by the constant threat of police intervention. Between 1920 and 1938 over 60,000 persons suspected of radicalism or Communism—few were Communists but many were labor leaders—were arrested. Police intimidation was supplemented by private violence from thugs inspired by various ultra-nationalist organizations. As Eleanor Lattimore points out, "These measures discouraged many workers or led them to try to work with the government and employers rather than against them; it convinced others that moderate methods were doomed to failure in a militarist-dominated Japan and that only militant protest and action could get results."¹ Both of these conflicting attitudes can be clearly observed in post-war Japan.

Since the only hope of substantially improving the condition of labor lay in reform of the government, it was natural that the labor movement should have a decided political orientation. Labor leaders were strongly influenced by Western socialist writers, occasionally by syndicalism, and later to some extent by Communism. Conflicts of ideology were largely responsible for the factionalism and fragmentation which seriously weakened the movement. During the thirties the right wing was represented chiefly by the All Japan General Federation of Labor (Zen Nippon Rodo Sodomei), founded by Bunji Suzuki in 1912 as the Friendly Love Society (Yuai-kai), and later headed by Komakichi Matsuoka; and by the Japan Seamen's Union. The principal left-wing organization was the National Council of Japanese Labor Unions (Zenkoku Rodo Kumiai Hyogi-kai), headed by Kanju Kato. On the extreme right were a number of "patriotic" unions of an obviously Fascist type. "Welfare associations" or company unions also existed and counted, in 1936, three times as many members as the trade unions. Employers of course were well organized, and were active in sponsoring

¹ Eleanor H. Lattimore, *Labor Unions in the Far East* (New York, American Council, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1945), pp. 49-50.

the Harmonization Society, which sought to promote "co-operation" between capital and labor.

The political arm of the labor movement was fully as important as the trade unions, and the two were intimately connected. Leadership was largely interchangeable and many unions were affiliated with one or another of the minor left-wing parties, of which, together with farmers' unions, they were the chief sponsors. The All Japan General Federation of Labor was the backbone of the Social Democratic Party (Shakai Minshuto) and later of the Social Mass Party (Shakai Taishuto). In the 1937 election, shortly before the China Incident, labor and left-wing parties received a million votes, or nearly 10 per cent of the total, and elected 37 members to the Diet. It is generally held that their growing strength was one of the factors which prompted the military party to another forward move in China.

Japan's labor or farmer-labor parties in general advocated greater democracy in government, social legislation, measures of relief for workers and farmers, and some degree of socialism. During the 1920's they actively opposed militaristic and imperialistic policies, but during the thirties, as police terror increased, open opposition was gradually abandoned. By 1940 many of their leaders had either made their peace with the militarists or retired from public life, and "national" socialists had secured control of the Social Mass Party. During the war a number of former labor leaders, whether from conviction or expediency, actively supported Japan's war aims abroad and regimentation of the masses at home.

Emasculation of the labor movement was not enough; in the interests of prosecuting the China war and preparation for greater exploits, it had to be suppressed altogether. The left-wing unions had been abolished in 1937. In 1940 all remaining unions were forced to disband and the Industrial Patriotic Association (Sangyo Hokoku-kai, better known as Sampo), originally founded in 1938, was officially recognized

as a national labor front on the Nazi model. In the same year all Japanese political parties, including the Social Mass Party, voluntarily dissolved and were replaced by the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, of which Sampo became the industrial wing.

Sampo's aim was thus stated by its president, the Welfare Minister: "In Sampo all the trouble between labor and capital has been swept away, and they have been united under the banner of loyalty to the Throne."² Its membership in 1943 was about 6,000,000, with some 86,000 local branches.³ Units were organized in every industrial plant having 50 or more employees. Membership was virtually compulsory and the company president or factory manager was usually the head of the association. Sampo held propaganda meetings, encouraged industrial efficiency and patriotic activities such as air-raid drills and purchase of war bonds, and promoted industrial harmony; it also carried on some welfare activities, and had charge of distributing certain types of rations. As the war progressed these measures of regimentation became insufficient. Conscription of labor was introduced in 1942 and steadily extended, and in 1944 labor in war plants and mines was put under a system of military discipline.

Weak and divided though it was, the labor movement was the strongest and most reliable force on the side of democracy and peace to appear in pre-war Japan. Unions provided a training school, however imperfect, in democratic action and a nucleus of Japanese who were sufficiently independent to question official dogma and to resist arbitrary authority. Before the China war the movement had attained a respectable strength despite violent and persistent repression. After 1940, however, independent trade unions and political parties ceased to exist, although the Communists carried on some slight underground activity and occasional strikes or other forms of protest were reported during the war.

² *Ibid.*, p. 49.

³ *Labor Division Activities*. (See above, note on abbreviations; p. ix.)

II

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The post-war labor movement developed in conditions of severe economic depression and drastic political readjustment, of which no more than a brief outline can be given here.

Economic

In the first three years after the war ended Japanese industry was in a stagnant condition. Production very nearly stopped altogether after the surrender. By January, 1949 it had reached only 60 per cent of the 1930-34 level, and the largest gain was in mining, not manufacturing.¹ Severe shortages existed of consumer goods, fuel, and raw materials. Currency inflation proceeded at an accelerating pace; the circulation of Bank of Japan notes rose from ¥30 billion in August 1945 to ¥280 billion in November, 1948. Japan was kept going only by American subsidies, granted "to prevent disease and unrest."

The position of labor in this sick economy cannot be set forth with scientific precision, as statistics are few and must

¹ See Table 1. The base period 1930-34 is that adopted by the Far Eastern Commission as a pre-war norm. Some economists believe that 1936 or 1936-39 would be a fairer base; by this standard production in January, 1949 was around 35 per cent of pre-war. It should be noted that between 1932 and 1948 the population increased by nearly 20 per cent.

be treated with the greatest caution.² The main outlines of the picture, however, are sufficiently clear.

Even before the war Japanese industrial workers had lived not far above the subsistence level, and during the war their conditions of life greatly deteriorated. Peace brought no improvement—instead, a further decline. In January, 1946, it was estimated that wages had risen 300 or 400 per cent since 1937, living costs 600 to 1,700 per cent.³ This comparison is between pre-war and post-war conditions. In the fall of 1946, SCAP economists reported that real wages had fallen since 1945;⁴ prices were rising more rapidly than wages, as is usual during periods of inflation. Most SCAP

TABLE 1

JAPAN: INDEX OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION
(Mining and Manufacturing; 1930–34 = 100)

1944	154.8	1947	40.9	
1945	61.5	1948	54.8	
1946	32.5			
	1946	1947	1948	1949
Jan.	17.7	33.6	42.5	60.5
Feb.	21.3	34.4	45.5	...
Mar.	26.4	39.9	49.3	...
Apr.	28.3	39.1	49.8	...
May	30.7	41.2	51.7	...
June	31.6	42.3	52.9	...
July	33.2	41.7	55.1	...
Aug.	35.9	41.2	55.6	...
Sept.	37.4	43.1	60.6	...
Oct.	37.0	43.6	61.4	...
Nov.	36.9	41.8	61.9	...
Dec.	38.1	44.8	64.4	...

Source: *Japanese Economic Statistics*.

² The Japanese economists who prepared the government White Paper of July, 1947 (from which some of the information below is derived) admitted that much of their statistical data was unsatisfactory by scientific standards; but no other data were available.

³ *Summation*, Jan., 1946.

⁴ "Wage-Price Relationships."

Summations in 1946 and 1947 contained the statement that real wages declined during the month, without supporting statistics. On the other hand, the figures in Table 2 would

TABLE 2
JAPAN: PRICES, WAGES AND FAMILY EXPENDITURES

	Consumer price index: effective prices ^a (Aug. 1946-Mar. 1947 = 100)		Wages ^b (yen per month)		Urban family expenditures (yen per month)
	All items	Food	Manufac- turing	Mining	
<i>1946</i>					
Aug.	86.1	91.1	583	627	1,915
Sept.	85.4	88.9	639	622	1,836
Oct.	87.1	88.2	654	647	2,020
Nov.	85.8	83.8	754	649	2,106
Dec.	97.0	95.0	1,079	1,246	2,851
<i>1947</i>					
Jan.	110.7	111.5	926	1,113	2,588
Feb.	123.0	124.4	977	1,121	2,507
Mar.	137.1	138.0	1,036	1,205	3,315
Apr.	137.3	130.2	1,187	1,516	3,543
May	163.3	161.6	1,373	1,732	4,057
June	189.7	191.4	1,631	2,248	4,372
Jul.	222.9	223.1	1,767	2,700	5,324
Aug.	216.1	213.4	1,959	2,847	5,458
Sept.	224.4	207.3	2,103	2,931	5,209
Oct.	236.4	208.1	2,231	3,100	5,679
Nov.	247.9	215.7	2,456	3,177	5,808
Dec.	282.2	255.3	3,429	4,114	8,467
<i>1948</i>					
Jan.	286.5	255.3	2,855	4,218	6,495
Feb.	302.3	283.9	2,897	4,252	6,215
Mar.	310.0	289.5	3,137	4,596	7,059
Apr.	322.1	293.8	3,575	4,545	7,073
May	328.7	304.9	3,667	5,069	7,802
June	343.9	306.4	4,297	6,182	7,758
Jul.	394.7	351.5	4,759	6,993	8,860
Aug.	420.5	365.0	5,335	7,191	9,455
Sept.	417.8	351.8	5,841	7,713	9,211

TABLE 2

JAPAN: PRICES, WAGES AND FAMILY EXPENDITURES—*Continued*

	Consumer price index: effective prices ^a (Aug. 1946–Mar. 1947 = 100)		Wages ^b (yen per month)		Urban family expenditures (yen per month)
	All items	Food	Manufac- turing	Mining	
Oct.	406.3	329.5	6,423	7,952	10,018
Nov.	433.0	360.3	6,766	8,082	10,398
Dec.	456.7	386.1	8,878	8,684	15,013
<i>1949</i>					
Jan.	475.1	394.7	8,247	7,982	10,633

^a Average of official and black market prices, weighted according to amount purchased on black market.

^b Includes irregular allowances.

Source: *Japanese Economic Statistics*.

indicate a gradual rise in real wages during 1947 and 1948 (starting, of course, from an abnormally low base). These figures presumably do not represent take-home pay after deduction for income tax. It is probable at any rate that determined efforts by organized labor (seconded to some extent by SCAP) were able to mitigate to some extent the pressure of rising prices on the average worker's family budget. An important exception must be noted in the case of government employees, who constituted perhaps a fifth of the total labor force, and whose wages lagged well behind those in private industry.

There can be no doubt that severe privation existed among urban workers. Owing to the breakdown of war-time controls, it was impossible for them to buy sufficient supplies at official prices. Rations of food and other necessities were inadequate and had to be supplemented by purchases in the black market. The issue of scheduled food rations was often delayed for periods ranging from a few days to several weeks.

A complete breakdown was averted only by the importation of limited quantities of American food.

According to Japanese government surveys approximately 70 per cent of all family expenditures in 1946-47 were for food, indicating a bare subsistence level. Purchases in the black market accounted for 20 to 40 per cent of all food consumed, and from 70 to 85 per cent of total expenditures.⁵ The black market price of staple foods (in terms of rice equivalent) was ¥36.2 per kilogram in April, 1947, as compared with the official price of ¥3.64.⁶ The proportion of food bought in the black market varied from week to week, depending on the amount of rations issued. An index of "effective" prices has been compiled by averaging official and black market prices, weighted according to this ratio. The effective price of staple foods in January, 1947, was about 260 per cent of the official price, and for non-staple foods the difference was even greater.⁷ The index of effective food prices increased from 91.1 in August, 1946 to 475.1 in January, 1949, while a similar index for all consumer goods rose from 86.1 to 394.7.

It will be noted that average urban family expenditures, as given in the accompanying table, ran considerably higher than average wages. Family budget surveys indicated that the average worker's family could not live on its wage income alone. An investigation by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, covering the period April-December, 1946, showed that wage income amounted to 64.5 per cent, and cash income 49.2 per cent, of total family expenditures.⁸ Another survey of family budgets in Tokyo, in February, 1947, conducted by the Price Board, showed monthly expenditures of

⁵ White Paper; from survey for July, 1946-April, 1947.

⁶ White Paper.

⁷ "Wage-Price Relationships." Japanese government figures give the ratio for staple foods in February, 1947 as 382 per cent.

⁸ *Oriental Economist*, Apr. 12, 1947, p. 279. The difference between wage and cash income was due to the limitation on cash payments imposed as an anti-inflation measure.

¥2,756 for an average family of 4.46 persons. Of this 64.7 per cent was met from salaries, 8.3 per cent from irregular employment, 5.4 per cent from savings, 7.8 per cent from sale of property, 8.7 per cent from gifts and 3.9 per cent from loans.⁹ Most working-class families were forced to sell clothing or household effects in order to buy food, and had no recourse when such meager reserves were exhausted.

Other evidence of privation was given in an official White Paper of July, 1947. Per capita daily food consumption for urban workers was estimated at 2,105 calories in 1941, 1,793 in 1945, and 1,600 in 1946. The height and weight of Japanese school children, it was stated, showed a retardation in growth of about one year. Before the war, per capita textile consumption for clothing was 10 pounds a year; this was contrasted with 6.1 pounds in 1941, 5.8 in 1942, 3.4 in 1943, 1.3 in 1944, 1.2 in 1945, 2.6 in 1946, and a forecast of under 2 pounds for 1947. Meanwhile, old clothes were wearing out. Other forecasts of available supplies for 1947 were four matches per person per day, two 50-gram cakes of soap per person per year, and one pair of rubber-soled socks for every seven persons. Home consumption of wood and charcoal fuel was estimated at about two-thirds of pre-war. Electric power consumption was higher than pre-war, on account of greater use of electricity for cooking and heating, but most homes, factories, offices, and schools were inadequately heated and poorly lighted. Housing was extremely scarce owing to bomb damage,¹⁰ although there had been some reconstruction. Most families lived doubled up in cramped quarters, and some were reduced to huts made from waste materials.

With war industries closed, other plants operating far below capacity, and demobilization and repatriation returning

⁹ White Paper.

¹⁰ In Tokyo, 51 per cent of the city was leveled, according to the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey. The percentage of destruction in the 66 cities which were bomb targets ranged from 25 to 90.

millions to the labor market,¹¹ severe unemployment was inevitable. No precise figures are available, and indeed they would be difficult to compile, since the problem was more one of partial and concealed than of total and obvious unemployment. A census in April, 1946 showed 1,590,000 as wholly unemployed, 1,960,000 as working one week in a month, and 4,320,000 as working from 8 to 20 days in a month.¹² (Total non-farm paid employment on July 31, 1946 was estimated at 10,071,272.)¹³ Yet the number of persons seeking employment remained, at first, comparatively small. The exodus to the villages to some extent cushioned the impact, and the family system took care of some victims. To many the black market and other more or less illegal occupations offered an easier, surer, and larger income than productive employment. Pressure from organized labor against "mass discharges" undoubtedly had an effect in limiting unemployment. Paternalism and, perhaps, fear of the social consequences of mass destitution also exercised a restraining influence. Hence many Japanese enterprises were badly overstaffed.

To relieve unemployment, a modest public works program was launched by the Japanese government, and direct relief was provided on a limited scale. Few if any Japanese were actually starving, but most city-dwellers kept only one jump ahead of the wolf, and malnutrition was widespread.

Such conditions explain why the principal economic demands of organized labor were for higher wages and security of employment. Yet if industrial workers had trouble in balancing their personal budgets, their employers were meeting with similar difficulties. Mounting wage bills increased their costs of production, and as already noted, many concerns were seriously overstaffed, at least in relation to the

¹¹ Up to Oct. 30, 1947, 5,700,000 Japanese had been repatriated from overseas (*Summation*, Oct., 1947, p. 279).

¹² White Paper.

¹³ *Summation*, Feb., 1947, p. 190.

amount of raw materials which they could obtain. The 1947 White Paper cited rather startling figures on the low productivity of labor, which it attributed primarily to shortage of power and raw materials, aggravated by deterioration of equipment and diversion of critical materials to non-essential uses.¹⁴ According to this source industrial employment in July, 1946 was about the same as before the war, whereas production had fallen off by 70 per cent. Monthly coal output per miner was 5.3 tons in May, 1947 against 18.9 in 1933 and 13.9 in 1941. Cement output per worker was 14 tons in 1946 against 25 in 1945. The number of train kilometers run on Japanese railways was about the same in 1936 and in 1946, while the number of railway employees had risen from 228,000 to 573,000.

Labor costs were not the only factor augmenting costs of production, for the breakdown of price control affected industrial as well as consumer goods, and raw materials and equipment were often obtainable only in the black market. Of 97 commodities studied by SCAP economists early in 1947, the black market price of only 15 was anywhere near the official price; in 30 cases it was up to 150 per cent higher, in 35 cases 150 to 300 per cent, and in 17 cases more than 300 per cent above the official price.¹⁵

The authors of the 1947 White Paper believed that most of Japanese business was operating at a loss, meeting its deficits by borrowing, or, in some cases, from government subsidies.¹⁶ This must at any rate have been true of concerns which sold their products at official prices. It was estimated that in the period October, 1946 to March, 1947 the cost of producing coal exceeded the official price by a figure rang-

¹⁴ It might be added that absenteeism was widespread, chiefly because of the fact that workers took time off to go to the country to search for food. Many employers granted regular holidays for this purpose.

¹⁵ "Wage-Price Relationships."

¹⁶ It will be noted that the reference is to industrial, not commercial, enterprises.

ing from ¥46 per ton in the best month to ¥266 in the worst. In the same period the combined operations of four iron and steel companies showed an operating deficit of ¥602 million (one-third of total expenses), of which ¥318 million was recouped from the price stabilization fund, leaving a net deficit of ¥284 million.

Not all of the products of industry were sold at official prices. The poor rewards of operating legally not only augmented black market supplies but tended to curtail production of essential commodities and to stimulate that of non-essential or luxury goods. Many manufacturers found it more profitable to dispose of their raw material stocks on the black market, to hoard them, or to use their funds for speculation, than to operate their plants. Others simply gave up and decided to go out of business. The resulting wave of suspensions and shutdowns was a fruitful source of labor unrest.

The effects of these economic disturbances bore more heavily on urban workers than on other classes in the population. Farmers suffered from shortages of consumer goods but they had enough to eat, their homes had not been destroyed, and their debts had been largely wiped out by the inflation. The currency regulations imposed in February, 1946 as an anti-inflation measure caused much hardship to wage-earners. Cash payment of wages was limited to ¥500 per month plus ¥100 for each dependent. Bank deposits were frozen and personal withdrawals limited to ¥300 per month, with the same allowance for dependents. Actually some further withdrawals were permitted, for payment of rent, medical expenses, etc., and it appears that the regulations were often evaded. Still wage earners were at a disadvantage as compared with entrepreneurs (including farmers and fishermen), who could sell their products for cash. Moreover, rising money wages brought many workers, formerly exempt, into

the taxable income class, reducing take-home pay.¹⁷ Theoretically this affected all classes alike, but actually it bore more heavily on wage and salary workers, whose taxes were deducted at the source. Income tax exemptions were eventually raised somewhat, at labor's insistent demand.

Japan was, of course, a defeated nation. Yet Japanese workers hoped that the advent of peace and "democracy" would bring an improvement in their lot, and used their newly-acquired freedom to protest vigorously when the expected improvement failed to appear. For this failure they held the Japanese government primarily responsible, a conclusion which was shared by many foreign observers and supported in part at least by statements from SCAP.

It may be admitted that Japan could not soon, if ever, regain economic health by her own efforts alone. Three prerequisites were necessary: a clear and final decision on reparations; a reasonably free flow of foreign trade; and at least a pump-priming dose of foreign credit. But this did not excuse the Japanese government for its failure to take those steps which were open to it to set its own house in order and to relieve public distress. While it could not restore prosperity, it could make sure that such resources as Japan possessed were efficiently utilized and equitably distributed. The validity of this statement is not lessened by the fact that, as Japanese correctly asserted, the costs of the occupation were a drain on the Japanese economy.¹⁸ On the other hand, Japan received substantial American assistance in the form of food and other goods furnished on credit.

The Japanese government did not do what it could. During the war the system of economic controls, though unwieldy, had been reasonably effective; after the surrender it

¹⁷ By January, 1948 coal miners, who were among the highest-paid workers in the country, were in the 47 per cent income tax bracket (*New York Times*, Jan. 1, 1948).

¹⁸ These costs, however, were greatly inflated by profiteering and graft on construction projects for the occupation forces.

broke down completely. Price controls were retained in theory but disregarded in practice. Wage controls remained for some time on the books but no effort was made to enforce them. Food collections were poorly and unequally enforced. The rationing system was demoralized by inefficiency and fraud, and the machinery for allocating industrial materials left much to be desired.

It has been asserted that government officials high and low contributed to the general economic disintegration by illicit operations ranging from petty favoritism to spectacular fraud. However much truth there may be in these assertions, and there is certainly a good deal, the government was either unable or unwilling to stem the inflationary tide. As a result, scarce commodity stocks were diverted into non-productive or non-essential channels. Black markets, both wholesale and retail, continued to flourish despite feeble attempts at suppression. Currency inflation was rampant. A new class of speculators and black market operators reaped fantastic profits while the masses, especially the urban working population, suffered severe hardships. The government's efforts to deal with the situation were half-hearted if, as has been charged, they did not constitute deliberate sabotage.¹⁹

By the spring of 1947 things had reached a point where General MacArthur took the unusual step of issuing, on March 22, a stern public warning to the Japanese government. Foreign assistance, he said, would be contingent on full use of Japan's own resources. When the question was discussed in the Allied Council on April 2, SCAP presented a staff study indicating the need for drastic and comprehensive measures of economic control. The British representative, W. Macmahon Ball, commented that there was general agreement on the kind of remedial measures which were needed. "The real problem," he said, "is political. It is to

¹⁹ Cf. T. A. Bisson, "Reparations and Reform in Japan," *Far Eastern Survey*, Dec. 17, 1947.

find Japanese authorities who have the will and the capacity to establish a controlled economy.”²⁰ Japanese labor’s contention that economic and political questions were inextricably intertwined thus received a respectable endorsement.

The Katayama cabinet, which took office in June, 1947, made a more vigorous attack on the economic problem than its predecessors, though how much of the credit belonged to the government, and how much to the energetic stimulation supplied by SCAP, cannot easily be determined. In any case the hope of rapid recovery proved illusive, and American authorities became alarmed at the continued drain on American resources represented by subsidies to Japan. In December, 1948 General MacArthur, acting on instructions from Washington, ordered the Japanese government to take specific and drastic measures to promote economic recovery. The point of interest here is the importance of government action to the achievement of labor’s goals.

Political

The necessities of the present thus combined with traditions inherited from the past to give the post-war labor movement a strong political orientation. It became, in fact, the principal group in opposition to the groups in power, toward whom its attitude was not determined entirely by economic considerations. Hence it is desirable to recall briefly the main features of the political setting.

With minor qualifications all of Japan’s cabinets in the first three post-war years represented the most conservative elements remaining in public life after the elimination of professional militarists and leading ultra-nationalists. The purge barred from public office most of the outstanding civilian leaders who had glaring records of supporting mili-

²⁰ *New York Times*, Apr. 2, 1947.

tarism, but their places were filled, in the main, by less prominent members of the old political hierarchy, and many former leaders still played an important role behind the scenes. The application of the purge was, moreover, not instantaneous. The war-time Diet continued to function until the spring of 1946 (when most of its members were declared ineligible for re-election), and several men later branded as "supporters of militarism" held important cabinet posts for months before the purge caught up with them. New leadership was slow to develop.

Aside from new black-market millionaires, the dominant political groups after the war were old-line politicians, bureaucrats, and the zaibatsu. (Though somewhat weakened by SCAP's liquidation program, the zaibatsu continued to enjoy great economic and political influence.) Of the three leading political parties, the Democratic Liberals and Democrats (originally called Liberals and Progressives) were direct heirs of the old Seiyukai and Minseito, while the Social Democratic Party included leaders of the old Social Mass Party who were prominent during its period of subservience to military influence. The old bureaucracy still clung firmly to the reins of administration.

With occasional exceptions these men, by reason of their training and experience, had little or no interest in democratic reform, and were less concerned with the welfare of the masses than with protection of their own personal, family and class interests, both economic and political. This was made clear in their passive resistance (accompanied by outward compliance) to reforms advocated by SCAP; in their failure to come to grips with the economic problem; most clearly, perhaps, in the Diet debates on the new constitution, when government spokesman Kanamori assured doubting members that the new charter did not represent any real change in the "national polity."

Japan's first post-war Premier (not counting the short-lived

Higashi-Kuni cabinet) was Baron Kijuro Shidehara, who gained fame in earlier years for his relatively liberal foreign policy, but was a conservative in domestic politics and was connected by marriage with the Mitsubishi interests. There was not much difference between his cabinet, which held office from October, 1945 to May, 1946, and its successor, headed by Shigeru Yoshida, which took office after the first post-war election. The latter was based on a parliamentary combination of the Liberal and Progressive parties. The Katayama government, installed in June, 1947 after a second election, represented a slight shift to the left, being a coalition of right-wing Social Democrats, whose socialism was largely theoretical, with the Progressive and the smaller Cooperative Party. Katayama resigned in February, 1948 and was succeeded by the Democrat (Progressive) Hitoshi Ashida, whose cabinet was a reshuffle of much the same elements. Following Ashida's fall in October, 1948, the Democratic Liberal leader, Yoshida, again became Premier, with a clear parliamentary majority following the election of January, 1949.

Although many workers voted for conservative candidates, the leadership of organized labor rejected completely the old-line conservative parties. The Cooperative Party, a smaller middle-of-the-road group, appealed mainly to farmers. There remained the Social Democrats and the Communists, who competed keenly for labor support. Both denounced the militarists and "feudal remnants" in Japanese society, but they differed greatly in other respects.

The Social Democrats were committed to parliamentary methods of gaining and using power. They professed a moderate socialism similar to that of the British Labor Party. They were, however, sharply divided into a right wing, led by such men as Komakichi Matsuoka, Chosaburo Mizutani, and Suehiro Nishio, and a left wing, among whose most

prominent figures were Kanju Kato and Mosaburo Suzuki. Tetsu Katayama, the party leader, on the whole succeeded in steering a middle course and thus held the party together, though defections occurred both on the right and on the left. No wide gap separated the Social Democratic right wing from the Democrats (Progressives), while the left wing vigorously advocated state control of key industries and other measures to curb the power and profits of big business. The left wing originally favored cooperation with the Communists, but later reversed this position (except the extreme left); while the Communists, who began by branding only right-wing Social Democrats as traitors to the working class, later denounced them all pretty impartially, but never entirely abandoned the idea of a united front.

The platform on which the Communists sought support was not especially revolutionary except in its opposition to the Emperor system, a theme which was stressed at first but later, proving unpopular, was soft-pedaled. The party advocated moderate reforms along socialist lines; in practice, however, it appeared to rely mainly on militant action on the economic front, rather than on constitutional methods. The Communists also had their right and left wings. The right, led by Sanzo Nosaka (who under the name of Susumo Okano had organized the Japanese People's Emancipation League in Communist China during the war), favored circumspection and moderate tactics. The left-wing leaders, Kyuichi Tokuda and Yoshio Shiga, released in 1945 after many years of imprisonment, urged more radical policies and direct action.

In so far as it was politically conscious, labor had therefore to choose between the Social Democrats and the Communists. At one time it appeared possible that these parties might collaborate in support of common objectives, but any such prospect, probably slight at best, was scotched by

SCAP's attitude toward the Communist Party. Labor was also confronted by another equally crucial question, distinct from the first though related to it: namely, whether it should seek to gain its political ends exclusively through parliamentary methods, or bring its economic power into play. Both questions strongly agitated the post-war labor movement.

III

OCCUPATION POLICY TOWARD LABOR:

1945-47¹

The policy of the occupation toward labor, as initially formulated and practiced, was geared to the broad objectives set forth in the Potsdam Declaration and basic directives from the United States government. These were to eliminate militaristic influences from Japanese society and to foster the growth of democratic institutions. In the first year of the occupation the principal emphasis was on political reform. Later, as industrial recovery lagged and Japan continued to be a burden on the American taxpayer, greater stress was laid on economic rehabilitation. Meanwhile, GHQ, SCAP was conscious of Japan's strategic value, and the "cold war" concept influenced its decisions at all times.

The first basic directive to General MacArthur, dated September 6, 1945, contained no specific guidance on labor policy, except for the injunction to promote freedom of speech and assembly, to encourage democratic organizations in labor, industry and agriculture, and to encourage a wide distribution of income and ownership. The second directive, dated November 8, 1945, instructed the Supreme Commander to:

Require the Japanese to remove, as rapidly as practicable, war-time controls over labor and reinstate protective legislation.

¹ Parts of this section are taken from an article by the present writer on "Labor Policy in Occupied Japan," *Pacific Affairs*, June, 1947.

Require the removal of all legal hindrances to the formation of organizations of employees along democratic lines, subject to any necessary safeguards to prevent the perpetuation of militaristic influences under any guise or the continuation of any group hostile to the objectives and operations of the occupying forces.

Prevent or prohibit strikes or other work stoppages only when you consider that these would interfere with military operations or directly endanger the security of the occupying forces.

General principles of occupation policy were laid down by the United States government and later to some extent by the eleven-nation Far Eastern Commission, but their application in Japan was determined by the Supreme Commander in Tokyo. Important decisions were made at the highest level by the Supreme Commander and a few intimate advisers. Responsibility for preparing recommendations on labor policy, and for its day-to-day implementation, was assigned to Labor Division, a subdivision of the Economic and Scientific Section, GHQ, SCAP. The Division was staffed by a small but able group of American experts on labor problems, among whom, however, there was considerable turnover. Various other echelons also dealt with labor affairs in one way or another, including G-2, Civil Intelligence, Public Safety, Civil Information and Education, Government Section, and the military police; also local military government and tactical units stationed throughout Japan, which were responsible not directly to SCAP but to Eighth Army. Because of differences of opinion and difficulties of liaison, practice was not always in accord with official SCAP policy as enunciated by Labor Division. Furthermore, it was generally true throughout the occupation that the most energetic impulse toward reform came from subordinate officials. With all these cross-currents it was sometimes difficult for the Japanese to determine just what occupation policy was on any given subject at any given time.

Labor policy, like so many others, had at first to be improvised. After some initial confusion a fairly clear and consistent policy was eventually formulated in Tokyo. This was based on a working philosophy evolved by Labor Division, which assumed that the working classes constitute, potentially, the strongest if not the only reliable base for a democratic regime in Japan. The middle class, it was held, is numerically, economically and spiritually weak. The farm population is traditionally conservative and politically lethargic. The wage workers, who with their families form approximately 40 per cent of the population, have historically displayed more political consciousness and receptivity to new ideas than any other important group. In pre-war Japan labor organizations and parties were among the most vigorous and effective opponents of war and militarism and advocates of democratic change. Consistently oppressed and exploited in the past, labor has little or no stake in the old order and can be counted on to support the new one *provided* that it is given a positive incentive to do so. Democracy must, therefore, offer to Japanese workers freedom of expression and action, and tangible improvement in their material conditions of life.

Hence, this analysis continues, it must be a cardinal aim of the occupation to develop among the working classes both the desire and the ability effectively to support the democratic philosophy and democratic institutions. Japanese labor may thus become a powerful bulwark against the attacks which at some future time will almost certainly be directed against the new regime by now dormant nationalist and militarist elements. Labor holds the key to success or failure in the attempt to convert Japan from a dangerous enemy into a good neighbor. On the other hand, it was held, failure to demonstrate to Japanese workers the advantages of the democratic way would leave them an easy prey either to a resur-

gence of militarist doctrines or to a new totalitarianism of the left, regarded as equally distasteful.

The policy decision adopted by the Far Eastern Commission in December, 1946 on "Principles for Japanese Trade Unions" was little more than a restatement of policies which had already been in operation in Japan for more than a year. It is, however, the most succinct official statement of occupation policy toward labor unions, and is reproduced in the Appendix (Document I). Point 6, "Trade unions should be allowed to take part in political activities and to support political parties," caused some discussion in Japan. While not inconsistent with the line which had been laid down by SCAP, it was interpreted in some quarters as allowing more latitude in the field of political action than SCAP considered desirable.

Removal of Obstacles to Labor Organization

The concrete measures taken by SCAP in the labor field were of two kinds: negative and positive. In the early days of the occupation it set out to eliminate the legal and institutional obstacles which had previously blocked any form of democratic activity. It proclaimed freedom of speech, press and organization. Propagation of militarist doctrines and criticism of the occupation were barred, but with these exceptions Japan enjoyed for the first time a regime of civil liberty.

The importance of these negative measures has not always received sufficient emphasis. A foreign authority can quickly and effectually destroy what is old and bad. It cannot by its own efforts create what is new and good.

On October 4, 1945 SCAP issued a directive to the Japanese government on "Removal of Restrictions on Political, Civil and Religious Liberties." Under this authority the

following laws, restricting labor organization and other forms of democratic expression, were abrogated in October and November: the Peace Preservation Law of 1941; the Protective Surveillance for Thought Offenses Law of 1936 and subsidiary regulations; Articles 3 and 8 of the Public Peace Police Law of 1900; the Factory and Workshop Supervision Ordinance of March, 1944 (instituting military discipline in war plants); and the National Labor Mobilization Ordinance (authorizing conscription of labor). Articles 4, 6, and 7 of the National Mobilization Law of 1938, from which this ordinance derived, were abrogated on April 1, 1946.²

The same directive ordered the release of all political prisoners, including persons arrested for "thought" offenses or for labor activity. An imperial amnesty of October 18, 1945 released some 300,000 prisoners and restored the civil rights of 600,000 other persons.³ Many of those released took part in the organization of the new trade unions as well as in political activity.

Under the same directive all secret and "thought control" police organizations were dissolved, including the Special Higher Police Units in the Home Ministry, Metropolitan Police Board and prefectural police bureaus; and the Thought Section in the Criminal Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Justice.⁴ The Kempeitai, or military police, was of course eliminated along with the rest of the army. All labor functions previously performed by the Home Ministry, Metropolitan Police Board and prefectural police bureaus were transferred to the Ministry of Welfare.

Formerly the police kept a watchful eye on all labor activities and usually took on themselves the function of settling labor disputes. On February 8, 1946 instructions were issued by the Home Ministry directing them to refrain from all intervention in labor affairs. The degree of compliance

² *First Interim Report.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

is difficult to estimate. In June the Home Ministry found it necessary to issue new instructions. Many violations undoubtedly occurred, despite SCAP vigilance.⁵ However, with labor's rights now guaranteed by law, intimidation was not so easy as in the past. It can be said that oppression and intimidation of labor by police action were greatly reduced, though not entirely eliminated, in the initial phase of the occupation.

The Patriotic Industrial Association (Sampo), which was the principal instrument of labor regimentation during the war, voluntarily dissolved on September 30, 1945.⁶ Its assets were confiscated and applied to public use, in some cases being turned over to legitimate trade unions. An attempt to revive the association as a semi-official labor union was quashed by SCAP authorities.⁷

The Patriotic Labor Association (Romu Hokokukai), a sort of Sampo for casual labor, was also dissolved on September 30, 1945. As this organization had been performing a necessary function in supplying labor for the occupation forces, it was allowed to continue temporarily in a somewhat different form, under the name of Laborers' Association (Romu Kyokai). This body was dissolved on December 31, 1945, its assets were liquidated and responsibility for

⁵ A few examples may be given. On Jan. 14, 1946 representatives of the government railway union met the director of the Tokyo Railway Bureau to discuss their demands. Two officers of the Metropolitan Police Board were present, and were asked to leave. They explained that they merely wished to ascertain whether the dispute was likely to disrupt food shipments (*Tokyo Shimbun*, Jan. 17, 1946). In the summer of 1946 a reliable observer reported that in Gumma prefecture police were visiting factories and union offices to collect information on labor activities. They may have been compiling dossiers for future use. In Tochigi, police repeatedly questioned union officials and required advance notice of union meetings as well as of public demonstrations. In Nagano, following General MacArthur's warning of May 20, 1946 against violence, police forced their way into peaceful union meetings, claiming MacArthur had commanded them to be present to prevent possible disorder. Many other complaints were made by unions of improper police activity.

⁶ *First Interim Report*.

⁷ *Labor Division Activities*.

supplying labor to the occupation forces was transferred to newly established Boards of Day Laborers.⁸ Various other organizations, similar in purpose to Sampo, also voluntarily dissolved. These included the Harmonization Society (Kyocho Kai), the parent of Sampo, and the Japan Navigational Patriotic Organization (Nippon Kaiun Hokokudan).

Some of these organizations, however—notably the Romu Hokokukai, which had been established in 1943 by the labor bosses—were continued locally under other names, and engaged in recruitment of labor with accompanying exploitation and coercion. Accordingly, pursuant to instructions from SCAP, the Japanese government on December 14, 1946 directed the dissolution of the Tokyo Autonomous Labor Federation, the Kanagawa Labor Cooperation Association, and similar bodies. This order had the twofold purpose of weeding out all vestiges of the labor front organizations and striking a blow at the notorious labor boss system.

As a further means to prevent continuance or revival of oppressive labor practices, steps were taken to bar undesirable persons from positions in labor administration. A Japanese government order of November 30, 1946 excluded from such positions former members of the police, former officials of the Patriotic Industrial Association, the Patriotic Labor Association or the Harmonization Society, and former officials of labor sections of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association. Such persons were barred from positions in national or prefectural labor bureaus, public employment exchanges, staffs of Labor Relations Committees, or as conciliators under the Labor Relations Adjustment Law.⁹ Implementation of this order was said to have been completed by the end of May, 1947.¹⁰

Although Sampo was defunct, there was danger that Sampo personnel, or others of the same ilk, would seek by

⁸ *First Interim Report*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, May, 1947.

⁹ *Summation*, Dec., 1946, p. 172.

infiltration to gain control of the free trade unions. The Japanese government was directed to take steps to check such a tendency. The ordinance of December 14, 1946, already cited, forbade former officers or influential members of the Patriotic Industrial Association, the Patriotic Labor Association, the Harmonization Society or the Japan Navigational Patriotic Organization to be officers or influential members of labor unions or any other organizations concerned with labor, including organizations for labor recruitment. A further ordinance of March 14, 1947 barred from union office all persons disqualified for public office by the SCAP directive of January 4, 1946 (the "purge" directive).¹¹

Positive Measures

The negative measures described above succeeded in removing, not completely, but for most practical purposes, the artificial obstacles which had previously blocked the growth of the Japanese labor movement. Constructive achievement was necessarily a matter of slower evolution. On the positive side SCAP sought to introduce into Japan a system of labor relations modeled on the best American practice, i.e., free labor unions, collective bargaining, and peaceful settlement of labor disputes.

Labor Legislation

In labor relations as in other fields, it was felt that the first constructive step must be to set up a new legal framework. This took the form of two basic statutes, the Trade Union Law (passed in December, 1945) and the Labor Relations Adjustment Law (passed in September, 1946). Both bear ob-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Mar., 1947, p. 175.

vious marks of American inspiration modified by Japanese bureaucratic traditionalism. Both were drafted by a Labor Legislation Committee appointed by the Welfare Ministry on October 24, 1945, which held public hearings. The Trade Union Law was patterned more or less on America's National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (Wagner Act). The Labor Relations Adjustment Law combined various American precedents into a much more comprehensive system of labor relations machinery than exists in the United States. It was originally intended to be part of the Trade Union Law, but delay in drafting necessitated its postponement and introduction as a separate law in a later session of the Diet.

Trade Union Law

The Trade Union Law was passed by the Diet in December, 1945 and went into effect, together with its enforcement ordinance, on March 1, 1946. It guaranteed the right of union organization to all workers except policemen, firemen, and employees of penal institutions, and had the stated purpose of encouraging collective bargaining. Trade unions were defined as organizations of workers whose main purpose is improvement of their economic status. An organization which admits to membership persons representing the employer's interest, or which depends on the employer for the major part of its expenses, was not a trade union within the meaning of the law. Unions were required to register with the administrative authorities, submitting copies of their constitutions and the names of their officers. Unions which failed to meet the standards stated above (i.e., company unions) might be reorganized or dissolved on recommendation of the competent Labor Relations Committee. Employers were forbidden to discharge or otherwise discriminate

against a worker because of legitimate union activity.¹² The maximum penalty for violating this article was a ¥500 fine or six months' imprisonment. An employer might not claim damages from a union because of a strike or other legitimate act of dispute. A union which "frequently violates laws and ordinances and disturbs peace and order" might be dissolved by court order, after a hearing. A union which had legal personality (acquired by a separate registration process) was exempt from income and corporation taxes.

Collective agreements were made binding on both parties, and had to be registered with the authorities. Their term might not exceed three years. Individual labor contracts were declared invalid when in conflict with a collective agreement. There followed certain provisions not based on American precedents, and designed to promote standardization of working conditions. When a collective agreement covered three-fourths of the employees in a given establishment, its terms became applicable to all employees. Also, if a collective agreement covered a majority of workers of the same kind in a given locality, the authorities might order its extension to cover all workers of the same kind in the same locality, and their employers. So far as is known these provisions have not been applied in practice.

A Central Labor Relations Committee of 21 members was established, with similar committees of 15 members in each prefecture. Provision was also made for special committees (one was set up for the shipping industry). These committees were composed of representatives of labor and employers in equal numbers, appointed by the authorities in accordance with recommendations by labor and employer organizations, together with neutral members. In addition to performing certain functions in enforcing the law, the

¹² Originally the law merely forbade discrimination on account of union membership, but this article was amended in a rider to the Labor Relations Adjustment Law.

committees might assist in settling labor disputes (these duties are spelled out in the Labor Relations Adjustment Law), compile statistics, investigate labor conditions and submit recommendations for their improvement, which might form the basis for compulsory orders by the administrative authorities. The committees might require attendance of witnesses, visit plants and inspect the books and records of unions and employers.

In recognizing the legitimacy of labor unions and collective bargaining the law was a complete reversal of Japanese precedent. It contained, however, many weaknesses. Employers were not, as in the Wagner Act, specifically forbidden to exert coercion or otherwise to intervene improperly in union affairs. Nor were they specifically required to bargain collectively in good faith. As SCAP's Labor Advisory Committee noted, "A disproportionate part of the present law is devoted to governmental supervision and control over trade unions." The provisions for registration of unions were probably unnecessary and certainly needlessly complex, and those regarding dissolution of unions could be used by a hostile government to justify oppressive measures against legitimate unions. No provision was made for deciding by election or otherwise the claims of rival unions, or for establishing the proper bargaining unit in case of controversy. This lack was not serious at first, as few cases of rivalry appeared, but later they did develop.

Perhaps the most serious defect was the weak and clumsy enforcement machinery. The Labor Relations Committees were not empowered to issue orders but could act only through the administrative authority, usually the prefectural governor, or in cases of national scope the Welfare Minister (later the Labor Minister). The said official apparently might act at his own discretion, and except in the case of dissolving a union, the enforcement procedure was not spelled out in detail either in the law or in the accompanying ordi-

nance.¹³ All of these defects were noted by SCAP's Labor Advisory Committee, which observed that while the law had been "a kind of Magna Charta" for Japanese labor, and had worked remarkably well in the first few months, it contained seeds of serious difficulty for the future.¹⁴

Labor Relations Adjustment Law

Prior to the war the Japanese government had established a few agencies for adjustment of labor disputes, but they seldom functioned, and in practice such activities were generally the prerogative of the police. As SCAP would not countenance using the police in this way, the Welfare Minister decided, in November, 1945, to set up informal committees of conciliation in Tokyo and the prefectures as an interim measure. These committees enjoyed little confidence and were seldom used. The chairman of the central committee, Kakichi Kawarada, a former Home Minister and director of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, was attacked in the press as an ally of the militarists. After the Labor Relations Committees were set up under the Trade Union Law in the spring of 1946 they conciliated some disputes, but no orderly procedure was established by law until the passage of the Labor Relations Adjustment Law in September, 1946.

¹³ Such particularization was especially necessary because of the absence of Japanese precedents. Following the issuance of government instructions in November, 1946, that procurators were to prosecute violations of the law at the request of the competent Labor Relations Committee, automatically and without further parley, the first criminal indictment under the law was made on Nov. 29 against the Enuma Manufacturing Co., in Ishikawa prefecture, which was charged with dismissing workers for union activity. On Mar. 15, 1947 the director of the company was found guilty and given a suspended sentence of two months' imprisonment. Whether the discharged workers were restored to their jobs is not known (*Summation*, Dec., 1946, p. 164; Mar., 1947, p. 179).

¹⁴ Advisory Committee Report, p. 7.

This law, which became effective, with its enforcement ordinance, on October 13, 1946, had as its purpose the establishment of machinery for peaceful settlement of labor disputes. Parties to such disputes were charged with the responsibility of making every effort to achieve a peaceful settlement whether through the legal machinery or other methods of their own choice.

Provision was made for conciliation, mediation or arbitration.¹⁵ The Labor Relations Committees were to maintain a panel of conciliators, one of whom might be appointed to act in a given case at the request of either party or on the initiative of the Committee. Mediation might be undertaken by a Mediation Committee, containing an equal number of worker and employer representatives together with neutral members, appointed by the chairman of the Labor Relations Committee from among its own members or other persons. Such a Mediation Committee should be appointed at the request of both parties; at the request of one party pursuant to the terms of a collective agreement; in "public welfare" work, at the discretion of the Labor Relations Committee (which might be requested to act by either party); or, in "public welfare" work or other work seriously affecting the public welfare, at the request of the administrative authorities. "Public welfare" work meant transportation, posts, telegraphs and telephones, supply of water, gas and electricity, medical treatment and public health work. Other industries might be designated as "public welfare" work for a limited period on recommendation of the Central Labor Relations Committee. The Mediation Committee's report had to be made within 15 days, and accepted or

¹⁵ As the terms were used in the law, a conciliator merely talks with both parties and tries to help them reach a settlement by direct negotiation. A mediator investigates the issues in dispute and makes public a recommendation for settlement, which the parties are not bound to accept. An arbitrator makes an award binding on both parties. These distinctions were not well understood in Japan.

rejected by the parties within 10 days thereafter. Arbitration would be performed by the Labor Relations Committee itself at the request of both parties, or of one party pursuant to the terms of a collective agreement. There was no provision for compulsory arbitration.

Certain restrictions were imposed on "acts of dispute," defined as a strike, slowdown, lockout, or other act hampering the normal course of work. In "public welfare" work, such acts were prohibited for 30 days after mediation was initiated, although designating an industry as "public welfare" work would not outlaw acts of dispute already in progress. Policemen, firemen, prison employees and employees of national, prefectural, or municipal governments, except those in public enterprises (e.g., railways), were forbidden to engage in acts of dispute. Infringement of these provisions would subject the responsible union or employer to a maximum fine of ¥10,000. Employers might not discharge or otherwise discriminate against a worker for an act of dispute or for giving testimony in investigation of a labor dispute, but exceptions might be made by the Labor Relations Committee.

By Western criteria the Labor Relations Adjustment Law was an admirable statute and did not impose burdensome limitations on union activity or the right to strike. Nevertheless its passage was vehemently opposed by practically every section of organized labor, while the Trade Union Law had been warmly welcomed. This hostility derived in part from simple ignorance of the law's actual content and unfamiliarity with any form of impartial labor machinery, together with false or misleading propaganda by the bill's opponents. It came in part from labor's intoxication with its new freedom, which made it impatient of any restrictions whatever, even if made for its own benefit. Particular objection was made to the prohibition of strikes by government employees and to the "cooling-off" period prescribed in

public utilities. Whatever the validity of the former objection, the latter could be justified on no reasonable ground; but the right to strike was a simple and easily understood symbol of labor's new freedom, of which it was inordinately jealous.

A more fundamental reason for labor's hostility to the law was its deep distrust of the intentions of the government in power. Whatever the terms of the law, labor believed, rightly or wrongly, that it would not be fairly administered; that it was, in fact, designed by a hostile government as an instrument to obstruct the legitimate activities of labor unions. In the past, government intervention in labor disputes had always worked to labor's disadvantage. Only time, and meticulous fairness in the actual administration of the law, could overcome such suspicions.¹⁶

Labor Relations Committees

The Labor Relations Committees began their operations under very great handicaps. Each was charged with an as-

¹⁶ Various proposals have been made to revise both the Trade Union Law and the Labor Relations Adjustment Law. In January, 1947, the Minister of Welfare undertook to study public opinion on the Trade Union Law, sent questionnaires to labor and employer groups, and held conferences in all prefectures (*Summation*, Apr., 1947, pp. 181-82). Various changes were suggested but no action was taken, possibly because organized labor strongly opposed any change in the labor laws. Nevertheless proposals for revision continued to be advanced from time to time, on the ground that undisciplined labor activity required restraint, and that curbs on labor would make Japan more attractive to foreign investors. On April 30, 1949, legislative proposals were submitted by the government to the Diet. Among other things they provided that the Premier with the consent of the Diet might designate an industry as "public welfare" and hence subject to the cooling-off period. Also strikes were limited to 60 days, after which negotiations must be resumed. Financial support of unions by employers was prohibited; election of union officers by secret ballot was made mandatory; violence by unions was prohibited (a provision possibly aimed at "production control"); and employers were forbidden to refuse to bargain collectively "without legitimate reasons" (*New York Times*, May 1, 1949). This legislation was passed before the Diet session ended on June 1.

sortment of duties—enforcing the Trade Union Law, adjusting disputes, making surveys and recommendations, etc.—which might tax the energies of three or four separate boards or commissions. In fact, splitting the functions of the Committees among several agencies would be a desirable improvement. A serious initial handicap was the lack of any proper budgetary provision. Committee members were paid only a nominal stipend, which meant that only those with an unusual amount of leisure and public spirit devoted more than a small fraction of their time to what should have been a full-time job. Little or no provision was made to equip the Committees with a staff or secretariat. Although it was obvious that they could not properly conduct the investigations of fact on which their decisions were supposed to be based without a considerable staff, most prefectural committees had to rely on what assistance they could get from prefectural labor offices.

Later some steps were taken to remedy this lack, though it was not easy in the existing state of government finances. In November, 1946 funds were allotted to increase the staff of the Central Labor Relations Committee from 19 to 99, and prefectural committees were authorized to secure staffs averaging 13 persons each. The sum of ¥970,000 was further allotted for travel, research, etc.¹⁷ The 1947-48 budget provided ¥20,994,000 for Labor Relations Committees. In August, 1947 the combined staffs of the prefectural committees totaled 387. The addition of 993 more persons was planned, which would bring the average prefectural staff to 16 or 17.¹⁸

A serious initial difficulty was the lack of precedent in Japan for free trade unions, collective bargaining or impartial machinery of adjustment. Workers, employers, government officials, and members of the new Labor Relations Committees themselves were almost totally unfamiliar with either the principles underlying the new legislation or the

¹⁷ *Summation*, Nov., 1946, p. 213.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Aug., 1947, p. 206.

procedures involved. Great difficulty was encountered in finding qualified persons to serve on the committees, especially neutral members commanding the confidence of both labor and employers. The prefectural governors who made the appointments often had an incorrect idea of what constituted proper qualifications. Many complaints were made that so-called neutral members actually were identified with employer interests. Investigation in the summer of 1946 showed that many prefectural committees were ignorant of their duties and largely inactive. One committee chairman admitted that he had not read the Trade Union Act. Some committees were manipulated by local labor administrations as yet undemocratized. A few, however, were doing some useful work, especially in dissolving company unions and in adjusting disputes. In a press conference in the fall of 1946 a member of Labor Division admitted defects in the composition of the committees but stated that reorganization was under way and would be completed by the end of the year.¹⁹

The terms of the original committees expired on March 1, 1947. By the end of April new committees had been appointed in only 33 prefectures, and the new Central Committee was not installed until October.²⁰ While the old committees continued to serve, the uncertainty hampered their work. In any case it would seem that the one-year term was much too short for effective administration in a field where experience counts for so much.

¹⁹ In September, 1946 new rules were announced for selecting Labor Relations Committee members. For the Central Committee, all labor organizations with over 100,000 members could recommend candidates; employer candidates were recommended by the Federation of Economic Organizations. Committee members were appointed by the Minister of Welfare. Neutral members must be approved by both the labor and the employer members. Similar rules governed the selection of prefectural committees (*Summation*, Sept., 1946, p. 151).

²⁰ *Summation*, Apr., 1947, p. 189; Oct., 1947, p. 190. Installation of the Central Committee was delayed because a question was raised as to whether Dr. Itsutaro Suehiro, its able and hard-working chairman, who had incurred the government's displeasure, was technically disqualified under the purge directive.

Such initial difficulties as those described above do not, of course, prove anything about the ultimate success of the Labor Relations Committees. During their first six months the Committees handled only 11 cases of discrimination against union members and 69 disputes.²¹ This was before the passage of the Labor Relations Adjustment Law. The law was first applied in the electrical workers' dispute of October, 1946, under circumstances calculated to intensify labor's hostility (see p. 114). However, the Committee did settle the dispute; and the fact that its recommendations were on the whole favorable to labor may have somewhat diminished the antagonism of the unions toward the law. After this the Central Labor Relations Committee became extremely active and played a useful part in settling many major disputes, including the seamen's dispute in the fall of 1946 and the government employees' dispute in the winter of 1947. Most of the work was done by the staff and a few of the neutral members, as most of the members were company or union executives or had other professional responsibilities.²²

Encouragement of Labor Organization

In addition to removing obstacles and providing legal guarantees, positive encouragement was given to labor organization. The keynote was struck by General MacArthur

²¹ *Summation*, Sept., 1946, p. 151. In their first 15 months, prefectural committees handled 115 complaints of unfair employer practices (*Summation*, July, 1947).

²² In 1947 and 1948 the trend was toward greater use of the Labor Relations Committees, and by 1948 incomplete figures indicated that the majority of all disputes—certainly of major disputes—were referred to the appropriate Committee for adjustment. It appears that peaceful settlement was rarely achieved without such aid. The operations of the Committees gained slowly in efficiency and effectiveness. It is known, however, that American officials frequently took a hand behind the scenes, lending the weight of their authority to the Committee's recommendations.

on October 11, 1945, when he publicly informed the newly-appointed Prime Minister, Baron Shidehara: "I expect you to institute the following reforms: . . . The encouragement of the unionization of labor—that it may be clothed with such dignity as will permit it an influential voice in safeguarding the working man from exploitation and abuse and raising his living standard to a higher level; with the institution of such measures as may be necessary to correct the evils which now exist in child labor practices."

Publicity was given to the steps described above—establishment of civil liberties, abolition of Sampo, the Trade Union Law, etc. Information was provided on American labor practices. Labor organizations were given access to radio time. In numerous conferences with Japanese, SCAP officials explained the new policies. It is not to be supposed that American officials went out and organized unions, or gave their official blessing to any particular Japanese labor organizations. They simply let it be known through all channels that SCAP favored the establishment of labor unions, and that Labor Division's door was open to union leaders for discussion of their problems. No further stimulation was required.

Warnings to Labor

As the Japanese unions grew rapidly in strength and began to develop political interests and militant tendencies, some American officials became alarmed over the unexpected vigor of the genie which they had released. Others, including those closest to labor activities, were much encouraged by the vigor of the Japanese response but felt that the situation had entered a new phase in which labor no longer needed stimulation but required sympathetic guidance to restrain

undesirable tendencies. Opinions within SCAP were divided and policy was not always consistent.

The first clear note of warning was sounded by General MacArthur in his public statement of May 20, 1946, in which he cautioned against "the growing tendency towards mass violence and physical processes of intimidation" by "disorderly minorities."²³ This was generally taken to refer to public demonstrations by labor (mass meetings, parades, etc.), which had become increasingly common, culminating in the great May Day demonstrations throughout the country, in which at least a million persons took part, and the so-called Food May Day in Tokyo on May 19. With minor exceptions these affairs had been peaceful and orderly. There had been a demonstration at the Prime Minister's residence on April 7 demanding Shidehara's resignation, during which a slight scuffle occurred, several policemen were injured, and MP's intervened. On or about May 14 residents of Setagaya ward, Tokyo, had tried to force an entrance to the Imperial Palace grounds to protest to the Emperor over the delay in issuing rice rations, but were prevented by the guards. During the Food May Day demonstration on May 19 a similar

²³ Complete text as follows: "I find it necessary to caution the Japanese people that the growing tendency towards mass violence and physical processes of intimidation, under organized 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 military 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 purpose 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 same views of this predominant public opinion will exert sufficient influence to make it unnecessary to intervene."

incident occurred at the palace in which several policemen were bruised and someone fell or was pushed into the moat, but emerged unharmed. A delegation of 30, headed by Kyuichi Tokuda, the Communist leader, spent that night and part of the next day camping in the corridors of the Prime Minister's residence in an attempt to see Yoshida, who was then forming his cabinet.

There had, in fact, been dramatic and unorthodox methods of protest and slight disorders, but to speak of a "grave menace" to "the occupation itself" from "mass violence" was a considerable exaggeration. Most demonstrations represented merely exercise of the right, guaranteed by the constitution of the United States, to assemble peaceably and petition for the redress of grievances. Unfortunately, MacArthur's statement was interpreted as a warning against all such demonstrations. Labor was somewhat confused, and in some cases, as noted elsewhere (p. 31), police took advantage of the statement to interfere with legitimate union operations. The incident put a temporary damper on labor activity; demonstrations almost ceased for a month or so, after which they were resumed with unabated vigor. MacArthur's statement appears also to have had the effect of intensifying the split between Socialists and Communists.

It is probable that a mixture of motives lay behind the May 20 statement, including SCAP's intense fear of Communism and its extreme sensitivity to criticism. Another repercussion from May Day was a "manifesto" prepared by the committee which organized the May 1 Tokyo demonstration, and circulated to the members of the Allied Council, charging the Japanese police with various infringements of citizens' legal rights, especially in connection with the recent election. These charges were brought up by General Kuzma Derevyanko, the Russian representative, in the Allied Council meeting of May 29. Mr. George Atcheson, the American member, denied the accusations and charged that the mani-

festó appeared to be a translation from a foreign language, meaning Russian.²⁴ The United States, he added, does not favor Communism in Japan or elsewhere.²⁵

SCAP's attitude on this subject was again demonstrated at the Allied Council meeting on July 10, when General Deryanko presented a list of twenty-two recommendations on labor policy, generally along the same lines that SCAP was already following. Mr. Atcheson bitterly attacked the recommendations as propaganda, asserting that the Council "was not pledged to further Communism in Japan." The Supreme Commander, he said, "has no intention of setting up any bayonet rule." He also inquired whether labor unions were free in Russia. During the discussion W. Macmahon Ball, the British member, stated that after careful study of the Soviet proposals, "I just could not find any signs of Communist propaganda." He observed that "it is unfortunate that such a proposal, designed for the good of the people, should be automatically stigmatized as Communist propaganda."²⁶

²⁴ At least one American who read the Japanese text of the manifesto stated privately that it was written in good Japanese and, in his judgment, bore no evidence of being a translation.

²⁵ *Christian Science Monitor*, May 29, 1946.

²⁶ Examination of the Russian proposals (see *Nippon Times*, July 11, 1946) substantiates Mr. Ball's view. They consisted of specific and matter-of-fact recommendations, broadly in line with existing SCAP policy, e.g.: "the freedom of labor unions should be guaranteed" and "written collective agreements . . . should constitute the basis of relations between workers and employers." Concrete suggestions were made regarding a minimum wage, equal pay for women, an 8-hour day, overtime pay, paid holidays and vacations, abolition of child labor, protection of women and children, maternity leave, workmen's compensation, industrial safety rules, and the like. Comparison of the Russian proposals with the report of SCAP's Labor Advisory Committee reveals differences in detail rather than in principle. For example, the Russians want two-week paid vacations guaranteed, while the Americans recommend one week at present, to be increased later if possible. Occasionally there is close correspondence in detail. The Russians say "the procedure of registration of labor unions [under the Trade Union Law] should be simplified, bringing to a minimum all necessary formalities." SCAP's committee finds that "The registration requirements the Law imposes on unions are . . . unduly burdensome." The most controversial point touched on by the Rus-

Labor Division, in dealing with Japanese labor, adopted a more conciliatory attitude than did Mr. Atcheson in dealing with the Russians. In August, 1946 Theodore Cohen, then chief of Labor Division, addressed the inaugural conventions of the Japanese Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Unions, reaffirming SCAP's friendly attitude but adding some words of advice. To the JFL Mr. Cohen said: "This inauguration of the post-war Nippon Rodo Kumiai Sodomei is indeed an historic occasion. Democracy in action is always inspiring . . . the response of the Japanese workers to the opportunities opened to them by SCAP . . . has exceeded my most optimistic expectations. . . . Japanese labor unionists can play a vital role in the creation of the new Japan."²⁷ He went on to stress the importance of full democratic participation by all union members in the work of the unions, and in a gentle warning against extreme demands, pointed out that "the well-being of the workers . . . is closely tied in with the essential soundness of the national economy." His speech to the CIU was similar in tone, with perhaps a shade more emphasis on good advice. Praising the Japanese unions for showing a sense of responsibility, he warned against abuse or dissipation of labor's strength. "Excessive diversion of union strength to outside activities better fulfilled by other organizations," he said, "can only handicap the efforts to improve the economic status of the Japa-

sians is production control (see p. 96), and their recommendation is extremely mild. They would legalize production control in the event that a plant was closed down as the result of a strike and the employees dismissed without severance pay. It is doubtful whether this would have satisfied Japanese labor; at any rate, it is a far cry from sovietization of factories. Many Americans would doubtless have preferred to see production control outlawed altogether, though SCAP had carefully refrained from taking a position on the question. It is doubtful, too, whether SCAP would have approved the Russian proposal for a medical insurance fund to be administered by the unions. However, the area of agreement was broad enough to afford ample basis for a constructive discussion.

²⁷ *Nippon Times*, Aug. 4, 1946.

nese workingman.”²⁸ This guarded language was correctly understood as a warning against “excessive” political activity by labor unions.

Policy in Labor Disputes

A similar evolution took place in SCAP's policy toward labor disputes. The initial policy was one of non-intervention. It was considered to be the responsibility of the Japanese government, through appropriate organs, to take any action needed to settle disputes. The theory was that the Japanese must learn to solve such problems for themselves. SCAP, however, reserved the right to intervene if it considered such action necessary. Up to the summer of 1946, according to an official report in June of that year: “In no instance have occupation troops been ordered to intervene in a labor dispute or been used to influence the settlement of a dispute or strike. Military intervention to maintain essential industries or services has at no time been necessary.”²⁹

As regards strikes, SCAP policy was stated in a command letter to the armies of occupation dated November 17, 1945: “Strikes, lock-outs, or other work stoppages which are inimical to the objectives of military occupation are prohibited. . . . A labor dispute ‘inimical to the objectives of military occupation’ is one which jeopardizes the safety of Allied troops, interferes with troop supply, disrupts public services or production necessary to the maintenance of public order, public service and public health or adversely affects other purposes of the occupation.” This was interpreted as follows: “In practice, transportation, communication, coal mining, public utilities, repatriation service and Occupation Forces’ projects have been considered essential. This limitation has been communicated orally by Economic and Scien-

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Aug. 23, 1946.

²⁹ *First Interim Report*, p. 7.

tific Section, GHQ/SCAP, to the Japanese Government, employers and labor unions on numerous occasions and has prevented several serious stoppages in those categories.”³⁰ The decision to prohibit a strike as inimical to the occupation was not left to the discretion of local military units but was supposed to be referred to SCAP.³¹ Actually, local units sometimes used their own judgment.

This policy was clear enough up to a point, but the question remained whether or not any given strike would be considered inimical to the occupation. No precise rules could easily be formulated and General MacArthur tried to avoid the necessity of making such decisions. Hence the Japanese could never be quite sure of SCAP's intentions. The autumn of 1946 saw a wave of labor militancy expressed in many disputes and actual or threatened strikes, some of national importance. On August 27 the Supreme Commander issued a public warning that “strikes, walkouts or other work stoppages which are inimical to the objectives of the occupation are prohibited.” Subsequently, rumors that SCAP was preparing to crack down on strikers gained wide circulation. For example, a member of the electrical workers' union informed the writer that leaders of his union had been told by a Japanese official that if the union should strike, its leaders would be arrested by the occupation forces. The source of such rumors cannot easily be traced. It is probable that some American officials, not necessarily those authorized to expound labor policy, expressed themselves privately to certain Japanese in terms which may well have been exaggerated with frequent repetition.

Actually, during the troubled days of the “October offensive,” SCAP continued to practice self-restraint. No specific strike was banned, except a small strike at Sasebo which, as it affected repatriation ships, was directly “against the occupation” (see p. 133). SCAP labor officials maintained in pub-

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³¹ *Labor Division Activities*, p. 11.

lic an attitude of strictly impartial detachment. Behind the scenes, however, SCAP did on occasion use its influence to head off a strike by promoting a settlement, especially in big disputes to which the Japanese government was a party. Indeed, when union demands affected the national budget, SCAP could hardly escape involvement. While such negotiations were secret, it is believed that in certain cases, including the electrical workers' dispute of 1946 (see below, pp. 114 ff.), SCAP brought pressure on the government to modify its resistance to union demands.

Not all representatives of SCAP adhered to the line laid down by Labor Division. Prior to the radio strike in October, for example, a SCAP official is reliably reported to have threatened strikers with arrest (see below, p. 108). Military government and other units in the field sometimes intervened in disputes in a manner not sanctioned by SCAP. An instance verified by a reliable observer was that of a local MG officer in Kobe who in the summer of 1946 intervened several times in labor-management negotiations and once ordered the arrest of union leaders. A letter to SCAP from the CIU, dated January 23, 1947, mentioned several cases of intervention by American troops. It was alleged, *inter alia*, that an officer in Hokkaido in October, 1946 had ordered union officials to call off a coal strike; that an MG officer in Fukuoka prefecture had advised union acceptance of company terms, threatening Eighth Army action; that in Tochigi prefecture armed CIC (Counter-Intelligence Corps) members had removed machinery from a plant to block production control; and that during the Kyushu coal dispute in October, 1946 a CIC officer had threatened a union mass meeting with machine guns.

It has not been possible to check the accuracy of these particular statements; but unauthorized action by American troops certainly occurred in many cases. Sometimes Labor Division was able to rectify the situation. Through its efforts, for ex-

ample, intervention by an MP lieutenant in the Tokyo-Shibaura dispute in October, 1946 was balked and the lieutenant was transferred to the United States. On another occasion a major who was breaking up a picket line in a movie strike was stopped by MP's. But often Labor Division was unable to impose its policy on local troop units; and to most Japanese, of course, the local units represented American authority.

The threat of a government employees' strike on February 1, 1947 (see below, pp. 137 ff.) presented a serious challenge to the non-intervention policy, already undermined by the October offensive. It is fairly certain that pressure was applied to the Japanese government to meet, in part, the demands of the unions; but in this case the unions would not accept the terms offered. Accordingly, at the last moment, SCAP publicly and formally banned the strike. After this, the breakdown of non-intervention was generally recognized, although not publicly admitted. Following the February 1 affair SCAP took a stronger line in discouraging strikes. At the same time SCAP officials began to take a more active hand in settling labor disputes, not by formal orders, but by giving advice that had the same force. They were concerned to avoid strikes but disliked the arbitrary method used in the government employees' case. The alternative was intensified efforts to settle disputes before they reached the strike stage. The new and creaky Japanese machinery of adjustment was not doing the job and SCAP felt it necessary to support it by informal methods which would detract as little as possible from the prestige of the Labor Relations Committees.

Such methods succeeded in preventing serious labor disturbances until the spring of 1948. At that time another surge of labor unrest, again spearheaded by government employees, expressed itself in organized absenteeism which at length assumed the proportions of a major strike wave. Ac-

cordingly, SCAP once more resorted to open intervention; it publicly prohibited a threatened national strike by communications workers, and later extended the ban to all "coordinated regional work stoppages." The basic right to strike, it was stated, was not affected.³²

Labor Education

Parallel with the activities described above, an effort was made to direct the course of labor relations into peaceful and orderly channels not by coercion but by education. Educational work had been carried on from the beginning, but it entered a new phase in the late summer of 1946, marked by intensification of effort and a shift of emphasis. Earlier activity had aimed primarily at encouraging labor organization by emphasizing the rights of labor. The initial objective having been attained, the new program put more emphasis on labor's responsibilities. The program, however, was not directed solely at labor unions, but also at employers, government officials, and the general public. It was designed to train the Japanese to use the new machinery of labor relations provided in the Trade Union Law and the Labor Relations Adjustment Law.

While the program was technically one of information it contained a strong propaganda element. The themes emphasized in work with unions may be illustrated by summarizing a pamphlet entitled *Democratic Trade Unionism*, issued by Labor Division in the fall of 1946. It begins by explaining that unions are formed because workers can better their economic condition more effectively by collective than by individual action. Democracy means the rule of the people, and in a democratic trade union all decisions are made

³² See below, p. 183. For further restrictions on strikes by government employees, see pp. 189 ff.

by majority vote of the members. Union leaders are elected by the membership to represent them and to carry out membership decisions. The main business of a union is collective bargaining with the employer. Employers—that is, persons having the right to hire and fire—are not admitted to membership in unions. A union which is controlled by the employer or by the government is not a true union.

The distinction between a union and a political party is explained carefully and at some length. Both have their place in a democratic society but their functions are distinct. A union which allows itself to be controlled by a political party weakens its effectiveness as a union. It is not democratic to force union members to follow the line of any political party. This does not mean that unions take no interest in politics and government. On the contrary, they work on a non-partisan basis to promote legislation and support or oppose candidates in the interests of labor. A union will make its own decisions on such matters by a democratic vote.

A democratic union will not accept financial aid from an employer, a political party, or the government, for this would mean losing its independence. Stress is laid on the autonomy of local unions, frequent meetings, and full membership participation. Union officers are elected by secret ballot, and can be removed from office for cause after a fair trial. A responsible union will not make impossible demands on the employer, will try to settle all issues by peaceful discussion, and will strike only as a last resort.

Another pamphlet issued in the spring of 1947 described in some detail Communist methods of infiltration into American unions, warning the Japanese to be on guard against such practices.

In materials prepared for employers stress was laid on the obligation of the employer to recognize the workers' right to organize and to bargain in good faith with the representatives of his employees. The employer would gain in the

end by the establishment of orderly collective bargaining and by improvement of the employees' morale. It is not, however, the business of the employer to teach his workers how to organize and operate unions. He should maintain a strictly hands-off policy.

Government officials, including members of Labor Relations Committees, were similarly instructed in the elements of sound labor-management relations, the principles underlying American and Japanese labor legislation, and the theory and practice of labor administration, conciliation, mediation, and arbitration.

While these were the guiding ideas, the bulk of the program consisted in disseminating information on the technique of collective bargaining, including negotiation of contracts, operations under the contract, the shop steward system, and grievance machinery; on democratic trade union methods, including simple parliamentary procedure, union elections, and union finances; on techniques of conciliation, mediation, and arbitration; and on the operations of such American government agencies as the Department of Labor, the National Labor Relations Board and the U.S. Conciliation Service. Besides studying American methods, the Japanese were encouraged to study their own Trade Union Law, Labor Relations Adjustment Law, and the operations of Labor Relations Committees.

On some occasions SCAP speakers addressed key groups of union leaders, employers, or government officials. But main reliance was placed on the distribution of printed materials, chiefly American publications, distributed in English or when possible in Japanese translation. These included publications of American unions, employers' associations and government agencies, particularly the Department of Labor. A few materials were especially prepared in Tokyo. Effective use was made of sample contracts and union constitutions. Bulk distribution was achieved mainly through trans-

lations issued by Japanese agencies. Japanese unions, employers' associations, research and educational institutions, and government, were urged to issue their own publications and to carry out their own educational programs through publications, posters, lectures, conferences, classes, libraries, and other media. Supplementing the main effort centered in Tokyo, military government units were encouraged to carry on similar programs at the local level.

In using American materials the Japanese were repeatedly warned not to copy slavishly American models, but to work out their own methods adapted to Japanese conditions. The fact remains that the models presented were almost exclusively American. It is probable that SCAP would have been willing to make more use of materials from other countries such as Britain and Australia. But that would have meant opening the door to Russian publications as well.

The impression should not be created that Japan was flooded with material on labor relations. Shortages of personnel, materials, and paper imposed limitations on the program. The greatest difficulty of course was to reach the union rank and file. The Japanese response was fairly encouraging. Many union leaders and forward-looking employers displayed a keen interest in getting information about America. Cooperation was obtained from many unions and employers' associations and from government. A large number of publications were issued, and a considerable number of classes and labor schools were organized. The ultimate results of such a program can be measured only over a term of years, and never exactly.

Other Measures Affecting Labor

To fill out the picture, brief mention should be made of other aspects of SCAP labor policy, besides those directly

affecting union organization. In addition to a system of labor relations based on free unions and collective bargaining, the SCAP blueprint contemplated legislation guaranteeing to workers minimum standards of health and well-being, the establishment of various services usually provided by government in a democratic industrial state, and the improvement of labor administration.

Factory Legislation

Before the war Japan had some protective legislation regulating hours of work, employment of women and children, health and safety standards, workmen's compensation, labor recruitment, and similar subjects. Standards were generally low, coverage was limited and enforcement was entirely inadequate. During the war these laws were largely suspended by ordinance. They were restored on November 1, 1945, with a few temporary exceptions as regards mining, due to the critical shortage of coal.³³ War-time wage controls were not immediately abolished but soon became a dead letter in practice.

SCAP's aim, however, was not merely to restore pre-war conditions but to raise the level of protective legislation at least to the minimum standards recommended by the International Labor Organization. This was, in general, accomplished by three laws passed by the Diet in March, 1947, after long discussion and public hearings at which workers and employers expressed their views.³⁴

The Labor Standards Law was a comprehensive statute covering all workers except domestic and family labor. It prohibited forced labor, contract labor, and labor recruitment except by legally authorized agencies. Wage differen-

³³ *Labor Division Activities*, p. 7.

³⁴ *Summation*, Mar., 1947.

tials based on sex were forbidden. Wages must be paid to the worker in cash at least once a month. Minimum wages might be established by competent wage boards. A basic 8-hour day and 48-hour week were established, with extra pay for night work. Six days' paid vacation annually was guaranteed after one year of service, with more for longer service. Regulations were prescribed for safety and sanitation in the place of employment. The employment of children under 15 was prohibited, except that children of 14 might be employed if they had finished primary school and those of 12 or over in certain light occupations. Night work and heavy or dangerous work were forbidden for women and young persons. Twelve weeks' maternity leave was prescribed, and menstrual leave if requested. Rules were laid down governing the use of apprentices. Penalties were provided for non-compliance. The law was to be enforced by Labor Standards Offices in Tokyo and the prefectures.

The Seamen's Law established similar regulations adapted to the special conditions of the shipping industry. The Workmen's Compensation Law set up a system of workmen's compensation on an insurance basis, administered by the government, which collected contributions from employers and made payments to workers.

Most of the provisions of the Labor Standards Law and the Seamen's Law, and all of the Workmen's Compensation Law, had been promulgated by September 1, 1947.³⁵

These laws were welcomed by Japanese labor. It was not to be expected, however—despite their long-range importance—that their promulgation would immediately result in any great improvement of labor conditions. As SCAP recognized, “standards which would normally be feasible are difficult to meet with industry operating below capacity and with shortages of materials and equipment.”³⁶

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Sept., 1947, p. 171.

³⁶ Advisory Committee Report, p. 14.

Labor Administration

Great stress was laid by SCAP experts on the need for developing comprehensive, efficient and modern machinery of labor administration, which Japan had never possessed. Without such machinery the most enlightened laws would remain a dead letter. Jurisdiction over labor affairs was scattered among many agencies, most of them inadequately financed and poorly staffed, and some essential functions were not being performed at all. The Ministry of Public Health and Welfare was nominally responsible for labor affairs (which formed a minor part of its duties), but the Ministry of Communications had jurisdiction over postal, telegraph and telephone workers, the Ministry of Transportation over railway workers and seamen, and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry over employees of government monopolies and semi-official corporations and miners. Labor administration in the prefectures was performed by the prefectural governments, which were responsible to the Home Ministry (later abolished). SCAP's Labor Division and Labor Advisory Committee strongly recommended the creation of a Ministry of Labor which would absorb all labor functions from other agencies and add a number of new ones. They urged, moreover, that all local labor agencies should be responsible to the Labor Ministry.

Passive resistance by members of the Yoshida cabinet effectively delayed the establishment of a Labor Ministry. At length, under the auspices of the Katayama cabinet, a bill creating such a ministry more or less along the lines desired by SCAP was passed by the Diet on August 29, 1947. The new ministry, established on September 1, had jurisdiction over all labor except seamen, who remained in the care of the Ministry of Transportation. It included a Labor Administration Bureau (for labor relations and education);

a Labor Standards Bureau (to enforce protective legislation); an Employment Security Bureau (for employment exchanges, vocational guidance, and administration of unemployment insurance); a Women's and Minors' Bureau; and a Bureau of Statistics and Investigation.³⁷ Local labor administration was partly in the hands of prefectural authorities, partly in those of local agencies of the Ministry. The first Minister of Labor was Manryo Yonekubo, Social Democrat, who before the war had been vice-president of the Seamen's Union, secretary-general of the Japan Labor Union Congress, and an official of Nippon Yusen Kaisha, the well-known shipping line.³⁸ With the advent of the Ashida cabinet he was succeeded by Kanju Kato, lifelong militant labor leader and left-wing Social Democrat.

The creation of this ministry marked a great step forward but many problems remained to be solved. Chief among these was the extreme shortage of competent personnel. Old-style bureaucrats had to be re-educated and large numbers of new ones trained before it would be possible to build a really adequate labor administration. SCAP did what it could to push the Japanese government in this direction within the limits of the general policy, established some months after the occupation began, that so far as possible reforms should come from Japanese initiative and SCAP should use its powers of direct command only as a last resort.

Reform of Wage Structure

SCAP experts felt that far-reaching reforms were needed in the Japanese wage structure, which was so complex as almost to defy comprehension. The pattern varied, but typically there was a basic wage supplemented by regular allow-

³⁷ *Summation*, Aug., 1947, pp. 199-200. ³⁸ *Ibid.*, May, 1947.

ances based on the employee's age, length of service, number of dependents, efficiency, place of residence, etc. On top of this were all sorts of irregular allowances or bonuses granted at the end of the year, in the winter months or in special emergencies. Such special allowances, rather than a regular wage increase, were often given in response to union demands for higher pay. Some of these complexities grew up during the war, and in addition, under war and post-war conditions many companies distributed, free or at low prices, meals, food, clothing, daily necessities and even their own products, which employees could sell on the black market. There was little correlation between the wage a job paid and the skill, training, or responsibility which it involved. SCAP experts felt that this system not only complicated collective bargaining but tended to lower the efficiency of industry. It was recognized that the system had some social value and also that it could not be reorganized overnight, but efforts were made to get the Japanese to study the problem and work gradually toward a more rational wage structure.

Labor Recruiting and Public Works

While SCAP at first avoided any responsibility for solving Japan's economic difficulties, it was forced, even early in the occupation, to take some steps in order to prevent complete breakdown. Among the emergency problems was that of recruiting labor for coal mines and for repatriation ships. SCAP encouraged the Japanese government in efforts to attract labor to these occupations by improving notoriously bad working and living conditions, as well as by propaganda. SCAP also encouraged the formation and execution of a large-scale public works program to relieve unemployment, with indifferent success.

Employment Exchanges

The Japanese government maintained some 600 public employment exchanges. These were studied by SCAP experts and recommendations for their improvement were made to the Japanese government. Among other things, it was recommended that labor exchanges should not refer applicants to jobs vacant as the result of a labor dispute.³⁹ It was noted that during the war the labor exchanges had been closely linked to the labor front; and that remnants of labor-front influence were still evident in the relation of some labor exchanges with labor bosses.⁴⁰

Labor Bosses

The institution of the labor boss, sometimes known as the *oyabun-kobun* (patron-client) system, was one of the most vicious survivals in modern Japan of a feudal pattern in social relations.⁴¹ It was especially prevalent in the construction industry and in the supply of casual labor elsewhere. Labor bosses were said in 1946 to control about 2,000,000 workers, and often controlled not only their jobs but also their housing, education, medical care, and votes. They kept back from 10 to 50 per cent of the workers' wages. They received special food rations for distribution to their workers, kept back part or all of them and sold them on the black market. Workers were intimidated and in some cases those who protested were beaten up or murdered. In Kanagawa prefecture the leading labor boss, one Matsui, who headed an organization known as Romu Kyodo Kai, controlled 138,-

³⁹ Advisory Committee Report, p. 19. ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴¹ Cf. *Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 20, 1945.

000 workers, of whom about 50,000 were employed by the occupation forces. In one district the labor exchange did all the work while the labor boss collected the profits. Often disguised as "welfare associations," the labor bosses were not only extortionate, but an effective bar to union organization or to free exercise of the rights of democratic citizenship.

Although labor supplied to the occupation forces was supposed to be recruited by Japanese authorities through Boards of Day Laborers or public labor exchanges, much of it was actually furnished by labor bosses. Local American commanders of tactical units were interested in getting the job done and did not feel that they had a mission to reform Japanese labor practices. In one case the prefectural government ordered the abolition of the labor boss system but was vetoed by the local American commander. Many American officers, on the other hand, deplored the system but could do nothing about it as there was no effective substitute. These conditions were due in part to faulty liaison, which often kept even local military government units, let alone tactical units, ignorant of SCAP policy on labor and other matters, and made it difficult for SCAP to keep in touch with local developments.

As time went on, liaison improved, and efforts were eventually made not only to remedy the situation in regard to occupation force labor, but to stamp out the labor boss system altogether. In July, 1946 the Welfare Minister, prompted by SCAP, issued orders forbidding the use of labor bosses to supply casual labor for the occupation forces. In September it was reported that twelve of the thirteen prefectures which had been using bosses had abolished the practice, and the job of procurement was being turned over to the public labor exchanges.⁴² On December 14, 1946, as noted elsewhere (p. 32), the Japanese government issued orders which if

⁴² *Summation*, Sept., 1946, pp. 158-59.

fully enforced would have gone far toward wiping out the labor boss organizations. But a year later reports indicated that they were still flourishing and still furnishing labor to the occupation forces.⁴³

Occupation Force Labor

Labor required by the occupation forces was recruited and paid by the Japanese government, and supplied by local liaison officers on requisition by local U.S. Army commands. In January, 1946 the number of Japanese civilians employed by the occupation forces was estimated to be at least 175,000.⁴⁴ Prevailing wages were supposed to be paid, but as these were determined on the basis of wages paid by the Japanese government for the same type of work, they were generally well below the rates paid by private industry, especially after the latter had been forced up by union pressure.

Japanese workers employed by the occupation forces were permitted to organize and to bargain collectively with their employer (the Japanese government), but not to strike. A Federation of Occupation Forces' Workers' Unions was established on September 2, 1946, representing 40 locals and 32,000 workers. It decided to affiliate with the JFL. Another union, the All Japan Federation of Occupation Forces' Workers' Unions, operated chiefly in the Tokyo area and was affiliated with the CIU.⁴⁵ The latter organization on November 6, 1946 signed a contract with the Japanese government covering 50,000 workers. It established district councils, composed of representatives of the local union and the government, to discuss questions of wages, working con-

⁴³ Subsequently renewed attacks were directed against the labor boss system but information as to the degree of success is not at hand.

⁴⁴ *Labor Division Activities*, p. 1.

⁴⁵ *Summation*, Sept., 1946.

ditions, discharges, etc.⁴⁶ On May 26, 1947, after negotiation with the unions, the government announced a new wage scale for occupation force workers. It approximately doubled existing rates, thus bringing the wages of occupation force workers into line with those of other government employees.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Nov., 1946, p. 211.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, May, 1947.

IV

GROWTH OF LABOR ORGANIZATION: 1945-46

In 1940 the Japanese labor movement, never strong, seemed to be utterly crushed, both physically and spiritually. Yet in the first year and a half after the war union membership leaped to nearly five million,¹ more than ten times the pre-war peak, and organized labor had become a force to be reckoned with in politics.

One factor in the extraordinary rebirth of the labor movement was a sense of liberation and hope for a better life in a new Japan, evident in the dazed but happy faces of the marchers on Japan's first post-war May Day. A year earlier, such a demonstration would have been met with machine guns. Another factor was a surge of long-repressed and angry protest against injustice and hardship. There was also an element of conformity and social compulsion; unions were now correct and backed by the voice of authority, as Sampo had been, only the voice was now MacArthur's. On the other hand, union organizers had constantly to contend with the notion, well implanted in the past by official propa-

¹ By the end of 1948 union membership had reached 6,700,000, or approximately 50 per cent of all non-agricultural workers, according to a Labor Ministry report (*Kyodo*, Apr. 16, 1949). A Japanese government survey at the end of 1947 showed that transportation and communications were 89 per cent organized, mining 82 per cent, finance 72 per cent, gas, electricity and water supply 67 per cent, professions 49 per cent, government service 42 per cent and manufacturing 37 per cent (*Summation*, June, 1948). Although these figures may be subject to some discount for exaggeration and faulty records, they suggest the proportions of the movement.

ganda, that unions *per se* were something dangerous, subversive and un-Japanese.

TABLE 3
JAPAN: TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP ^a

Industry	June 30, 1948			
	No. of Unions	Men	Membership Women	Total
Agriculture	143	6,370	1,922	8,292
Forestry	566	53,146	6,104	59,250
Fishing	105	16,427	1,304	17,731
Mining				
Coal	1,035	425,761	64,340	490,101
Other	341	65,298	11,188	76,486
Total	1,376	491,059	75,528	566,587
Construction	1,854	450,326	23,534	473,860
Manufacturing				
Metal	1,401	247,013	40,968	287,981
Machinery	3,802	598,068	114,885	712,953
Chemicals	2,042	273,578	98,254	371,832
Ceramics	651	64,965	21,913	86,878
Textiles	1,368	104,873	298,208	403,081
Lumber and wood-working	1,928	90,154	22,316	112,470
Foodstuffs	907	60,021	28,114	88,135
Printing and bookbinding	380	31,454	13,692	45,146
Other	322	15,298	8,780	24,078
Repair services	389	62,159	5,065	67,224
Total	13,190	1,547,583	652,195	2,199,778
Gas, electricity and water supply	747	151,319	15,429	166,748
Commerce				
Wholesale trades	408	35,315	10,806	46,121
Retail trades	527	62,115	21,236	83,351
Other	358	46,665	13,678	60,343
Total	1,293	144,095	45,720	189,815
Finance	779	105,225	80,344	185,569

TABLE 3

JAPAN: TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP ^a—Continued

Industry	June 30, 1948			
	No. of Unions	Men	Membership Women	Total
Transportation and communications				
Land transportation	2,575	775,881	69,057	844,938
Seamen	40	102,756	...	102,756
Longshoremen	288	53,439	6,128	59,567
Communications	1,449	238,188	108,516	346,704
Total	<u>4,352</u>	<u>1,170,264</u>	<u>183,701</u>	<u>1,353,965</u>
Service professions				
Amusement and recreation	182	12,473	6,818	19,291
Advertising and publicity	20	2,305	577	2,882
Other	156	9,013	5,916	14,929
Total	<u>358</u>	<u>23,791</u>	<u>13,311</u>	<u>37,102</u>
Liberal professions				
Education	1,623	324,422	191,441	515,863
Other	1,259	66,757	53,243	120,000
Total	<u>2,882</u>	<u>391,179</u>	<u>244,684</u>	<u>635,863</u>
Government and public organizations	5,928	473,792	142,330	616,122
Not elsewhere classified				
Occupation Forces workers	298	90,700	19,177	109,877
Other	69	14,417	1,734	16,151
Total	<u>367</u>	<u>105,117</u>	<u>20,911</u>	<u>126,028</u>
Grand total	33,940	5,129,693	1,507,017	6,636,710

^a Unions reported registered exclusive of unions reported discontinued.

Source: *Summation*, Aug., 1948. Data from Ministry of Labor.

Attempts at union organization began soon after the surrender, but the movement did not really get under way for several months. General MacArthur's statement of October

11, 1945 gave the stamp of SCAP approval, and the passage of the Trade Union Law in December (though it was not promulgated until March) legally guaranteed the right to organize. Thereafter, union membership increased at the rate of about 500,000 a month until the summer of 1946, after which the rate of increase gradually slowed down.

There was little in the way of a central organizing drive; rather, local unions sprang up spontaneously and without coordination. The few surviving pre-war labor leaders were joined by many ardent spirits with no previous union experience. Several pre-war unions were revived in the fall of 1945, including the Japan Seamen's Union, the Tokyo Transport Workers' Union, the Tokyo Gas Workers' Union, and the Tokyo Communications Workers' Union. But these were soon overshadowed by new unions representing workers and industries never before touched by trade unionism.

Socialists and Communists played a major role in organizing the new unions. On September 29, 1945 some 30 former leaders of the National Council of Labor Unions held a preliminary meeting at the home of Kanju Kato, and on October 10 about 120 pre-war labor leaders, chiefly Socialists, met to plan the revival of the labor movement. They included Komakichi Matsuoka, former head of the right-wing All Japan General Federation of Labor, and Kanju Kato, pre-war leader of the left-wing National Council of Japanese Labor Unions, who agreed to join forces in the interests of a united labor front. Both were Social Democrats, Matsuoka belonging to the right and Kato to the left wing of the party. Communists were equally active in promoting labor organization, making up in energy what they lacked in numbers.

In general the Social Democrats were primarily interested in building up their party strength, in order to seek political power by constitutional methods, and regarded union organization chiefly as a means to that end. The Communists sought to build strong unions for their own sake, under

Communist control if possible, and were more active in appealing directly to the workers on the basis of their immediate needs.² The Kansai (Osaka-Kobe) region was regarded as a Social Democratic stronghold while the Kanto (Tokyo-Yokohama) region was the main center of Communist strength, another being the Hokkaido coal districts. There was a good deal of rivalry but, at first, little dual unionism. Most workers saw little difference between Socialists and Communists and in the early months of 1946, in many districts, adherents of both parties cooperated with one another and formed local federations regardless of politics.

The usual unit of organization was a single factory, mine or office, but some unions were formed on a geographical basis cutting across industrial lines. Thousands of such local units sprang up. The next stage was a movement for federation into larger bodies, which, again, followed no consistent pattern. There were national industrial unions; city, district, or prefectural federations;³ and company-wide unions uniting all plants of a large corporation. A single local union might affiliate with federations of all three types. The dominant form of federation, however, was the national industrial union. Craft unionism was almost unknown. In fact, failure to recognize the special interests of various crafts within an industry led to some internal difficulties, as with the government railway and motion picture workers, and hence to recognition of the need for more attention to craft interests within the industrial framework.

The first new national industrial union was established by newspaper and radio workers on February 9, 1946.⁴ Others followed, including government railway workers and motion

² *Labor Division Activities*, p. 10.

³ Of these the most important was the Kanto District Council of Labor Unions, organized on Jan. 27, 1946, under Communist leadership. This was a temporary set-up which dissolved on Sept. 5 after the inauguration of the CIU. (*Asahi*, Jan. 28, 1946; *Jiji*, Sept. 5, 1946.)

⁴ *Summation*, Feb., 1946.

picture workers in March; coal miners, electrical workers and steel workers in April; communications workers in May. By June there were also national unions of streetcar workers, printing and publishing workers, and tobacco workers. Of course these unions did not at first embrace all workers in the industry although as time went on they tended to do so.

Discussions looking toward formation of a national labor federation began at an early stage. A Preparatory Committee for a Japanese Federation of Labor was formed under Socialist leadership in October; in January it adopted a temporary platform⁵ and elected Komakichi Matsuoka as chairman. A month later the newspaper workers and others started a rival movement, the Preparatory Committee for a Congress of Industrial Unions, headed by Katsumi Kikunami. This group included Communists and others who believed that the old-line leadership was sterile and tainted with war guilt.

For several months earnest discussions were held in an effort to merge the two bodies. This was part of a larger movement, energetically pursued in the winter and spring of 1946, to bring all left-wing organizations—Socialists, Communists, labor and farmer unions, and others—together in a united popular front. Spearheading the movement was the Democratic People's League, led by Kanson Arahata and other left-wing Social Democrats. The CIU and the Communists were keen for united action, but the JFL and right-wing Social Democrats held back, fearing, as they said, to be swamped in a Communist tide. Hence the unity movement failed; although the idea of unity was recognized as desirable by all labor groups, and limited local cooperation was sometimes achieved, the two wings of the movement gradually

⁵ The platform included inquiry into the responsibility of the ruling class for the war, overthrow of Fascists, opposition to the bourgeoisie, workers' participation in the control of industry, wages proportionate to prices, lower income taxes, measures against unemployment, and support of the Social Democratic Party. (*Nippon Sangyo Keizai*, Jan. 19, 1946.)

moved farther apart. The split was crystallized in August when both the All Japan General Federation of Labor Unions (Zen Nippon Rodo Kumiai Sodomei) and the National Congress of Industrial Unions (Zenkoku Sangyo-betsu Kumiai Kaigi)⁶ were formally inaugurated at national conventions in Tokyo.

The JFL convention was held on August 1-3, 1946. By a vote of 594 to 127, Komakichi Matsuoka was elected chairman over Kanju Kato, who was chosen sub-chairman. The secretary-general, Toraichi Hara, and the three vice-chairmen were all from the right wing.⁷ The convention adopted a platform calling for a 48-hour week; equal pay and opportunity for women; maternity leave; no income tax on wages; a democratic social insurance system; a Labor Standards Law; full employment; revival of production; collective bargaining and labor-management committees; recognition of production control; no company unions; healthy nationwide labor federation; affiliation with World Federation of Trade Unions; and destruction of feudal and militaristic education, ideas, and customs.

A policy statement adopted by the convention, analyzing the development of Japanese capitalism in Marxist terms, concluded that owing to the critical situation produced by the war Japan could not wait for the normal cycle of capital accumulation, concentration and socialization, but must proceed at once to socialize banking, production, and distribution. To this end, a truly democratic government must be established by peaceful means. Japan should participate in the International Labor Organization, Bretton Woods, and other international economic agreements; and should promote her foreign trade, but not on the basis of exploitation of labor. Labor, not capital, must take the lead in national

⁶ Abbreviated here as JFL and CIU; popularly known in Japan as Sodomei and Sanbetsu. The JFL later changed its official title to General Federation of Japanese Trade Unions.

⁷ *Jiji*, Aug. 3, 1946.

economic reconstruction. The convention strongly condemned the Communist Party for attempting to disrupt the labor movement. It asserted the necessity of building a powerful Socialist Party, which would strengthen the labor unions; but held that the unions should be politically independent. The convention reaffirmed JFL support of the Social Democratic Party, and rejected a motion for political neutrality in the interests of a united labor front.⁸

The CIU convention, meeting on August 19-21, elected Katsumi Kikunami, dynamic leader of the newspaper workers, as chairman, though there was some sentiment for Kazuyoshi Dobashi of the communications workers. Dobashi was chosen as vice-chairman together with Yasuo Sakaguchi of the government railway workers, Tokyo District. The CIU platform, broadly similar to that of the JFL, called for national economic reconstruction; struggle against feudalism, militarism, and Fascism; admission to the World Federation of Trade Unions; labor unity; social insurance; a 40-hour week; opposition to mass discharges; cooperation with farmers' unions; support of movements for colonial independence; and world peace. The convention chairman, Togo Kameda, denied charges that the CIU was dominated by Communists. Unions, he asserted, must sometimes engage in political action but should not be subservient to any political party.⁹ A proposal to merge with the JFL was voted down, on the ground that the latter's centralized organization curtailed the freedom of action of constituent unions, but a motion favoring a united front with the JFL was carried by a large majority.

There were some differences between the structure of the JFL and CIU as originally organized. The JFL was more highly centralized. It was composed of local unions, which were directly affiliated to the Federation. The locals were grouped into prefectural federations, whose work was closely

⁸ *Nippon Times*, Aug. 4, 1946.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Aug. 21, 1946.

supervised by the national Central Committee. Locals might organize "conferences," or form national unions, along industrial lines, but only with the approval of the Central Committee. In this framework it would be difficult to form strong national industrial unions which might challenge the Federation leadership. In fact, the JFL at first had few affiliated national unions.¹⁰

The CIU on the other hand was basically a federation of national industrial unions, many of which were strong in their own right. The degree of control which they exercised over their locals varied from one union to another. There were also locals directly affiliated with the CIU; the structure of neither federation had attained any logical consistency. Member unions conducted their own affairs autonomously, the function of the national headquarters being coordination and guidance. The CIU also had some district councils but they were less important, and more autonomous, than those of the JFL. The JFL proclaimed the virtues of "democratic centralism," while the CIU lauded those of autonomy. In practice, however, the national leadership in both cases tried to exert effective control over affiliates but the JFL was more successful, possibly because it did not as a rule take in unions it could not control.

A third federation, the All Japan Council of Labor Unions (JCLU), was organized in October, 1946 with about 100,000 members, headed by Hitoshi Yamakawa, a pre-war labor and Socialist leader. Sponsored by the Democratic People's League, it sought to bring about unity in the labor movement. Another motive was to combine a number of independent unions in order to secure the right to nominate members of the Central Labor Relations Committee. The

¹⁰ By March, 1947, however, the JFL had 11 national industrial unions as affiliates, and in October, 1947 it was reported to be reorganizing along industrial lines (*Kyodo*, May 29, Oct. 7, 1947).

new federation attracted a number of independent unions which were dissatisfied with both of the existing federations, especially coal miners in Kyushu.¹¹ Though it remained a minor factor it did serve as a sort of bridge facilitating cooperation between the JFL and CIU.

There were also, by the fall of 1946, many large unions of national or regional scope not affiliated with any federation. The most important were the General Federation of Government Railway Workers' Unions, with over 500,000 members (its powerful Tokyo District belonged to the CIU, but later withdrew); the All Japan Government and Public Office Workers' Union (over 400,000); the All Japan Shipyard Workers' Union (around 100,000); and the Japan Seamen's Union (about 75,000). Company-wide unions in large corporations (not necessarily company unions) embraced many thousands of workers; examples are the All Japan Council of Mitsubishi Mining Industry Workers' Unions and the Federation of Oji Paper Workers' Unions. Independent regional organizations, such as the Kanto District Federation of Private Railway Workers' Unions and the West Japan Federation of Mitsui Mine Workers' Unions, and numerous local unions still independent and unaffiliated, made up an organizational picture of decided complexity. Special mention should be made of the government employees' unions, whose membership totaled around 2,000,000. Some were affiliated with the CIU and some were independent, but most of them were loosely linked in a Liaison Council through which they presented joint demands to the government.

Figures on union membership vary widely. At the time of their inauguration in August, 1946 the JFL claimed 850,000 members and the CIU 1,600,000.¹² There was some overlapping between the two federations. By January, 1947 the

¹¹ *Summation*, Oct., 1946.

¹² *Nippon Times*, Aug. 2, 30, 1946.

JFL claimed 1,067,000 and the CIU 1,770,000.¹³ At this time, according to a press estimate, the CIU had approximately 24 affiliated unions (mostly national in scope), while the JFL had 1,700 (mostly locals). Two-thirds of the JFL members were in regional federations and one-third in industrial unions, of which the largest were in transportation, textiles, mining, and tobacco. The leading CIU affiliates, in order of size, were the communications workers (400,000), machine tool workers, chemical workers, government railway workers (Tokyo District), teachers, electric appliance workers, coal miners, electrical workers, iron and steel workers, stevedores, and newspaper and radio workers (29,000).¹⁴

Organization was at first extremely loose, and it is doubtful whether the average worker had any clear idea of his relationship to his union. Both the leaders and the rank and file were almost totally without trade union experience, except for a few whose experience had been gained under pre-war conditions. Leadership tended to gravitate into the hands of intellectuals, although some came up from the ranks. The most typical union leader was young, enthusiastic, idealistic, and impetuous. He had not had time to learn the mechanics of running a union or to hammer out a working philosophy of politics or trade unionism. There was also the cautious type who moved with the times but shied at too

¹³ *Ibid.*, Jan. 30, 1947. By July, 1947 the JFL claimed 1,067,000 members, the CIU 1,700,000, the JCLU 157,000 and independent unions 1,160,000 (*Summation*, July, 1948). Somewhat different figures are given in a Ministry of Labor survey as of December, 1947 (*Summation*, May, 1948):

	<i>Claimed by national union</i>	<i>Reported by local unions</i>
JFL	1,005,125	759,279
CIU	1,186,965	1,146,329
Other national unions	2,568,376	2,710,855
Unaffiliated	1,651,969
		<hr/> 6,268,432

¹⁴ *Nippon Times*, Jan. 30, 1947.

great innovations. There were many careerists and not a few racketeers.¹⁵

A phenomenon difficult for Americans to understand was the fact that many union officials, chosen in free elections, were drawn from the ranks of managerial employees, such as department and section heads. This was a carry-over from the old habit of looking to management for leadership and direction. The remarkable thing was that many men of this type identified their interests with the union rather than with management and turned out to be active and devoted trade unionists. This practice, of course, violated all the canons of Western trade unionism and was criticized even in Japan. Labor feared that managerial employees who were union officers would serve the company rather than the union; management feared that the talents and inside knowledge of executive employees would be diverted to serve the union rather than the company.

Moreover, many unions were at first wholly or partly financed by the employer. Many full-time union officers continued to draw their regular pay from the company;¹⁶ local unions had their offices on company premises, used company supplies, etc. One reason for accepting the employer's aid was that the unions had few financial resources. Dues were low, as were workers' incomes, although dues collections were reasonably effective and the checkoff was common.¹⁷

SCAP advisers urged unions to stand on their own feet financially in order to preserve their independence. Yet, in

¹⁵ Cf. Eiji Kurosawa, "Labor Leaders in Post-war Japan," Rengo Press Digest Service, Apr. 10, 1947; Mark Starr, "The Japanese Labor Movement and Its Leaders," *Labor and the Nation*, Jan.-Feb., and Mar.-Apr., 1947.

¹⁶ According to a government survey in December, 1947, out of 28,053 local unions in Japan, 5,143 had paid full-time officers; and of 17,504 officers in these unions, 12,675 were paid by the employer (*Summation*, May, 1948).

¹⁷ Average dues in December, 1947 were ¥17 per month (around 3 cents), or about two-thirds of one per cent of average wages in manufacturing. The checkoff at this time covered 3,613,915 union members (*Summation*, May, 1948).

the first confusion of labor organization, many employers gave direct or indirect financial support to employee organizations without insisting on calling the tune. In numerous instances unions whose officers were company executives and a good portion of whose expenses were met from company funds nevertheless behaved in an extremely independent fashion. In one such factory visited by the writer, union posters bearing savage caricatures of bloated capitalists were decorously displayed on the plant bulletin board.

It was therefore impossible to apply American criteria in drawing distinctions between independent unions and company or puppet unions. But actual puppet unions, controlled by the employer, were very common in Japan, where they had ample precedent. Many employers sought to head off free labor organization by setting up so-called unions under their own, sometimes disguised, control. Some of these were later dissolved by Labor Relations Committees and some were driven from the field by genuine unions, but many remained. As employers recovered their equilibrium and took steps to counteract the growing strength of organized labor, many used diplomatic methods rather than open opposition.

By Western standards the internal organization of the new Japanese unions did not at first, in most cases, conform very closely to accepted democratic criteria, although some progress in this direction was made later as procedures were regularized. Constitutional safeguards against abuse of power by union officers, and democratic methods of conducting union business, were sketchy to say the least. This did not necessarily mean that the essentials of democracy were absent, although procedure might be rough and ready. Stormy union meetings, and frequent shake-ups among union officers, demonstrated that a healthy spirit of independence was by no means absent. Some unions, indeed, tried to practice almost pure democracy, with consequent loss of efficiency.

Nevertheless there was a real danger that the union movement, or parts of it, might be taken over by self-appointed leaders animated either by self-interest or by political fanaticism. The ablest union leaders tended to behave in a rather dictatorial fashion toward their followers, and this was true of sincere idealists as well as of the careerist type. The docility of the Japanese worker was an asset to union strength in that it made for good discipline, but it was also an invitation to exploitation by unscrupulous leadership.

The organizing and propaganda techniques of Japanese unions were often ingenious and effective. Clever and colorful posters and placards made an excellent publicity medium. Despite scanty funds many unions issued leaflets, pamphlets and union papers, and a trade union motion picture committee produced a few films. Perhaps the best known early labor film was "People Who Create Tomorrow," produced by the employees in the Toho film company studio during a strike.

About 25 per cent of union members were women, and a few women became active in the movement, but on the whole the attitude of women workers was passive. Many unions established women's departments, which found their task difficult. Like many male workers, women were slow to grasp the broad aims of the labor movement and tended to think in terms of their own personal problems.

As before the war, Japanese labor leaders were highly political-minded. Distinctions between union and party activity were less sharply drawn than in the United States. Yet to speak of political "control" of the movement would be to oversimplify a complicated and fluid situation. Most new labor leaders who had emancipated themselves from feudal concepts tended to think in radical and socialist terms, but they were not necessarily committed to the support of either the Social Democratic or the Communist party. As for the rank and file, the unions, dealing as they did with concrete

on-the-job issues, were more real to the average worker than Diet debates in far-off Tokyo. The unions, taken as a whole, were more powerful than either of the two left-wing parties, and while party strategy influenced union policies, union needs also affected party decisions.

With this qualification labor's political line-up may be sketched as of late 1946 and early 1947, the end of the first period of rapid organization. The JFL, somewhat smaller than the CIU and much more tightly organized, was largely dominated by Social Democratic leadership, chiefly of the right wing. The CIU, in contrast, was a big sprawling aggregation not amenable to control by anybody, although the Communists tried to control it and did exert a good deal of influence.¹⁸ Communists and their sympathizers exerted a shaky and uncertain control over national CIU headquarters, which, however, by no means controlled the actions of all the affiliated unions. These differed among themselves, Communist influence being strong in some and weak in others, and usually stronger at the top and weaker at the local level. Attempts to impose a centralized discipline met with very uneven success. As for the many independent unions, it is impossible to generalize.¹⁹

An American journalist, writing in June 1947, summarized the Japanese labor picture as follows:

¹⁸ Cf. *Fortune*, Mar., 1947, p. 184: "While the C.I.U. has Communist members in high positions, particularly in regional offices, trade-unionism is in such flux that no one could control it. C.I.U. unions are in the main autonomous in setup and independent in mind."

¹⁹ Two years later, in December, 1948, a well informed American observer estimated that of the 4,000,000 organized workers in private industry, Communists probably "controlled" about 10 per cent and non-Communists 75 per cent, the remaining 15 per cent representing unions in which Communist and non-Communist forces were about equally divided. Communist influence, according to the same source, was somewhat stronger among the 2,500,000 government employees; here it was believed that Communists controlled some 15 per cent of the membership, non-Communists 50 per cent, with 35 per cent divided. Some equally well qualified observers felt that this estimate of Communist influence was somewhat too low.

Japanese labor is like an unchained and bewildered giant. It knows its strength, but it is not quite sure how and where to apply it. If the Japanese labor movement emerges from its present immaturity and learns to distinguish between freedom and irresponsibility, it may become the principal guardian of democracy and pacifism in this country. Improperly led, or goaded by repression and economic despair, it could as easily plunge Japan into disorder and Communism.²⁰

²⁰ A. T. Steele in *New York Herald Tribune*, June 6, 1947.

V

LABOR DISPUTES

The newly organized unions lost no time in presenting demands to their employers. Labor disputes broke out on a scale unprecedented in Japanese history. The official figures, given in Table 4, may underestimate both the number of disputes and the number of workers involved. It should be noted, however, that they include labor-management controversies not accompanied by a strike or other interruption of production. Such controversies account for the majority of the workers involved in disputes. It should be noted also that disputes in private industry were numerically less impressive than those between the government and its employees; for example, of 1,794,000 workers involved in disputes in December, 1947, 1,670,000 were government employees.¹

In the early days of the occupation most disputes were settled quickly, and usually with a victory for the union. Employers were stunned by the defeat, disorganized and uncertain, fearful of antagonizing the occupation forces, and in some cases, no doubt, apprehensive of revolutionary developments. Later the employers' attitude stiffened and protracted struggles occurred, especially as the scale of dispute shifted from individual plants to an entire industry or region. Government authorities similarly recovered from their initial shock and took a more forceful line toward labor dis-

¹ *Summation*, Feb., 1948, p. 191.

TABLE 4
JAPAN: LABOR DISPUTES^a

	Accompanied by act of dispute												Total with no act of dispute		Grand Total				
	Strike			Lockout			Slowdown			Production control			Total			No.	Workers	No.	Workers
	No.	Workers	No.	Workers	No.	Workers	No.	Workers	No.	Workers	No.	Workers	No.	Workers					
1946																			
Jan.	27	6,142	3	376	9	2,549	13	29,029	52	38,096	22	4,653	74	42,749					
Feb.	23	6,523	5	306	10	6,847	20	15,806	58	29,482	23	5,671	81	35,153					
Mar.	32	48,527	7	1,271	9	10,772	39	20,651	87	81,221	16	1,920	103	83,141					
April	30	14,762	4	689	6	840	53	34,815	93	51,106	18	9,811	109	60,917					
May	42	9,047	3	608	8	3,401	56	38,847	109	51,903	23	7,075	132	58,978					
June	29	6,735	7	727	7	10,147	44	18,056	87	27,434	17	6,120	104	33,554					
July	48	14,721	8	381	17	10,147	25	2,478	98	27,727	13	9,506	111	37,233					
Aug.	61	24,054	11	603	18	4,983	28	23,245	118	52,885	12	538,277	130	591,162					
Sept.	59	81,368	11	1,143	28	14,484	37	22,390	135	119,385	13	535,763	148	655,148					
Oct.	104	188,958	11	1,133	17	2,633	35	9,138	167	201,862	9	91,597	176	293,459					
Nov.	89	76,563	9	922	14	3,262	24	7,663	136	88,410	9	87,909	145	176,319					
Dec.	65	61,361	10	1,266	17	23,569	26	8,566	118	94,762	17	1,521,820	135	1,616,582					

TABLE 4
JAPAN: LABOR DISPUTES ^a—Continued

1947	Accompanied by act of dispute												Total with no act of dispute		Grand Total	
	Strike		Lockout		Slowdown		Production control		Total		Total with no act of dispute		Grand Total			
	No.	Workers	No.	Workers	No.	Workers	No.	Workers	No.	Workers	No.	Workers	No.	Workers		
30	17,491	10	717	9	2,316	26	6,243	75	26,767	16	1,436,780	91	1,463,547			
Jan.	28,101	6	260	14	1,462	24	5,037	96	34,860	22	1,444,381	118	1,479,241			
Feb.	35,553	9	948	11	2,370	23	6,104	118	44,975	14	13,754	132	58,729			
Mar.	8,252	3	182	7	689	13	2,097	45	11,220	12	190,312	57	201,562			
April	5,487	4	183	13	933	12	834	50	7,437	22	99,673	72	107,110			
May	11,454	5	337	9	3,441	10	393	49	15,625	23	29,598	72	45,223			
June	16,671	12	976	11	2,596	15	10,670	70	30,913	28	10,995	98	41,908			
July	19,118	13	1,742	24	9,889	25	1,509	115	32,258	39	34,700	154	66,958			
Aug.	60,306	15	2,230	27	18,254	21	1,937	126	82,727	42	1,049,625	168	1,132,352			
Sept.	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	92	91,571	58	1,756,011	150	1,847,582			
Oct.	62,087	6	646	8	1,078	21	1,404	69	65,215	56	1,746,358	125	1,811,573			
Nov.	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	58	138,139	80	1,797,494	138	1,935,633			
Dec.																
1948																
Jan.	29,711	8	469	9	943	13	1,417	62	32,540	100	1,925,874	162	1,958,414			
Feb.	77,263	4	54	13	111,651	16	590	66	189,558	102	1,908,521	168	2,098,079			
Mar.	818,418	11	616	17	116,543	21	1,594	98	937,171	96	1,439,254	194	2,376,425			
April	203,663	9	479	13	13,575	17	3,679	79	221,396	84	2,062,887	163	2,284,283			
May	190,242	7	336	14	98,327	18	2,057	80	290,962	82	71,171	162	362,133			
June	291,731	12	740	15	14,429	19	1,936	106	308,836	104	181,483	210	490,319			

^a Table shows number of disputes and number of workers involved, for various types of dispute. Includes disputes carried over from previous month. Figures from Ministry of Labor; compiled from *Summations*.

^b Figures not available.

turbances, especially when the government itself, as the nation's largest employer, became a party to major disputes. As resistance to labor demands solidified, disputes became long drawn out, and were usually settled by some form of compromise.

The majority of disputes were settled peacefully or with only brief interruptions of production. No major strikes were of long duration. The 24-hour demonstration strike was a favorite labor tactic. Figures compiled by SCAP, through June, 1948, indicate that in only one month—October, 1946—did the number of man-days lost through strikes exceed one per cent of total man-days available. Some additional time was lost through slowdowns and other forms of "sabotage," and even brief local stoppages in key industries, such as coal and transportation, could affect other industries as well. Nevertheless it would appear that labor disturbances were not a major factor among the many which impeded Japan's industrial revival.

Although there were no long and hard-fought strikes, both workers and employers sometimes resorted to violence and intimidation. Workers, especially in the early days of labor organization, occasionally treated their employers, and even government officials, in a cavalier fashion, such as forcing their way into the employer's presence, or locking him up in his own office. Strong-arm squads were used by some unions and by some employers, and at least one person was killed in a labor dispute. There were also numerous union complaints that the police had broken up peaceful demonstrations, or refrained from action when union members were attacked by company henchmen. Union leaders were sometimes arrested on flimsy or trumped-up charges.

Nor was violence absent in intra-union controversies. In particular, the Youth Corps organized by many unions tended to develop into undisciplined action groups, composed of Communists and their sympathizers, former army men, and

a hoodlum element. Among their activities were shouting down opposition at union meetings and threatening bodily harm to union leaders. On numerous occasions such methods were used in attempts to prevent a peaceful compromise.

The tradition of the *ronin* or adventurer and the *soshi* or professional bully is strong in Japan and it was not surprising that it manifested itself on both sides in labor controversies. On the whole, there was far less serious violence than in comparable periods of acute labor unrest in the United States. This was no doubt due in part to the presence of the occupation forces, although they rarely had to intervene directly to preserve order.

Labor Demands

✓ Labor's principal demand was for wage increases. Owing to the complexity of the Japanese wage structure this demand took many forms: an increase in "basic pay" or in supplementary allowances such as those for dependents; a flat bonus for the winter months or periods of particularly acute food shortage; etc. The usual claim was for a wage which would balance the increasing cost of living and permit a "minimum livelihood." As living costs continued to rise unions which had already won substantial wage increases repeatedly came back for more.

Second only to the wage issue was that of "mass discharges." Protests against large-scale layoffs, actual or threatened, became increasingly frequent as private employers and government sought to reduce their working forces in the interests of rationalization, or to close altogether plants which were operating at a loss. Many other demands were made by unions, including shorter hours, better housing and working conditions, larger food rations, equal opportunity

and special protection for women,² and elimination of abuses in hiring, promotion or personnel administration. Actual or alleged violations of the labor laws, such as refusal to bargain collectively or the discharge of union leaders, were also cause for complaint.

Democratization of Management

Most unions included among their primary objectives "democratization of management." Exactly what this meant was not entirely clear even to the workers themselves. For one thing it meant elimination of "undemocratic" company officers who had supported the militarists and, no doubt, made themselves objectionable to their employees in other ways as well.³ Beyond that it meant giving the employees a voice in management. To some few it connoted a goal of economic organization along syndicalist lines, with each factory controlled by its workers. Others would have been satisfied to exercise about as much influence in the determination and execution of personnel policies as is normally enjoyed by American unions under well developed collective bargaining.

In practice the demand was often met by the establishment of a labor-management committee. Although the functions of these committees were vaguely defined, they met at frequent intervals and engaged in a rough and ready kind of collective bargaining on all subjects of mutual concern,

² Women workers usually demanded maternity leave, rest periods for nursing mothers, and leave during menstruation. This last was a universal subject of discussion among women trade-unionists, who were somewhat disconcerted when told that the practice was unknown in America. Many of them admitted that it was not a rational demand but felt that it was justified under existing abnormal conditions (unheated factories, etc.).

³ In one Hokkaido coal mine the workers undertook to try their employers as war criminals (Beatrice G. Reubens, "'Production Control' in Japan," *Far Eastern Survey*, Nov. 6, 1946, p. 346).

often including matters which in America are regarded as prerogatives of management. Later employers began to insist on narrowing the scope of the discussions to personnel problems and to reassert the right of management to enjoy sole authority in the determination of general business policies. SCAP made a determined effort to introduce the American mechanism of grievance procedure; this was often welcomed by employers, but regarded with suspicion by unions as limiting their freedom of action.

The labor-management committees are of interest because they seemed to develop naturally out of post-war Japanese conditions rather than following a foreign model. Although their operations were often stormy, they were a potential instrument of great value in putting employer-employee relationships on a more democratic basis. More broadly, union demands for "democratization of management" signified a popular Japanese initiative directed toward achieving, by different methods, somewhat the same ends as those sought by the occupation in its efforts to eliminate militarist sympathizers from positions of influence in industry (the economic purge) and to broaden the base of economic power (zaibatsu liquidation, deconcentration of industry, anti-monopoly laws).

Union Techniques

The techniques used by Japanese unions to enforce their demands were many and varied, often ingenious and imaginative. Outstanding of course was the strike, the classic weapon of labor, and to Japanese workers a cherished symbol of their new freedom. In the early days many workers went on strike out of sheer exuberance; such strikes were of course short-lived. Sometimes they were not properly strikes at all. In the fall of 1945 the telephone operators in Sendai

“struck”; they remained at their switchboards, but persons calling the exchange were greeted with: “*Moshi moshi!* [Hello!] We are on strike! Long live democracy! Number, please?” Demonstrations and parades were extremely popular, and many devices were adopted to dramatize the workers’ demands, as when actors went through a play in pantomime without speaking the lines. In some plants the employees decided to work only that number of hours for which they felt they were being fairly paid. There were hunger strikes, sitdown strikes, and many slowdowns, commonly called “sabotage.” “Production control” is discussed in more detail below.

When SCAP in effect forbade big strikes in government service or key industries, various substitutes were devised, many of them inspired by Communists and systematically practiced. Half of the workers in an office or plant department might decide to take sick leave, or go on vacation, or arrive two hours late explaining that they had been delayed by crowded streetcars, a plausible excuse. Another device was to hold lengthy union meetings on the employer’s time.

Collective Bargaining

There was little precedent in Japan for collective bargaining as practiced in Western countries. The concept of the union contract with detailed provisions covering all aspects of employer-employee relations was almost unknown until it was introduced by the Americans in 1945. Even more foreign to Japanese experience was the elaborate apparatus of shop stewards and grievance machinery and the notion of collective bargaining as a continuous process. Efforts at conciliation or mediation were hampered by the fact that Japanese unions had not learned to expect impartial treatment from government organs. These ideas made headway as the

result of SCAP's intensive educational activity, but it was hard to determine whether they had taken permanent root.

As usually happens in the first stages of labor organization, many disputes were settled by oral agreement on the immediate point at issue—say a wage increase—with no attempt to set up a framework for continuing union-management relations. The first written contracts were vague, general, subject to conflicting interpretations and generally unworkable, besides which they often left the most important points unsettled. Later there was a gradual increase in the number of written agreements and an improvement in their technical form. By June, 1947 over 5,000,000 employees, or 90 per cent of all organized workers, were covered by some kind of union contract. Noteworthy was the number of company-wide, regional, or even industry-wide contracts, usually achieved only in the mature stage of a labor movement.

Both unions and employers had much to learn of the mechanics of successful negotiation. In the early stages, several hundred workers would sometimes show up in a body to negotiate with their employer. Unions had a tendency to adopt a peremptory attitude with little regard for practical possibilities, while employers tended either to refuse everything, or to concede everything in principle but nothing in practice. Both sides made gradual progress in working out the techniques of hard-headed bargaining and of compromise. Unions and employers were learning how to defend their case with factual arguments, and how to protect their interests with contract provisions. Use of such methods was encouraged by the increasing activity of the Labor Relations Committees, which by 1948 were handling the bulk of all disputes.

Because of the inexperience of all parties and the initial timidity of employers, the Japanese unions at first enjoyed some unusual advantages. Wages were commonly paid during strikes. Many employers meekly accepted closed-shop

TABLE 5
JAPAN: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS ^a
August, 1945—June, 1947

	Covering one union			Covering two or more unions			Total		
	Agrs.	Unions covered	Workers covered	Agrs.	Unions covered	Workers covered	Agrs.	Unions covered	Workers covered
1945									
Aug.—Dec.	3	3	3,111	—	—	—	3	3	3,111
1946 ^b									
Jan.—Mar.	200	200	77,372	15	29	22,858	215	229	100,230
April—June	647	647	353,767	128	417	212,554	775	1,064	566,321
July—Sep.	677	677	363,418	145	501	224,164	822	1,178	587,582
Oct.—Dec.	730	730	370,663	90	479	262,866	820	1,209	633,529
1947 ^c									
Jan.—Mar.	881	881	243,761	64	2,970	1,932,320	945	3,851	2,176,081
April—June	622	622	146,400	32	429	840,043	654	1,051	986,443
Total	3,760	3,760	1,558,492	474	4,825	3,494,805	4,273 ^d	8,585	5,053,297 ^d

Note: As of June 30, 1947, 37.7 per cent of all unions, and 89.7 per cent of all organized workers, were covered by agreements.

^a Number of agreements includes basic agreements and supplementary local agreements, the workers covered being counted only once.

^b Revised.

^c Preliminary.

^d Includes 39 agreements on which data were not available.

Source: *Summation, Aug., 1947*, p. 206, from Ministry of Welfare.

contracts. Union officers enjoyed great freedom to engage in organizing activity while continuing to draw their regular pay, and union meetings were frequently held not only on company property but on company time. But as employers, government, and SCAP took a firmer attitude toward labor, these privileges were gradually cut down. By 1948 strikers did not as a rule draw wages. In April, 1947 the government issued regulations for its own employees prohibiting union activity during office hours, except for negotiations with management. Government offices could be used for union meetings but government supplies could not be used by unions.⁴ These rules were not at first strictly enforced, but in 1948 the government discontinued payment of full-time union officers, and this example was followed by many private employers.

Production Control

The most interesting technique developed by Japanese workers, apparently without exact parallel elsewhere, was "production control," which became a subject of nation-wide discussion and at one time aroused considerable alarm.⁵ In production control the workers, instead of striking, take over the plant and run it until management meets their demands or a compromise is reached. Any surplus of operating receipts over disbursements is banked to the credit of the employer. This method had much to recommend it in post-surrender Japan, for it did not interrupt production. It might be expected that efficiency would suffer, and this sometimes occurred, but an abundance of reliable testimony confirms the fact that in many cases output was greatly expanded, not only because the employees worked harder under

⁴ *Summation*, Apr., 1947, p. 188.

⁵ Cf. Beatrice G. Reubens' article cited above.

their own leaders—this nearly always happened—but because they introduced administrative improvements.⁶

The first case of production control occurred on the newspaper *Yomiuri* in the fall of 1945 (see pp. 101 ff.) This was the first important labor dispute after the war, and attracted wide attention, as it seemed to be setting a pattern for the future. The *Yomiuri* employees seem to have aimed at some more or less permanent form of employee control of editorial policy, though not of business management. In later cases, production control was used only as a temporary weapon. But discussion of its propriety became confused with that of “democratization of management.” In the first part of 1946, production control was used widely, reaching a peak in April and May, when nearly half of all reported disputes featured this technique. After that its popularity declined, largely because of strong official opposition, but scattered cases were reported in 1948.

The technique of production control varied widely.⁷ At *Yomiuri*, operations were conducted by a union committee of eighty which chose a working committee of nine, important questions being decided at membership meetings. At the Japan Carbon Co. in Yokohama, the factory manager headed the union’s production control committee. At the Tohoku Dockyard Co. the union’s chairman of production control and two vice-chairmen were heads of departments, that is, company executives. At the Adachi plant of the Japan Precision Instrument Co. the factory manager and the department heads were replaced by their assistants. At the Yokohama electric wire manufacturing plant of the Furu-kawa Electric Industry Co., the union’s production control

⁶ For example the Toyo Gosei Co. closed its plant on the ground that it was producing at a loss. The union took over, converted to another product, and demonstrated to the employer’s satisfaction the possibility of profitable operation. The dispute was finally settled by mediation and the company resumed control (*Summation*, Sept., 1946).

⁷ See article by Saburo Matsuoka of the Welfare Ministry in *Rodo Hyoron* (*Labor Review*), July, 1946.

chairman replaced the factory manager, but no other change was made. But at the Tsurumi plant of the Japan Steel Pipe Co. the union installed a wholly new administration.

The scope of operations also varied, and seems seldom to have been all-embracing—a further indication that, in most cases, production control was a hastily organized method of protest rather than a scheme aiming at expropriation. Even at *Yomiuri* it was applied only to the editorial and printing departments; purchasing, credit, and payroll administration were not affected. At the Bibai coal mine, production control was instituted for actual mining operations but not for sales, transportation, and wage payments. In this case no sales were made as the railroad declined to accept coal from the union for shipment. At the Japan Steel Pipe Co. (Tsurumi plant) daily necessities were distributed to workers through rationing channels, while purchases were made in accordance with existing contracts. At the Japan Shoe Manufacturing Co. shoes were bartered outside the control association, a procedure presumably illegal but not uncommonly practiced by factory owners.

Wages were paid by the company as usual throughout the *Yomiuri* dispute, as was true in most other cases. On the Keisei Electric Railway the company paid wages; the union collected fares and deposited them to the company's account. At the Kanto Electric Distribution Co., however, the company seems to have used wage payment as a bargaining weapon to induce union acceptance of certain conditions.

Production control was violently denounced by government spokesmen and others as an unwarranted invasion of the rights of private property. Unions defended it as a legitimate method of dispute. Since no precedents existed, controversy raged over its legality. The unions contended that it was a form of strike and therefore legal. The cabinet debated the question, issued several strong statements against production control, and endorsed the labor-management

committee as an alternative. In the face of vigorous labor protests, however, the government backtracked and modified its unequivocal opposition. All sections of organized labor defended production control. SCAP remained carefully neutral, maintaining that the question should be decided by Japanese courts, or by legislation. But in a statement in the Allied Council on July 10, 1946, criticizing Russian proposals on labor policy, Mr. George Atcheson strongly condemned production control as confiscation of property without compensation.⁸

This statement does not seem to have been a considered pronouncement on labor policy; at any rate it did not settle the question. Discussion continued, and in August, 1946 Justice Minister Kimura stated in the Diet that it was not the policy of the government to ban all production control, if moderately conducted; violence, he said, would be punished.⁹ Several cases were finally adjudicated but the courts managed to straddle the issue without laying down any clear-cut doctrine.¹⁰ In any case *stare decisis* receives little recognition in Japanese courts. It appeared, however, that production control might be tolerated under certain conditions. But after 1946 the use of production control declined and by 1948 it was no longer a major issue.

⁸ *New York Herald Tribune*, July 15, 1946. ⁹ *Nippon Times*, Aug. 8, 1946.

¹⁰ In the case of the Oriental Photographic Industry Co. a local of the All Japan Chemical Workers' Union had instituted production control on Sept. 27, 1946 in protest against the discharge in July of three union members. The case was referred to the Tokyo District Court, which named three lawyers, representing labor, capital and neutral opinion, as custodians of the plant. The union protested this order. The lawyers proceeded to designate the union as trustee to operate the plant pending settlement of the dispute, stipulating that it could not change operating policy without the approval of the custodians, although it could alter administrative details (*Summation*, Nov., Dec., 1946). The case of the Toyo Watch Co., where a long dispute had been marked by violence, was decided on Feb. 2, 1947. It appeared that the union had increased wages, using funds received in payment for watches manufactured prior to the period of production control. This was declared illegal; but production control itself was not so stigmatized, and apparently the union could sell watches manufactured under its own auspices and pay wages out of the proceeds (*Summation*, Feb., 1947, p. 186).

VI

THE "LABOR OFFENSIVE" OF 1946-47

By the summer of 1946 the labor movement had nearly four million members and was beginning to achieve some coherence and direction. Many strong national unions had appeared and the two great federations were formally inaugurated in August. Labor was beginning to feel its strength and to develop a sense of solidarity. Economic conditions were deteriorating, workers' hardships were increasing, and no hope of improvement was in sight. Neither labor nor anyone else had much confidence in the ability of the Yoshida cabinet to solve the nation's economic problems. Widespread feelings of dissatisfaction and protest, stimulated and directed by militant labor leaders, resulted in a wave of serious disputes that swept over the country in the fall and early winter, gaining momentum until it was cut short by SCAP on January 31, 1947.

The first phase of the movement, lasting from September to November, was generally if inaccurately known as the "October offensive," from a slogan widely publicized by the CIU. It slackened off in December, but was renewed with increased vigor in January. The CIU was the principal spearhead of the movement, but nearly all organized labor was eventually involved. Of the six biggest nation-wide disputes in this period, those in the newspaper, electrical, and coal industries were conducted by CIU unions, those in the gov-

ernment railways and shipping by independent unions, while in the government employees' dispute both CIU and non-CIU unions were involved.

The JFL was more or less swept along by the tide, supporting the workers' demands but deploring immoderate tactics. Left-wing Social Democrats sought with indifferent success to spur the Federation to more energetic action. Late in October Secretary-General Toraichi Hara announced that left-wing proposals for a "winter offensive" had been rejected.¹ A subordinate secretary, Minoru Takano, immediately countered with the statement that the National League of Metal Workers' Unions, organized in September by Kanson Arahata, had launched a drive for a wage increase, a sliding wage scale, and improved factory rules. The Central Committee of the JFL finally had to come out in support of the metal workers' campaign.²

The movement can be described as a strike wave only in a limited sense. There were, indeed, a great many strikes, usually local in character, and generally short. Threats of strike action were loud and frequent, but they were not always carried out. A strike of seamen was called in September, which was only partly effective owing to an intra-union conflict. The government railway workers called a 24-hour strike for September 15 but an agreement was reached before the deadline. The press-radio strike in October fizzled badly. A five-day strike in October closed most Hokkaido coal mines, but not those in Kyushu. The electrical workers threatened a major power tie-up in December, but this was averted by an agreement. The government employees' strike of February 1, 1947 was banned by SCAP. At the October strike peak only 1.21 per cent of total man-days available were lost by strike action.³

¹ *Jiji*, Oct. 31, 1946.

² *Ibid.*, Nov. 1, 1946.

³ *Summation*, May, 1947, p. 158.

The labor offensive did not, then, have serious disruptive effects on the national economy, although the danger was always present, and wage increases did contribute to the inflationary spiral. It won important economic gains for the workers and strengthened recognition of the unions. It also opened up internal rifts which seriously weakened several unions, and intensified the split between the two wings of the labor movement. Both unions and employers gained valuable experience. Finally, the movement demonstrated labor's political power, for political motives were mingled with economic in all the major disputes, and their total effect was to hasten the demise of the Yoshida cabinet.

The following sections describe five of the six largest labor disputes ⁴ which occurred in the fall and winter of 1946-47, together with some of the earlier background of union ac-

⁴ Coal is omitted as data available to the author on this industry are limited. Working conditions in coal mines were notoriously bad, especially in Hokkaido. Under SCAP pressure, some improvements were made in an effort to speed labor recruitment in an industry vital to national economic recovery. Unionization proceeded rapidly in all coal fields and several rival labor federations were formed. Communist influence was especially strong in Hokkaido. A survey by the Coal Mine Operators' Association in December, 1946 reported that 90 per cent of Japan's 360,000 coal miners were organized, with membership distributed as follows (*Summation*, Dec., 1946, p. 163):

	Kyushu	Joban	Hokkaido	Yamaguchi	Total
All Japan Coal Mine Workers' Union (CIU)	29,840	7,650	58,513	3,627	99,624
Unions affiliated with JFL	58,738	8,062	4,987		71,787
Independent unions	82,454	58,576			141,030
					<u>312,441</u>

In March, 1946, 18,000 miners went on strike in Kyushu; the dispute was settled in four days (*Summation*, Mar., 1946). Another four-day strike involving 12,000 miners occurred in Kyushu in August (*Summation*, Aug., 1946). A larger strike movement threatened to develop in the fall as part of the CIU's "October offensive." About 50,000 miners walked out in Hokkaido and 90 per cent of the Hokkaido mines were closed for five days; the strike ended when the operators temporarily accepted the union's wage demands. A threatened coal strike in Kyushu failed to materialize and the dispute was settled peacefully (*Summation*, Oct., 1946).

tivity in each industry. Together these case histories throw some light on the way in which the new labor movement functioned in the national scene. By examining in some detail the course of events in several industries, it is possible to gain an idea of the extreme complexity and variety of the still fluid pattern of Japanese labor relations.

VII

NEWSPAPER AND RADIO WORKERS

Newspapermen were among the first to take advantage of freedom to organize, and the first labor dispute to attract national attention occurred on a Tokyo newspaper.

Before the war there had been some organization among printers but none among editorial employees. The All Japan Newspaper and Radio Workers' Union (CIU) was the first new union to organize on a national scale. Its first chairman, Katsumi Kikunami, later head of the CIU, was a former London correspondent of *Asahi* and a Communist sympathizer, and in general the top leadership was under strong Communist influence. The union included all types of newspaper employees—reporters, editors, printers, office workers, etc.—as well as employees of the radio industry. Strong differences of opinion developed among its members. Some were extremely militant, radical, and vocal; others shared the conservative attitude typical of professional and white-collar workers. Because newspaper employees were interested in questions of newspaper policy and the social role of the press as well as in their own conditions of employment, and because the press is a public service industry and an important influence on public opinion, it became at times impossible to consider a labor dispute on a newspaper solely on its merits as a labor dispute.

The remarkable changes that took place in the Japanese press in the first months of the occupation, from slavish com-

pliance with government orders to lively criticism, must be attributed in large part to the initiative of the working press, operating often in spite of reluctant owners and publishers.¹ Newspaper employees were strong advocates of press reform, and contributed materially to the achievement of SCAP objectives in this field, although their efforts sometimes went beyond what SCAP considered desirable.

Soon after the occupation began, employees of the leading metropolitan dailies organized unions and demanded, in addition to higher wages, a share in editorial direction. Their main drive was for the resignation of newspaper officials who had advocated militarism and ultra-nationalism. Because newspaper owners were terrified of reprisals from SCAP, which had cracked down on the press for conduct inimical to the objectives of the occupation, this campaign was successful to a large degree. Former press chiefs were retired and on many papers, including *Asahi* and *Mainichi*, the employees acquired a commanding voice in shaping news and editorial policies.²

One paper, *Yomiuri*, a sensational journal and a loud trumpet of army propaganda, held out against the employees' demands, chief among which was the resignation of the owner, Matsutaro Shoriki, a former chief of the criminal section of the Metropolitan Police Board and sponsor of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association.³ When Shoriki discharged five union leaders the employees, on October 27, assumed control of the paper and issued it themselves. This, the first case of "production control," aroused intense interest in the country and not a little apprehension, for this was a period when new precedents were being made. In this case, while economic objectives were present, the employees' main aim was to force a change in editorial direction. During the

¹ See Robert H. Berkov, "The Press in Postwar Japan," *Far Eastern Survey*, July 23, 1947.

² *Loc. cit.*

³ *Summation*, Dec., 1945, p. 37.

dispute Shoriki was listed for arrest as a war criminal. He remained at liberty long enough to reinstate the discharged employees and to name Tsunego Baba, a pre-war liberal writer, as publisher. Baba appointed Tomin Suzuki, a well-known writer and president of the union, as editor-in-chief. Production control was abandoned after an agreement had been reached, on December 11, through the efforts of a special mediation committee. The union was recognized as collective bargaining agent; a labor-management council was set up to advise on editorial, personnel, and business policies; and questions of wages and working conditions were to be settled by subsequent negotiation.⁴

As a result of this incident *Yomiuri* became known as the most radical and outspoken of the great Tokyo dailies, and attracted the unfavorable attention of SCAP's press section. Friction developed between Baba and the employees, who, he charged, were infringing the prerogatives of management and allowing the paper to fall under Communist influence. On June 12, 1946 Baba dismissed six editors, including Suzuki. The union protested this action as a violation of the December agreement, which, they claimed, required consultation with the labor-management council before an employee was discharged; and as a violation of the Trade Union Law, which prohibited discrimination against employees for union activity. A bitter dispute developed, culminating in a strike.

Two issues were involved in the controversy, one in the field of labor and the other in that of journalism. Thus two different sections of SCAP were brought into the dispute: the Civil Information and Education Section, which had jurisdiction over the Japanese press, and the Labor Division of the Economic and Scientific Section, which had jurisdiction over labor questions. Mr. Baba turned for support to CI&E, the union to Labor Division. Japanese ran back and

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

forth between CI&E and Labor Division offices, and rumors flew thick and fast. The impression was created in some quarters that CI&E was backing Mr. Baba in a union-busting drive, while others believed that Labor Division was unduly partial toward the union and unmindful of proper canons of free journalism. Bad feeling was created between CI&E and Labor Division, and as numerous SCAP officials, working at cross-purposes and from different viewpoints, stirred the broth in various directions, the dispute grew more bitter and more confused. Had the need for a coordinated policy been seen at the beginning of the dispute, SCAP might have played a helpful role in clarifying the issues, instead of contributing to the general confusion.

Both CI&E and Labor Division were defending unimpeachable principles. CI&E was defending the Press Code, an excellent statement of principles of sound democratic journalism, and in particular the principle that news stories should be factual, uncolored, and unbiased—as distinct from editorials, where the expression of critical opinion was encouraged. *Yomiuri* had been warned for printing biased news stories, and it was alleged that CI&E threatened to close down the paper if the warnings were not heeded. To what extent the vigilance of CI&E officials was heightened by their dislike of *Yomiuri*'s editorial policy can only be conjectured. Mr. Baba's position was that he could not comply with SCAP's directions unless he were permitted to make changes in his staff. There is no question that he received the sympathetic encouragement of certain CI&E officials, who saw the issue in terms of an attempt by a labor union, and a radical and probably Communist union at that, to control the editorial policy of a newspaper, in violation of sound principles of democratic journalism and the rights of private property.

Equally unassailable principles of democratic labor relations were also involved. Labor Division, for its part, was

concerned to defend the sanctity of union contracts and the rights of labor unions under the Trade Union Law. It did not undertake to decide whether these rights had actually been violated by the *Yomiuri* management, maintaining that this was for Japanese agencies to determine.

Eventually, on June 29, a joint statement was made by Labor Division and CI&E, to the effect that the management of a newspaper had the right to determine its editorial policy but not to violate the legal rights of a labor union, and that it was not the policy of SCAP to interfere in the settlement of particular labor disputes. In the meantime, however, both Baba and the union had been able to turn to their own purposes various statements actually or allegedly made by CI&E and Labor Division officials.

As the dispute progressed the employees of *Yomiuri* split into a right-wing and a left-wing faction, and the union's position became hopelessly confused. It appears that the right wing, which favored accepting the dismissals and opposed a strike, won a majority of the votes at membership meetings on June 26 and July 13. The left wing charged that the employer had improperly influenced the votes, by threatening that SCAP would shut down the paper and in other ways. It also appears that the chief of CI&E's Press Unit addressed the employees at the meeting on June 26. The union alleged that the company had hired thugs in an attempt to provoke violence. Left-wingers staged a sitdown strike but were ejected by right-wingers, and 31 strike leaders were discharged.⁵ On June 21 some 150 police raided the *Yomiuri* building and arrested four of the six discharged editors on grounds of illegal entry; 52 other employees were also arrested although no charges were brought against them.⁶ The 52 were released after four hours, the four editors after eleven days, and the charges against them were dropped, after the union had threatened to sue the Tokyo

⁵ *Ibid.*, June, 1946.

⁶ *Ibid.*

police chief, Baba, and others for illegal arrest,⁷ and after Labor Division had reprimanded the police for various irregularities in their conduct. Meanwhile 41 other employees had been transferred from Tokyo to branch offices for disciplinary reasons.

The dispute was referred to the Tokyo District Labor Relations Committee, but events outran its deliberations. The union finally formulated demands including discussion of the six discharges by an impartial organ; cancellation of 17 other personnel changes; a wage increase, food allowance, recognition of collective bargaining, and a new retirement allowance system.⁸ At a meeting on July 11, at which, according to a management spokesman, only 200 of the 500 present were *Yomiuri* employees, a strike was voted.⁹ The strike was called on July 12. Some employees responded and others did not; publication was suspended for a few days.¹⁰ A scuffle took place on July 16, when according to the union the management used strong-arm tactics to eject strikers from the building.¹¹ Two public demonstrations were held in support of the strikers, at one of which a clash occurred between the left- and right-wing *Yomiuri* factions.¹² The national press union supported the strike but the locals at *Asahi*, *Mainichi*, and several other Tokyo papers declined to do so.¹³ Finally the right-wing *Yomiuri* faction withdrew from the national union, claiming that they had been deprived of the right of free discussion, and at a meeting of 1,300 employees on or about July 30 proceeded to organize an independent union, which the left wing maintained was a puppet of the management.

If the account given above is even approximately accurate, it would appear that the union had a claim against the *Yomiuri* management which, whatever its merits, deserved

⁷ *Nippon Times*, July 3, 1946.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Chicago Sun*, July 17, 1946.

¹³ *Ibid.*, July 21, 26, 1946.

⁸ *Ibid.*, July 14, 1946.

¹⁰ *Jiji*, July 17, 1946.

¹² *Nippon Times*, July 21, 23, 1946.

to be investigated; that both union and management indulged in needlessly provocative tactics; that the union, at least by the end of the dispute, probably did not represent a majority of the *Yomiuri* employees, but that its claim of intimidation by the employer also deserved investigation; that the police raid, whether or not technically justified, hindered rather than helped a constructive and peaceful settlement; and that SCAP got its signals mixed and contributed to the general confusion. The management felt that it was fighting for its undoubted right to determine its own editorial policy; the union felt that it was fighting for its legal rights and for its very existence. There is nothing inherently incompatible in the principles espoused by management and union. Unfortunately a peaceful reconciliation proved impossible, and the dispute continued to fester for many months.

In August the Labor Relations Committee presented its report on the dispute. It held that the newspaper was within its rights in making personnel changes necessary to effectuate its editorial policy, even in violation of the union contract, but not other personnel changes. It upheld the dismissal of the six editors but not the other discharges and transfers. The company was directed to negotiate with the union regarding these cases. After three weeks the national press union charged that the company was not complying with the award, and asked the Labor Relations Committee to enforce it by a court order.

Radical CIU leaders hoped to use the *Yomiuri* case as a rallying-cry in a great national demonstration as part of the October offensive. On August 15 representatives of nineteen unions met to plan a joint struggle against *Yomiuri*. The railway workers' union ordered its members not to handle shipments of the paper, but withdrew the order when its legality was challenged.

During the next few weeks attention was focused on the

government railways dispute. When this was settled, the press union intensified its preparations for a nation-wide struggle to win its demands at *Yomiuri* and also at the *Hokkaido Shimibun*, where a similar dispute was in progress. The union also demanded collective agreements throughout the industry, wage increases, and "democratization of management." On September 17, the national union told its local branches to prepare to strike any time after September 22 if its demands had not been met.¹⁴ The strike date was eventually set for October 5. The union's exact demands were not made any too clear to the public, and each branch was apparently authorized to make its own demands on its own management in addition to those of the national union.

The decision to strike by the national executive committee of the union precipitated a controversy in the local branches over whether or not to support the strike order. It was reported that the printers, younger employees, and women tended to favor the strike, while the editorial workers tended to oppose it. Many branches vacillated. On October 3 the *Nippon Times* reported that of Japan's 106 dailies, 58 were affiliated with the union, and of these 40 had voted to support the strike, 5 had refused, and 13 were undecided. The independent *Yomiuri* union denounced the strike. Long discussions took place in the national executive committee. After a seven-hour debate on September 24 a unanimous pro-strike decision was reached when the *Jiji Shimpō* representative, who had opposed the move, decided to go along with the majority.¹⁵ Discussion continued in local meetings and the disruptive effects on the union of raising this controversial issue were evident. Local chapters complained that the *Yomiuri* case did not warrant a national strike, that the union's national headquarters had behaved dictatorially, that strike votes had not been taken in local chapters, and that the strike was politically motivated.

¹⁴ *Nippon Times*, Sept. 20, 1946.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Sept. 26, 1946.

Meanwhile various groups were trying to mediate the dispute, including the Social Democratic Party and the Central Labor Relations Committee. The national union leaders remained adamant, while Mr. Baba of *Yomiuri* refused to negotiate under threat of a strike.

The October 5 strike was a fiasco. Most newspaper employees remained on the job, or were absent only briefly. *Asahi*, *Mainichi*, *Kyodo* News Service, and other Tokyo chapters voted to withdraw in last-minute membership meetings just before the deadline; others dropped out soon afterward.¹⁶ Some locals voted to strike for 24 hours only. The strike had been called for midnight October 4. As of 9 A.M. on October 5 *Kyodo* reported that 43 of the 58 local chapters were not on strike.¹⁷ Later *Kyodo* stated that the staffs of 14 papers (including one news agency), representing 7 per cent of total newspaper circulation, had walked out, some for one day only.¹⁸ Of these 9 were affiliated with the national press union and 5 were independent. By October 7 only one paper in Tokyo and four in the provinces were still on strike. (According to another account, however, 30 non-union papers joined the strike and 20 had to suspend operations—presumably for only a short time—when the printers walked out.)

There is little doubt that more or less *sub rosa* efforts were made by CI&E and by the government to prevent the press strike. A visit by the CI&E Press Unit head to *Asahi* on October 3 produced rumors, quite possibly unfounded, that SCAP would take over the paper in event of a strike;¹⁹ at all events CI&E's opposition was well known. On October 4 the head of CI&E's Radio Unit told union leaders at Radio Tokyo that if they struck they would "suffer the conse-

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Oct. 6, 1946.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Oct. 6, 1946.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Oct. 8, 1946.

¹⁹ *Cf. New York Herald Tribune*, Oct. 23, 1946.

quences.”²⁰ Later, however, the union was assured by the Provost Marshal that MP’s would keep their hands off. It is said that an agent of Prime Minister Yoshida met with company representatives and right-wing unionists to discuss ways and means of heading off the strike. To what extent the failure of the strike was due to such forms of pressure cannot, of course, be determined, but it seems clear that membership support was shaky in any case.

Tokyo press comment on the affair was mild, and may well have reflected the views of local union units. In their editorials of October 5 *Mainichi* deplored the strike but criticized the rigid attitude of the *Yomiuri* management; *Asahi* thought the union should call off the strike and negotiate, but that *Yomiuri* should be more conciliatory; the *Tokyo Shimbun* also straddled the fence.

Despite the lack of response to the national strike call, a small group of stalwarts in Tokyo did not give up without a struggle, and minor disorders occurred. A demonstration on October 6 was broken up by Japanese police, aided by MP’s.²¹ The next day strikers tried to prevent the distribution of papers at *Mainichi*, whether by force or persuasion is not altogether clear; at any rate, a scuffle ensued, and eight strikers were arrested. They were released on October 19, reportedly at the instance of SCAP.²²

²⁰ *Chicago Sun*, Oct. 5, 1946. Another account says he threatened them with jail.

²¹ *Chicago Sun*, Oct. 6 (?), 1946. This report states that the demonstration was orderly.

²² *Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 23, 1946. Another incident of the press strike which involved SCAP was the case of Kenkichi Yahagi, a *Yomiuri* employee who was arrested by U.S. forces for making a speech outside Tokyo in which, it was charged, he made statements critical of the occupation. Yahagi was alleged to have said that the Americans were colonizing Japan. Evidence was conflicting but it seems probable that he did make some such statement. He was sentenced on November 15 by a Provost Marshal court to four years at hard labor or a fine of ¥40,000. As a result of SCAP intervention the sentence was later reduced to a year and a day and Yahagi was released on probation. SCAP evidently felt that the punishment was out of proportion to the crime.

One union group responded with élan to the strike order and continued for several weeks to wage a determined struggle which because of their strategic position focused the attention of the country. These were the employees of the Broadcasting Corporation of Japan, center of the government-controlled national radio network, a group of young enthusiasts given to holding demonstrations and waving red flags from the roof of Radio Tokyo building, where they made a dramatic picture against the sky. The Radio Tokyo group supported the *Yomiuri* strike and also had various grievances against their own management.

Radio Tokyo went off the air on October 5. On the following day the government formally took over the BCJ facilities and prepared to operate them itself. It ran into difficulties when members of the communications workers' union, who were government employees, refused to cooperate. There was some disorder on October 7 when Communications Ministry men entered Radio Tokyo under police escort, and four strikers were arrested. The strikers staged a number of demonstrations around the building but no serious clashes occurred. By October 8 the government had got the Kawaguchi transmission station working and the broadcasting of news and weather reports was resumed; other programs were resumed, at least in part, on the following day, with the aid of executive employees of Radio Tokyo. Apparently they were not heard except near Tokyo as the local stations were not functioning. Meanwhile negotiations had been going on and signs of weakening soon appeared among the Radio Tokyo employees. By October 9 the BCJ union was making overtures. It offered to resume radio news, time signals, and weather reports, provided state control was lifted and a wage increase and union contract were granted. Radio employees in Nagoya went back to work about October 14 and one provincial radio station resumed operations under government control.

On October 16 an agreement of sorts was reached at *Yomiuri*.²³ The six discharged editors and the 31 employees dismissed for strike activity were reinstated but agreed to resign. All were to receive severance pay. The *Yomiuri Shimbun* Employees' Union (independent) was recognized as sole bargaining representative and would be consulted on personnel affairs. The company would pay strike expenses and consider the possibility of a wage increase. There would be no discrimination against strikers. The strikers returned to work, and with the *Yomiuri* affair settled the national press union lost its main agitational issue.

It took another week to settle the Radio Tokyo dispute. Feverish discussions took place among the strikers, and strong-arm tactics were used by militants in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent a compromise. At an employees' meeting on October 15 changes were made in the strike committee.²⁴ By October 19, twenty-two local stations were back on the air, though not with full programs. Agreement was in sight when the report circulated that some BCJ directors were urging discharge of the strike leaders. Fear of such action seems to have led the union committee to reject a compromise proposal by a vote of 68 to 2. Assistance in overcoming this snag was rendered by the Radio Advisory Committee, a group supposed to represent listeners and advise on radio programs, which apparently persuaded the management to moderate its views regarding reprisals against strikers. The strike ended at midnight on October 24, when the union ordered its members back to work.

Labor and management cooperated in preparing a report on the strike which was broadcast on October 27, and included apologies to the public for the interruption of service. According to this report, negotiations were begun on October 3, two days before the strike. The company had

²³ *Nippon Times*, Oct. 19, 1946; *Summation*, Oct., 1946.

²⁴ *Nippon Times*, Oct. 19, 1946.

agreed that the union's economic demands were justified but felt that its financial position precluded any commitments at that time. The chief stumbling-blocks were the union's demand for a closed shop and for certain rights in connection with personnel policy. Negotiations were punctuated by a statement from President Takano of BCJ urging the Radio Tokyo employees to secede from the national press union and by a demand that the union chapter "purge" itself, presumably of radical elements.

It was understood that negotiations would be continued with a view to concluding a collective agreement, which had been worked out in draft form. Actually, however, the union was forced to abandon the strike with no concrete gains. On November 6 the national union complained to the Tokyo Labor Relations Committee that the BCJ had discharged nine section heads, not union members, for activities favoring the strike,²⁵ and a running fight between labor and management on this and other issues continued for many months. In September, 1947 a compromise agreement was reached on the basis of recommendations by the Central Labor Relations Committee.²⁶

The actions of the national union leadership in the October strike were irresponsible and ill-considered. Not only were technical strike preparations inadequate, but the attempt to force strike action when the bulk of the union membership was opposed or unconvinced showed either poor judgment or lack of interest in democratic procedure or both. The *Yomiuri* case was not important enough in itself, nor did it represent a sufficiently clear-cut principle, to spearhead a national movement. Although the union disclaimed political motives, it is certain that a desire to weaken the Yoshida cabinet entered into the thinking of its leaders; but in fact it was the union, not the government, that suffered. It is true that economic and other strictly labor issues,

²⁵ *Summation*, Nov., 1946.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Sept., 1947, p. 179.

such as collective bargaining rights, were also present. There is no doubt either that the newspaper employees had genuine grievances, or that many of their complaints against "undemocratic" newspaper owners, as well as against the government, had much justification. The method chosen to correct these grievances, however, failed to pass the pragmatic test. It did not work. It merely discredited and threatened to split the union.

At a national convention on October 25 chairman Kikunami and other union officers accepted responsibility for the unsuccessful strike and resigned from office. Kikunami, however, retained his position as chairman of the CIU, and his supporters redoubled their efforts in the "October offensive" to make up for this setback. Takayuki Kawazoe, financial news editor of *Jiji* Press, was chosen as chairman of the union. On October 28 the new officers of the union issued a policy statement calling for reorganization of the Strike Policy Committee, strengthening of the union organization along more democratic lines, greater efforts in behalf of young, female, and local union members, continuation of the fight at Radio Tokyo, speedy settlement of the *Hokkaido Shimbun* affair, unification of the union and support of the demands of local chapters, opposition to discharges and other threats to the workers' standard of living, and struggle against all reactionary influences.

Although it appeared at first that the national leaders of the newspaper union had learned something from this costly mistake, serious internal friction continued, and prevented the union from functioning effectively. The threatened split, though long postponed, occurred in 1947 and was confirmed in 1948 with the formation of a new national press union.

VIII

ELECTRICAL WORKERS

The dispute in the electrical industry in the fall of 1946 presents an interesting contrast with that in the newspaper industry. The electrical workers' leadership was equally energetic but more astute. Although both unions were reputed to be under strong Communist influence at the top, they pursued very different tactics. The newspaper union rushed precipitately into strike action, failed, and thereby fatally weakened the union; the electrical union, which took time for adequate preparation and never went to extremes, won a favorable settlement and thereby strengthened its position.

The generation and distribution of electric power in Japan were at this time in effect a government monopoly. Power was generated by the Japan Electric Generation and Distribution Co., a semi-official concern, while distribution was handled by nine subordinate companies, each serving a different district. More than half of the JEGDC stock was held by the government, which appointed the company's president. The whole system was closely supervised by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The All Japan Electric Industry Workers' Union (Densan) was affiliated with the CIU and claimed, at the time of the dispute, some 100,000 members. Its control was unchallenged in its field, and it was strongly organized throughout the country. While not much is known of its internal organiza-

tion, control appeared to be highly centralized. However, the leadership commanded membership support, and the union stated that prior to the dispute its demands were thoroughly discussed in its local branches. In contrast to several other disputes in public utilities, no dissident anti-strike movement appeared, and orders from the national headquarters seemed to have been promptly carried out.

Some light is thrown on the thinking of Densan leaders by a movie script prepared by the union shortly after the dispute.¹ In contrast with several other semi-documentary films produced by Japanese unions, which were poorly organized and largely emotional in content (e.g., one prepared by the government railway workers), the electrical workers' film was a well-edited factual documentary. The story of the dispute was told—from the union angle, naturally—against a background of the structure and problems of the electric industry as part of the national economic framework. Stress was laid on the run-down state of equipment, and the fact that small consumers paid much higher rates than large ones, as well as on the hardships of the employees. Blame for all these evils was attributed to bureaucratic control by a reactionary government.² The script was significant as showing that the union leaders had studied the economic and technical organization of their industry and were thinking in terms of a fundamental reorganization, not merely in narrow terms of employee interest.

Whether the kind of reorganization which they favored is practicable or desirable is of course another question. From other evidence it would appear that they advocated a high degree of employee participation in management, but

¹ The film was later produced in considerably altered form.

² The argument sounded very much like the criticisms periodically directed at the American power industry, except that the Japanese writers saw the solution in less, not more, government control. This reflected, not an anti-socialist bent, but distrust of the government in power.

not to the extent of full employee control. The union took the lead in organizing local committees, composed of factory owners, politicians, and other leading citizens as well as union representatives, to discuss ways and means of relieving the power shortage. Although the immediate subject of discussion was the local allocation of power, the union hoped to stimulate a broadly based movement for reorganization of the industry.³

The union was formally organized in April, 1946, consolidating local units already in existence. Negotiations with the Kanto Power Distribution Co. in May resulted, after a period of production control, in a union victory and the signing of a contract apparently of a very general character. In June employees of the JEGDC presented demands including higher wages, higher electric rates for large consumers, and "democratization" of the industry. The company offered to grant about half of the proposed wage increase. The union requested from the Minister of Commerce and Industry permission to enter on production control, which was refused. This dispute having ended inconclusively, the union remained quiet until September, meanwhile perfecting its organization and making detailed preparations for a renewal of its claims. Plans were discussed at a three-day congress at Kanazawa on July 16-18, and on September 13 a Central Joint Struggle Committee was formed. On or about September 17 the union's demands were presented to the JEGDC and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and negotiations were opened on October 7. The electrical workers' initiative thus formed part of the CIU "October offensive." Densan had supported the abortive press strike of October 5 and had threatened to cut off the power supply of recalcitrant newspapers.

The union demanded (1) wage increases sufficient to bal-

³ *Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 4, 1946.

ance the cost of living; ⁴ (2) revision of the retirement allowance system; (3) "democratization" of the industry and abolition of bureaucratic control. At the outset of the discussions it appears that greatest emphasis was laid on the third point, namely, a fundamental reorganization of the industry, but later talks revolved largely around questions of wages.

Several days of negotiations, in which, apparently, President Arai of the JEGDC showed a somewhat more receptive attitude than the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Hoshijima, produced no results. On October 11 the union issued its first strike order, affecting only business office employees and designed to disrupt the company's communications, but permitting continuance of collections and wage

⁴ The following schedule, comparing the union demands, the company's first counter-proposal, and the terms proposed by the Central Labor Relations Committee, is inserted here for reference.

	Monthly wage		
	Union demand	Co. offer	CLRC plan
Basic salary:			
Under 17 years of age	¥500	¥350	¥500
Add for each year of age: 17 to 30	30	15	30
31 to 40	20	20	20
Family allowance:			
For first dependent	200	150	200
For other dependents	150	100	150
Efficiency wage (average)	800	300	400
Allowance for each year of employment	10	..	10

The union also asked special allowances for employees living in certain areas, payment of certain income taxes by the company, overtime allowance, etc. (Source: Densan.)

The Central Labor Relations Committee made the following comparison for an employee 30 years of age, having 10 years' service and two dependents (*Oriental Economist*, Nov. 23, 1946):

	Union	Company	CLRC
Monthly salary	¥1,870	¥995	¥1,550
Less income tax (to be paid by company in union plan)	195	565
Net income	¥1,870	¥800	¥ 985

According to another estimate average net wages *after* payment of income tax were as follows: actually paid before dispute, ¥950; union demand, ¥2,300; CLRC plan, ¥1,250 (¥1,800 before taxes). (*Summation*, Nov., 1946, p. 214.)

payments. To this opening charge of buckshot the government responded by bringing up its heavy artillery. On October 13 it suddenly promulgated the Labor Relations Adjustment Law, which became effective the same day.

Passage of the Labor Relations Adjustment Law had been violently opposed by union labor, which regarded it as a tool of oppression. The sudden promulgation of the law precipitated a subsidiary controversy as the union charged bad faith, claiming that assurances had been given, when the law was passed, that its enforcement would be delayed until after passage of the pending Labor Standards Law.⁵ Under the Labor Relations Adjustment Law, acts of dispute in public utilities were prohibited for thirty days after a dispute was referred to the Labor Relations Committee for mediation.

The government did not, however, immediately appeal to the Central Labor Relations Committee, possibly because of a statement by the Committee deploring the hasty promulgation of the law. Instead (October 14) the Ministry offered to reopen negotiations. The union asked for a public reply to its demands by October 18. None was forthcoming, and on that date the union fired its second gun, consisting of scattered five-minute blackouts. The next day, October 19, Welfare Minister Kawai (who was later purged) invoked the Labor Relations Adjustment Law, requesting mediation by the Central Labor Relations Committee. Meanwhile the union had complained to the Home Ministry of alleged improper acts by police in various parts of the country. At the same time Commerce and Industry Minister Hoshijima, in an effort to counter the union's propaganda, stated publicly

⁵ The Diet had unanimously passed a resolution calling on the government to introduce at the next session a law designed to secure the livelihood of the working masses; to create a cabinet committee to formulate plans for improving the status of government employees; and to exercise discretion in setting the enforcement date for the Labor Relations Adjustment Law. The *Oriental Economist* thought it was "doubtful" whether the government's action was in conformity with this resolution (*Oriental Economist*, Nov. 16, 1946).

that the union was demanding an average monthly wage of ¥3,600 plus payment of ¥2,000 in income taxes. The union asserted that the correct figure was about ¥2,400. Each side accused the other of refusal to reopen direct negotiations.

Incensed by invocation of the Labor Relations Adjustment Law, the union expressed itself in favor of direct negotiations, and, suspending the five-minute blackouts, on October 22 issued orders for the third step in its pressure campaign. This order, effective October 23, called for suspension of power to key industrial plants for three to four hours, with 24 hours' advance notice. The order was carried out on October 24, affecting approximately 338 factories in the Tokyo, Kanagawa, Osaka, and Aichi areas. However, after a warning from the Public Prosecutor of the Tokyo District that such action violated both the Labor Relations Adjustment Law and the Electric Enterprise Law, the union canceled the order and the shut-off was not repeated.

The Central Labor Relations Committee at first played the role of conciliator, attempting to arrange a reopening of direct negotiations rather than itself proposing terms of settlement. After various informal conferences, the company made public a counter-proposal, containing certain concessions, and direct negotiations were resumed on October 25 between union, company, and government spokesmen, with Mr. Katsura of the Central Labor Relations Committee in attendance.

Little progress was made, and on October 30 the union announced a new tactic. The country was faced, it said, with a serious shortage of electric power, due to lack of coal and, it claimed, government bungling; severe rationing of electric current was necessary to prevent a complete breakdown; the government had taken no steps; the union would therefore enforce curtailment of consumption on an average of 30 per cent. The power shortage was real enough; the union cleverly took advantage of it to represent power curtailment

as a public service rather than an illegal act of dispute. The government stated that it had been working on a plan for power rationing, but had been prevented by the union's actions from securing the necessary data. It charged the union with usurpation of authority in taking the responsibility on itself. The government announced its own plan for power rationing, and the question of responsibility seems to have been lost sight of in the controversy over other issues.

On October 31 negotiations were discontinued and a Mediation Committee appointed by the Central Labor Relations Committee set to work to prepare recommendations for settlement. The Mediation Committee included members of the Central Labor Relations Committee. The union remained quiet, awaiting the committee's report. On November 5 the committee completed its recommendations.⁶ It endorsed the greater part, though not all, of the union's demands. Even before the report was made public, the government issued a statement denouncing it as inflationary.⁷

Controversy over the merits of the report was complicated by disputes over the propriety of the government's action, which aroused widespread public criticism. The *Nippon Times*, for example, thought the union's demands too high, but believed the government's precipitate action had made the situation worse instead of better. The Social Democrats charged that the government itself was responsible for "vicious inflation at the expense of the working class." Even the Liberal Party, represented in the government, declined to support the cabinet's position in full, and at least one power company spokesman criticized the government state-

⁶ For comparison on wages, see above, footnote 4.

⁷ The government stated that the wages granted in the mediation plan were excessive and would encourage other inflationary wage increases; and that they would necessitate a threefold increase in electric rates. The Committee said that the companies were already operating at a loss, owing mainly to the high cost of materials; that electric rates were below the general price level and would have to be raised anyway; and that the wage increase would not be a major factor (*Oriental Economist*, Nov. 23, 1946).

ment. Chairman Suehiro of the Central Labor Relations Committee defended the report and suggested that if negative criticism was all the government could offer it might better resign. Rumors were current that the government contemplated changes in the personnel of the Central Labor Relations Committee.

Naturally neither the companies nor the union accepted the mediation plan, although there were strong indications that both might have been persuaded to do so—despite the company's dislike of its terms, and the union's initial hostility to the whole idea of mediation—had the government kept its hands off. Embarrassed by the critical storm and confronted by a new threat to its already shaky position, the government distractedly sought some way out of the impasse. Cabinet counsels were divided; Keinosuke Zen, director of the Economic Stabilization Board (later purged) was praised or blamed as the main advocate of a deflationary low-wage policy. At first the government was reported to be working on a plan of its own, but finally it asked the Central Labor Relations Committee to draft a new formula. On November 16 the companies formally rejected the Mediation Committee report, while the union declared that it would not accept the terms so long as the government persisted in its hostile attitude. After consultation by Dr. Suehiro with both company and union heads, the Central Labor Relations Committee produced, on November 18, a new formula, differing only slightly from the old one. But the thirty-day period specified by the Labor Relations Adjustment Law ended on November 19 without a settlement.

The union was now free under this law to engage in acts of dispute. The Home Ministry announced, however, that any interference with the operations of the power industry would be prosecuted under Article 33 of the old Electric Enterprise Law. Undeterred by this threat, the union proceeded with its plans for a suspension of electric power. Elab-

orate technical preparations had been made, including safeguards against damage to machinery or other facilities and the defense of electric generating and transforming stations. No action, it was announced, would be taken to endanger life or to hamper the occupation forces. Initially, at least, limited action, not a complete shutdown, was contemplated: namely, the suspension for four hours during the afternoon of all electric power except to foreign official establishments, hospitals, water and sewage systems, coal mines, telegraph and telephone systems, and blast furnaces or other plants where for technical reasons operations once suspended could not be quickly resumed. The code message "Don't eat mackerell!" went out from union headquarters on November 27, and action was scheduled to begin on December 2. As the date approached public tension increased. The Central Labor Relations Committee, however, continued its efforts. On November 30 a provisional agreement was reached between the union and the companies, and the crisis was over.

The final negotiations seem to have dealt with the total amount to be added to the monthly wage bill. Apparently Mr. Zen had set a limit of ¥25,000,000, but on November 29 Dr. Suehiro, meeting with the economic ministers, persuaded them to permit some leeway. The company offered 10 per cent, the union asked 30 per cent, and a compromise was reached at 20 per cent.

The terms of the agreement did not differ greatly from those of the original Mediation Committee report. In addition to the wage increases, which were to come into effect in April, 1947, a committee representing labor and management was established to make plans for reorganization and democratization of the industry, and a retirement system was promised.⁸ On the whole, the settlement represented a

⁸ *Summation*, Dec., 1946.

victory for the union, or so it must have seemed at the time.⁹

The part played by SCAP in the solution of the dispute cannot be documented, but it is safe to assert that this part was considerable. CIU leaders believed that SCAP had induced the government to make certain concessions which it would not have made as a free agent, and it is known that during this period SCAP took a stand against proposals for wage-freezing advanced by Mr. Zen.¹⁰

Sufficient data are not available to permit an evaluation of the economic issues in dispute. Viewing the episode as a case study in the technique of labor relations, certain judgments are possible. Obviously all parties made a good many mistakes, as was to be expected in view of the complexity of the issues, the emotional tensions aroused, and the inexperience of all concerned with collective bargaining, conciliation, and mediation. The JEGDC officials played a relatively passive role. The dispute was essentially between the union and the government, neither of which exhibited an attitude of sweet reasonableness. The union displayed excessive militancy; the government showed an unbecoming prejudice.

The union's wage demands were widely criticized as being unreasonably high. It appears to have been guilty of illegal acts on a limited scale. Its initial hostility to any mediation caused much difficulty, and it seems to have prolonged the dispute for some days after it had gained the bulk of its demands. On the other hand it did finally accept a compromise without precipitating a serious economic disturbance, and its program of gradual pressure shows a consideration for the public interest—or an intelligent appreciation of how much the traffic would bear, which in practice amounts to the same thing. While it made no secret

⁹ By the summer of 1947 the terms of the agreement had not yet been implemented, and renewed disputes broke out over this and other issues.

¹⁰ "Wage-Price Stabilization."

of its hostility to the Yoshida cabinet, it made no political demands, and fought its battle entirely on economic issues.

Incidentally, this was the first large dispute in which any attempt was made to determine a wage scale on the basis of ascertained facts and scientific standards. The union sought to justify its proposals by elaborate calculations based on a survey of living expenses of electrical workers made in June, 1946 by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the power companies.¹¹ Some general principles for determining the component parts of the complex Japanese wage scale were accepted by both parties. As the *Oriental Economist* noted, a significant precedent was thereby established.¹²

Undoubtedly the union made a better showing than the government. Whether or not its case was better or its motives purer, its operations were more efficient. It knew what it wanted, it had facts and figures, its strategy was cleverly planned, its organization was well disciplined and its propaganda was highly effective. After the event the union claimed credit for the most intelligently conducted large-scale dispute in the history of the Japanese labor movement. For what it is worth, this claim is probably correct.

The government's handling of the affair was, by contrast, inept. It never seems to have made up its mind what line to follow. It blustered, temporized, threatened, and retired in confusion. At no point in the dispute, so far as is known, did it offer any constructive proposal or take any constructive step, except to refer the matter to the Central Labor Relations Committee, and this was done in the manner best calculated to prejudice the Committee's efforts. Having called in the Committee, the government sabotaged its work by denouncing its report, thus in all probability prolonging the dispute. This was especially unfortunate since this was

¹¹ Chairman Suehiro of the Central Labor Relations Committee complimented the union on the ability with which it presented its case.

¹² Jan. 11, 1947.

the first test of the Labor Relations Adjustment Law, which got off to a bad start. Finally, the government had to fall back on the Committee to rescue it from its difficulties.

It was, of course, proper for the government to oppose illegal actions, and to reject the union's demands if it considered them economically unsound. Unfortunately it went beyond this. Its public statements gave color to the union's charge that the government's attitude toward labor was one of uncompromising hostility. Admittedly its position was difficult since it was in effect itself a party to the dispute. Yet it could plausibly be claimed that the government was using the police power of the state in a partisan manner.

By far the best showing was made by the Central Labor Relations Committee and especially by its chairman, Dr. Suehiro. The achievement of a settlement was in large part due to his patient and untiring efforts (aided no doubt by those of SCAP) in the face of repeated discouragements. It is true that Dr. Suehiro somewhat compromised his neutral position by displaying a certain appearance of partiality toward the union. Yet there is no doubt that he urged all parties to make concessions for the sake of a compromise settlement. His job was to settle the dispute somehow and to prevent a possible industrial and political catastrophe. The terms which he proposed may be attacked on economic grounds, but they represented a shrewd calculation of the actual strength of the opposing forces.

IX

GOVERNMENT RAILWAY WORKERS

The railway labor dispute which came to a head in September, 1946 illustrates some of the difficulties of labor relations in a country where the government itself is a major entrepreneur. Except for a few privately owned lines the railways of Japan had long been owned and operated by the national government through the Ministry of Transportation. This made it difficult to apply American concepts of sound labor policy, according to which the government, in theory at least, stands as an impartial umpire between capital and labor and as guardian of the public interest. Similar considerations applied in the case of communications, education, and other industries, such as shipping and electricity, which were partially though not wholly under government control. Regardless of the desires of the parties, any large dispute involving the government as employer inevitably has political repercussions.

It should be explained further that most of the local lines serving the city of Tokyo, roughly comparable in function with the New York subways, were part of the national government railway network.

The Federation of Government Railway Workers' Unions embraced the bulk of the government railway employees, numbering some 550,000. It was an independent industrial union, affiliated with neither JFL nor CIU, although its

Tokyo District branch was affiliated with the CIU at the time of the dispute.

The September dispute had been preceded by various smaller disturbances reflecting the dissatisfaction of the railway workers. In March the Tokyo District union staged a slowdown strike which seriously embarrassed local transportation in the city and suburbs. The strike aroused a good deal of public criticism and eventually petered out. A number of strike leaders were suspended by the Ministry of Transportation, whose action was challenged by the union as illegal discrimination under the Trade Union Law. The Tokyo District Labor Relations Committee upheld the suspensions but advised that the men be reinstated if they acknowledged their error.

In May the government railway union, together with other unions of government employees, had presented demands for wage increases. After extended negotiations the government, in mid-July, offered to grant the greater part of these demands, and the union's central committee voted, 51 to 27, to accept the government's proposal.¹

The September dispute was precipitated by the government's decision to dismiss about 75,000 employees (reported figures vary) in the interests of economy and rationalization. The government claimed that the railways were overstaffed and losing money. Furthermore, it was under obligation to rehire former employees returning from the armed services. The union claimed that, on the contrary, 139,000 more men were needed to provide proper service. Both parties favored a reduction in working hours.² Officials of the union and the Ministry met on August 15, when the Ministry explained that it intended to dismiss only women, juvenile workers and others who had, presumably, been employed only as a war

¹ *Jiji*, July 16, 1946.

² The government recommended an 8-hour day. One report has the union backing an 8-hour day with a 7-hour day for heavy or dangerous work; according to another the union asked for a general 7-hour day.

measure. On the following day the union announced a 24-hour strike for September 15, unless its demands had been met in the meantime.

Intermittent conferences between the government and the union were accompanied by a violent internal dispute within the union over the propriety or wisdom of using the strike method. The idea of an impending national railway strike aroused apprehension throughout the country, and many newspapers, even though not unsympathetic to the union's demands, urged it to consider the convenience and safety of the public. It is hard to see why quite so much heat was generated as no one had proposed anything more than a 24-hour strike, on a Sunday, which would doubtless have caused some inconvenience but would hardly have brought economic life to a standstill.

A national convention of the union, with 536 delegates from all parts of the country, met on September 5 at Ujiyama in an atmosphere of extreme confusion.³ On August 27 General MacArthur, with particular reference to the shipping industry, had warned against strikes endangering the objectives of the occupation, while on September 2 the central executive committee of the CIU had voted to support the railway strike. Delegations from Nagoya, Osaka, and other chapters in western Japan opposed the strike, while those from eastern Japan tended to favor it. Chairman Seiichi Suzuki appealed in vain for unity. Dissidents demanded the resignation of the central executive committee and the dispute committee. An Osaka delegate was elected as chairman of the convention, but later, in a test vote on a minor issue, the pro-strike faction won a majority. At this most of the delegates from Nagoya, Osaka, and Moji withdrew from the convention, which was left without a quorum and forced to adjourn after hearing addresses by Messrs. Kato, left-wing Social Democrat, and Tokuda, Communist. Subsequently,

³ *Nippon Times*, Sept. 7, 8, 1946.

several of the dissident local chapters seceded from the union.

A few days later (September 12) the Tokyo District chapter, by a vote of 63 to 51, endorsed a 24-hour strike on September 15. Plans were made by the national union to prevent any interruption of trains serving the occupation forces. The minority advocated postponement, urging a lack of adequate preparation. Meanwhile the seamen's strike had begun on September 10 and a national press strike was threatened for October 5. Tension rose high. The government was interpellated in the House of Peers (September 12). On the same day Progressive Party Diet members urged the government to exert all efforts for "an all-round settlement," alleging that current labor disputes were inspired by "a strong factor behind the scenes." The Social Democratic Party issued a statement opposing the railway and seamen's strikes on the ground that the issues were more political than economic, while the Communist Party strongly supported both walkouts. Six CIU unions announced plans for a 24-hour sympathy strike on Saturday, September 14.

Despite all warnings the union's national leaders remained firm in their determination to proceed with the strike; and as the deadline neared the government gave way and offered to settle on terms which, if somewhat lacking in precision, represented a victory for the union. The government agreed not to dismiss 75,000 employees, and to set up a joint committee, including union representatives, to discuss detailed plans for rationalization. After a warm debate the union strike committee accepted the proposal, on September 13, by a vote of 17 to 6. After the vote had been taken the left wing made a last-minute attempt to reverse the decision. Katsumi Kikunami, CIU chairman, urged the railway union leaders to reject the government proposal, arguing that its terms did not give sufficiently precise guarantees against the discharge of workers. Following conferences with other CIU

leaders, the railway union changed its position and reopened negotiations, but on the following morning an agreement was reached on much the same terms as those originally accepted. This was signed by Transportation Minister Tsunejiro Hiratsuka and union chairman Suzuki, and seven minutes later the strike order was canceled.

The merits of the issue are difficult to judge. Assuming that the government was correct in asserting that the railways were overstaffed, it would have been wiser to have offered some plan for the relief of those who were to be deprived of jobs. The union on the other hand was precipitate in calling a strike without allowing adequate time for negotiations, and in the face of strong opposition within the union. The left wing, in pushing for a strike, was willing to risk splitting the union for the sake of a possible tactical success, but at the risk of a dangerous defeat. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion either that their enthusiasm outran their judgment, or that they were, as many charged, less interested in the immediate issue of protecting the jobs of railway workers than in staging a demonstration against the alleged general iniquity of the government. But in the end the union accepted a peaceful settlement. Although union policy was not determined by any strategic plan but by a precarious balance of forces, the result in this case was a notable victory, which proved to be genuine, for two years later there had been no mass discharges. Chief credit in the affair probably goes to Chairman Suzuki. By a determined threat to strike the union succeeded in bluffing the government, and it was saved by the government's weakness from having to make good on its threat, which might have split the union wide open. By timely if belated concessions the government strengthened the hands of the moderate union element. But the most obvious lesson for other unions was that the government had given in under threat of a strike.

Several accounts are given of the role of the Communists

in this incident. The Communist Party was believed to be behind Kikunami's attempt to force a strike after agreement had been reached.⁴ Yet it is also reported that a few days earlier Nosaka had warned against "political" activities—such as political strikes;⁵ and later the Communist Party publicly supported the railway settlement.⁶ Both stories are quite credible, for like other Japanese parties the Communists suffered from divided counsels.

⁴ Cf. *Fortune*, Mar., 1947, p. 137.

⁵ *Summation*, Sept., 1946, p. 18.

⁶ *Christian Science Monitor*, Sept. 17, 1946.

X

SEAMEN

The seamen's strike of September, 1946 was noteworthy in that it represented a revolt of the rank and file—stimulated by militant elements—against a leadership strongly tainted with subservience to employer interests and political reaction. The Japan Seamen's Union had been strong before the war, including most of Japan's merchant seamen and sharing in the operation of their employment exchanges. It was a right-wing organization, backed by the Shipowners' Association. When the union was reorganized after the war the chairmanship fell to Hidekichi Koizumi, pre-war head of the Merchant Marine Officers' Association (also under shipowners' influence) and a former director of the Mitsui Shipping Co. Koizumi became the central figure in an intra-union struggle.

While Japanese merchant shipping was privately owned, it was strictly controlled by the Marine Transport Control Council, an operators' association which was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation. Much of Japan's merchant fleet was destroyed during the war, and maritime commerce ended with the surrender. However, coastwise shipping continued, and the repatriation of several million Japanese nationals from overseas, for which the United States permitted the Japanese government to charter about 200 Liberty ships and LST's, temporarily provided employment for Japanese seamen. When repatriation was completed

it was estimated that only about 750,000 tons of Japanese shipping would be in service, which would provide jobs for no more than 13,000 seamen.¹ The prospect of mass unemployment, together with complaints of low pay, poor food, and bad working conditions, created unrest among the seamen and caused demands for relief.

On August 7, 1946 representatives of the All Japan Seamen's Union laid their case before Seigo Yanase of the Marine Transport Control Council, opposing any mass discharges and demanding an increase in pay and food allowances.² The operators, rejecting the union's demands, announced plans for reducing personnel from 54,000 to 10,800 by the end of the year.³ The union was prepared to negotiate but warned that it would strike if necessary. On August 21 it carried its demands directly to Transportation Minister Tsunejiro Hiratsuka (who incidentally was later purged). The demands included no discharges, two months' vacation with pay, 100 per cent increase in basic salary, a special anti-famine allowance of ¥2,000 plus ¥200 for each dependent, and control of rice rations by the union. Failing a satisfactory reply by August 27, the union threatened a strike. The operators' reply promised improvement of working conditions, apparently in general terms, but made no concessions on the discharge program. Accordingly a meeting of the union's national council was called at Kobe on September 3 to consider its strategy.

In the meantime a wildcat strike had started on August 24 on two repatriation ships and spread to others in Sasebo harbor, tying up the port and preventing the scheduled sailing of five repatriation ships in all. At this point (August 27) General MacArthur intervened with a strong warning against strikes "inimical to the objectives of the occupation" (see p. 50) and directed the Japanese government to end the Sasebo tie-up, if possible without using police forces. The

¹ *Nippon Times*, Aug. 10, 1946.

² *Nippon Times*, Aug. 10, 1946.

³ *Ibid.*, Aug. 15, 1946.

Sasebo strike immediately collapsed, and the union assured the Supreme Commander that there would be no more interference with repatriation shipping. General MacArthur's warning was generally interpreted as being directed not only at the seamen but at other unions which at the time were threatening strike action, notably the government railway workers.

The seamen's convention at Kobe on September 3-4 was a stormy affair. Delegates from all of the forty local chapters were present, representing a membership of about 75,000. The issue lay between Chairman Koizumi, who was trying to head off the strike movement, and rank-and-file rebels led by Matsujiro Tanaka, Communist, head of the union's organization section. This internal struggle had been going on for some time. The union's original constitution gave the chairman power to appoint all members of the national executive committee.⁴ Protests against such concentration of power, and dissatisfaction with Koizumi's policies, had led to the establishment, in May, of a Central Strike Committee elected by the membership.⁵ It was the latter committee which had represented the union in negotiations with the Transportation Ministry. Fighting broke out at the Kobe meeting when some thirty thugs forced their way into the meeting, threw beer bottles, and used mock rifles to beat up strike supporters.⁶ Order was restored by the police. The convention finally voted to submit an ultimatum to the Control Council, calling for a strike on September 10, and to replace Koizumi by Tanaka as head of the Central Strike Committee.

Further negotiations took place, in which the union apparently scaled down its wage demands somewhat but demanded 99 per cent employment and a labor-management

⁴ *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, Sept. 20, 1946.

⁵ *Summation*, Sept., 1946.

⁶ *Nippon Times*, Sept. 6, 1946.

committee to handle discharge questions.⁷ These negotiations were conducted by Koizumi, who was making desperate efforts to prevent the strike by announcing some kind of settlement with the operators.⁸ It was, in fact, clear to no one whether the Strike Committee or Koizumi's Executive Committee represented the seamen. On September 9 the Strike Committee, after passing a resolution of non-confidence in Koizumi, sent strike orders to all locals; Koizumi wired them to remain at work as he was still negotiating. On September 10 Prime Minister Yoshida appealed for peace in the industry. Transportation Minister Hiratsuka deplored the calling of a strike against the will of the union chairman and reminded the seamen of General MacArthur's order of August 27.

The question of striking directly "against the occupation" did not arise, as repatriation ships and others employed by the occupation forces were exempted from the strike order.⁹ Response to the strike order was naturally spotty, in view of the conflicting instructions and factional conflict, and it is impossible to say how many ships were actually tied up. It appears, however, that the response was better than 50 per cent.¹⁰ The Kyushu district adopted an attitude of neutrality as between Koizumi and the Strike Committee, but staged a strike of its own, which tied up most shipping on the island, including deliveries of Kyushu coal.¹¹ On September 10 the Strike Committee offered to negotiate if Koizumi, whom it had expelled from the union, were excluded from the negotiations.¹² Later the Strike Committee asked the CIU to request the Central Labor Relations Committee to remove Koizumi from office, charging him with making a secret deal with the operators.¹³ A temporary arrangement was finally made by which a committee consisting of Koi-

⁷ *Nippon Times*, Sept. 10, 1946.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Sept. 12, 1946.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Sept. 17, 19, 1946.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1946.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Sept. 11, 1946.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Nov. 13, 1946.

¹² *Ibid.*, Sept. 13, 18, 1946.

zumi, Tanaka and three other pro-strike members represented the union in negotiations with the operators.¹⁴ An agreement was reached on September 20. The union gained its main point—no discharges—and part of its claims for wage increases and food allowances. Joint labor-management committees were to be established to work out policies for full employment, fair hiring practices, and reform of the wage system.

Following the settlement, Koizumi and the other members of the Executive Committee, together with all department and chapter heads, resigned from office,¹⁵ but the internal strife was not ended. The annual convention of the union was scheduled to meet in October. Koizumi tried unsuccessfully to get the meeting postponed, but it met in Kobe on October 5, with 623 delegates present.¹⁶ Again the police and MP's had to intervene to restore order.¹⁷ A new, provisional executive committee was elected and it was decided to hold another convention in January, to move union headquarters from Kobe to Tokyo, and to revise the union rules along more democratic lines.

Thus the dispute ended with an apparent victory for the union but at the cost of a threatened split in the organization. There can be little doubt that Koizumi's tactics were highhanded and dictatorial, and his integrity as a labor leader is open to serious question. The dissident faction was on firm ground in seeking a more democratic union administration, but open to criticism for its precipitancy in striking before the possibilities of negotiation had been exhausted. Unfortunately, in the course of the dispute, internal and external issues became confused. It would have been better, of course, to settle the internal problem before approaching the operators, but in practice this was not possible.

¹⁴ *Summation*, Sept., 1946.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Sept., 1946; *Nippon Times*, Oct. 4, 1946.

¹⁶ *Summation*, Oct., 1946.

¹⁷ *Nippon Times*, Oct. 8, 1946.

XI

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES: THE GENERAL STRIKE MOVEMENT

Labor unrest, which had reached a peak in October, 1946, gradually decreased toward the end of the year; but meanwhile a new wave of protest was gathering force, in which the leading role was taken by government employees. The attempted nation-wide strike of February 1, 1947, in which other unions joined, was the climax of a period of increasing labor militancy and contributed powerfully to the downfall of the first Yoshida cabinet.

In Japan, government employees included not only employees of government offices and teachers, but also those in various public enterprises, such as the post office, telephone and telegraph systems, most of the railways, and the tobacco, salt, and camphor monopolies. The trade union movement made rapid progress not only among such groups as railway workers, but also among white-collar groups such as office workers, minor bureaucrats, and teachers.

White-collar or not, Japanese government employees, like those in other countries, were peculiarly vulnerable to the hardships of an inflationary period, since their salaries, dependent on government budgets, lagged behind those in private industry and far behind the rising cost of living. In May, 1946 a SCAP official estimated that salaries of government employees had increased from 20 to 40 per cent since the surrender, while wages in private industry had gone up

200 to 400 per cent, and the cost of living had risen by about 850 per cent.

Labor organization among government employees took many forms. There were several large organizations of the industrial-union type, notably the Federation of Government Railway Workers' Unions (independent; membership around 540,000) and the All Japan Communications Workers' Union (CIU; membership around 325,000). Several national unions competed for the teachers' allegiance, with the All Japan Teachers' Union leading the field. There were also many smaller groups like the Finance Ministry Employees' Union, and numerous unions of municipal workers. Many small units were linked in the All Japan Government and Public Office Workers' Union, credited in December, 1946 with a membership of 432,000.¹ Some of these unions were affiliated with the CIU and some were independent; JFL influence was relatively small.

From the spring of 1946 the efforts of most of the government employees' unions were more or less effectively coordinated through the National Council of Government and Public Office Workers' Unions, headed by Kazuyoshi Dobashi of the communications workers,² and later through a Joint Struggle Committee. The eventual crystallization of the efforts of many unions, representing groups as different as teachers and railwaymen, into a single common campaign was encouraged by the high degree of centralization of the Japanese state. Most local administrative offices and the public schools, as well as railways and communications, were administered from Tokyo and were directly or indirectly dependent on the national budget.³ The wages of government employees, numbering in all some 2,600,000, formed an important part of the total wage picture.

Prior to the winter of 1946-47 various individual unions

¹ *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, Dec. 7, 1946. ² *Jiji*, Aug. 2, 1946.

³ Some decentralization was provided for in the new constitution.

had attempted with varying success to negotiate for higher wages, union recognition, and other benefits. The activities of the government railway workers are described elsewhere (pp. 126 ff.) Some other examples of government employees' activity are mentioned below. Except for the railway workers, there had been few strikes or serious threats of strike among government employees before January, 1947.

In June, 1946 the Federation of Tokyo Metropolitan Workers' Unions, which was demanding a special food allowance, instituted a program of so-called "business control," modeled on production control in industry. This seems to have consisted mainly of putting the union seal on official papers, though the union claimed to have increased the efficiency of streetcars and other public services. After denouncing the union's move as illegal, Governor Matsui offered a compromise settlement, which was accepted. On November 30, 1946 an agreement was signed between the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Federation of Tokyo Metropolitan Workers' Unions, representing seven unions and all of the 51,000 municipal employees. The contract established a council representing equally the Metropolitan Government and the employees, which was to determine wages and other conditions of employment and could also deal with questions of efficiency and improvement of services.⁴

Communications Workers

In June, 1946, shortly after its inauguration as a national union, the All Japan Communications Workers' Union presented to the Communications Board a list of demands including abolition of the "feudal" organization of government offices, a labor-management committee, and guarantee of a

⁴ *Summation*, Dec., 1946, p. 165.

minimum living standard by means of a flexible wage scale.⁵ The leadership of this powerful union, headed by Kazuyoshi Dobashi, was at this time of a moderate type though subject to pressure by more militant elements. The union threatened to strike, but after some negotiation accepted a compromise agreement in mid-July.⁶ This was part of a general wage increase for all government employees, averaging about 50 per cent, jointly negotiated by the communications workers, the government railway workers, and the council of government employees.⁷

The communications workers presented new demands in November, for a pay increase of around 250 per cent.⁸ The Minister of Communications asked the union to wait until February, as a new wage plan for all government employees was being drafted. This pattern is a recurrent one among wage negotiations of government workers. The official to whom the demands are presented, even if he is sympathetic, must usually reply that he cannot act without higher authority or a budgetary appropriation. Long delays occur, wage policy is debated at high levels, and when employees' needs are acute and they have little confidence in the intentions of the government, they tend to accuse it of deliberate stalling.

Teachers

Demands from teachers' unions for salary increases began to appear in force during the fall of 1946. Organization of teachers progressed more slowly than that of industrial workers as Japanese teachers, like their counterparts in other countries, are apt to think of themselves as professional pro-

⁵ *Nippon Times*, June 15, 1946.

⁶ *Ibid.*, July 12, 18, 1946; *Jiji*, July 2, 11, 17, 1946.

⁷ *Jiji*, July 11, 17, 1946.

⁸ *Nippon Times*, Nov. 20, 25, 1946.

ple for whom trade unionism is inappropriate. Economic necessity, however, gradually tended to break down this attitude. It was generally admitted by everyone that teachers' salaries were inexcusably low. Several organizations purporting to represent the nation's teachers appeared, the leading ones being the All Japan Teachers' Union (Zen Nippon Kyoiku Rodo Kumiai)⁹ and the National Federation of Teachers' Unions (Kyo Shokuin Kumiai Rengo Kai), representing the left and right wings respectively.¹⁰ The former, which was affiliated with the CIU and was sometimes accused of being under Communist influence, was credited with a membership of 103,000 primary school teachers but claimed to represent 350,000 out of a total of 400,000 teachers. The NFTU, unaffiliated, claimed a membership of 30,000 middle school teachers. The AJTU freely advertised its willingness to strike, while the NFTU disclaimed such an intention. Rivalry between the two groups at first prevented the establishment of a common front. The Minister of Education, Kotaro Tanaka, obviously favored the NFTU but after some reluctance consented to discussions with both groups.

The demands presented by the AJTU and the NFTU in October and November were very similar. Both wanted a minimum basic monthly salary of ¥600, increases in other salaries and allowances, no discrimination by sex or locality, no discharges, and raising of the income tax exemption. Tanaka promised the NFTU to bring the minimum salary up to ¥600 and to meet their other demands so far as possible.¹¹ Neither union was satisfied with this statement. A few days later Finance Minister Tanzan Ishibashi stated at a press conference, apparently in response to demands from the

⁹ Also translated as All Japan Federation of Teachers' Unions, All Japan Educational Workers' Union, Japan Educators' Union, National Teachers' Union, All Japan Teachers' Labor Union, etc.

¹⁰ *Summation*, Nov., 1946; *Oriental Economist*, Nov. 30, 1946; *Nippon Times*, Nov. 15, 1946.

¹¹ *Nippon Times*, Nov. 11, 1946.

AJTU, that the government was making a full investigation of the salaries of teachers and other public employees, which could not be completed until February, 1947. He hoped that some provisional measures of relief would be possible. On December 20 it was reported that the government had decided to juggle the budget to provide a small temporary increase in teachers' salaries.

Government Employees Combine

At the same time other government employees, notably the railway and communications workers, were also presenting demands for wage increases. Up to this point, four temporary increases had been made, with SCAP approval, in government workers' salaries: in December, 1945 and in May, June, and September, 1946. Except for the first, these were granted after representations by the Council of Government Employees' Unions. The first three increases amounted altogether to an average of about 250 per cent, according to SCAP figures.¹² In September the previous temporary increases were made permanent, dependents' allowances were raised about 30 per cent on the average, and all increases and special allowances except the dependents' allowances were consolidated into a single monthly payment.¹³ These increases affected some 1.5 to 1.7 million persons. They fell far short, however, of keeping pace with the rise of living costs.

As the unions continued to press for further wage adjustments, the government indicated willingness to make some concessions but took the position that nothing could be done until a comprehensive study had been made of the whole situation as it affected government finance. Suspecting that this was an excuse to delay action indefinitely, the unions

¹² *Ibid.*, Sept. 1, 1946.

¹³ *Summation*, Sept., 1946.

intensified their campaign. On November 26 a Joint Struggle Committee of public office, railway and communications workers, and teachers was organized, claiming to represent 2,400,000 government employees. The demands which it presented to the government included wage increases, lower taxes on small incomes, and lifting the ¥500 monthly limit on cash salary payments, which had been imposed as an anti-inflation measure.¹⁴ The government granted a "winter allowance" in December, but made no other commitments and announced that wages would not be paid during a strike. By the end of the year a campaign for a nation-wide government employees' strike was well under way.

Drive against Yoshida Cabinet

This was but one manifestation of a labor drive on a much broader front. Not satisfied with the results of the fall offensive, CIU leaders had continued to agitate for militant action. The JFL also, in November, announced a campaign for higher wages, collective bargaining agreements, and a government more representative of labor.¹⁵ Negotiations between the CIU, JFL, and JCLU looking to cooperative action led to a meeting on November 20 to discuss possibilities of a merger. The CIU offered to dissolve and its officers offered to resign to promote such a step. The merger discussions broke down as usual on JFL distrust of Communist influence in the CIU. They did lead, however, to a combined demonstration against the Yoshida cabinet, timed to support Social Democratic action in the Diet.

On November 28 Suehiro Nishio, right-wing Social Democrat, speaking in the Diet, criticized the government's labor policy and demanded dissolution of the Diet. A formal mo-

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Dec., 1946, Jan., 1947.

¹⁵ *Nippon Times*, Nov. 6, 1946; *Summation*, Nov., 1946.

tion calling for dissolution was introduced by the Social Democrats on December 17 and supported by the other opposition parties.¹⁶ Besides criticizing the government's weakness and inaction, they asserted that the mission of the Yoshida cabinet had ended with the promulgation of the new constitution. The cabinet, said party chairman Tetsu Katayama, must heed the cry of the farmers and working masses and submit itself to the test of a national election. On the same day a huge labor demonstration before the Imperial Palace demanded the resignation of the cabinet and formation of a new government based on the Social Democratic Party. Also demanded were a minimum wage, collective agreements in every industry, full employment, passage of the Labor Standards Bill, income tax revision and removal of the ¥500 limit on cash wages.¹⁷ The rally was sponsored by the JFL and CIU, and estimates of attendance ran as high as 500,000. The Social Democratic resolution was, of course, voted down in the Diet but the leading Tokyo papers, *Mainichi*, *Asahi* and *Yomiuri*, supported the demand for new elections.

The Prime Minister was so shaken by these events that early in January, after the Diet session had ended, he engaged in protracted negotiations with the aim of bringing the Social Democrats into his cabinet. Their conditions were too stiff, however, as they sensed that the tide was moving in their favor. By January 17 Yoshida had abandoned the effort, which if successful would have taken some of the wind out of the sails of the growing strike movement.

Government Employees Prepare for Strike

On January 1 the government employees' Joint Struggle Committee met to work out its strike plans. The strike date

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Dec. 18, 1946. Leftists would have preferred a motion demanding resignation of the cabinet.

¹⁷ *Summation*, Dec., 1946.

was subsequently set for February 1. It was stated that services to the occupation forces would be maintained and that the legal prohibition of strikes by government office workers, under the Labor Relations Adjustment Law, would be complied with.¹⁸ That the unions were at first thinking in terms of limited or gradual action is indicated by various reports. The railway workers planned to begin with business control, followed by strike action; there was some division of opinion as to whether food shipments would be permitted.¹⁹ The teachers, also, planned to try production control before proceeding to a strike.²⁰

The strike objectives, as announced on January 18, were: (1) minimum basic monthly salary of ¥650, effective from December, (2) immediate payment of the balance of the year-end allowance, (3) immediate conclusion of collective bargaining agreements, (4) no unreasonable discharges, (5) no discriminatory treatment, (6) cash payment of all salaries and allowances, (7) grant of "cold zone" allowances, (8) abolition of Labor Relations Adjustment Law, (9) abolition of income tax on wages, (10) raising exemption point of consolidated income tax to ¥30,000, (11) payment of salaries during strike, (12) guarantees against police oppression of labor, (13) apology for Prime Minister Yoshida's references to labor in his New Year's message.²¹

All Labor Joins In

During January the movement gained in volume and velocity until it became virtually a dispute between the government and all of organized labor. On January 15 the All Japan Joint Struggle Committee of Labor Unions was formed to support the government employees. It included some thirty unions and all three major federations, and rep-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Jan., 1947.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Jan. 18, 1947.

¹⁹ *Nippon Times*, Jan. 9, 1947.

²¹ *Oriental Economist*, Feb. 1, 1947.

resented about 4,000,000 workers. The Committee planned a joint struggle for common objectives, including a minimum wage, income tax revision, payment of all wages in cash, collective agreements, opposition to discharges, and establishment of a democratic government.

The Committee was united on its general objectives but not on the question of tactics. Communists and other militant left-wingers pushed for a broad program of concerted nation-wide strikes. The CIU supported such a program but the JFL and JCLU were opposed, and the JFL eventually withdrew from the Committee. There was a good deal of indecision and wavering in the various unions. Hence the committee, while supporting the government employees' strike, left member unions free to make their own decisions. Several unions announced plans either for 24- or 48-hour sympathy strikes, or for synchronized strikes in support of their own objectives.²² Among these were the All Japan Iron and Steel Workers' Union, the Japan Express Co. Labor Union, the All Japan Electrical Engineering Workers' Union, the All Japan Machine Tool Workers' Union, the All Japan Chemical Industry Union, the All Japan Coal Miners' Union and the All Japan Printing and Publishing Workers' Union. The All Japan Public Workers' Union Federation, a smaller and more conservative body than the All Japan Government and Public Workers' Union, decided only on January 24 to join the strike.²³ As the end of January drew near the movement began to approach—though it never actually reached—the proportions of a general strike.

Bases of Strike Movement

Economic conditions were the basic cause of the growing unrest among wage and salary workers. Inflation was un-

²² *Nippon Times*, Jan. 23, 1947.

²³ *Ibid.*, Jan. 25, 1947.

checked, prices were still rising, black markets flourished, and the resources of many families were approaching exhaustion. Not only government employees but all urban workers suffered increasingly great hardships with little visible hope of improvement, as production was still in the doldrums and the government seemed either unable or unwilling to take effective remedial measures.

Political motives were also present; in fact, economic and political goals cannot be dissociated. The more intelligent labor leaders realized that there was little point in merely fighting for wage increases while the inflationary spiral continued. Relief for the workers' hardships could come only from a concerted all-out attack on the nation's economic problems. Neither the Shidehara nor the Yoshida cabinet seemed to be capable of constructive action. There were also numerous complaints of specific abuses such as favoritism and corruption in the distribution of rationed supplies.

Beyond all this lay the fact that the people of Japan had been promised a new deal—summed up in the magic word “democracy”—and many of them believed they were not getting it. The militarists had gone but in its domestic aspect the Japanese government did not seem to have changed greatly. Few of the long-range reforms introduced by SCAP had yet produced any tangible effect on the lives of the people. A vague discontent fused with economic privation to produce widespread unrest. Under such conditions it was easy for Communist and other radical labor leaders to arouse the smoldering discontent of the rank and file with the slogan, “Down with the Yoshida cabinet—establish a people's government!” Moderate leadership tended to be swept aside or to join the bandwagon.

The big disputes in the fall of 1946—of seamen, miners, railwaymen, electrical workers, etc.—had been mainly fought for straight economic objectives. While union leaders made no secret of their dislike of the Yoshida cabinet, they re-

frained for the most part from raising political slogans, knowing that political action by labor was frowned on by SCAP and often identified with Communist influence. In the winter offensive, opposition to the government was voiced openly, and resignation of the cabinet was generally understood to be the major strike objective, although it was not formally stated as such. This was rationalized on the ground that the government had taken the offensive by instituting a campaign to crush labor organization and to protect the profits of capitalists at the expense of the people's livelihood.

The government, for its part, although under pressure it had often given in to labor demands, was suspicious and hostile in its attitude toward the labor movement, which it regarded as a threat to public order, if not as a revolutionary conspiracy. In October, when the coal miners', Radio Tokyo and electrical workers' disputes were at their height, Prime Minister Yoshida called the strike wave "a challenge to democratic government" and "a movement by small minorities aiming at the establishment of dictatorial government."²⁴ On October 30 Yoshida spoke in similar terms at a conference of prefectural governors, condemning the tactics of the coal miners and electrical workers as a threat to economic reconstruction and hence to the life of the nation.²⁵ The fall offensive was punctuated by similar statements by other government spokesmen. In a joint statement on October 12 the Liberal and Progressive Parties reaffirmed their support of the Prime Minister and warned against strikes instigated by a "faction" to disrupt the economic and political situation.²⁶

It was at about this time that Mr. George Atcheson made his famous statement in the Allied Council that "the time has come when Japanese aims have become virtually identi-

²⁴ *New York Times*, Oct. 13, 1946.

²⁵ *Nippon Times*, Oct. 31, 1946.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Oct. 14, 1946.

cal with Allied aims.”²⁷ Although this sweeping language surprised many people in SCAP whose experience in dealing with Japanese officials did not support Mr. Acheson’s conclusion, it was endorsed by the State Department in Washington.²⁸ Obviously this statement was helpful to the hard-pressed Yoshida government in its struggle against the demands of labor. This was not the only occasion when statements in the Allied Council, intended primarily as a defense of SCAP’s record against Russian criticism, had the effect of strengthening conservative against progressive elements in Japanese politics.

In his New Year’s message Yoshida used particularly strong language in speaking of labor. The main cause of low production, inflation, and unrest lay, he charged, in labor disputes instigated by “rebellious elements” (*futei no to*) who hampered reconstruction, disturbed national unity, and sought to exploit economic conditions in order to seize political power. This speech aroused strong resentment in labor circles, especially the word “*futei*,”²⁹ which has about the same connotations as “disloyal” or “subversive” in the United States.

By this time activists in the labor unions were definitely aiming at a nation-wide strike movement of sufficient proportions to force the resignation of the Yoshida cabinet. The movement was one of peaceful protest. Although some of the strike supporters were too handy with their fists, there was no evidence of any plan for concerted violence or insurrec-

²⁷ *New York Times*, Oct. 17, 1946.

²⁸ *New York Herald Tribune*, Oct. 18, 1946.

²⁹ According to *Asahi* this was in war-time Japan “a special word used by the privileged class . . . [who] considered themselves always in the right and regarded their opponents as ‘malcontents’ [*futei*] and would not permit them to make comments on their policies or views. This was a word used in conjunction with the now defunct law for the maintenance of peace and order.” *Asahi* felt that the use of this word showed that the Prime Minister was either lacking in tact, or unfit to guide the destinies of the nation. “Labor disputes,” it added, “took place repeatedly since last fall because the lives of the working masses had been threatened daily.” (*Asahi*, Jan. 4, 1947.)

tion. The strike leaders do not seem to have had any very clear idea of the next step, if the campaign succeeded. There were vague demands for a government "based on the Social Democratic Party." If they had anything more definite in mind, it was probably a government composed of Social Democrats, Communists, and other "popular" elements. Such a government, of course, would have had the support of only a small minority in the existing Diet.

By the middle of January events seemed to be working toward a showdown between the unions and the government. As tension mounted, an ugly incident occurred when, on January 21, Katsumi Kikunami, CIU head and active pro-strike leader, was attacked with knives and seriously wounded by two men who later surrendered to the police and identified themselves as members of Shin-ei Kinro Taishuto, a reactionary organization which openly threatened more attacks on labor leaders unless the strike were called off.³⁰ Threatening anonymous letters were received by other union leaders. Home Minister Omura, deploring the incident, promised that the government would suppress terrorism.

SCAP Tries to Prevent Strike

In the meantime SCAP, which was reluctant to interfere openly, was working quietly behind the scenes in an effort to head off the strike. Pressure was brought to bear on the government to induce it to concede some part of the union demands,³¹ and strong pressure was applied informally to induce the unions to call off the strike.

On January 22 the government, apparently at SCAP's request, offered a temporary wage increase amounting to ¥650,771,000 monthly in January, February, and March;

³⁰ *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, Jan. 24, 1947.

³¹ *Christian Science Monitor*, Jan. 22, 1947.

payment of ¥700 (rather than ¥500) monthly in cash; and establishment of a commission to investigate the wage problem.³² This offer fell considerably short of the unions' demands, but went much farther than the government had previously been willing to go.

On the same day, without publicity, Major General W. F. Marquat, chief of SCAP's Economic and Scientific Section, summoned the members of the Joint Struggle Committee to his office and advised them to continue negotiations and not to strike, giving arguments in favor of such a course and stating that SCAP would prohibit the strike if the advice were disregarded. It appears that owing to interpreter trouble not all of the Japanese were perfectly clear as to exactly what Marquat had said; some believed he had advised acceptance of the government offer; but the general purport of his remarks was clear enough. Despite this warning the unions rejected the government offer and later advised SCAP officials that the strike would proceed in the absence of written orders from SCAP to the contrary.

Negotiations between the government and the unions continued, however, in an increasingly hectic atmosphere. A meeting at the Prime Minister's residence on the 25th produced no results; but Dr. Suehiro of the Central Labor Relations Committee continued his efforts, the government raised its terms, and by January 29 it was reported that the issue was narrowed down to a difference of ¥220 in the average monthly wage. Meanwhile Yoshida again tried, without success, to persuade the Social Democrats to enter his cabinet. By this time enthusiasm for the strike had reached a high pitch, under strong Communist stimulation. Union opinion was still divided; on January 26 the JFL took an anti-strike stand and withdrew from the movement,³³ while Youth Corps activists tried to dragoon doubters into line.³⁴

³² *Oriental Economist*, Feb. 1, 1947; *Summation*, Jan., 1947.

³³ *Summation*, Jan., 1947.

³⁴ *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 2, 1947.

But the militants had won the upper hand in the strike committee, which was not in a mood to accept anything short of the cabinet's resignation.

Knowledge that SCAP intended, if necessary, to ban the strike may well have stiffened the backs of both parties. The government need not make too many concessions if SCAP were going to prohibit the strike in the end. On the other hand the union leaders need not back down before their followers by giving in to the government; submitting to SCAP's paramount power would involve no such loss of prestige. It was for this reason that the union leaders insisted on a written order from SCAP.

SCAP Bans Strike

On the afternoon of January 30 General Marquat again called in the union leaders and ordered them to call off the strike. They were told to report by the following day what steps they had taken. They requested a written order but were told that this was unnecessary. At 2:30 P.M. on the next day, 9½ hours before the deadline, no word of compliance had been received. General MacArthur therefore issued a formal order forbidding the strike. This action, he said, was being taken with the greatest reluctance, and on the ground that the strike would paralyze Japanese industry and might necessitate further Allied assistance to Japan. He did not, he said, intend otherwise to restrict the freedom of labor in pursuit of legitimate objectives or to influence the basic social issues involved; but the general tenor of his statement was strongly critical of the unions.³⁵

The news of MacArthur's order was received with bitter disappointment at strike headquarters. A few hotheads coun-

³⁵ For text of statement see Document 2, in Appendix.

seled defiance, but after a short discussion the strike committee submitted unconditionally. To ensure compliance Yashiro Ii, the committee chairman, broadcast news of General MacArthur's order by radio that evening. In a voice charged with emotion he told the workers: "We must comply" with SCAP's order, but urged them to continue the struggle by other methods. The strike movement collapsed completely. Except for one or two brief local stoppages, no attempt was made to challenge the SCAP order. The strike committee did, however, appeal to the Allied Council for support in winning their demands, charging that the government was undemocratic.³⁶

The Japanese press heaved a sigh of relief at MacArthur's action. They could hardly have criticized it openly in any case, but in this instance their approval seemed wholehearted. Some papers deplored the fact that Japanese shortcomings had forced the Supreme Commander to intervene in order to solve a problem which they had been unable to solve for themselves. At the same time, while the press criticized the unions' tactics, it expressed considerable sympathy for their objectives, and few had a good word to say for the Yoshida government.

On January 31 Prime Minister Yoshida reorganized his cabinet, dropping Keinosuke Zen, director of the Economic Stabilization Board (who was purged in April), but retaining Finance Minister Tanzan Ishibashi. Zen and Ishibashi had been labor's chief targets. Also dropped was Agriculture and Forestry Minister Hiroo Wada, the most liberal member of the cabinet. On February 1 the government issued a statement promising to continue the wage negotiations and indicating that the average pay of government employees would be doubled, though expressing some uncertainty as to where the money would be found.

³⁶ *New York Times*, Feb. 2, 1947.

Labor Wins Concessions

On February 6 General MacArthur made public a letter to Prime Minister Yoshida in which he said, "I believe the time has come for a general election."³⁷ The exact time was left to the discretion of the Japanese government, but the Supreme Commander indicated his desire that the election be held as soon as possible after the end of the forthcoming Diet session. While not a direct order, it had the same effect. It was, indeed, appropriate that new elections should be held prior to the inauguration, on May 3, of the new constitution, and a change of government was desired by the bulk of articulate Japanese opinion. Yet the announcement helped to assuage disappointment in labor circles over the outcome of the strike effort.

Prime Minister Yoshida's address at the opening of the Diet session on February 14 was much more conciliatory toward labor than his New Year's message had been. He voiced concern for the improvement of labor conditions, called the labor movement conducive to recovery and democracy, and hoped it would play an active part in national reconstruction. At the same time he called for more democracy in the unions and warned against minority dictatorship. He recognized the merit of the government workers' demands, while deploring their decision to strike.³⁸

After February 1, negotiations were continued between the government and the various government employees' unions. On February 20 the government announced that all unions concerned had provisionally accepted a plan, on lines suggested by the Central Labor Relations Committee, to raise wages to an average of ¥1,200 a month.³⁹ Affecting 2,700,000 employees, the plan would, it was said, approx-

³⁷ *Summation*, Feb., 1947, p. 45.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

imately double the government's wage bill. An Advisory Committee, representing the government and the unions, was established to work out details and make recommendations for improving the conditions of government employees. This agreement was approved by the unions on February 27, when the dispute formally ended. The Advisory Committee held meetings on February 28, March 3, 8, 17, and 20, and considered a draft plan for a provisional wage increase submitted by the Finance Ministry.⁴⁰ On April 15 the Advisory Committee agreed on a scheme for pay increases to an average of ¥1,500 monthly, retroactive to April 1.⁴¹ Its implementation, however, remained uncertain because of budgetary difficulties. In May the plan was again revised to a monthly average of ¥1,600, which was to be retroactive to January 1.⁴²

In addition, collective bargaining agreements, apparently of a fairly general type, were made with a number of unions. On February 6 an agreement was reached with the All Japan Tax Collectors' Union (30,000 members), providing for a wage adjustment and a contract.⁴³ On February 21 a contract was signed between the Ministry of Transportation and the General Federation of Government Railway Workers' Unions.⁴⁴ This was the first written contract between the national government and its employees (except for one with occupation force workers), and covered 530,000 employees. The Ministry of Communications on March 14 concluded a contract with the All Japan Communications Workers' Union, covering its 380,000 members. Both the railway and communications agreements contained provisions on hours, holidays, vacations, overtime pay, workmen's compensation, and retirement allowances. A minimum wage system was to be established after consultation with the unions, and,

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Mar., 1947, pp. 179, 183.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, May, 1947, p. 196.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Feb., 1947, p. 182.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Mar., 1947, p. 179.

through labor-management committees, the unions were to have some voice in operating as well as personnel policy. Such a committee was established in the government railways on March 15.⁴⁵ The railway contract provided for a standard 8-hour day, "recognition" of the closed shop, and better treatment of women employees. Both of these contracts were master agreements with provision for supplementary local agreements where necessary.

On March 8 a contract was signed between the Ministry of Education and the All Japan Teachers' Union, claiming 320,000 members.⁴⁶ It included provision for a 42-hour week, maternity and menstrual leave, and a labor-management committee. An identical contract was signed with the National Federation of Teachers' Unions.⁴⁷ These contracts met with criticism from the Ministry's Educational Reform Committee, which objected to the closed shop and to giving the labor-management committee a voice in operating policies. On April 12 an agreement on interpretation of the contract was reached with the AJTU, to the effect that the committee would deal mainly with wages and working conditions.

Alleviation of the income tax, one of the government workers' demands, had been repeatedly urged by most labor organizations. In mid-February the government promised to introduce a bill to this effect,⁴⁸ and in March the Diet passed a bill which among other things lowered taxes on small incomes, raised the exemption point and consolidated normal and surtaxes on a pay-as-you-go basis.⁴⁹ There is some question as to whether the bill as a whole ameliorated the burden on low incomes, and there appears to have been considerable delay in its promulgation.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Apr., 1947, p. 190.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Mar., 1947, p. 183.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Feb., 1947, p. 189.

In Retrospect

The February 1 strike movement was an acid test both of the youthful Japanese unions and of SCAP policy toward labor.

In January, 1947 the mounting dissatisfaction of Japanese labor found expression, under the stimulus of militant leadership, in a movement aiming not only at the redress of economic grievances but at bringing about a change of government. It is important to distinguish between the ends which the strike leaders sought to achieve and the methods by which they sought to achieve them. Their economic grievances were real; their dissatisfaction with the government in power had much justification, and, in any case, they had by democratic canons the right to agitate for change. But, as SCAP officials pointed out, they were now free, as they had not been in the past, to seek a change of government through the normal machinery of democratic elections.

This argument, so obvious to a Western mind, did not greatly impress Japanese labor leaders. As they saw it, the situation which they faced was abnormal, their needs and the country's were acute, and the process of winning elections was slow and uncertain at best. Most Japanese, indeed, though familiar with the mechanism of the ballot box, did not have much faith in it. Elections had never brought an improvement in their lot and politicians had generally let them down. Confidence in the democratic process cannot be quickly implanted.

Nevertheless, even if it be granted that extraordinary conditions call for extraordinary methods, the attempt to force a change of government by direct economic action was a mistake from the point of view of labor's own interests. While the general aims of the movement commanded the over-

whelming support of articulate labor opinion, and considerable sympathy among other groups, the general strike tactic did not. A premature general strike, lacking a solid base in public opinion, could only have weakened the labor movement and postponed attainment of its goals. Only in rare circumstances is the general strike an effective or desirable weapon, and these circumstances did not exist in Japan. It was a political mistake, of precisely the kind to be expected in a country having few parliamentary traditions and suddenly freed from the restraints imposed by an authoritarian despotism.

SCAP labor officers were clearly disappointed when the union leaders, whose confidence they thought they had won, failed to respond to their appeal to abandon the strike voluntarily. It was a blow to the policy of persuasion, and in subsequent months SCAP adopted a much sterner attitude toward union divagations from the prescribed line.

The January crisis illustrated clearly the difficulties of a policy of non-intervention—or, more accurately, of an attempt at limited intervention—in Japanese social processes. It is possible that forceful and open intervention at an earlier stage, with SCAP in the role of impartial arbitrator, might have prevented the economic dispute between the government and its employees from developing into a national political crisis. An order for new elections, if issued earlier, might have had a similar effect. By consistently refusing to intervene, at least openly and decisively, in Japanese labor disputes, SCAP let itself be pushed into a position where it was forced to take an apparently unneutral action.

Given the situation as it existed on January 31, it would have been difficult for General MacArthur to reach any other decision. If successful, the strike might possibly have brought about political changes desirable in the light of SCAP's long-run aims. But it might also have disorganized economic life, produced political confusion, stimulated the

activities of both right and left-wing extremists, and seriously weakened the labor movement itself.

Yet it must be admitted that SCAP's action was one-sided in form and appearance. While disclaiming any desire to take sides in the controversy, SCAP in fact disarmed and publicly reprimanded one of the parties. The MacArthur statement made no distinction between labor's objectives and its methods; both were condemned by implication. It is true that the Japanese government was privately warned not to take advantage of the strike ban, but of this the general public, including labor, was unaware. It is true also that labor did subsequently gain a substantial part of its objectives, both economic and political; but at the critical moment the impression created in the public mind was one of defeat, not only for Communist-inspired extremist tactics—as SCAP doubtless intended—but for the aims of labor as a whole.

The labor campaign against the Yoshida cabinet was a genuine popular movement of a kind, or at least on a scale, unprecedented in Japan. In so far as it represented a political protest, it is doubtful whether it reflected the attitude of a majority of the electorate, still politically apathetic and bound by tradition. It did directly reflect the attitude of an important and politically conscious segment of the population, and indirectly the vague discontent of the great majority.

The labor drive of 1946–47 was not created by Communists, although they were among its most active supporters and hoped to profit by it, and it was they, undoubtedly, who pushed most strongly for extreme tactics. Foreign observers did not always realize that a large number of Japanese, especially the younger men, were militant progressives or radicals without being Communists. Many such men were attracted by Communist slogans but knew little of Communist philosophy and less of party discipline. Full of hatred for the

old regime, they formed, potentially, one of the best reservoirs of leadership for a virile Japanese democracy. In the labor movement such men tended to gravitate to the CIU, and furnished active leadership in the anti-Yoshida campaign.

It would therefore be a mistake to dismiss the "labor offensive" as a mere maneuver by a small clique, although such a clique was undoubtedly at work. Demonstrations, mass meetings, and strikes can be an authentic, if clumsy, expression of public opinion. The "labor offensive" of 1946-47 was such an expression, although it did not conform to the rules of correct democratic procedure introduced by the occupying power. It is therefore regrettable that SCAP, whether by its own tactical errors or those of Japanese labor, was forced into the position of appearing to suppress and discredit a manifestation of popular political initiative whose aims, as distinguished from its methods, had much in common with the announced aims of the occupation itself.

XII

AFTERMATH

As already noted, after February 1, 1947 SCAP took a stronger line in guiding union policies, discouraging strikes, combating Communism, and actively promoting the peaceful settlement of labor disputes. The pattern had now been set and the unions were expected to conform. Taking their cue from SCAP, both the Japanese government and private employers adopted a firmer stand toward labor demands.

A significant note was struck by George Atcheson in his remarks in the Allied Council on March 19. Mr. Atcheson, who had just returned from the United States, reported that American businessmen were willing to assist the development of Japanese peace-time economy. But, he added, American opinion condemned the February 1 strike as purely political. Union members, he asserted, were "dupes and tools" of an aggressive minority. The unions must practice self-discipline if they were to contribute to Japan's democratization.¹ *Mainichi* on March 25 drew the moral that labor had better heed this warning or Japan would get no American aid.² It was perhaps a coincidence that a few days later the

¹ *Nippon Times*, Mar. 20, 1947.

² *Ibid.*, Mar. 26, 1947. Few subjects were more keenly discussed in the Japanese press in 1947-48 than foreign financial aid. Business and political leaders were anxious to attract foreign investment to the country. "All government measures," said Prime Minister Ashida on April 10, 1948, "will be focused on paving the way for introducing foreign capital" (*Summation*, Apr., 1948). During this period a number of prominent American business men visited Japan to investigate possibilities of trade and investment. On June 3, 1948,

Mainichi local withdrew from the national press union, charging that it was under Communist influence.³

Union Activity

The collapse of the strike movement left the unions weakened and chastened, and subsequent months saw a decline in labor activity. Left-wing leaders, discredited by failure, found themselves on the defensive, and while striving to retain leadership, adopted a more moderate line. In general the tendency was toward more moderate policies, less high-handed methods, and more practical forms of internal organization. Greater emphasis was placed on peaceful collective bargaining, mediation and other methods approved by SCAP. Unions devoted more attention to the revival of production, and an effort was made, with only limited success, to exert political influence through the ballot.

After February 1 the All Japan Joint Struggle Committee of Labor Unions, which had been formed to support the government employees, was disbanded,⁴ but a movement was immediately launched by many of the same leaders to form a new instrument for united action. Meetings were held on February 3 and 5 by representatives of some 30 unions including the CIU, JCLU, government railway and seamen's unions. The JFL held aloof on the ground that the leaders of the February 1 strike had been discredited. The immediate emphasis was shifted to the spring elections, and a Democratic Front Election Policy Committee was formed to support candidates. Eventually, after long negotiations, a National Liaison Council of Labor Unions (*Zenkoku Rodo*

the vice-director of the Economic Stabilization Board told a Diet committee that labor unrest, and specifically labor-management committees (which the government had once encouraged) were among the obstacles to foreign investment (*Summation*, June, 1948, p. 32).

³ *Nippon Times*, Apr. 1, 1947.

⁴ *Summation*, Apr., 1947, p. 180.

Kumiai Renroku Kyogi Kai, or Zenroren for short) was organized on March 10.⁵ It included all three major federations and 39 unions claiming a total membership of 5,837,000. The functions of the Council were described as purely consultative. But as early as April members of the JFL executive committee criticized the Council for trying to act as a policy-making body.⁶ Later the JFL stopped contributing to the Council's support, though it continued for some time to attend meetings.⁷

"Self-reflection" was the keynote of labor discussions in the winter and spring of 1947. In April a CIU spokesman admitted in a press interview that there had been internal criticism of the February 1 strike tactics.⁸ At CIU executive committee meetings in May criticism of the national leadership was expressed by representatives of the newspaper, printing, communications, and medical workers' unions.⁹ Among the charges were Communist affiliation, dictatorial tactics, and use of the strike as a means of "educating" the workers rather than as a legitimate economic weapon. In response to such comments, the committee passed resolutions in favor of greater internal democracy, elimination of excesses, and election of new officers.¹⁰ The CIU had already, apparently as a result of suggestions from SCAP, abolished its Youth Corps, and several national unions followed this example.¹¹ At the CIU national convention in July similar criticisms were heard, and the constitution was amended to provide a more democratic procedure.¹² At this time Katsumi Kikunami resigned from the presidency and Makoto Kan,

⁵ *Ibid.*, Mar., 1947, p. 177.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Apr., 1947, p. 155.

⁷ In July, 1948, the JFL formally withdrew from the Liaison Council, charging that it had degenerated into a mere Communist tool (*Summation*, July, 1948).

⁸ *Summation*, Apr., 1947, pp. 183-84.

⁹ *Ibid.*, May, 1947, p. 155.

¹⁰ *Jiji*, May 12, 1947.

¹¹ *Summation*, Mar., 1947. Press reports toward the end of the year, however, indicated that Youth Corps were still active in many localities. Cf. *Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 6, 1947.

¹² *Summation*, July, 1947.

head of the All Japan Machine Tool Workers' Union, was elected in his place. Kan's views did not differ greatly from Kikunami's, but he was a less dynamic figure.¹³ The vice-presidents were Togo Kameda, Communist, of the chemical workers, and Jinsuke Mitsumura, Social Democrat, of the communications workers. Sukeji Yoshida, Communist, was chosen as secretary-general. Communist representation on the executive committee of ten was reduced from six to one.¹⁴

It was evident that the atmosphere after February 1 had produced some changes, but not a major overturn, in CIU leadership, and had induced it to adopt a more circumspect policy. Nevertheless secession movements appeared in a number of the affiliated unions; but the CIU succeeded on the whole in holding its organization together. The government railway workers, Tokyo District, voted on May 10 to sever their connection with the CIU,¹⁵ and the Kyushu District Council declared its independence in July.¹⁶ But motions to withdraw from the CIU were defeated at conventions of the All Japan Express Workers and the newspaper workers in May and the communications workers in June.¹⁷

The JFL leadership was also the target of some criticism on the ground of ultra-conservatism;¹⁸ but its internal problems were less serious than those of the CIU. At its national convention in October it voted to reorganize on an industrial rather than a regional basis.¹⁹ Komakichi Matsuoka was re-elected as president and Toraichi Hara was chosen as secretary-general, with a minority of posts going to left-wing leaders.²⁰ There was little change in the character of JFL leadership.

¹³ *New York Herald Tribune*, July 15, 1947.

¹⁴ *Summation*, July, 1947; *New York Times*, July 16, 1947.

¹⁵ *Summation*, May, 1947, p. 156. ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Aug., 1947, p. 204.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, May, 1947, p. 157; June, 1947.

¹⁸ *Christian Science Monitor*, Apr. 6, 1947.

¹⁹ *Kyodo*, Oct. 7, 1947.

²⁰ *Jiji*, Oct. 8, 1947.

At conventions in March, 1947 the communications workers, government railway workers, and All Japan Teachers' Union voted to dissolve their Struggle Committees—which had conducted negotiations with employers and spearheaded militant action—and leave the conduct of union affairs in the hands of the executive committees.²¹ The government railway workers voted to reorganize in the interests of efficiency, and shelved a resolution to bar Communists from union office. Later a plan was drawn up for departmentalization along craft lines, with a labor-management committee for each craft. The new rules forbade strikes except when authorized by a two-thirds vote at a union convention.²²

The schism in the press-radio union became more pronounced. At the national convention in March several locals charged that the national leadership was under Communist influence,²³ and later ten locals, including the Tokyo *Mainichi*, withdrew from the national union. At another convention in May the *Asahi* local proposed that the union sever its affiliation with the CIU. A compromise was reached on the basis of the national union retaining its CIU connection but leaving the locals free to make their own choice.²⁴ In August the national union voted to leave the CIU if the ten dissident locals would return to the fold; but this plan failed to materialize.²⁵

Despite such internal strains union membership continued to increase and several new national unions were organized. The Japanese Federation of Textile Industry Workers' Unions, an independent body representing some 60,000 workers, was established on March 10, and the All Japan Bank Clerks' Union, claiming 100,000 members, was formed on April 11.²⁶ Schism rather than unity lay behind the or-

²¹ *Summation*, Mar., 1947, pp. 177-78. ²² *Ibid.*, June, 1947.

²³ *Ibid.*, Apr., 1947, p. 187.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, June, 1947.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Aug., 1947, p. 204. In 1948 a new newspaper union was organized and the split became final.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Apr., 1947, p. 188; May, 1947.

ganization, on May 1, of the National Motion Picture and Theater Workers' Union, composed of dissident groups which had split off from the older movie union together with independent locals.²⁷ But unity triumphed when the All Japan Teachers' Union and the National Federation of Teachers' Unions decided, on May 8, to amalgamate.²⁸ The new organization, formally inaugurated in June, represented 357,000 of the nation's 383,000 primary and secondary school teachers.

Collective Bargaining

The number of labor disputes declined sharply after February 1, and during the spring and summer the trend was toward peaceful settlement with few strikes or threats of strike. Collective bargaining, resulting in signed contracts, made distinct progress. In March and April industry-wide contracts were concluded by coal miners, seamen, harbor workers and occupation force workers.²⁹ These showed some technical improvement over earlier agreements. The coal agreement, ratified April 12, between the National Council of Coal Mine Workers' Unions and the Japan Coal Mine Operators' Association, covered 458,350 underground, surface, and office workers and over 90 per cent of the industry. It was the first major contract to include a sliding wage scale, based on the cost of living.³⁰ In May the Federation of All Japan Metal Mine Labor Unions, with 70,000 members, and the Federation of Metal Mine Employers reached an industry-wide agreement, including a wage increase, based on recommendations by the Central Labor Relations Committee.³¹

²⁷ *Ibid.*, May, 1947.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Apr., 1947, p. 189.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Mar., 1947, p. 180; Apr., 1947, pp. 189-90.

³¹ *Ibid.*, May, 1947, pp. 157-58.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, May, 1947, p. 5; June, 1947.

By the end of June 4,273 contracts had been signed, covering 89.7 per cent of all organized workers,³² which seems to indicate that SCAP's educational campaign was bearing fruit. Sixty-seven per cent of all contracts (as of May 31) were on a broader than local basis; 13 per cent called for reference of disputes to the competent Labor Relations Committee; 33 per cent contained some kind of machinery for adjusting disputes.³³

³² *Jiji*, Sept. 4, 1947.

³³ *Summation*, June, 1947.

XIII

LABOR AND THE KATAYAMA CABINET

The advent of the Katayama cabinet inaugurated a new era in the relations between government and labor, which unfortunately proved to be short-lived.

The problem faced by post-war Japanese governments in dealing with organized labor was essentially the same as that of governments in other countries menaced by inflation—in Britain, France, Italy, even the United States. And Japanese labor's attitude was broadly similar to that of labor in other countries. So long as it believed that wages were falling behind in the race with prices, it pressed vigorously and continuously for wage increases. It supported, however, a program of effective controls over prices and profits, together with an equitable rationing system, and was willing to moderate its demand for higher wages when such a program was in operation or in prospect. Its attitude was conditioned not only by existing economic conditions but also by the degree of its confidence in the government. Japanese labor leaders had no confidence in the Yoshida government's intentions toward labor. Although their support of the Katayama government was not enthusiastic, most of them were willing to give it a chance, and many gave it active support. But when convinced that the government was unwilling or unable to keep its promises of economic amelioration, labor again took a line of active opposition.

Labor in the Elections

Following the failure of the February effort to exert political pressure with economic weapons, the unions tried to win a voice in government by approved electoral methods. The attempt was only moderately successful. It took the form of backing a comparatively small number of candidates for office in the spring elections. Most of these were labor men, and all ran as Social Democrats, Communists, or independents. The new election law, which favored major against minor parties in Diet elections, tended to discourage labor candidates.

Four elections were held: on April 5 for prefectural governors, mayors and village headmen; on April 20 for the House of Councillors; on April 25 for the House of Representatives; and on April 30 for prefectural, municipal, and village assemblies. On March 13 the CIU, emphasizing that a union is not a political party, announced that it did not favor using union funds or energies for active campaigning, but would confine itself to recommending certain candidates and general political education.¹ However, election committees were formed by both CIU and JFL locals.² Unions which entered candidates, or organized to support candidates on a regional scale, were required to register temporarily as political organizations.³ Eighteen unions so registered.⁴

The CIU endorsed 8 candidates for the House of Councillors (5 Social Democrats, 3 Communists) and 15 for the House of Representatives (8 Social Democrats, 7 Communists).⁵ The JFL proposed, for nomination by the Social Democratic Party, 10 (or 7) candidates for the House of Councillors and 32 for the House of Representatives.⁶ The

¹ *Summation*, Mar., 1947, p. 176.

² *Ibid.*, Apr., 1947, p. 52.

³ *Ibid.*, Mar., 1947, p. 176.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Apr., 1947, p. 52.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Mar., 1947, p. 176; Apr., 1947, p. 52.

JCLU endorsed 6 independent candidates but took little active part in the campaign.⁷ The government railway workers endorsed 7 independents for the upper house, 5 Communists, and one Social Democrat for the lower. The communications workers endorsed 2 candidates for the upper house and 15 for the lower, mostly Social Democrats with a few Communists. The All Japan Teachers' Union, chiefly interested in vocational representation, endorsed 4 candidates for the upper house, 2 for the lower and 60 for local assemblies, while the National Federation of Teachers' Unions backed one candidate for the House of Councillors.

It is impossible to determine how much labor union activity influenced the results of the elections, but a number of labor spokesmen were elected to national and local office. The new House of Councillors contained 23 union officials (out of a total membership of 250), including several national officers of the JFL, and the chairmen of the government railways, seamen's, electric appliance workers' and both teachers' unions.⁸ Sixteen labor leaders won seats in the House of Representatives (total membership, 466), including officials of the JFL, communications workers, and metal miners.⁹ In all, 15 JFL officers and one from the CIU were elected to the Diet, reflecting the close ties between the JFL and the Social Democratic Party. Katsumi Kikunami, CIU chairman, ran for the Diet but was defeated. The chairman of the JFL, Komakichi Matsuoka, right-wing Social Democrat, was chosen as Speaker of the House of Representatives, and continued to hold his union office. One labor leader (Toshibumi Tanaka, Social Democrat) was elected as prefectural governor in Hokkaido, and candidates endorsed by labor won governorships in Nagano, Tokushima, and Fukuoka.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Apr., 1947, p. 52.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

⁹ A labor bloc was formed by 43 Diet members who organized a club which met regularly with Chief Cabinet Secretary Nishio, Minister Yonekubo and labor's Liaison Council (*Yomiuri*, Aug. 11, 1947).

Cabinet Attitude toward Labor

The resignation of the Yoshida cabinet following the elections fulfilled a long-standing demand of labor. While the new cabinet hardly qualified as the "people's government" urged by labor spokesmen, it did represent a shift to the left. As a result of the election, the Social Democrats had become the largest party in the Diet, though still possessing only a plurality.¹⁰ Tetsu Katayama, the party leader, was chosen as Prime Minister and formed a cabinet of Social Democrats (all from the right wing of the party), Democrats (the former Progressive Party), and People's Cooperatives. The Social Democrats, though professing Socialist principles, were inhibited by the necessities of a coalition, and the temper of organized labor was, on the whole, to the left of the Social Democrats.

Unlike its predecessor, the Katayama cabinet went to a good deal of pains to conciliate organized labor. Shortly after the announcement of the cabinet's eight-point economic policy on June 11, the Prime Minister called a meeting of over one hundred labor leaders to explain the program and to ask their support.¹¹ Similar meetings were held with groups representing other interests. Labor was represented on the Payroll Commission which fixed standard

¹⁰ Composition of House of Representatives (*Summation*, Aug., 1947, p. 58):

	Before the election	After the election	Popular vote
Social Democratic	98	144	7,168,888
Liberal	140	131	6,295,242
Democratic	145	121	6,857,480
People's Cooperative	63	29	1,862,753
Communist	6	4	1,002,883
Minor parties	4	24	1,560,070
Independent	9	13	1,614,295
Vacant	1
Total	<u>466</u>	<u>466</u>	<u>27,361,611</u>

¹¹ *Jiji*, June 19, 1947.

wages under the government's wage program.¹² Representatives of labor were named, along with those of business, the press and the academic profession, as advisers to the Economic Stabilization Board.¹³ The plan for government control of the coal industry was discussed with union leaders, who were assured that existing contracts would be observed, and the plan provided for labor representation on national and local control organs.¹⁴

A curious incident was reported soon after the Katayama cabinet took office. Manryo Yonekubo, cabinet member in charge of labor affairs, after being received by the Emperor, quoted His Majesty publicly as saying that conciliation between capital and labor was progressing better in the Kansai than in the Kanto district. The Emperor, he said, hoped for harmonious relations between capital and labor in order to speed the revival of production.¹⁵ As the Emperor is not lightly quoted even in the new Japan, this must be interpreted as using the Imperial authority in support, not only of the laudable principle of industrial harmony, but also of the methods of the Socialist-controlled JFL, whose chief stronghold was in Kansai.

Government's Economic Program

The major test of relations between labor and the cabinet, however, lay in the government's economic program, and especially in its wage-price policy. By this time, controls over prices, wages, and commodity distribution had almost completely broken down. In August, 1946, after prolonged discussion, an Economic Stabilization Board had been established by the Yoshida cabinet as an overall agency of

¹² *Ibid.*, June 26, 1947.

¹³ *Kyodo*, Sept. 11, 1947.

¹⁴ *New York Times*, Oct. 3, 1947; *Summation*, Sept., 1947, p. 22.

¹⁵ *Kyodo*, June 5, 1947.

economic planning and control. Some of the delay was caused by difficulty in finding someone to head the new agency. The choice finally fell on Keinosuke Zen, Liberal, who was later purged. At the same time a Price Board was set up under the ESB to fix official maximum prices. Mr. Zen, whose attitude toward labor organization was far from sympathetic, was much concerned over the inflationary effects of wage increases, as he demonstrated during the electrical workers' dispute. In November, 1946 the ESB proposed a plan for virtually freezing wages, but the proposal was vetoed by SCAP, which pointed out that wages were lagging behind prices; that it would be inequitable to limit wages unless prices were regulated with equal strictness, and unless the rationing system were reformed; and that the plan was open to criticism on other grounds, including failure to provide for participation by labor and capital in planning and enforcement.¹⁶

As a result of the February 1 strike movement, the government promised on January 22, 1947 to establish a Wage Commission, representing employers, labor, and the public, to work out a comprehensive wage policy. Disputes over the personnel of the Commission's technical advisory staff delayed its operations until March 20. By that time elections were impending and a change of government was in prospect.

On June 11 the Katayama cabinet announced its economic program. This called for a many-sided attack on the economic problem, but the heart of the program was in the wage-price policy, which was further clarified on July 5. The program, which owed much of its inspiration to Hiroo Wada, new head of the Economic Stabilization Board, was carefully drafted with an eye both to labor's needs and to its sensibilities. It was an ingenious attempt, first, to bring prices and wages into line by reducing "effective" prices to

¹⁶ "Wage-Price Relationships."

the level of wages; and second, to prevent further increases in either. But as any suggestion of "freezing" wages would have been anathema to organized labor, prices were to be controlled directly and wages only indirectly.

The goal was to stabilize wages at or slightly above their existing level—the aim was a general average of ¥1,800 monthly—but to increase their purchasing power by making more goods available at official prices. In order to divert goods from the black market, official commodity prices were substantially increased. After this, it was announced, official prices would be determined by labor costs. "Standard" wage rates were to be determined for each industry. No ceiling was set on wages but any wage increase above the standard figure would automatically bring a price increase.

The government also favored "rationalization" of employment by the discharge of surplus workers, a suggestion which had been fought by union labor when put forward by previous cabinets. It proposed to encourage this by reducing government subsidies to industrialists, while at the same time passing an unemployment compensation law to take care of displaced employees. Provision was also made for public works. Stress was laid on enlisting the cooperation of both labor and management in the implementation of these policies.¹⁷

On July 4 the government issued the White Paper already mentioned, a comprehensive analysis of the nation's economic difficulties,¹⁸ and on the following day the first steps to implement the wage-price policy were announced. Official commodity prices were raised in amounts ranging up to 200 per cent. Rice went up from ¥36 to ¥99 for ten kilograms, and other food prices from 18 to 27 per cent. The

¹⁷ *Summation*, June, 1947.

¹⁸ See above, Chapter II. This was the first document of its kind ever issued by a Japanese government, and was noteworthy for the effort made by its authors to explain economic problems in terms comprehensible to the average citizen.

price of coal received by producers was lifted from ¥346 to ¥956 per ton; the price paid by essential industries went from ¥200 to ¥400, and that to other consumers from ¥400 to ¥1,208.¹⁹

Standard wage rates were announced for 35 industries, ranging from ¥1,124 per month in raw silk to ¥2,440 in freight and shipbuilding. Textiles averaged about ¥1,230 per month, chemicals ¥1,600, food processing ¥1,600, printing ¥1,900, machinery and tools ¥2,181, electric power ¥2,200, metallurgy ¥2,350, freight and transportation ¥2,400.²⁰

The government in effect asked labor to give this program a chance to work by agreeing to voluntary wage ceilings. Meanwhile the government would try to stabilize prices and to make more supplies available in the legal market. On August 2 Minister Yonekubo, appealing to labor to be patient, said that if prices were not stabilized in six months the government would subsidize the workers.²¹ Labor was also urged to help the government by boycotting the black market and to exert all its efforts toward increasing production.

Labor's initial response to the government's appeal was fairly encouraging. The JFL, under Social Democratic leadership, pledged full cooperation.²² Although the CIU was skeptical from the beginning, and declined to endorse the government's wage policy, it made at first no determined

¹⁹ *New York Times*, July 6, 1947.

²⁰ *Summation*, July, 1947, p. 193. Actual monthly wages in November, 1947, as reported in *Japanese Economic Statistics* (Jan., 1948), ran considerably higher, as follows:

Wood products	¥1,964	Printing	¥2,993
Textiles	2,148	Ceramics	3,029
Machinery	2,691	Metal mining, underground	3,247
Metal mining, surface	2,737	Metals	3,304
Food products	2,825	Coal mining, underground	4,088
Coal mining, surface	2,910	Miscellaneous	1,987
Chemicals	2,989		

²¹ *Jiji*, Aug. 2, 1947.

²² *Ibid.*, June 19, 1947.

campaign against it. Whereas the Yoshida cabinet had been regarded by organized labor with undisguised hostility, labor's attitude toward the Katayama government was a mixture of hope and suspicion. On the whole, labor at the outset supported the government (even while opposing some features of its economic program), or at least refrained from attacking it. Demands for wage increases did not disappear, but for several months they were moderated and were not, save in isolated instances, pressed in a militant manner. There was, of course, considerable argument over fixing the "standard" wage rates, with the unions pressing for higher figures.²³

Aside from the question of wages, organized labor gave some positive support to the government's battle against inflation. Even before the Katayama cabinet took office many unions had interested themselves in uncovering hoarded goods and combating the black market. In May, for example, the government railway workers had launched a campaign to boycott the black market and to expose and refuse to transport black market goods.²⁴ Unions in Osaka had begun a movement for lower prices in April, and in August they put on a campaign for a boycott of the black market, using forums, newspaper publicity, posters, and exhibits. This was sponsored by local affiliates of the JFL, CIU, JCLU, government railway workers, and electrical workers, together with women's organizations and other civic groups.²⁵

Most noteworthy was labor's participation in the Economic Reconstruction Movement, organized by progressive business men to promote economic recovery by cooperation between capital and labor. This constructive movement, launched in February, 1947, at the outset enlisted the support of all the principal employer and labor organizations,

²³ *Summation*, Aug., 1947, pp. 212-13.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, May, 1947, p. 156.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Aug., 1947, p. 204.

and accomplished some useful work, but later fell a victim to its own internal dissensions.

During the summer the labor picture remained fairly quiet. By fall, however, little visible progress had been made in controlling prices or suppressing the black market. Unions were losing confidence in the government, and large sections of organized labor were vigorously challenging the official wage line. Even the JFL did not long give unqualified support to voluntary wage-freezing. By July it was advising unions to ask for temporary allowances, rather than permanent wage increases; ²⁶ the former could be defended as a stopgap measure to relieve distress without attacking the principle of wage stabilization.

As in the previous January, labor's quarrel with the government over wage policy centered around the demands of government employees. Despite the gains of the previous winter, government employees were still at a disadvantage compared with most industrial workers. It appears that many private employers, disregarding the standard wage schedules, had granted considerable increases, while the government, striving to hold the line, refused like relief to its own employees.²⁷

On July 5 the All Japan Government and Public Employees' Union submitted demands for a wage increase and "democratization" of the civil service. The latter point is worth noting, for in this and other cases, while wage adjustments were the most urgent, they were by no means the only goals of organized labor. The government employees asked for abolition of the examination system; machinery for popular recall of unfit civil servants; a rational classification

²⁶ *Kyodo*, June 29, July 2, 1947.

²⁷ *New York Herald Tribune*, Dec. 18, 1947. Statistics as usual are wanting. According to the Cabinet Bureau of Statistics industrial wages rose in July and August, reaching an average of ¥1,489 in lumbering and woodworking, ¥2,758 in transportation and ¥3,457 in coal mining (*Summation*, Oct., 1947, p. 193). The average for government employees was ¥1,600.

system based on ability and efficiency; rationalization of salary schedules; a new pension and insurance system; and conclusion of written contracts.²⁸ That the Japanese civil service was badly in need of reform was generally admitted,²⁹ and in some respects, though by no means all, the union's suggestions paralleled those of SCAP.

During July the government office workers, communications workers, government railway workers and teachers presented demands to their respective ministries for salary increases or cost-of-living allowances.³⁰ These were consolidated in an overall demand submitted on August 15 by the Council of Employees' Unions of Public Organizations, representing all government employees.³¹ This called for a cost-of-living allowance averaging ¥2,000 plus ¥1,000 for each dependent, together with some increase in the basic salary. This request was rejected by the government on August 21,³² but negotiations continued. The government offered a lump sum of ¥1,662 covering certain payments in arrears, and added demands of its own for revision of contracts. It wanted an open shop, less union participation in personnel policy and none in administrative policy, grievance procedure, and compulsory conciliation or mediation.³³ During August, also, demands for wage adjustments were made by national unions of printers, maritime, iron and steel, and radio workers. The emphasis was on special allowances rather than higher wage rates.

By September the government had begun to hedge. It offered to raise the ¥1,600 monthly average for government employees to ¥1,800, apparently on condition of certain changes in contract provisions.³⁴ The government employees'

²⁸ *Summation*, July, 1947.

²⁹ See John M. Maki, "The Role of the Bureaucracy in Japan," *Pacific Affairs*, Dec., 1947.

³⁰ *Summation*, July, 1947, p. 188.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

³² *Jiji*, Aug. 21, 1947.

³³ *Summation*, Aug., 1947, p. 207.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Sept., 1947, p. 178.

unions insisted on a wage sufficient to buy 2,400 calories per day (for males), and guarantees that this amount of food would be available through rationing channels; also on lump sum payments to cover past deficits. Toward the end of the month the government railway and communications workers asked for mediation of their dispute by the Central Labor Relations Committee;³⁵ and on October 29 this request was repeated by the government employees' council.³⁶ In September, also, the CLRC took up the case of the electrical workers, who had been negotiating all summer on implementation of their agreement of the previous December.³⁷

During October labor dissatisfaction became acute and was expressed both in words and in actions. On October 2 Labor Minister Yonekubo, with Chief Cabinet Secretary Nishio and Economic Stabilization Board Director Wada, held a conference with a representative group of thirty labor leaders. The government spokesmen again appealed to labor to exercise self-restraint, to work for larger output and against the black market. Mr. Okabayashi of the National Council of Coal Miners' Unions replied that the government seemed to put all the responsibility for raising production on the shoulders of labor. It was easy, he said, to talk of boycotting the black market, but workers had to buy there in order to live.³⁸

A few days later a convention of the JFL reaffirmed its support of the government's economic program, but recommended stopgap allowances.³⁹ The CIU reiterated its opposition to the government wage policy, but promised support for the rest of the program if the standard wages were revised.⁴⁰

By this time left-wing unions were moving into the stage of active protest. Since strikes were now severely discouraged

³⁵ *Jiji*, Sept. 30, 1947.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Oct. 29, 1947.

³⁷ *Summation*, Sept., 1947, p. 178.

³⁸ *Kyodo*, Oct. 2, 1947.

³⁹ *Jiji*, Oct. 8, 1947; *Summation*, Oct., 1947, p. 19.

⁴⁰ *Jiji*, Oct. 6, 1947.

by the occupation, and were illegal for many government employees, other techniques were devised, the principal one being mass absenteeism. In October communications workers, particularly post office clerks, resorted to absenteeism on a large scale in Tokyo and Osaka. The government charged that this was a form of strike; the union replied that it was simply due to malnutrition.⁴¹ The communications workers' demonstration subsided when the government threatened absentees with loss of pay and status,⁴² but later mass absenteeism and other forms of "sabotage" were employed at numerous scattered points by government employees and others. In December the tax collectors' union advised citizens not to pay their taxes as the money was not being properly used by the government; for this they drew a warning from SCAP.⁴³ Other forms of protest were more picturesque. Employees of the Patent Bureau appeared on the streets offering to shine the shoes of passers-by to demonstrate the inadequacy of their salaries.

Demonstrations were also organized. On November 12 a CIU demonstration in Tokyo, demanding higher wages and no discharges, drew a crowd of only 40,000,⁴⁴ but on December 18 at least 100,000 turned out in the Imperial Palace Plaza to demand a decent living standard.⁴⁵ Late in December a crowd of 20,000, led by the four Communist Diet members and officers of the government railway union, held Transportation Minister Kimura in his office all night while they unsuccessfully demanded his promise to raise the income tax exemption and to pay January salaries at the beginning of the month.⁴⁶

An interim climax was reached in October when the com-

⁴¹ *New York Herald Tribune*, Oct. 27, 1947.

⁴² *Summation*, Oct., 1947, p. 186.

⁴³ *New York Herald Tribune*, Dec. 18, 1947.

⁴⁴ *Jiji*, Nov. 12, 1947.

⁴⁵ *New York Herald Tribune*, Dec. 19, 1947.

⁴⁶ *New York Times*, Dec. 27, 1947.

munications workers' union started mass absenteeism and declared that continued "provocation" by the government would lead to serious consequences.⁴⁷ This drew a blast of criticism from the JFL, which condemned the union for absenteeism and wildcat strikes.⁴⁸ On October 24, the same day as the union statement, Mosaburo Suzuki, left-wing Social Democrat, called for re-examination of the standard wage schedules.⁴⁹ At a cabinet meeting on October 26 Labor Minister Yonekubo proposed measures to pacify labor without abandoning the wage line, including larger rice rations for workers and a higher income tax exemption, and, it is reported, winter allowances and some concessions to the railway and communications workers. Of these proposals only the one on taxation received cabinet approval.⁵⁰ Earlier Yonekubo is said to have urged on the cabinet the importance of getting sufficient distribution of commodities through legal channels to guarantee stability of real wages, but to have received no encouragement from the Ministry of Commerce and the Economic Stabilization Board.⁵¹

By November labor unrest had reached the point where the cabinet decided to ask the Diet for a ¥3 billion appropriation for winter allowances.⁵² When the coal miners threatened to strike on December 7, the cabinet hastily voted ¥220 million for special allowances for miners.⁵³ By mid-December the government had accepted a CLRC recommendation for year-end allowances for government employees⁵⁴ and had, in principle, abandoned the ¥1,800 standard, proposing to fix a new schedule of "efficiency wages" after consultation with the unions.⁵⁵ The government was willing to devote ¥7.5 billion to wage adjustments, and evidently hoped to secure, in return, abandonment by

⁴⁷ *Jiji*, Oct. 24, 1947.

⁴⁹ *Kyodo*, Oct. 24, 1947.

⁵¹ *Asahi*, Sept. 26, 1947.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1947.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Dec. 16, 1947.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Oct. 25, 1947.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Oct. 26, 1947.

⁵² *New York Times*, Nov. 10, 1947.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Dec. 23, 1947.

the unions of mass absenteeism and similar obstructionist tactics.

These concessions eased the atmosphere for a while but it was clear that by this time the Katayama cabinet had lost the confidence of considerable sections of organized labor, including the CIU and the government employees. In November Kazuyoshi Dobashi, head of the communications workers, had asserted that the government no longer represented the interests of the working class.⁵⁶ Although political slogans were avoided and there was no "down-with-the-cabinet" movement, labor dissatisfaction helped to precipitate the resignation of the Katayama cabinet in February, 1948.

The immediate occasion, in fact, of the cabinet's fall was a controversy over the method of financing a wage increase to government employees. The CLRC plan accepted by the government in December called for a special bonus to government employees equivalent to 2.8 months' salary; of this 2 months' salary was actually paid in December. On January 29 the government introduced a bill to finance the remainder, and to provide funds for raising regular salaries, by a 100 per cent increase in railway and postal rates, in effect an increase in indirect taxation. Both the left-wing Social Democrats and the liberals opposed this method of financing, the former on grounds of principle and the latter, no doubt, in order to embarrass the cabinet. A deadlock ensued, and the cabinet, unable to break it, resigned on February 10.⁵⁷ After a month of political maneuvering, with the Katayama cabinet still conducting affairs, a new cabinet under Hitoshi Ashida was installed on March 10. Like its predecessor, it was a coalition of Social Democrats and Democrats, but it was headed by a Democrat and included two left-wing Social Democrats, one of them Kanju Kato, who became Minister of Labor.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Nov. 10, 1947.

⁵⁷ *Summation*, Feb., 1948.

Meanwhile, on February 24, a bill to finance the remaining 0.8 months' allowance from other sources of revenue was finally passed, disposing of this issue, and attention now shifted to the question of a permanent wage increase for government employees. On February 18 the Temporary Wage Committee established by the CLRC brought in a recommendation for an average wage of ¥2,920. The communications workers immediately demanded payment on this scale from March 1. The advent of the Ashida cabinet was followed by a new wave of labor protest, including a strike by 25,000 CIU coal miners and a threatened power tie-up by electrical workers, whose wage negotiations had broken down.⁵⁸ On March 12 Tokyo's communications (except those of the occupation forces) were cut off by a one-day strike of long-distance telephone and telegraph operators.

The new government promptly moved to stem the tide. On March 13 the Diet accepted the ¥2,920 scale in principle and appropriated funds to raise average wages to ¥2,500 immediately. This arrangement was accepted by the government railway workers but not by other government employees. Strike action was threatened by communications workers, teachers, municipal employees and others. The communications workers demanded a bonus of ¥5,000 plus ¥2,500 for each dependent. About March 25 government employee unions began calling "piston" strikes, i.e., repeated and staggered one- or two-day local stoppages, and "mass vacations" were taken in many government offices. The Tokyo street-car workers (municipal employees) struck on March 26-29, temporarily disrupting transportation in the capital. A 24-hour nation-wide strike of communications workers was announced for March 31.⁵⁹

On March 29 SCAP issued a memorandum banning the proposed communications strike as detrimental to the public

⁵⁸ *New York Herald Tribune*, Mar. 14, 1948.

⁵⁹ *Summation*, Mar., 1948.

welfare.⁶⁰ Some confusion arose as to whether the ban extended to regional or "piston" strikes. Despite a statement on March 30 by the chief of Labor Division that local strikes would not be prohibited, on March 31 SCAP issued a second statement declaring that the ban applied to "any systematic or coordinated series of related work stoppages on the part of members of affiliated labor unions in a single industry or a group of industries."⁶¹ The communications union thereupon canceled its strike orders. In an action evidently intended as a warning to recalcitrants, the government discharged six leaders of the tax collectors' union and reduced the pay of 28 others.

The SCAP orders quelled the strike movement, although scattered absenteeism continued among municipal transit and other government employees. Meanwhile negotiations over the new wage scale continued. At length a compromise plan was worked out on the basis of an average wage of ¥2,920, retroactive to January 1, with immediate payment of partial arrears;⁶² reclassification of government employees by a committee of government and union representatives; and agreement by the unions to discontinue strike tactics. On April 12 the government, stating that unions representing 1.2 out of 1.87 million employees had accepted these terms, gave the other unions 24 hours to follow suit, and warned that unions which had not accepted the agreement unconditionally would not receive the new wage scale or be represented on the new wage committee. On April 12, also,

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Apr., 1948, p. 23; cf. *New York Herald Tribune*, Mar. 30, 1948. SCAP said that the proposed strike was subject to the provisions of the Supreme Commander's statement of Jan. 31, 1947.

⁶¹ *Summation*, Apr., 1948, pp. 24-25; cf. *New York Herald Tribune*, Apr. 1, 1948.

⁶² The terms were: immediate payment of a sum representing the difference between actual wages for January through March and ¥2,500; payment of ¥2,500 in April; payment at the rate of ¥2,920 to begin in May; and arrears bringing total payments for January through April up to ¥2,920 to be paid after Diet approval of the new classification system (*Summation*, Apr., 1948, p. 26).

another SCAP order banned all strikes in communications. Nevertheless the communications workers refused to accept the government terms, and the other unions declined to participate in the new committee unless all government employee unions were represented. Finally, on April 16, a new agreement was accepted by the government and all the unions; the terms were much the same but the way was left open for future upward revision of the ¥2,920 wage scale and for strike action in future disputes, and the government made some concessions as regards strike pay and non-punishment of strike leaders.⁶³

Although this agreement stabilized the situation for the time being, it was more in the nature of a truce than a settlement. It had been reported that the left-wing labor leaders, who instigated the strike movement, wished to precipitate an election and a change of government. This desire was apparently shared, for different reasons, by the major opposition party, the Liberals, who hoped that a general election would put them back into office, from which vantage point they intended to launch a strong campaign to break the labor movement.⁶⁴

As in the previous year, labor unrest had its roots in acute economic distress, for which the efforts of the Katayama cabinet had brought little tangible relief, and particularly in the dissatisfaction of the underprivileged government employees. A SCAP labor official was quoted as saying that the basic issues were economic but were being exploited by Communists.⁶⁵ It seems tolerably clear that such disruptive tactics as piston strikes, mass vacations, etc., were mainly inspired by Communists, who were quick to take advantage of a real grievance, prone to make extreme demands, and not interested in compromise. While labor unrest was most

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Apr., 1948, p. 27; cf. *New York Herald Tribune*, Apr. 17, 1948.

⁶⁴ *New York Herald Tribune*, Mar. 10, 1948.

⁶⁵ *Christian Science Monitor*, Mar. 17, 1948.

acute among government employees, it was by no means confined to them. However, the strike wave was less broadly based than that of the previous year. SCAP was forcefully discouraging strikes, and Social Democratic labor leaders were committed to support of both the Katayama and the Ashida cabinet.

Democratization Leagues

Toward the end of 1946, as leftists sought to force the pace of "struggle tactics," an organized movement to combat Communist influence within the Japanese unions began to take shape, and it continued to gather force slowly during the following year.⁶⁶ It took the form of "Democratization Leagues" organized within various unions and maintaining some liaison with one another. The movement has been variously described. According to some observers it was a spontaneous reaction of Japanese unionists against the high-handed tactics of Communist factions; others assert that it was an artificial creation inspired by SCAP labor officials. Certainly it received strong encouragement from SCAP. It was supported by Social Democrats and independent labor leaders whose position was threatened by the Communist faction, and attracted also a number of disillusioned ex-Communists.

A drive against Communists had been inaugurated among the government railway workers in October, 1947,⁶⁷ and by the spring of 1948 it had developed considerable strength in this union. At the union convention of March 15-18, out of 613 delegates 130 were said to be anti-Communist, 114 pro-Communist, and the rest neutral. The convention elected a right-wing chairman, and voted to accept the government's

⁶⁶ A similar movement was launched in the Japan Farmers' Union in March, 1948 (*Kyodo*, Mar. 21, 1948).

⁶⁷ *Summation*, Feb., 1948.

latest wage offer and to cease local disputes.⁶⁸ Later, the Democratization League was reported to have won 60 seats in the union's Central Executive Committee, with 17 Communists, 7 Communist sympathizers, 26 neutral, and 16 undecided.⁶⁹ On May 28 Etsuo Kato, head of the Democratization League, was re-elected as chairman of the Central Executive Committee; Ichizo Suzuki, Communist, was chosen as vice-chairman, and Daikichiro Kanemasa of the left-wing but anti-Communist Renovation League as secretary-general.⁷⁰ At a union convention on May 31 and June 1 some excitement was created by the alleged distribution of handbills charging that chairman Kato and other union officers had taken bribes from the government,⁷¹ which illustrates the bitterness of the intra-union struggle. After a lively debate the convention voted, 331 to 270, to retain the constitutional provision that strikes or other dispute tactics must be authorized by national headquarters. The left-wing demand for local autonomy was rejected by a combination of right and center forces.⁷²

In other unions the movement spread more slowly. In January, 1948 the JFL invited the government railway workers, All Japan Federation of Coal Miners, and seamen, to join it in an anti-Communist educational campaign.⁷³ On February 13 a Democratization League was formed in the CIU, headed by Jinsuke Mitsumura of the communications workers, a CIU vice-chairman. Later the CIU League was led by Matsuta Hosoya, who had been expelled from the Communist Party.⁷⁴ On February 24 a conference was held of representatives of the CIU Democratization League, the JFL, the government railway workers, radio workers and others.⁷⁵ On March 3 representatives of several Democratization Leagues formed the Labor Union Democratization Council

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Mar., 1948.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, May 28, 1948.

⁷² *Ibid.*, June 2, 1948.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Apr., 1948.

⁶⁹ *Jiji*, May 19, 1948.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, May 31, June 1, 1948.

⁷³ *Summation*, Jan., 1948.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Feb., 1948.

as a rival to the left-wing Liaison Council of Japanese Labor Unions; the new Council supported the ¥2,920 wage for government employees.⁷⁶ Although denounced by President Dobashi, the movement took root in the communications workers' union, where a Democratization League was organized on March 13 by 350 delegates representing 45 locals in the Tokyo area.⁷⁷ In March, also, a Democratization League was formed in Osaka by 1,500 delegates representing 30 unions, including the JFL, the seamen, and the government railway workers.⁷⁸

By the summer of 1948 the Democratization Leagues were no more than a struggling minority except in the government railway workers; SCAP's monthly report for May admitted that although they had made some progress among coal, electric power and electric equipment workers they had "not made any significant impression on the labor movement as a whole."⁷⁹

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Feb., 1948.

⁷⁸ *Kyodo*, Mar. 13, 1948.

⁷⁷ *Jiji*, Mar. 13, 1948.

⁷⁹ *Summation*, May, 1948.

XIV

SCAP AND GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, 1948

The government employees were far from satisfied with the wage agreement of March, 1948. In June the National Council of Government and Public Workers' Unions presented a demand for an average wage of ¥5,200. They were also opposed to grievance machinery, wage ceilings, price increases, and reduction of personnel. The government offered ¥3,791, and in June submitted legislation to this effect to the Diet. The bill was passed on July 5, with the new wage scale retroactive to June 1.¹ That this scale was still below the wage level prevailing in private industry was generally admitted.² On July 7, after a month of negotiations, the union council called for mediation of the dispute by the Central Labor Relations Committee, to which the government finally agreed.³

Mediation was thus under way, with strike tactics for the moment in abeyance, when the Supreme Commander threw a bombshell in the form of an open letter to Prime Minister Ashida, on July 22. Though dealing specifically only with labor relations in government service, SCAP's action profoundly affected the labor movement as a whole. In fact, according to the SCAP *Summation* for July, it "became the center of public interest and caused replanning of all political strategy."

In his letter⁴ the Supreme Commander proposed a revi-

¹ *Summation*, June, July, 1948.

² *Ibid.*, July, 1948.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ For full text see Document 3, in Appendix.

sion of the existing civil service act, a post-war measure. Government employees, he said, are responsible to the whole people. No government employee has the right to strike or use other delaying tactics; by such action he forfeits his rights as a civil servant. Collective bargaining, he continued, is not applicable in public service, although public servants have the right individually or collectively to present their views and grievances. He thought that public enterprises such as railways, and the salt, camphor, and tobacco monopolies might be excepted from this rule, but they should be re-organized as public corporations. Finally, General MacArthur recommended that the National Public Service Law be revised in accordance with these principles.

Government employees, other than operating employees of public enterprises, were already debarred from striking under the Labor Relations Adjustment Law, although this provision had not been strictly enforced. The SCAP letter went further and denied them the right of collective bargaining which they had previously enjoyed. Moreover, the letter could be interpreted as depriving operating employees of the right to strike, at least temporarily and perhaps permanently.

Exactly what prompted this *démarche* by SCAP has never been fully explained. It was no doubt intended as a reprisal against Communist tactics, which had been very troublesome, especially among government employees. It was, moreover, in line with the increasing emphasis on economic recovery which characterized United States policy toward Japan in 1948. Numerous official statements made clear the belief that the occupation's original aim of democratic reform must, if necessary, give way before the urgent need to place Japan's economy on a self-supporting basis.⁵

⁵ Among the most important were General Frank R. McCoy's statement in the Far Eastern Commission on Jan. 21, 1948; the report of Overseas Consultants, Inc., in February; and the report of the Johnston Committee, a business group sponsored by the Army, in April.

According to Blaine Hoover of Government Section, GHQ, SCAP, the Supreme Commander's action was taken to forestall "a paralyzing strike of government workers announced for August 7, which in Japan's impoverished condition would have resulted in starvation and disaster to large sections of the Japanese people."⁶ The only mention of a threatened strike in SCAP's *Summation* for July refers to a statement by Kazuyoshi Dobashi on July 31, nine days after the SCAP letter. Even if a threatening situation existed, it is not clear why SCAP did not, as on previous occasions, meet it by issuing a temporary restraining order, instead of by permanent legislation curtailing rights previously enjoyed.

It is known that a difference of opinion existed within GHQ, SCAP on the treatment of government employees. Government Section, which was in charge of reorganization of Japanese political institutions, regarded the problem primarily as one of creating an efficient, modern civil service system; Labor Division on the other hand viewed it as part of the larger problem of labor relations. In the action of July 22 Government Section's view prevailed, and shortly afterward James S. Killen, chief of Labor Division, and several of his associates resigned their positions. Jurisdiction over government employees was transferred from Labor Division to Government Section, and contrary to usual SCAP practice, the subsequent revision of the National Public Service Law was supervised exclusively by Government Section without consultation with Labor Division. After his return to the United States Mr. Killen, a vice-president of the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers, AFL, delivered an address at a convention of the American Federation of Labor in which he criticized SCAP's labor policy on the ground that in denying collective bargaining rights to government employees SCAP was not

⁶ *Nippon Times*, Aug. 5, 1948.

weakening Communism but rather driving Japanese workers into its arms.⁷

The cabinet lost no time in acting on General MacArthur's suggestions. On July 31 it issued an ordinance declaring that government employees (national and local) were debarred from exercising the right of "collective bargaining as usually understood with its coercive character supported by the strike threat." They or their organizations might present claims or grievances and discuss them with the appropriate authority. Current mediation proceedings affecting government employees were suspended, and the handling of labor relations in the civil service was transferred to the National Personnel Authority. Strikes or delaying actions were prohibited on pain of loss of civil service rights, ¥5,000 fine or one year's imprisonment. The ordinance would continue in effect until the National Public Service Law had been revised by the Diet.⁸ The government also announced that all existing contracts with public employee unions were void, although clauses not incompatible with the ordinance would be observed.⁹ The cabinet's action, although temporary, thus went much farther than General MacArthur's proposal, which had not denied collective bargaining rights to employees of public enterprises. As a gesture of appeasement, government spokesmen announced plans to improve the welfare of public employees through better housing, clinics, sanatoria, etc., and said that consideration would be given to a salary increase.¹⁰

Rightly or wrongly, the SCAP statement was generally regarded in Japan as the most serious blow yet dealt to organized labor as a whole. As on other occasions, various Japanese agencies took advantage of the atmosphere which it

⁷ *New York Times*, Nov. 20, 1948. The AFL convention passed a resolution criticizing occupation labor policy in both Japan and Germany along similar lines (*New York Herald Tribune*, Nov. 22, 1948).

⁸ *Summation*, July, 1948, pp. 34-35.

⁹ *Jiji*, July 31, 1948.

¹⁰ *Kyodo*, July 27, 1948.

created to impose restrictions on labor activity unrelated to the issues dealt with by SCAP. A number of municipalities, for example, issued regulations limiting the holding of public meetings and demonstrations. One of the first to do so was the city of Osaka, whose action was condemned by Labor Minister Kato.¹¹ The Osaka ordinance was cancelled, in part, by Major General Joseph H. Swing, U.S. corps commander for southern Japan, on the ground that it violated SCAP regulations on civil liberties. Osaka, said General Swing, went "a little too far."¹²

The SCAP letter became an international issue when criticism of it was publicly expressed by the acting Russian member of the Allied Council in a letter to General MacArthur on August 11, in remarks at the Allied Council meeting on August 28, and in a press conference on September 5 by the permanent Russian representative, General Kuzma Derevyanko, who had just returned from Moscow.¹³ On September 16, at a meeting of the Far Eastern Commission in Washington, Ambassador Alexander S. Panyushkin demanded that the Commission ask General MacArthur to rescind his July 22 letter and the cabinet ordinance of July 31.¹⁴ The Russians contended that these actions violated the Potsdam Declaration (which enjoined the Japanese government to "remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies") and the FEC directive on labor, which guaranteed the right to organize and bargain collectively, making no exception for government employees. Mr. Panyushkin also denounced repressive police measures against government employees. Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall, in a press statement on September 2, denied that SCAP's action violated international agreements, while General MacArthur asserted that the main threat to labor's freedom in

¹¹ *Ibid.*, July 31, Aug. 10, 1948.

¹² *Jiji*, Aug. 13, 1948.

¹³ *New York Herald Tribune*, Aug. 11, Sept. 7, 1948.

¹⁴ *New York Times*, *New York Herald Tribune*, Sept. 17, 1948.

Japan came from Communism.¹⁵ The Russian proposal was rejected by the FEC on January 6, 1949 by a vote of nine to one, with China abstaining.¹⁶

In Japan itself the immediate effect of the SCAP letter was to prolong the life of the tottering Ashida cabinet, threatened by attacks from labor and the political left on one hand and from the Democratic Liberals on the other. Since implementation of the letter required new legislation, a special session of the Diet was immediately summoned, and demands for Diet dissolution had to be withdrawn. In the end, however, the Ashida cabinet fell on October 7, just before the opening of the Diet session, as a result of the arrest of two of its members on charges of corrupt practices. A new single-party government was formed by the Democratic Liberal leader and former premier, Shigeru Yoshida.

The new labor policy became a major political issue. The Democratic and Democratic Liberal parties fully supported the Supreme Commander's letter. The Democratic Liberals, in addition, blamed the government for the deterioration of the labor situation which had necessitated SCAP's action.¹⁷ The Social Democrats accepted, with evident reluctance, the principles enunciated by SCAP but sought to lighten their application in practice by recognizing "in principle" the right of government employees to collective bargaining and by improving their real wages.¹⁸ The Social Democratic ministers decided to stay in the cabinet and do what they could to protect labor's position against conservative attacks. The Kuroda group of "orthodox" (left-wing) Social Democrats charged that the SCAP letter had been inspired by the Japanese government, which they accused of abusing its authority and attacking labor's constitutional rights.¹⁹ The Communists denounced the cabinet order as a violation

¹⁵ *New York Herald Tribune*, Sept. 18, 1948.

¹⁶ *New York Times*, Jan. 7, 1949.

¹⁷ *Summation*, July, 1948, p. 31.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 34.

¹⁹ *Kyodo*, Aug. 2, 1948.

of the Constitution, and demanded the resignation of the "Fascist" Ashida government.²⁰

The MacArthur letter was particularly embarrassing to Labor Minister Kanju Kato, a left-wing Social Democratic labor leader who had long been on record as opposing any change in existing labor laws. In a press interview on July 23 he stated that his views were unchanged but that SCAP must be obeyed.²¹ He considered resigning from the cabinet but decided to stay and fight for the best terms he could get in the proposed cabinet ordinance and subsequent law revision. On July 26 he was quoted as saying that the SCAP letter forbade only strikes, not collective bargaining, and that he would oppose efforts by conservatives to use the letter to their advantage.²² The cabinet ordinance of July 31 was drafted only after a struggle within the cabinet and consultation with Blaine Hoover of Government Section, SCAP,²³ in which Kato and other Social Democratic ministers fought, on the whole, a losing battle.

The Japanese press as usual lauded MacArthur's action. As to the labor situation itself, the *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* comments of July 31 were fairly typical. *Asahi* condemned the leftist tendencies of the communications workers and praised the moderate stand of the government railway workers. *Yomiuri* blamed the government for neglecting the workers' needs and thus bringing about the existing deplorable situation.²⁴

The effect of SCAP's letter followed by the cabinet ordinance was to throw the whole labor movement into turmoil. All sections of organized labor viewed the new developments with alarm, but opinions on what line the unions should take under the new conditions were sharply divided. As criticism of the occupation was forbidden, it was impossible

²⁰ *Summation*, Aug., 1948, p. 25.

²² *Ibid.*, July 26, 1948.

²⁴ *Kyodo*, July 31, 1948.

²¹ *Kyodo*, July 23, 1948.

²³ *Jiji*, July 28, 1948.

publicly to take issue with General MacArthur; but it was possible to criticize the government's interpretation of his words, and great ingenuity was shown in this direction.

Labor leaders, confronted by SCAP's bombshell, divided roughly into two groups: those who bowed to the inevitable, and those who did not. The former accepted, however unwillingly, the principles of the SCAP letter and sought to work within this framework, by legal methods, for the best possible terms. The latter condemned the government's action and sought to reverse or modify it, some by agitation and peaceful protest, others—chiefly Communists—by strike action in defiance of the cabinet ordinance.

A barrage of statements and resolutions by labor unions and individual leaders testified to the alarm and confusion which the SCAP letter produced in labor's ranks. The well-disciplined JFL indicated its position as early as July 24, when its secretary-general, Toraichi Hara, called for a "realistic and constructive" stand on the part of labor. Implicitly accepting the necessity for revision of the National Public Service Law, Hara said that this should be accompanied by creation of authoritative and democratic machinery for determining wage standards. Naturally, he said, it was the duty of government employees to serve the country, but their services should be remunerated at rates not less than those paid in private industry. The unions, Hara declared, should use such machinery to push their claims rather than relying on strikes, which only stirred up anti-labor reaction.²⁵ JFL leaders in Osaka also blamed radical tactics for provoking the counter-blow.

Left-wing unions, led by the CIU, took the position that General MacArthur's letter was not an order but only a suggestion which the government was not bound to follow. They declared that the cabinet ordinance of July 31 violated

²⁵ *Jiji*, July 24, 1948.

constitutional guarantees of labor's rights,²⁶ the Far Eastern Commission's sixteen principles for labor,²⁷ and the Potsdam Declaration. On July 31 the council of government employees' unions filed a petition with SCAP asking clarification of these points, and inquiring whether the proposed cabinet ordinance would not impede realization of the Potsdam aim of promoting democracy.²⁸ On the same day a delegation of the National Liaison Council of Labor Unions (Zenroren) called on Prime Minister Ashida to demand an explanation of the legality of the cabinet order.²⁹ Replying on July 30 to protests from President Dobashi of the communications workers, Labor Minister Kato stated that the cabinet ordinance was issued to execute occupation policy, which took precedence over the Japanese constitution and laws.³⁰

Interest in the issues raised by the cabinet's action reached such a pitch that a public hearing on the question was held under the auspices of the Democratic Liberal party, which, though scarcely pro-labor, was willing to use any means to embarrass the government. At this gathering vice-chairman Takahara of the communications workers denounced the cabinet's action as a violation of the constitution. JFL spokesman Okubo expressed the belief that the government was bound to obey the SCAP "order," but that to deprive operating employees of the right to bargain and strike was to misinterpret SCAP's instructions.³¹

On August 3 the Central Labor Relations Committee held a session with Cabinet Secretary Tomabechi, who was questioned closely regarding the origin of the cabinet ordinance. Quoting the instrument of surrender, Tomabechi stated that the ordinance was a matter of occupation policy,

²⁶ Article 28 of the new constitution reads: "The right of workers to organize and to bargain collectively is guaranteed." (*Summation*, Oct., 1946, p. 25).

²⁷ See Document 1, in Appendix.

²⁸ *Jiji*, July 25, 30, 1948.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, July 31, 1948.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, July 30, 1948.

³¹ *Ibid.*, Aug. 3, 1948.

and intimated that its terms, including the suspension of CLRC mediation, had been inspired by GHQ, SCAP. When Katsumi Kikunami pressed the question of whether GHQ ordered the cabinet to take this action, Tomabechi replied that GHQ had given its approval, which was equivalent to an order.³² The government thus sought to shift the onus to SCAP so far as it dared, and relied heavily on SCAP's authority to enforce its orders. On August 5 Communications Minister Eiji Tomiyushi, warning against strikes by communications workers, pointed out that Japan was a defeated nation operating under SCAP's orders.³³

The CIU on July 30 demanded the resignation of the cabinet and dissolution of the Diet; it also protested the suspension of mediation of the government employees' dispute by the Central Labor Relations Committee,³⁴ as did the CLRC's labor members.³⁵ On the following day the National Liaison Council of Labor Unions pledged itself to fight for the constitution, democratic rights, and national independence.³⁶ President Makoto Kan of the CIU, speaking on July 31, called the government's action Fascistic; the cabinet, he asserted, was usurping the functions which rightfully belonged to the Diet.³⁷

The communications workers' union likewise, on July 31, announced a struggle to defend "our organization and the Constitution" against "imperialism." Linking the government's move with efforts to attract foreign capital, it charged the government with using the SCAP letter to suppress the labor movement, and termed the situation a "crisis of democracy."³⁸ A similar note was struck a few days later by Kyuichi Tokuda, the Communist leader, who delivered a speech in Tokyo accusing the cabinet of selling out the country to

³² *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Kyodo*, July 30, 1948.

³⁶ *Jiji*, July 31, 1948.

³⁸ *Jiji*, July 30, 1948.

³³ *Ibid.*, Aug. 5, 1948.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, July 28, 1948.

³⁷ *Kyodo*, July 31, 1948.

foreign capitalists.³⁹ That SCAP itself was a tool of foreign capitalists was not asserted in so many words.

Debate over the legality of the cabinet ordinance of July 31 continued with great vehemence, producing further refinements of the legal arguments on both sides, and on September 6 sixteen unions, including the CIU and the communications workers, brought a legal action charging that the cabinet's action was a "conspiracy under pretext of cabinet decisions," violating Article 192 of the penal code.⁴⁰

Meanwhile the more determined leftists in the unions prepared for other forms of action. The CIU national headquarters called for a "popular struggle" on a regional basis to defend labor's rights and to bring down the Ashida government. But the CIU Democratization League, after a two-day meeting of its working committee, announced on August 2 its opposition to the "popular struggle" policy.⁴¹ The League proposed to fight revision of the National Public Service Law by legal and democratic methods. It decided to remain in the CIU in order to oppose destructive policies, but at the same time indicated that its ultimate aim was a new labor federation, purged of Communist influence, which would cooperate with the JFL.⁴²

The government railway workers were similarly divided. The union's Central Struggle Committee, controlled by leftists, campaigned actively for local "struggle tactics," while the Democratization League opposed this policy, saying that the union must abide by the SCAP letter and purge itself of Communist influence.⁴³ After a debate between left- and right-wing groups the union issued, on July 29, a statement calling on members to defend the union against all attempts to break it up, and to press for "favorable" revision of the National Public Service Law by organizing publicity com-

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Aug. 4, 1948.

⁴¹ *Kyodo*, July 31, 1948.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Sept. 6, 1948.

⁴² *Jiji*, Aug. 2, 1948.

mittees and by other legal means.⁴⁴ Locals were warned against using tactics which might create an atmosphere unfavorable to the union during the forthcoming discussions of law revision. Thus the right-wing view prevailed on union strategy, but the union also, doubtless as a concession to the left wing, demanded the resignation of the cabinet and endorsed cooperation with both Social Democrats and Communists. Leftists, despite this decision, continued to agitate for militant action.

The call of leftist leaders for "struggle tactics" against the new legislation and the Ashida cabinet produced, on the whole, little response, but some disturbances resulted, particularly among government railway and communications workers. Chief Cabinet Secretary Tomabechi warned on August 7 that violators of the no-strike ordinance would be discharged, and procurators were ordered to arrest them.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, mass absenteeism or "job desertion" appeared in a number of railway centers, including Matsuyama, Ehime, Sendai, Niigata, and Hokkaido. According to the Transportation Ministry, the Communists, especially the Young Communist League, made systematic efforts to promote absenteeism, concentrating on tying up locomotives. Absentee workers from Hokkaido were sent to organize the movement in northern Honshu, those from Sendai went to the Kanto district, and so on.⁴⁶ Mass absenteeism was reported on August 9 in Matsuyama, Ehime, and Hokkaido, and was immediately met by reprisals in the form of arrests and discharges, while replacements were sent in from other districts.⁴⁷ The movement soon collapsed in Matsuyama after it had been denounced by national union chairman Etsuo Kato and local Democratization League spokesmen, but it continued for some weeks in other places. On August 30 the Transportation Minister estimated that 1,300 workers had left their

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, July 28; *Kyodo*, July 29, 1948.

⁴⁶ *Jiji*, Sept. 1, 1948.

⁴⁵ *Kyodo*, *Jiji*, Aug. 7, 1948.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Aug. 9, 1948.

jobs.⁴⁸ By September 21, 383 railway workers had been arrested, 954 had been discharged, and 633 had suffered pay cuts; over 600 had returned to work.⁴⁹

Violent debates took place in government railway locals throughout the country. Leftists were reported to be leading in Hokkaido, but elsewhere the moderates appeared to be dominant. The Ehime local, for example, voted to leave the CIU, and the Sendai local voted, 171 to 91, to bar Communists from union office.⁵⁰ The railway workers were torn between the Communists on the left, the Democratization League on the right, and the Renovation (or Reformist) League, which was left-wing but anti-Communist.⁵¹ The union's national headquarters directed locals to oppose job desertion but to aid those who had deserted and try to get their jobs back for them.⁵²

At a convention of the government railway workers, held from September 30 to October 4, the Democratization League forces won a decisive victory. Pre-convention estimates had credited them with 65 per cent of the delegates, the Renovation League with 25 per cent, and the Communists with 10 per cent.⁵³ Democratization League candidates won all the top offices; Etsuo Kato was re-elected as chairman. Of the new Central Executive Committee, 15 members were from the Democratization League, 7 from the Renovation League, and 3 were Communists. Rejecting a militant policy, the convention pledged itself to "respect and uphold the principles outlined in SCAP's recent letter," but demanded for railway workers the right to organize and bargain collectively, opposed the "despotism" of the National Personnel Authority, and called for a ¥7,200 monthly wage plus living allowances.⁵⁴

Earlier, on September 1, right-wing forces had also won

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Sept. 1, 1948.

⁵⁰ *Jiji*, Aug. 17; *Kyodo*, Aug. 16, 1948.

⁵² *Jiji*, *Kyodo*, Sept. 7, 1948.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Oct. 3, 4, 1948.

⁴⁹ *Kyodo*, Sept. 15, 21, 1948.

⁵¹ *Jiji*, Aug. 10, 31, 1948.

⁵³ *Kyodo*, Sept. 30, 1948.

control of the General Federation of Private Railway Workers' Unions, electing the chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary-general. The program adopted by the convention called for constructive action by peaceful democratic methods; opposition to revision of the National Public Service Law; preservation of operating employees' right to strike; measures to protect the livelihood of government employees; and support of measures to revive production.⁵⁵

A similar struggle took place within the communications workers' union, but here the left-wing forces were stronger. A press report on August 7 stated that Communists seemed to be ahead in Osaka, Hiroshima, and Sendai, where strike action was threatened; were strong in Hyogo, Ibaragi, Tochigi, Gifu, and Tokyo; while moderate elements were said to prevail in Ishikawa and Kyoto.⁵⁶ On August 10 a general meeting of the Sendai local rejected the government's anti-strike order.⁵⁷ A convention of communications workers in Aichi prefecture, after a stormy session, endorsed the policies of the Central Struggle Committee by a vote of 90 to 78, after which a number of delegates withdrew and talked of forming a new union.⁵⁸ On the other hand, the Ishikawa and Nagoya locals demanded the resignation of the Central Struggle Committee, including President Dobashi, while other locals were considering dissolution and reorganization to eliminate Communists.⁵⁹ Non-confidence in the Central Struggle Committee was expressed also by locals in Chiba, Aichi, Saga, and Nara.⁶⁰ Nevertheless the Committee persevered in its policy of "struggle tactics," and on August 18 a union spokesman was quoted as saying that local defense committees must prepare for "eventual resort to force, in case of necessity."⁶¹ Dobashi threatened to oust recalcitrant

⁵⁵ *Jiji*, Aug. 30, Sept. 1, 1948.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Aug. 10, 1948.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Aug. 7, 1948.

⁶¹ *Jiji*, Aug. 18, 1948.

⁵⁶ *Kyodo*, Aug. 7, 1948.

⁵⁸ *Jiji*, Aug. 25, 1948.

⁶⁰ *Kyodo*, Aug. 18, 1948.

union leaders in Ishikawa, accusing Social Democrats of betraying the working class.⁶²

At a convention of the communications workers on September 1-2 the left-wing national leadership encountered opposition but was supported by a majority of the delegates. A motion of non-confidence in the Central Struggle Committee, presented by delegates from Kanazawa and Aichi, was defeated.⁶³ Another convention on November 10-13 produced similar results.⁶⁴

Yet, despite vigorously militant statements by Dobashi and other leaders of the union, very little absenteeism among communications workers was reported in the press. On August 21 Dobashi is said to have assured Colonel Charles L. Kades of Government Section, SCAP, that the union's policy did not imply strikes, although he later said that the original policy was unchanged.⁶⁵ Later the union promoted a "one-man-one-demand" movement, apparently designed to embarrass management without technically violating the anti-strike order.⁶⁶

New Legislation for Government Employees

As the cabinet order was a temporary measure, great interest attached to the terms of the revised National Public Service Law, which the Ashida cabinet now set about drafting; the work was completed by the Yoshida cabinet. The process was accompanied by intense debate both inside and outside the cabinet, and frequent consultation with Government Section, GHQ. On August 9 Manryo Yonekubo, a right-wing Social Democratic minister, said that the Social Democrats would leave the cabinet if their views on revision

⁶² *Ibid.*, Aug. 23, 24, 1948.

⁶⁴ *Kyodo*, Nov. 13, 1948.

⁶⁶ *Kyodo*, Oct. 2, 1948.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Sept. 1; *Kyodo*, Sept. 2, 1948.

⁶⁵ *Jiji*, Aug. 21, 1948.

of the law were rejected. He stated the party's position as follows: government employees should enjoy conditions not inferior to those in private industry; SCAP's letter overrides the constitution, but under its terms government employees may and should have the right to "negotiate jointly" though not to "bargain collectively."⁶⁷

That the government would continue to recognize existing government employees' unions for limited purposes was indicated on August 12. Such unions, it was stated, would be permitted to express their views to the Temporary National Personnel Affairs Commission. There would be no discrimination against union members. Provisions in existing contracts on working hours, vacations, etc., would be observed, but not provisions restricting the right of dismissal (i.e., requiring consultation with the union on dismissal questions).⁶⁸

At the same time, the government moved to eliminate full-time union officers from the public payroll. Such officers, it was announced, could keep their union jobs until the end of August (for non-operating employees) or the end of September (for operating employees). After that they would have to resume their regular jobs in the public service.⁶⁹ This was a severe blow, and the government employees' Liaison Council went so far as to claim that it negated the right to organize.⁷⁰ This was not true if the government merely meant to require that the unions pay their own officers, which in the long run was a salutary step from the point of view of the unions themselves. However, a government spokesman was quoted as saying that no full-time union officers would be recognized,⁷¹ which was a very different matter. On August 24 a cabinet decision was reported to the effect that, under the new National Public Service Law, government employees would be represented not by

⁶⁷ *Jiji*, Aug. 9, 1948.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Jiji*, Aug. 11, 1948.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Aug. 12, 1948.

⁷⁰ *Kyodo*, Aug. 16, 1948.

full-time union officers but by "delegates" elected two to four times a year; bureau chiefs would be excluded from union membership.⁷² The intention seemed to be to recognize the government employees' right to organize and negotiate, but under such regulations as would weaken if not disrupt entirely the existing union organizations. However, on September 10, after conferences with Blaine Hoover of Government Section, the government said that union officers could continue in their union jobs, although they could not draw government pay.⁷³

The bill to revise the National Public Service Law was introduced in the Diet on November 10,⁷⁴ passed on December 1 and immediately promulgated.⁷⁵ It was hailed by General MacArthur as "a major victory for those who seek integrity of representative government over those who would leave the government prey to minority subjugation."⁷⁶

As revised, the law provided that government employees⁷⁷ might "join or refrain from joining" associations. They might designate, through such associations, representatives of their own choice to negotiate with the proper authorities about working conditions and employee welfare, but might not conclude a collective agreement with the government. Wages were not specifically mentioned among the subjects for negotiation. Elsewhere the law provided that "personnel of the service may present application to the [National Personnel] Authority relative to salary, wages . . . or working conditions" and request administrative action; this would permit individual adjustments but would not affect basic pay schedules. Such schedules were fixed by the Diet, and the National Personnel Authority was required to make recommendations to the Diet on this subject annually. As a

⁷² *Ibid.*, Aug. 24, 1948.

⁷³ *Kyodo*, Sept. 7, 10, 1948.

⁷⁴ *Jiji*, Nov. 10, 1948.

⁷⁵ *Kyodo*, Dec. 1, 1948.

⁷⁶ *New York Herald Tribune*, Dec. 2, 1948.

⁷⁷ Except employees of police and fire departments, penal institutions and the Maritime Safety Board, who might not organize.

concession to labor, the law provided that in fixing wage schedules account should be taken of the cost of living and prevailing wages. Government employees were prohibited from striking or engaging in delaying action or other dispute tactics, subject to penalties ranging up to ¥100,000 fine or three years' imprisonment.

Existing employee organizations, the law stated, might continue, but they must conduct their internal affairs democratically, abide by the law and the procedures of negotiation laid down by the National Personnel Authority, and register with the Authority. No employee might be discriminated against for activity in an employee organization, provided such activity did not contravene regulations, but no employee might, while drawing pay, engage in union activity of a type not approved by the Authority. Government employees were forbidden to engage in any kind of political activity, and members of organizations advocating overthrow of the government were declared ineligible for public employment. The cabinet order of July 31 was revoked for employees of the central government, but continued in effect for local government employees.

At the same session the Diet passed bills dividing the Communications Ministry into two ministries—post office and telecommunications—and establishing the state railways and monopoly bureaus as public corporations; and a law regulating labor relations in public corporations.⁷⁸ The latter, which applied to government railways and monopolies, permitted employees of such corporations to organize and engage in collective bargaining under much stricter limitations than those previously applied to public utilities under the Labor Relations Adjustment Law. Strikes, slowdowns, and other acts of dispute were prohibited. Union officers

⁷⁸ The railway corporation was established on June 1, 1949, and the labor law was enforced from that date (*Jiji*, June 2, *Kyodo*, June 1, 1949). Splitting the railway administration off from the Transportation Ministry meant that the railway union lost a considerable number of members, including one-fifth of its executive committee.

must be elected by secret ballot and must be employees of the corporation; they might give their full time to the union, but could draw no pay from the corporation while doing so. Union accounts must be audited and a financial report must be made to the members of the union. The Ministry of Labor might, if necessary, designate appropriate bargaining units and conduct elections to determine who should represent the employees. The closed shop was apparently excluded. Collective bargaining negotiations, culminating in a written contract, should be held at least once a year. Such agreements must, however, be approved by the Diet if they called for expenditures exceeding the authorized corporation budget. Grievance committees should be established to settle day-to-day complaints.

Mediation of disputes might be undertaken by special tripartite committees, one for railways and one for public monopolies, together with local committees. Procedure was much the same as under the Labor Relations Adjustment Law. Should mediation fail, or on request of the Minister of Transportation, Finance or Labor, compulsory arbitration might be invoked, both parties having a share in selecting the arbitrators. Arbitral awards were to be final and binding except that the Diet must authorize any additions to the corporation budget.

The same Diet passed a bill raising the wages of government employees to an average of ¥6,307 per month,⁷⁹ and later regulations were issued increasing their working hours to 48 per week.⁸⁰

Polarization in the Labor Movement

The repercussions of SCAP's action of July 22 produced a widespread shifting of forces in the labor movement. The anti-Communist forces, represented primarily by the Democ-

⁷⁹ *Kyodo*, Dec. 21, 1948.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Jan. 3, 1949.

ratization Leagues, were apparently strengthened, but the Communist minority was not necessarily weakened; indeed, the contrary would appear to be true. Amid the dust and turmoil of intra-union struggles it is possible to discern a trend toward polarization similar to that displayed in the election of January, 1949, when the Social Democrats—the chief party of the center—lost ground heavily to the parties of the right, but the Communist vote also increased. In the case of labor, however, the Social Democrats represented the right-hand pole. In the following months a number of labor leaders, previously without political affiliation, formally identified themselves with either the Communist or the Social Democratic party. The most prominent examples, perhaps, were Kazuyoshi Dobashi, head of the communications workers' union, whose entry into the Communist Party was reported in December, 1948,⁸¹ and Etsuo Kato, chairman of the government railway workers, who in April, 1949 announced his decision to become a member of the Social Democratic Party.⁸²

The violent factional conflicts which followed the cabinet ordinance on July 31, and continued into 1949, were by no means confined to government employees. Similar struggles took place in most major unions. For example, in September the electrical workers' union, which had been engaged in a long-drawn-out dispute with management, was reported to be facing a split, with 50 members of its Central Executive Committee affiliated with the union's Democratization League, 50 under Communist influence, and 20 centrists. The chairman, Koji Kawaguchi, belonged to the left wing, which was said to be strongest in Hokkaido and the Kanto and Kansai districts. The Democratization League, led by vice-chairman Masahide Nishimori, was influential in Chugoku, Kyushu, and Tohoku, while locals in Hokoriku and

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1948.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Apr. 24, 1949.

Shikoku were said to be divided about evenly.⁸³ The National Federation of Coal Mine Workers' Unions was likewise divided. At a convention in May, 1949 the right wing commanded a majority, electing all the officers except one, but no unity of opinion existed on questions of union policy.⁸⁴

While the Democratization Leagues were fighting it out with the Communists in the CIU and independent unions, developments of a different kind were taking place in the JFL. Here the pre-war, right-wing Social Democratic leadership was challenged by an insurgent, but non-Communist, movement from the left, which charged the old leadership with paying only lip service to labor's interests and Social Democratic principles. The Federation's convention on October 21-24 was marked by unusually heated debates. Although Komakichi Matsuoka was re-elected as chairman of the union, the old secretary-general, Toraichi Hara, was defeated by Minoru Takano, a left-winger, by a vote of 299 to 110. The convention also voted, 277 to 238, to expel Suehiro Nishio, right-wing Social Democrat and former cabinet member who had been charged with corrupt practices. The convention went on record as opposing the Yoshida cabinet, and demanded the cancellation of the cabinet order of July 31 and the exemption of operating employees from the National Public Service Law.⁸⁵

The position of the left-wing elements in the JFL was similar to that of the right-wing elements in the CIU and independent unions. Both rejected the old-guard conservative leadership on the one hand, and Communist leadership on the other. Like Kanju Kato's pre-war "legal left," they favored a vigorous struggle for labor's economic and political aims, but one that kept within the law and used existing democratic machinery rather than trying to wreck it.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, Sept. 14, 1948.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, May 27, 1949.

⁸⁵ *Jiji*, Oct. 24, 25; *Kyodo*, Oct. 25, 1948.

In November, Democratization League leaders in the CIU laid plans for a "new CIU" purged of Communist influence. Its preliminary platform, as announced on May 21, 1949, was to strive for industrial recovery but to oppose capitalistic methods of reconstruction; to work for democracy in the unions and reject control of unions by a political party; and to oppose the policy of "violent revolution" identified with the World Federation of Trade Unions.⁸⁶

Also under discussion in late 1948 and early 1949 were the more ambitious project of a new labor federation including the JFL and non-Communist elements from other unions,⁸⁷ and the still more far-reaching design of a new political party amalgamating the Social Democratic Party, the left-wing but non-Communist Labor-Farmer Party, and all non-Communist labor and farmers' unions.⁸⁸ In January the JFL decided to back the movement for a united (non-Communist) labor front.⁸⁹ On February 12 a meeting was held preparatory to the formation of a National Trade Union Congress (*Zenkoku Rodo Kumiai Kaigi*).⁹⁰ It was attended by representatives of the JFL, CIU Democratization League, and government railway Democratization League, with observers from the JCLU, seamen's union and National Federation of Coal Mine Workers' Unions. The sense of the meeting was that the new organization would support a "renovated" Social Democratic Party. Dissatisfaction with the Social Democratic Party, especially its right-wing leaders, was rife even in the JFL. By June, 1949 factional struggles still rent the labor movement but no new alignment had definitely emerged.

Meanwhile Japanese labor faced serious problems as a result of the nine-point "austerity" program for economic recovery ordered by the United States in a directive to

⁸⁶ *Jiji*, May 21, 1949.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Jan. 30, 1949.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Feb. 12, 1949.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Nov. 11, 13, 1948.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Jan. 29, 1949.

SCAP on December 12, 1948. Among other things it called for wage stabilization and a balanced budget. The resulting Diet action requiring the dismissal of 176,000 government employees (about 17 per cent of the total employed by the central government)⁹¹ brought protests from all sections of labor and strike action from some. Dismissals from private industry were also expected as a result of reduced government subsidies, and the government talked of taking steps to relieve unemployment. The government frankly stated that in reducing personnel it intended to dismiss "undesirable" employees and "trouble-makers."⁹² The revision, in the same Diet session, of the Trade Union Law and the Labor Relations Adjustment Law was also viewed with lively apprehension by organized labor, although some of the revisions were in labor's interests, and the final program does not seem to have been so severe as that originally proposed by the Yoshida cabinet.

⁹¹ The bill was passed at the end of May (*Kyodo*, May 30, 1949).

⁹² *New York Times*, June 6, 1949.

XV

SUPPLEMENT JAPANESE LABOR: 1949-50

by WILLIAM T. MORAN

Introduction

The following pages give only a brief account of developments in the Japanese labor movement during 1949 and part of 1950. Even such a limited study, however, must take account of the social background against which the drama is played, and because of the unusual significance of voices off-stage, some notice should be given to them.

Labor, like all segments of the Japanese society, has operated during the postwar period in an atmosphere of considerable artificiality. Historical and immediate environmental forces and modes of action have been blunted and obscured by the imponderable weight of the occupation. Just as the individual Japanese citizen has modified his public behaviour during this period, so have the super-personalities of social organizations undergone subtle, but discernible changes.

This is certainly due, in part, to the fact that many of the internal and external problems facing the Japanese people are not open to attempts at solution by their independent thought and efforts. One aspect of this limitation was commented on by General MacArthur in his New Year's mes-

sage of 1950, when in reference to the problems of the global ideological struggle and the Japanese peace treaty, he said: "But the solution of these problems does not lie within Japan's present capability and should not be drawn within the orbit of Japan's internal politics."¹

Here an account is given of what Japanese labor has done in 1949 and 1950; it should be noted that this is not necessarily what labor desired to do, or what labor will do in some future and perhaps different circumstance.

Numerous commentators on post-war Japan have made a point of sharply contrasting the early "social-reform" period from the later "economic recovery" phase. Attempts have been made to place this turning point at some particular date or tie it to some single event, such as the change of attitude toward the dissolution of the Zaibatsu concerns. It seems questionable whether there was ever any real "reversal" of American policy in Japan, and even more dubious that it occurred at a certain time. It is true, however, that various elements of American policy in Japan have received different degrees of emphasis at various times, and pronounced contrasts are evident in the statements made by various American officials over a period of time. This has been particularly true of labor policy and has resulted in considerable confusion on the part of Japanese workers. As an example of this, the following statements may be noted.

On October 11, 1945 General MacArthur, in a communication to the Prime Minister of Japan, said:

I expect you to institute the following reforms in the social order of Japan as rapidly as they can be formulated . . .

The encouragement of the unionization of labor so that it may be clothed with such dignity as will permit it an influential voice for safeguarding the working man from exploitation and abuse and raising his standards of living to a higher level . . .

¹ Reported in full text in the *New York Times*, Jan. 1, 1950.

A Military Government labor officer, commenting in 1948, said:

Certainly no other element of Japanese society has responded so dynamically to the concepts of free democratic action as has Japanese labor. It is admittedly true that this amazing zeal has led to abuses and to questionable directions of energy . . .

However, the initial occupation labor policy was, according to post-surrender documents, based on the concept that a free and democratic nation is that in which democratic organizations representing various segments of the society have maximum opportunity in which to grow and flourish. Japanese labor today has already proved to be an extremely sensitive and responsive medium for this concept.

But, in 1949, on the fourth anniversary of Japan's surrender, General MacArthur in an address to the Japanese nation in which he called for a peace treaty by reason of Japan's having "fully and faithfully observed their surrender commitments," said of labor:

Progress of trade unionization during the past year, despite a degree of freedom unsurpassed in modern civilization, has been somewhat impeded by the machinations of an irresponsible leadership, but its rank and file are showing an increasing awareness of this threat to labor's legitimate objectives and are moving to insist on moderation and objectivity.²

However, by the time the next major message was delivered on January 1, 1950, General MacArthur said:

Labor, too, by its energy and patriotism is making a splendid contribution to the national recovery. Turning from an irresponsible leadership of the past, it is now becoming well oriented toward an objective and healthy future. And its demands for moderation evidences that labor is coming to understand that in

² *New York Times*, Sept. 2, 1949.

a society which is truly free the individual standard of life must bear a direct relationship to the constructive energies the individual contributes to life—that every segment of society must earn its own way, as the arbitrary advancement of one segment at the expense of another inevitably weakens political and economic freedom.³

It would not be surprising if Japanese labor and its leaders have developed some confusion over this kind of “praise-and-damn” verbalization. But added to this, there has been, in 1949 and 1950 (as in previous years), a series of direct actions by the occupation.

A far-reaching principle was established when General Marquat, Chief of the Economic and Scientific Section of SCAP Headquarters, stated that localized and regional strike actions on the part of unions in private industry would be regarded as a violation of General MacArthur’s 1947 ban on the specific strike action that was then planned. Again in 1950, during a widespread attempt by major unions to secure wage increases, this same SCAP statement was invoked by both the Japanese government and SCAP officials to force coal miners and electrical workers to cease strike action and accept arbitration. This latter situation is discussed more fully in the following pages, but it is of interest to note here that what had, in 1947, been a limited SCAP action directed at a particular situation has now achieved the stature of basic policy and prohibitive law.

The confusions and anxieties that have thus been produced in the Japanese labor movement must be borne in mind as the events of 1949 and 1950 are examined. When General MacArthur directed the Japanese government in 1945 to “encourage the unionization of labor [to] permit it an influential voice for safeguarding the working man,” Japanese labor groups believed him. And his 1947 statement

³ *New York Times*, Jan. 1, 1950.

banning the strike was generally believed to be an action directed only at that circumstance. Labor took note of such phrases as those quoted here and again believed that there would be no restrictions on "freedom of action heretofore given labor." But the extension of this statement to the 1948 situation, coupled with the excessive restrictions on government workers at that time, gave rise to serious doubts. Events of 1949 and 1950 intensified these doubts, and it is understandable that labor may now be inclined to question the reality of General MacArthur's statement concerning its "degree of freedom unsurpassed in modern civilization."

The General Political and Economic Background

Japan's internal political developments during 1949 and 1950 gave labor little cause for confidence. In the main, the conservatives, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida, increased in numbers and influence, while the mildly leftist Socialists practically ceased to exist as an effective political force. The Socialist Party, encompassing what one reporter has termed an "unwieldy conglomeration of widely separated prewar political institutions," was decisively split at its convention on January 19, 1950. In reporting this event, the *Christian Science Monitor* stated:

Japan's Socialist Party, which has been wracked by factional differences, finally has disappeared as a major political organization . . . party chairman Tetsu Katayama led 200 right wing delegates from the convention hall. An adamant left wing faction remained behind to undertake a structural salvage operation. . . . As a result of the Socialist split, 7,000,000 organized laborers, together with other left wing forces, are deprived of any major political leadership. There is no longer any major political or-

ganization capable of challenging the strength of the conservative Liberal Democratic Party of Prime Minister Yoshida. . . .⁴

By the end of February, 1950 the same paper, reporting that the "party system stands on the brink of disaster," cited the merger of the Democratic Party and the powerful Democratic Liberals. Though this resulted only in an increase of 28 members, giving the Democratic Liberals (Yoshida's party) 288 out of 466 Diet seats, the account stated that "the only major opposition party left in the Diet is the Communist Party, with 35 representatives. The Socialists, with 47 seats, have lost their effectiveness as a result of a three-way split. . . . And the 43 anti-merger Democrats—ideologically akin to the government party—will probably offer little opposition, by reason of their own recent split. The New Political Council of the remaining parties is the next largest group with 21 seats. . . . Instead of having several major political parties . . . there is today only one major political party of the extreme right."⁵

By May, 1950 Premier Shigeru Yoshida, 71 years old, was characterized quite correctly as "the strongest political figure in post-war Japan."⁶

In December, 1948 a new economic stabilization policy was recommended by the United States government in an interim directive, then commonly known as "the Nine-Point Program." Mr. Joseph Dodge, a Detroit banker, arrived in Tokyo on February 1, 1949 as financial advisor to SCAP, and immediately went to work to put this program in effect. The chief points of the "Dodge Plan," as it later came to be called, may be summarized as:

(1) A balanced national budget by means of sharply decreasing expenditures and increasing revenue; (2) Strengthen-

⁴ *Christian Science Monitor*, Jan. 20, 1950.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Feb. 27, 1950.

⁶ *The Evening Star*, Wash., D. C., May 25, 1950.

ing of the tax collection system; (3) Limited credits ("to those projects contributing to economic recovery"); (4) Wage "stabilization"; (5) Strengthening price control programs; (6) Improvement of foreign trade controls and tightening foreign exchange controls; (7) Improvement of allocation and rationing system; achieving maximum exports; (8) Increased production; (9) Improved food collection program; and finally development of the above plans "to pave the way for the early establishment of a single general exchange rate."

The methods of putting this program into effect were drastic and, by the end of 1949, almost universally disliked by Japanese business and government. It was reported that about a third of the four million small businessmen in Japan employing fewer than thirty persons closed their doors or merged with larger firms during 1949.⁷

This same report mentioned other developments and Japanese criticisms. Businessmen were said to be asking freedom to trade with China and to view the deflation policy as driving Japan to "economic suicide." The aim of retiring the national debt in three years was reported as requiring a 30 per cent excess of revenues over expenditures. The account quoted an Osaka banker as saying that it is "absurd to retire the national debt at this rate under the conditions now prevailing in Japan—we can't afford such a managed depression."

On January 4, 1950 the *Christian Science Monitor*, writing of a survey on cartels, said: "Here [in Osaka] and in other parts of Japan, however, there are increasing signs of a return to at least some of these former operational methods." The *New York Times* had reported on December 29, 1949 that SCAP persuaded the Cabinet to order the elimination of 170 of 352 post-war business control associations of the pre-war cartel pattern.

⁷ *U.S. News and World Report*, April 28, 1950.

Production increased in all the years since the end of the war, but by January, 1950 Japanese recovery had been slowed. "While production has been rising, markets, both domestic and foreign have been shrinking. Export goods are stockpiled to the unprecedented total of 80,000,000,000 yen. Business leaders say that stagnation has set in, that a panic may be just around the corner unless General Douglas MacArthur's Occupation makes its austerity regime a little more elastic."⁸

In April, 1950 it was reported that Japan's Finance Minister was on his way to the United States and would ask for relaxation of the stringent monetary policies of the Dodge Plan. In this account, Japanese newspapers were quoted as saying that he would argue that the tax burden and tight money are crippling trade and industrial expansion; that most employers are in trouble, missing payrolls, delaying debt payments and deferring expansion plans.⁹

Such was the picture of Japan's economy as labor struggled with its problems in 1949 and 1950. Its efforts to cope with them during 1949 were confused by internal political struggles of major proportions.

Internal Trade Union Developments, 1949-50

A remarkable degree of fragmentation has occurred in both individual unions in Japan and in labor federations. Almost every Japanese labor group in recent years has felt compelled to split, but the splitting has often presaged imminent extinction rather than propagation. This splitting and re-grouping of Japanese labor organizations have developed, on the surface at least, between "left-wing" and "right-wing" factions, and have arisen out of differences of opinions as to effective tactics. Differing concepts of the proper role and function of trade unions have led labor leaders and the

⁸ *New York Times*, Jan. 4, 1950.

⁹ *Ibid.*, April 25, 1950.

leaders of some political parties to urge various courses of action for labor.

Any analysis based on this explanation alone is bound to be superficial. For one thing, rivalries between individual leaders who command loyalties of rank and file sections play a part that has special importance in a nation like Japan. For another, these "left-right" splits have occurred in ultra-conservative labor groups as well as those considered more radical. For example, the Labor Division of SCAP reported two cases of such splitting in November, 1949. The Japanese Federation of Labor (Sodomei) split roughly 2 to 1 in condemning a self-constituted group within itself called the Independent Youth League. This group had been established some months earlier with the support and assistance of the most conservative elements for the purpose of combating the Young Communist Leagues, retaining conservative control of Sodomei, and strengthening the organization's support of the Social Democratic Party. SCAP viewed the youth group as undesirable, similar to ultra-nationalist societies of the past. To characterize this split as a "left-right" split would be very misleading. The other incident cited in the same report was that the NCIU (Sanbetsu), which is now unequivocally classed by SCAP as Communist-dominated, voted to affiliate with the World Federation of Trade Unions (from which British and U.S. unions have withdrawn, charging Moscow control) by a central committee vote of 254 to 204. Would this large minority of 204 be designated as the "right wing" of the NCIU?

In 1948 there were three major federations and one lesser one. The Japanese Federation of Labor (Sodomei), dominated by the Social Democratic Party, claimed 924,302 members.¹⁰ The Japan Congress of Industrial Unions (NCIU—Sanbetsu), considered now to be Communist-dominated,

¹⁰ See *Far Eastern Survey*, Oct. 19, 1949, p. 242.

then claimed 1,166,788.¹¹ The government workers' unions had organized loosely for bargaining purposes into a Government Workers General Liaison Council (Zenkanko). A small group called the General Council of Japanese Labor Unions (Nichiro) represented some of the smaller independent unions with a total membership of less than 300,000.

In reporting on developments for the year 1949, the Labor Division gave the following account:

The most significant development during the year was the failure of the Communists in their intent to use the labor movement as an instrument to gain political power and the alignment of labor with anti-Communist forces both on the home front and internationally . . . labor was finally successful in subduing such leadership when an overwhelming majority of the 6.5 million organized workers chose to affiliate with the new anti-Communist International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. . . .

On the home front the Japanese Labor movement was going through significant upheaval and realignment of forces, not only opposing Communist domination but also ultra-conservatism and other political party domination. The All Japan Liaison Council of Labor Unions (Zenroren) and the National Congress of Industrial Unions (Sanbetsu) which attempted to unify Japanese labor under Communist leadership and affiliate it with the World Federation of Trade Unions lost their influence and virtually disintegrated while the majority of labor rallied around the new anti-Communist General Council of Trade Unions. The General Federation of Trade Unions (Sodomei) was also losing its position as the leading labor organization as labor objected to its ultra conservative leaders and attempted domination by the Social Democratic party.

The Labor Division also noted the proposed formation of a General Council of Japanese Trade Unions, backed by almost all major national unions, particularly independent unions and Shin-Sanbetsu (dissidents from the NCIU) and

¹¹ See SCAP Labor Division Report, Dec., 1949.

termed it the "most concrete development in the unification of the anti-Communist labor front."

Certain aspects of these reports would seem to be naïve and optimistic interpretations of what SCAP would like to see rather than objective accounts of real events and probable developments. It is certainly true that Communist influence, and for that matter, the influence of all left-wing leaders sharply declined during 1949. For example, the *New York Times*¹² reported that Japan's "Communist-led" labor federation (referring to the NCIU) was collapsing and cited the following figures of its membership:

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of Unions</i>	<i>Membership</i>
1946	21	1,574,000
1948	15	1,251,000
1949	15	508,000

But it should be remembered that Communist and left-wing leaders were discharged in large numbers by both the government and private industry during this period, and in many cases the "moderate" groups gained undisputed control as a result.¹³ Rather than characterizing these events as a vigorous renunciation by labor of left-wing and Communist leadership it would probably be more accurate to say, as this writer did in October, 1949:

The Democratization Leagues, which have previously won and lost fights with the Communists by very close votes, have recently gained undisputed control in some unions because Communists and sympathizers have been fired. But this was not a result of rank and file endorsement of League policies; rather, it resulted from discharges which all labor opposed. The Leagues still face two big problems: How aggressively can they push workers' interests without taking stands for which they condemn the Communists? And how can they make sure that their moderate tactics do not lose for them the confidence of the workers? They have

¹² *New York Times*, Oct. 29, 1949.

¹³ See SCAP Labor Division Report, October 1949.

already showed signs of splitting . . . on these questions in a manner similar to the split in the Social Democratic party . . .¹⁴

As to the "overwhelming majority" support from the 6.5 million organized workers for the ICFTU and the proposed General Council of Trade Unions, events of early 1950 indicated that a somewhat more modest appraisal was in order. Even as plans were being drawn in December, 1949 for an inaugural convention to launch the new General Council, Sodomei leaders were cautious, posed reservations, appeared fearful of losing their own positions, and started a "unification movement" of their own.¹⁵ In February, the Labor Division noted that the Shin-Sanbetsu groups would withdraw their active support from the proposed organization for the time being. In any event, it would certainly seem premature to recognize the General Council as an "overwhelmingly supported" unification of Japanese labor.

As to affiliation with the ICFTU, it is still too early to say very much. Of two Japanese delegates elected to official positions in this organization at its first convention in London in December, 1949, one, Etsuo Kato, president of the Government Railway Workers Union, was elected to the executive committee "to represent the interests of the Asian countries."¹⁶ In announcing the departure of these delegates to attend the convention, the Labor Division had said that these Japanese delegates, "the only ones from Asia and the Pacific area," marked the reentry of Japanese labor into international organizations.

It would seem that two rather obvious comments are warranted. In view of the notable absence of delegates from India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and other Far Eastern nations at the London conference, one wonders what the attitude of labor leaders in these countries may be toward the Japanese

¹⁴ *Far Eastern Survey*, loc. cit. p. 248.

¹⁵ Labor Division Report, Dec. 1949.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Nov., 1949.

delegate said to represent "the interests of Asian countries." The second point is that the selection of such delegates during the period of the occupation is no sure indication of the course Japanese labor would pursue if it could act independently.

Labor's Bargaining Efforts through 1949

During 1949, for the first time since the start of the occupation, Japanese labor found its wage situation comparatively improved in relation to the rising price-level. This at least was the surface impression created by statistics compiled by official and non-official sources. Thus the SCAP Labor Division reported at the end of 1949 that during the first eleven months of the year average wages in manufacturing had risen only 9 per cent as contrasted with a 137 per cent increase during the same period of 1948. The following table shows the range of the consumer price index and the black market consumer price index in Tokyo:

<i>Consumer Price Index</i> (1948 av. = 100)	<i>Black Market Price Index</i> <i>Consumer Goods, Tokyo</i> (Sept. 1945 = 100)
Nov. '48 — 120.6	749
Mar. '49 — 139.8	791
(May '49 — 142.8 High)	(Apr. '49 — 820 High)
June '49 — 137.8	801
Sept. '49 — 140.2	733
Oct. '49 — 136.8	704

Source: Statistics Bureau, Prime Minister's Survey Office, survey of 28 major cities and Bank of Japan, 50 item survey, both reprinted in *Oriental Economist*, Jan. 14, 1950.

It would seem from these figures that the price situation actually improved after reaching a high point in the early summer. For some workers, it is probably true, as the Labor Division said, that there was "a slight increase in real wages."

The Japanese Ministry of Labor, in attempted computation of real wages for three years, shows the following:

	<i>Real Wage Indices</i> (1937 = 100)		
	1947	1948	1949
Mar.	20	26	35
June	24	35	37
Sept.	24	38	37
Dec.	31	50	46

Source: Ministry of Labor. Average wages for industrial worker with 1.5 family members; total minus taxes, adjusted to the consumer price index. No further information as to method of computation is given, and the authenticity of these results is questionable.

However, this "improvement" was in many cases illusory and was offset for great masses of labor by other factors. Thus, at the end of the year, the average family continued to pay more than 60 per cent of its income for food alone. The actual margin between family income and expenditure as reported by the Labor Division was extremely slim. For example, in August, 1949 this was reported as total income of ¥12,688 (of which the family head earned ¥10,633) from which was paid a total outlay of ¥11,710. Many workers in industries which suffered financial hardships and loss of business under the operation of the Dodge plan actually faced wage cuts. Auto workers struck for two days in early October over unilateral wage cuts instituted by the managements. In January, 1950, 5,000 of the 40,000 workers of the Japan Iron and Steel Company struck over a unilateral move on the part of the company to cut incentive wages. The electric power workers were faced with a request by the managements to reduce the base wage at a time when the union was seeking an increase, and in September, the CLRC recommended that the average base wage remain fixed at ¥7,100.

Unemployment in both government and private industries increased and was estimated at nearly 500,000 workers by

the end of the year.¹⁷ These figures on unemployment, compiled by the Labor Ministry, are of dubious accuracy. For one thing, they show only persons totally unemployed and seeking work. Many unemployed Japanese who follow the traditional pattern of returning to their native villages and doing farm work for bare sustenance during industrial depression periods do not appear in this survey. Nor does the survey show persons working as little as one day per week. Also curious is the fact that figures issued by the Labor Division for January, 1950 show that, although unemployment insurance laws cover only an estimated 50 per cent of the total paid industrial work force, in fact 79 per cent of the total unemployed were drawing insurance.¹⁸

This would suggest either that unemployment is striking predominantly at those workers covered by insurance, which seems improbable, or that the total unemployment figure is not accurate, and that the true amount is considerably greater.

A further development which made actual conditions for a large portion of labor considerably less bright than indicated by the wage and price statistics was the rapid increase of cases in which employers failed to pay wages. The Labor Division, quoting Labor Ministry figures, noted that from January through November of 1949 there were 11,700 cases of failure to pay wages totaling 7.3 billion yen. Action by the Ministry was effective in obtaining payments to the extent that these figures were reduced at the end of that period to 3,422 outstanding cases totaling 1.7 billion yen. These figures probably do not tell the full story. "Since keeping

¹⁷ Actual dismissals during the year were reported by the Labor Division to be 160,000 government workers and 330,000 from private industry.

¹⁸ The Labor Division reported that the total labor force in 1949 reached a new high of 39,920,000, of whom 12.7 million were paid, employed industrial workers. Unemployment insurance covered 6,500,000 workers by the end of 1949. Yet in November, when the Labor Division reported 400,000 unemployed, it also noted that 316,000 were drawing weekly unemployment insurance benefits.

tab on the cases depends largely on the vigilance exercised by the authorities in charge, the figures may not be entirely reliable." ¹⁹

Finally it should be noted that the government workers, numbering nearly 2,500,000, were under a wage freeze which had gone into effect in July, 1948. The average monthly wage had been pegged at ¥6,508, whereas the average monthly wage of industrial workers was reported to be ¥8,285 in December, 1949.²⁰

These, then, were the problems facing labor in its collective bargaining efforts throughout 1949 and into 1950. Certainly, wages continued to be a primary cause of disputes. The period was marked, however, by a big increase in the number of disputes in which employment (job security and dismissal allowances) was a key factor. The following table shows a comparison of factors in labor disputes over a four year period:

Labor Disputes Classified By Factors

	1946	1947	1948	1949
Wages	990 (31%)	729 (43%)	931 (47%)	360 (36%)
Employment	388 (12%)	297 (18%)	390 (19%)	397 (39%)
Labor Agreements	702 (22%)	258 (15%)	241 (12%)	75 (7%)
Others	538 (17%)	95 (6%)	77 (4%)	192 (19%)

Source: Labor Ministry, as reprinted in *Oriental Economist*, April 1, 1950. Figures for 1949 are for first ten months. No explanation given as to why percentages do not total 100.

The early part of 1949 saw labor struggling under the impact of the Dodge plan and the new legislative restrictions on government workers. Split internally over the issue of proper tactics to cope with these issues, unions were not very effective.

In October, 1949 the writer commented:

Thus unions find themselves facing a difficult situation in the fourth year of the occupation. Along with extensive layoffs,

¹⁹ *Oriental Economist*, April 1, 1950, p. 306.

²⁰ *Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 29, 1949.

unions charge that both the government and management are firing the most active trade unionists. For example, by July 18, 1949, the government announced that of the total railway workers discharged, 1,699 were discharged "dishonorably," for displaying an "uncooperative" attitude toward the reduction program. This included all of the Communist members and most of the Communist sympathizers of the union's central committee, giving the right wing (Mindō) undisputed control. Of the once militant communications workers union the *New York Herald Tribune* on August 14, 1949 reported that the government had dismissed 11,000 workers, and 'thereby got rid of most of the strike committee of the leftist . . . union.' With stricter economy imposed on both industry and government, negotiation for wage increases is in many cases impossible. Emphasis on increased production has tended to play into the hands of recalcitrant employers, who feel that pressure from both the Japanese government and the occupation will be brought to bear on striking unions. Unemployment is increasing. Some of the most militant unions, which often established patterns for wages and other benefits through their vigorous negotiation tactics, are now considerably circumscribed in their permissible actions by recent legislation.²¹

Private industry, as well as the government, utilized the retrenchment programs to fire left-wing and Communist unionists, and the Democratization Leagues gave both active and passive support to these measures. One American correspondent wrote: "Communism has come and gone in the ranks of organized labor here (Osaka) . . . as popular sentiment turned sharply against Communist demands for the use of force, gradually one union after another began dumping out Communist or Communist-controlled executives."²²

But some of the moderate labor leaders began to fear that these tactics might be extended to themselves. Thus it was reported that the anti-Communist leaders were worried for

²¹ "Labor Unions in Post War Japan," *Far Eastern Survey*, Oct. 19, 1949.

²² Gordon Walker, *Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 29, 1949.

fear that the same measures that ousted Communists and "sympathizers" might be extended to them. The article noted that there had been almost a year free of strikes because of what amounted to an "Occupation ban" and went on to add that many workers had been fired for actions which were forbidden by the new laws but which are ordinary practice elsewhere.²³

The Labor Division reported in October, 1949: "To date anti-Communist leaders have not protested recent unilateral dismissals of union officers and members by government and private industry because Communists were thereby eliminated. However, conservative unions are now building defenses in fear that similar action may be taken against aggressive but non-Communist leadership. National union leaders feel compelled to take this position in order to hold their following and by refusal of qualified men to accept union offices for fear of being marked for discharge." This observation was made a few weeks after General MacArthur's reference to the "machinations of irresponsible leadership" noted in the previous pages.

It was thus not surprising to see these "moderate" leaders, under pressure from their membership over wages and job security, and apprehensive over new manifestations of reaction and repression, adopt a more militant policy toward the end of 1949. By early 1950, a steady deterioration of labor relations led to a threatened series of nation-wide strikes in major industries, only averted, once again, by SCAP action. An examination of labor relations in some of the key government and private industries during this period will serve to illustrate the problems facing labor and the trends developed under these "moderate" leaders.

The government railway workers, heavily hit by the government retrenchment program, were occupied during July and August with attempts to develop an effective policy to-

²³ *New York Times*, Oct. 19, 1949.

ward the discharge program. The new laws placed dismissals of government workers outside the realm of collective bargaining. The Mindo (Democratization League) leaders opposed the use of forceful tactics advocated by the left-wing group. By October, following dismissal of 95,000 workers, including practically all left-wing leaders and committee members, Mindo central committee members totaled 278 out of 456. Though at first refusing to recognize the ousted left-wing as members of the union, they were forced by the end of October to concede that those dismissed by the government would remain union members until the union recognized their dismissal.²⁴

As a matter of fact, the criteria established by the government were such as to give the government workers' unions considerable cause for uneasiness. As reported by the Labor Division in August, 1949, they were (1) uncooperativeness; (2) unfitness as a public service employee; (3) inferiority in technical knowledge and physical condition; (4) few years of service; (5) poor work.²⁵ The government, however, remained firm in its stand that dismissals were not a proper subject for bargaining.

In September, the union requested a wage increase from the 6,508 yen average monthly pay to 9,700. Following refusal by the Government's Public Railway Corporation, the dispute was submitted to the Public Corporations Arbitration Committee, a body established by the new laws. The union's request was based on changes in the government-compiled consumer price index figures from July, 1948,

²⁴ Reported by the Labor Division in October, 1949, which commented on the union's request for bargaining rights on (1) criteria for dismissals (2) re-employment rights (3) creation of a tripartite board to review individual appeals, as "sound and legal."

²⁵ It is interesting to note that the Mitsui Coal Mining Company, in announcing a scheduled discharge of 2,000 workers for August 15, 1949 stated the criteria for selecting those to be fired in the following similar terms: (1) irregular attendance; (2) neglect of duty; (3) violation of laws and rules; (4) inefficiency and physical weakness.

when the wage figure had been frozen, to September, 1949. The Board awarded a figure of 8,058 yen, to begin with the October pay. The Government's Corporation promptly rejected this and demanded that the Board reexamine its findings. This was done by December 2, the Board recommending that the government pay a lump sum of 6,000 yen extra in December, and follow with a 1,000 yen per month increase in the average wage until their original recommendation was reached.

On December 4, after the government had refused to accept this new proposal, the National Personnel Authority, the new body created by law to control all government workers, recommended a revision of the average monthly wage to 7,827 yen. On the basis of this, the government decided to give all workers a year-end bonus of 700 yen plus one third of the family allowance plus one third of the regular service allowance, the whole not to exceed 5,000 yen.

This action was reported²⁶ as having passed the Diet without "strong support" (186 for, 101 against, 179 abstaining) despite "general knowledge that General MacArthur's headquarters had ratified the government's opinion regarding the amount that could be afforded . . ." ²⁷

The unions accepted this bonus "without prejudice—meaning that (they) . . . were willing to accept the reduced bonus but would continue to agitate for more." ²⁸

In January, the Railway Workers' Union brought suit in the Tokyo District Court to force the government to accept the award of the Arbitration Board and pay the full 6,000 yen bonus plus the scheduled wage increase thereafter. In

²⁶ *New York Times*, Dec. 17, 1949.

²⁷ These bonuses were reported to range from 2,900 to 3,500 yen (\$8.12 to \$9.80, or about a fortnight's wage) and less than half what the unions had asked. The Labor Division reported in January that these traditional year-end bonuses were the smallest, proportionately, since the end of the war. The following figures of the bonuses as percentages of total wages were cited (for the month of December): 1946 (30); 1947 (29); 1948 (23); 1949 (14).

²⁸ *New York Times*, Dec. 21, 1949.

February the District Court upheld the award and ordered the government to pay, but the government promptly appealed the decision to the Supreme Court.

By this time, other government workers were involved in similar negotiations and disputes. They also had appealed to the courts and been upheld, but the government had here, too, appealed the cases. The government's position before the courts is worthy of note: The Arbitration Board, in reiterating its recommendation for an 8,200 yen wage, suggested that the Government Railway Corporations secure the additional six billion yen required by economizing in various other budget items for railways such as the eighteen billion yen special account for improvement of stations, etc. The government, which had maintained that awards requiring extra funds would have to have Diet approval, argued that these various ministry budgets were "line item" accounts, and that monies could not be transferred from one inter-department account to another without Diet approval. The unions, and the Boards, had claimed that this was nonsense; over-all government financial commitments were certainly subject to Diet approval, but inter-departmental allocation of funds was up to the discretion of the ministry involved.

At the same time that the railway case was developing, other government workers in communications and the monopoly enterprises of tobacco and salt had requested wage increases. These had been granted by the Public Corporation Arbitration Committee, had been rejected by the government, and had been submitted to and upheld by the Tokyo District Court. In the case of the Monopoly Corporation, a government enterprise reported to have made a profit of 120 billion yen in 1949, the union claimed that the requested wage increase, amounting to 128 million yen, was but slightly more than one per cent of the year's profits. Kyodo News Agency reported on March 22, 1949 that the

cabinet had formally accepted this award, but that following the advice of General Marquat on March 25, it had reversed its decision and decided not to pay until the Supreme Court ruled on the appeals.

Meanwhile, extensive negotiations from mid-1949 had involved the electric power workers, coal miners, metal miners, seamen, teachers, private railway workers, iron and steel workers and other industries. The power workers, whose request for an increase in base wages in October, had resulted in a CLRC award of a 6,000 yen bonus payment to cover the period from April through September, continued to press for increases into 1950. Coal miners, in addition to requesting wage increases, were fighting lay-offs, cut-backs in the government's incentive goods program, and other stringencies arising out of the new economic program. Teachers, metal miners, steel workers and others, toward the end of 1949, were seeking wage increases and job security measures.

Government recalcitrance on the wage issue, plus the stiffened attitude of private employers, both backed up by the SCAP economic program, were sufficient to drive the "moderate" labor leadership to consideration of immoderate action. In January, Sodomei, the conservative federation closely allied with the Social Democratic Party, established a Joint Central "Diet Struggle Committee," backed by the Social Democrats and composed of representatives of thirty-five non-Communist unions and two million workers, to press for wage increases for government workers.²⁹

By February 6, unions of government and private industry workers had, through this Diet Joint Struggle Committee, posted notice of a general strike warning which could involve "possibly 5,000,000 workers."³⁰ The correspondent who reported this went on to state: "The situation is made

²⁹ Reported by the Labor Division, Feb., 1950.

³⁰ *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 9, 1950.

more difficult by the fact that the demand is put forward by a section of labor which has purged itself of Communist influence, has followed a moderate legal course of action in the past and represents the type of unionism which the Occupation most desires to support. The wage . . . recommendations . . . have come from two official quarters . . . the issue is extremely serious because it means that arbitration channels urged by the Occupation as the only means of achieving better working conditions have broken down."

The unions pressed ahead despite warnings by Chief Cabinet Secretary Masuda that a "new policy" would classify "all strikes in any major industry—even a walkout by a single union—" as a "general strike" and a "violation of the MacArthur order" (of 1947).³¹ On March 7, the National Federation of Metal Miners called 60,000 workers out on strike. By March 12, 269,000 coal miners had struck for 72 hours and planned further stoppages. Kyodo News Agency reported that 19 steel mills closed as a result of the metal miners strike. Electric power cut-offs of from 15 minutes to 2 hours occurred throughout all Japan. Seamen were holding limited strikes and "protest meetings" aboard vessels in the major harbors. Teachers, rail workers and other government workers were participating "legally" by refusing to work overtime, by taking accrued leave, by strict observance of all safety rules, and by maintaining the bare minimum of performance standards required by law.³²

Thus, in the spring of 1950, after unions had been purged and had purged themselves of "irresponsible leadership," a combination of economic conditions and SCAP and Japanese government policies had been factors in creating what Lindsay Parrott described as a "situation . . . probably the most critical since General MacArthur issued his directive against a general strike of 1947."³³ There was irony in the fact that

³¹ *New York Times*, March 6, 1950.

³² *New York Times*, March 12, 1950.

³³ *New York Times*, March 7, 1950.

not only had this developed under "non-Communist leadership" but that it represented action by unions representing 5,000,000 of the 6,500,000 organized workers, and thus had, if anything, a broader base than the 1947 strike. As a matter of fact, the two situations suggest that fundamental economic and political factors inherent in the Japanese post-war scene are more significant than the over-simplified reasons of "Communist inspiration" that SCAP and other commentators have been inclined to cite as chief causes of major labor unrest during these years.

Much of the comment written about the 1950 "March offensive" has stated that the situation facing SCAP and the Japanese government was a difficult one because of their mutual desire to strengthen the "non-Communist," "objective" leadership which would be prone to use moderate tactics to obtain, in MacArthur's words, labor's "legitimate objectives." When the actions of both SCAP and the government are separated from their words, several things become obvious.

Certainly SCAP's attitude and that of the ultra-conservative Yoshida Cabinet toward labor are not precisely the same. In general, the conservative elements of the Japanese government, who have been in actual control since the end of the war and in nominal control for all except the brief period of the ill-fated Katayama cabinet, have shown a strong anti-labor bias at all times. Legislation designed to improve labor's position has tended to be delayed in enactment and diluted in enforcement. But situations in which SCAP has supported "control" measures, such as those concerning the government workers in 1948, or the "crack-down" on left-wing dissidents during discharges in 1949, or the application of wage controls during this period, have been implemented by government authorities with amazing speed and vigor.

Moreover, the occupation itself is composed of diverse ele-

ments which represent all types of attitudes toward labor found within the United States, the prevailing views in recent years being generally conservative. Thus the constant reference in official reports and statements to "moderate" leaders using "legal" means to obtain "legitimate" objectives, reflects, generally, a more conservative viewpoint than that evinced by the large majority of American labor leaders and proponents.

It would seem more accurate, therefore, to say that SCAP and the Japanese government actually faced different problems at this juncture, based on differing viewpoints toward labor. The ultra-conservative Yoshida cabinet conceivably viewed the problem as one of actually attempting further curtailment of labor's effectiveness while giving lip service to those rights of bargaining and representation permitted under law. Also, since the majority of Japanese business leaders and the government are opposed to many of the restrictions of the Dodge plan, it is conceivable that the government's rigid refusal to grant wage increases was a deliberate attempt to build up further pressures against an unpopular occupation policy.

SCAP's problem was more complex, and in a large part, self-created. There existed still the need to maintain and bolster the occupation's illusion that the Japanese were in truth governing themselves, with but a minimum of guidance and advice. On the one hand, the Japanese government had adopted the Dodge plan after fairly vigorous "guidance" by SCAP. This plan seemed rather definitely to exclude wage increases; at least the government was careful to point to ". . . Mr. Dodge's statement here that wage increases for government workers at this time would have an inflationary effect on the economy."⁸⁴

Yet SCAP, which had consistently advocated peaceful and

⁸⁴ *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 9, 1950.

"legitimate" methods of settling disputes, felt constrained to permit and to urge that the unions use the various mediatory vehicles which had been established. If, in fact, any wage increase was to be viewed as contradictory to one of the basic provisions of the Dodge plan, why, then, arbitrate at all?

But not only did the issue of government workers wages go through arbitration, it was further carried into the Tokyo District Courts, where the awards were upheld. Leaving aside in this account the interesting anomaly of courts in the Japanese judicial system apparently acting independently of the government's stated position, the problem facing SCAP at this point was a relatively clear-cut issue. Should labor be supported in its efforts through "legitimate" channels, or should the orthodoxy of the Dodge plan be upheld?

The events which occurred rapidly and decisively on the eve of this particular "general strike" of "labor's offensive" of 1950 show at least what SCAP and the Yoshida cabinet did, if not what the precise reasoning and motives were. The situation, described by the *New York Times* dispatch of March 7 as "most critical . . . since 1947," grew more serious. On March 12, 1950 this same paper reported (somewhat vaguely) that "unions with a total membership of 2,000,000 are striking, threatening to strike or engaging in slowdowns, refusal of overtime work and other semi-strike tactics." It also reported later that the head of SCAP's Labor Division, immediately following an announcement that the coal miners union had called out 290,000 miners for a one week strike, had called a conference with the union leader, Takeo Muto; the Labor Minister, Suzuki; and the CLRC chairman, Itsutato Suehiro. Mr. Muto told the press that the head of the Labor Division "had informed him that Allied Headquarters would not permit coal strikes . . . to last for more than the scheduled week since the 'national economy cannot stand continuation beyond that limit.' The

announcement indicated that prolongation beyond this week would be met by other measures.”³⁵

This same account reported that, following this meeting, “the Japanese Government with approval of Allied Headquarters today placed a curb on Labor’s ‘March offensive’ for a new round of wage increases by ordering compulsory arbitration of a coal miner’s strike which was held to be endangering the national economy . . . The Government action drove a wedge into the already weakening ranks of the ‘labor offensive,’ which is being stage managed by a ‘struggle committee’ of Diet representatives claiming to represent 2,000,000 workers opposed to the conservative cabinet’s disinflation policy. . . . With coal miners ordered to accept compulsory arbitration the sole important labor offensive area is in the power industry . . .”

On March 30, the *New York Times* reported that the “‘labor offensive’ of Japanese trade unions . . . virtually collapsed today. The electrical (power) workers union and management agreed to accept the arbitration plan of the CLRC.” It was on March 7 that Chief Cabinet Secretary Masuda had said that a power strike would be a violation of the 1947 SCAP ruling.³⁶ The *Times* account went on to state: “Efforts to compel a change in the Government labor and financial policies thus may be said to have broken down.”

By mid-May the government wage-award cases submitted to the Supreme Court had not yet been decided and the government’s position remained unchanged. SCAP and the Japanese government had quite effectively overcome labor’s most vigorous effort since “moderate” leadership had assumed undisputed sway.

Several things are noteworthy about these developments.

³⁵ *New York Times*, March 27, 1950.

³⁶ *Kyodo News Agency*, March 7, 1950.

The unions had shown considerable restraint before launching this unsuccessful "offensive." The case of the railroad workers perhaps best illustrates what Japanese labor was able to achieve through the use of arbitration boards, courts and other "legal" machinery. Government workers' wages were pegged in July, 1948. As prices continued to rise, the union finally requested the Public Corporation Arbitration Committee to consider its request for a wage increase. This was on September 14, 1949. By May, 1950, eight months later, following additional committee and court affirmation, wages for government workers had still not been appreciably improved.

In short, unions had been ignored to a large extent in their attempts to utilize the legally constituted restrictions of arbitration, and had been forcibly restrained from exerting economic and political pressure by strikes and other dispute tactics. Such minor concessions as had been granted had largely occurred by fiat.

Just what attitude the rank and file have toward the "moderate" leadership at this stage of developments is difficult to say, but it would not be surprising if confidence has weakened. On March 7, 1950 the *New York Times* had said: "What both the Government and the Allied sources fear is that even should the strikes be forcibly prevented the unions would revert to Communist leadership unless league members [meaning Democratization League leaders] are able to show they have been able to produce benefits for the rank and file." The strikes were forcibly prevented, and benefits thus far have been meager.

It is also interesting to note the pronounced trend toward compulsory arbitration of all disputes manifested during these last six months. Of course, even the legality of arbitration in cases wherein government funds are involved is still to be decided by the Supreme Court.

Conclusions

Conclusions and predictions on the Japanese labor situation are necessarily difficult and dubious at this fluid and critical stage. Some comments appear justified, however.

Certainly the rate of organization and union growth has leveled off and the immediate future will probably see a contraction. In June, 1949 the Labor Division reported that union contracts had reached an all-time high and covered 57 per cent of all organized workers. By January, 1950 the Division said that there was considerably less contract coverage and attributed it to the insistence by employers of lower standards and to the tight money situation. In February the Labor Division reported that there were 32,591 unions covering 6,105,959 workers, nearly 4,000 unions and more than 800,000 members fewer than the high point reached in March, 1949. The Labor Division attributed this to (1) exclusion of supervisors as union members under the revised Trade Union law; (2) personnel cuts by the government and private industry; (3) loss of leadership and disinterest in labor union activities, especially by workers in small establishments. This same report noted that 45 per cent of the paid industrial workers were still unorganized. This downward trend seems likely to continue in the near future.

There is no question but that the occupation policy during the last year and a half has emphasized economic recovery and this has resulted in considerable restriction of labor's permissible activity. This trend may develop further.

Japanese labor certainly faces a stiffer attitude on the part of employers and it must deal with a tough-minded, ultra-conservative government, which increases in power even as the moderate and left parties fade into insignificance. Labor has no representation of any consequence in the Diet, is not

itself unified, and does not appear likely to become so in any effective fashion very soon.

All unions are considerably perplexed, and justifiably so, as to what action is wise, or for that matter, even permissible now. It is not only fairly evident that major strikes are for all practical purposes banned today, there is evidence that precedent is being established for the continuation of this policy by the Japanese government when the occupation ends. And what amounts to nearly compulsory arbitration has been unsatisfactory on two counts: it has operated very slowly in many cases, a factor invariably favoring the employer and penalizing labor; and it has been challenged and ignored by the government in the most recent cases.

On the slightly optimistic side, it may be said that the environment today is far more realistic than that which existed in the first years of the occupation. These problems and attitudes with which labor is now attempting to cope are much closer to the real atmosphere that can be expected in the future. Certainly, any lessons learned in dealing successfully with this kind of situation will stand labor in good stead years from now. Whether such successful techniques will be devised is of course another question. It is not very different from saying of a military unit about to enter its first major engagement: "This is the real thing, now, and if they get through this, the lessons they will have learned will make them valuable, seasoned soldiers." All very true—if they survive the first encounter. Whether the post-war Japanese labor movement, whose development has thus far been controlled in a large measure by the occupation authorities, can survive and grow still seems an open question.

APPENDIX – DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT 1

FAR EASTERN COMMISSION POLICY STATEMENT ON "PRINCIPLES FOR JAPANESE TRADE UNIONS"

(Adopted in Dec., 1946; text from Activities of the Far Eastern Commission, Report by the Secretary General, Wash., D.C., 1947, p. 91)

1. Japanese workers should be encouraged to form themselves into trade unions for the purpose of preserving and improving conditions of work, participating in industrial negotiations to this end, and otherwise assisting the legitimate trade union interests of workers, including organized participation in building up a peaceful and democratic Japan.

2. The right of trade unions and their members to organize for these purposes should be assured and protected by law. The freedom of workers to join trade unions should be provided for by law. All laws and regulations preventing trade unions achieving these objectives should be immediately abrogated. Employers should be forbidden to refuse employment to, or discriminate against, a worker because he is a member of a trade union.

3. Trade unions should have the right of free assembly, speech and the press, and access to broadcasting facilities on a non-discriminatory basis, provided only that such assembly, speech or writing does not directly interfere with the interests of the occupation.

4. Trade unions should be encouraged to negotiate with the employers on behalf of their members regarding terms and conditions of employment. The Japanese Government should establish mediation and arbitration machinery for dealing with industrial disputes that cannot be settled by direct and voluntary negotiation between the worker and his representative and the employer. The mediation and arbitration machinery should operate under conditions assuring the protection of the interests of the

workers, and if employers are represented on the machinery, trade unions should be given equal representation.

5. Strikes and other work stoppages should be prohibited only when the occupation authorities consider that such stoppages would directly prejudice the objectives or needs of the occupation.

6. Trade unions should be allowed to take part in political activities and to support political parties.

7. Where practicable and while not interfering with their normal operations trade unions and their officials should take an active part in the process of democratization of Japan and should be encouraged to participate in measures taken to achieve the objectives of the occupation such as elimination of militaristic and monopolistic practices and the democratic reconstruction and development of a peaceful Japan.

8. Trade unions should be encouraged to promote adult education and an understanding of democratic processes and of trade union practices and aims among their members. The Japanese Government should as far as possible assist trade union officials in obtaining information on trade union activities in other countries. These objectives should be given due weight when allocations of paper supplies and imports of foreign publications are made.

9. The Japanese should be free to choose the form of organization of their unions, whether on a craft, industry, company, factory or territorial basis. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of a solid local basis for future trade union activity in Japan. However, unions should be allowed to form federations or other groupings, for example in the same area or in related industries or on a nation-wide basis.

10. The formation of trade unions should be a process of democratic self-expression and initiative, proceeding from the workers themselves. Employers should not be allowed to take part in the organization or conduct of unions or to finance them.

11. Trade union officials and standing committees should be elected by the workers concerned by secret ballot and democratic methods. It should be the responsibility of the unions to ensure that all officials have been democratically elected at regular stated

intervals and that all their activities are democratically conducted.

12. No person who is subject to the purge directive of 4 January 1946, or to subsequent purge directives, should be allowed to hold office in a trade union. All persons who were directly connected in the past in a responsible capacity with the obstruction or repression of trade union organization or activity should be prohibited from employment as union officials, in labor agencies or as mediators, conciliators, or arbitrators. All persons who held office in government-sponsored or controlled trade unions should be subject to screening before being allowed to take office again.

13. Japanese Government and other agencies which were set up or functioned for the purpose of obstructing or in such a way as to obstruct free labor organization and legitimate trade union activities should be abolished or their powers in respect to labor revoked. No police or other government agencies should be employed in spying on workers, breaking strikes, or suppressing legitimate union activities.

14. Any undemocratic workers' organizations or their affiliates, such as the Patriotic Industrial Associations, should be dissolved and not allowed to revive. No new workers' organizations with militaristic, ultra-nationalistic, fascist, or other totalitarian aims should be permitted.

15. Persons who have been imprisoned because of activity or dangerous thoughts in connection with trade unions and other labor organizations should be released.

16. The balance sheet and table of income and expenditure of each trade union showing also the source of large contributions should be available for public inspection. Safeguards such as annual audit by a professionally competent auditor appointed by the members should be taken to ensure the accuracy of these statements.

DOCUMENT 2

STATEMENT BY THE SUPREME COMMANDER BANNING PROPOSED STRIKE, JANUARY 31, 1947

(Text from Summation, Jan., 1947)

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

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

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

The persons involved in the threatened general strike are but a small minority of the Japanese people. Yet this minority might

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

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

DOCUMENT 3

LETTER FROM THE SUPREME COMMANDER
TO PRIME MINISTER ASHIDA,
JULY 22, 1948

(Text from Summation, July, 1948)

I have reviewed the conclusions drawn from the joint studies conducted between representatives of your government and this headquarters into the adequacy of the National Public Service Law as a solution to the problems now existing with respect to the Public Service of Japan. I am in general accord with these conclusions as to existing inadequacies which must be corrected.

It was the purpose of the National Public Service Law to provide for the installation of a democratic and efficient public service in the government of Japan. The plan envisioned a modern-type personnel system which recruits public employees from the entire public by competitive test and promotes them on the basis of merit, providing scientific supervision over their classification compensation, training, evaluation, health, safety, welfare, recreation and retirement. The system provides a grievance procedure for employees and assures them fair and equitable treatment in administration. Enforced by a quasi-judicial administrative authority and supplemented by emergency provisions aimed at immediate reform where urgency demands it, it constitutes a constructive program for dealing with the hazards which old bureaucratic practices present to the success of democracy in Japan.

The pattern of personnel administration as here inaugurated views the entire people as exercising sovereignty and control over the employees of government through the National Diet which, functioning through a National Public Service Authority, applies principles of scientific personnel management and standardizes

the public service, its recruitment, compensation, discipline, benefits and other factors incident to employment. Such a system, in accordance with democratic concepts, is designed to regard the faithful administration of the law and the efficient conduct of the government's business as a prime duty without yielding to the pressure of politics or privilege.

The studies, now completed, of various laws relating to this subject matter reveal omissions to deal adequately with the situation. They fail to afford positive safeguards against minority pressure upon the authority and integrity of government and they fail to apply the law to many classifications of governmental employees who clearly are entitled to civil-service benefits and protection and subject to its restrictions. Throughout there is a noticeable failure to distinguish between employee relationships in government and labor relations in private enterprise.

The rapid and unprecedented gains labor has made in Japan during the Occupation attest my own awareness of the vital importance of trade-unionism in modern life and of the historical significance of the trade-union movement throughout the world in correcting many of the abuses associated with modern industrial economy. In government, however, this movement has but limited application and cannot substitute for or challenge duly constituted executive, judicial and legislative agencies exercising the sovereign power.

At the start of the industrial era, the tendency existed to treat labor as a commodity, without voice in the price to be paid or the conditions of its employment. As the technology of mass production developed, however, workers had a better opportunity to organize for their mutual benefit, and through long and arduous struggle secured the economic power of bargaining collectively through representatives of their own choice for an improved standard of life, a betterment in working conditions and some degree of social security. This right of association with its inherent power of compulsion has progressively developed into the trade-union movement, an economic power which has brought to bear an increasingly potent influence upon industrial economy. Such influence in democratic society has in turn been translated into political power through the support it has given to

political parties, but it would be violative of the democratic concept for the trade-union movement to usurp the function of the duly elected representatives of the people as a whole by superimposing union judgment upon legislation and administration.

It is true that in all industrialized countries specific pressure groups exist, representing not only the interests of labor but also those of business, finance, agriculture, and the professions. Although such pressure groups contend for power and influence in a democracy, they are transcended by the fundamental concept of national unity. The "public" is not considered merely the residual members of the community who do not belong to such specific pressure groups, but consists of all the people, and the "public interest" is synonymous with the general welfare.

The significance of this concept is as well understood in Japan as in any Western democracy. The Constitution of Japan itself recognizes the "unity of the people" and the "will of the people with whom resides sovereign power"; the Constitution itself affirms the principle that "the freedoms and rights guaranteed to the people by this Constitution shall be maintained by the constant endeavor of the people," who "shall always be responsible for utilizing them for the public welfare"; and the Constitution itself envisages a National Diet as "the highest organ of state power" which shall be "representative of *all the people*."

If this fundamental concept of the Constitution declaring the unity of the people and the supremacy of the public interest is to be preserved inviolate, no part of the power of government can be delegated to or usurped by any private group whatsoever. Were the contrary true the "responsible government" for Japan, contemplated by the Potsdam Declaration and created by the Constitution, could not exist. For it is axiomatic that a government which abdicates its sovereign power is no longer responsible.

By its very nature, as a private entity the labor union does not possess the attributes of government. Wherever it has flourished, the strength of free trade-unionism has always sprung from its independence of government and its freedom from domination by government in the pursuit of its lawful and legitimate objectives.

Having experienced the suppression which was an attribute of

totalitarian Japan, Japanese labor since the Occupation has in general understood this principle and chosen the path of free trade-unionism, eschewing those reckless policies the inevitable effect of which would be to provoke severe repressive measures in safeguard of the general welfare. It has recognized that free workers in free private enterprise cannot exercise sovereign power except in their capacity as free men at free elections. Indeed, because it upholds the dignity of the individual and of his labor, free trade-unionism in the pursuit of labor's legitimate objectives constitutes one of the strongest bulwarks of democracy.

There is, however, a sharp distinction between those who have dedicated their energies to the public service and those engaged in private enterprise. The former are the very instruments used for the exercise by government of the people's sovereign power, and as such owe unconditional allegiance to the public trust imposed by virtue of their employment. For upon them rests, in the words of the late President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, a foremost exponent of the rights of labor, "the obligation to serve the whole people, whose interests and welfare require orderliness and continuity in the conduct of their government activities. This obligation is paramount. Since their own services have to do with the functioning of the government, a strike of public employees manifests nothing less than an intent on their part to prevent or obstruct the operations of government until their demands are satisfied. Such action, looking toward the paralysis of government by those who have sworn to support it, is unthinkable and intolerable."

I am in full accord with this view. No person holding a position by appointment or employment in the public service of Japan or in any instrumentality thereof should resort to strike or engage in delaying or other dispute tactics which tend to impair the efficiency of governmental operations. I feel that any person holding such a position who resorts to such action against the public of Japan thereby betrays the public trust reposed in him and forfeits all rights and privileges accruing to him by virtue of his employment. For as President Roosevelt further stated, "All government employees should realize that the process of collective bargaining, as usually understood, cannot be trans-

planted into the public service. It has its distinct and insurmountable limitations when applied to public personnel management. The very nature and purposes of government make it impossible for administrative officials to represent fully or to bind the employer in mutual discussions with government employee organizations. The employer is the whole people, who speak by means of laws enacted by their representatives in Congress. Accordingly, administrative officials and employees alike are governed and guided, and in many instances restricted, by laws which establish policies, procedures, or rules in personnel matters."

It must be clearly understood, however, that this concept does not mean that public servants are deprived of the untrammelled right individually or collectively, personally or by chosen representatives, freely to express their views, opinions or grievances for the purpose of seeking a betterment of their conditions of public employment. Such rights are inherent in a democratic society and inalienable and I believe are adequately provided for in the proposed revision of existing law. Moreover, the special restrictions which protection of the national interest impose upon the employees of government make it at all times incumbent upon government to provide adequate safeguards to the welfare and interests of such employees. Indeed, so completely is this concept understood and followed in democratic society that the opportunity for public service, with the added dignity, prestige and permanence of such a status, is universally regarded and sought as a desirable privilege.

So far as the railways, salt, camphor, and tobacco activities presently under government ownership are concerned, I believe that employees thereof might well be excepted from the regular civil service. In this event, however, public corporations should be established by appropriate action to manage and operate these activities. Proper provision should be made for standards, policies, and procedures of employment and while substituting mediation and arbitration measures for the protection accorded others under the civil service, safeguards should be provided to the public interest against any interruption of operations resulting from failure of employees faithfully to discharge their re-

sponsibilities of employment. Moreover, in the interest of efficiency, I believe that a complete reorganization of the Ministry of Communications is desirable, with the separation of the postal services of the Government from the other functions of that ministry and the establishment of two cabinet agencies in lieu thereof.

The National Public Service Law was initially conceived in recognition of the fact that a complete reform of the Japanese bureaucracy is essential to the success of democratic institutions, in Japan, as such institutions, whether political, economic or social, will inevitably find strength or weakness in direct proportion to the efficiency of the governmental services and the vigorous leadership which government, as organized to safeguard the public interest and advance the general welfare, is capable of extending to the sovereign people from whom its powers are derived. The success of this reform is accordingly no less a primary objective of the Occupation than it is a prerequisite to the future well-being of the people of Japan.

In the solution of this problem the paramountcy of the public interest is therefore of foremost consideration and corollary thereto is the need that safeguards be erected to insure that the lawful authority of the government, as the political instrument to enforce the people's will as expressed in the body of public law, be only challengeable at the polls as provided under well established democratic practice. To hold otherwise would be to subvert the public interest by rendering government subservient to a primacy of the special privilege of minority groups, a condition which inevitably leads to anarchy, insurrection and destruction. This is a rule fundamental to the very existence of a democratic society, and yet its enforcement in the great Western democracies has only recently necessitated the full application of the police power of the State involving the employment of the armed forces as well as the civil police. In Japan, where the maintenance of armed forces is renounced by constitutional mandate, such application of police power can, however, only be supported by the civil police. This renders it all the more necessary here than elsewhere that the law carefully define and make unmistakably clear the authority of

government and provision for the firm preservation of its integrity and dignity.

It is to this end that I feel that a comprehensive revision of the National Public Service Law to bring the same within the framework of the concepts herein discussed should be undertaken immediately. To assist you in this matter this headquarters will continue to be available for advice and consultation.

DOCUMENT 4

THE TRADE UNION LAW
(As revised in 1949)

CHAPTER 1. *General Principles*

ARTICLE 1. The purposes of the present Law are to elevate the status of workers by promoting that they shall be on equal standing with their employer in their bargaining with the employer; to protect the exercise by workers of autonomous self-organization and association in labor unions so that they may carry out collective action including the designation of representatives of their own choosing to negotiate the terms and conditions of work; and to encourage the practice and procedures of collective bargaining resulting in trade agreements governing relations between employers and workers.

2. The provisions of Article 35 of the Criminal Code (Law No. 45, 1907) shall apply to collective bargaining and other acts of a trade union which are appropriate, being performed for the attainment of the purposes of the preceding paragraph, provided, however, that in no event shall acts of violence be construed as appropriate acts of trade unions.

ARTICLE 2. Trade unions under the present Law shall be those organizations, or federations thereof, formed autonomously and substantially by the workers for the main purpose of maintaining and improving the conditions of work and for raising the economic status of the workers, provided that this rule shall not apply to those:

- (1) Which admit to membership officers, workers at the supervisory post having direct authority to hire, fire, promote or transfer, workers at the supervisory post having access to confidential information relating to the employer's labor

- relations plans and policies so that their official duties and obligations directly conflict with their loyalties and obligations as members of the trade union concerned and other persons who represent the interest of the employer.
- (2) Which receive the employer's financial support in defraying the organization's operational expenditures. Provided that this shall not prevent the employer from permitting workers to confer or negotiate with him during working hours without loss of time or pay or to the employer's contribution for welfare funds; or benefit and similar funds which are actually used for payments to prevent or relieve economic misfortune or accident; or to the furnishing of minimum office space.
 - (3) Whose objects are confined to mutual aid work or other welfare work.
 - (4) Which principally aim at carrying on political or social movements.

ARTICLE 3. "Workers" under the present Law shall be those who live by wages, salaries or other remuneration assimilable thereto regardless of the kind of occupation.

ARTICLE 4. Police and firemen employed in local public organizations shall not be able to organize or to join a trade union.

CHAPTER 2. *Trade Unions*

ARTICLE 5. Unless the trade union has submitted evidence to the Labor Relations Committee and proved that it is in compliance with the provisions of Article 2 and Paragraph 2 of this Article, the trade union shall not be eligible to participate in the formal procedures provided in this Law and the Labor Relations Adjustment Law (Law No. 25, 1948) and to avail itself of the remedies provided therein. Provided that nothing herein shall be construed so as to deny any individual worker the protection accorded by Clause 1 of Article 7.

2. The Constitution of the trade union shall include provisions provided for in each of the following clauses:

- (1) Name.
- (2) Address of the main office.
- (3) Members of a trade union besides a federated trade union (hereinafter referred to as "local union") shall have the right to participate in all affairs of the trade union and the right to be rendered equal treatment.
- (4) In no event shall any one be disqualified for union membership because of race, religion, sex, social status or family origin.
- (5) The officials of a local union shall be elected by secret ballot directly by the members, and the officials of a federation or a national union may be elected by secret ballot directly by the members of the local union or by delegates elected directly by secret ballot of the members of the local union.
- (6) General meeting shall be held at least once every year.
- (7) Financial report showing all sources of revenues and expenses, names of main contributors and present financial status shall be made public to the members at least once every year, together with certification of its accuracy by a professionally competent auditor appointed by the members.
- (8) No strike action shall be started without the decision made by secret ballot either directly by a majority of members voting or directly by a majority of delegates voting directly elected by secret ballot by all members.
- (9) No constitution of a local union shall be revised except by a majority vote by direct secret ballot of the members. No constitution of a national union or a federation shall be revised except by a majority vote by direct secret ballot of the members of the local union or of the delegates directly elected by secret ballot by all members.

ARTICLE 6. Representatives of a trade union or those to whom the powers thereto are delegated by the trade union shall have the power to negotiate with the employer or the employer's organization on behalf of the members of the trade union for conclusion of a trade agreement or on other matters.

ARTICLE 7. The employer shall be disallowed to do the following practices:

- (1) To discharge or give discriminatory treatment to a worker by reason of his being a member of a trade union, for his having tried to join or organize a trade union or for his having performed proper acts of a trade union; or to make it a condition of employment that the worker must not join or must withdraw from a trade union. Provided, however, that this shall not prevent an employer from concluding a trade agreement with a trade union to require, as a condition of employment, that the workers must be members of the trade union if such trade union represents a majority of the workers in the particular plant or working place in which such workers are employed.
- (2) To refuse to bargain collectively with the representative of the workers employed by the employer without fair and appropriate reasons.
- (3) To control or interfere with the formation or management of a trade union by workers or to give financial support to it in defraying the trade union's operational expenditure. Provided, however, that this shall not apply to prevent the employer from permitting the workers to confer or negotiate with him during working hours without loss of time or pay or to the employer's contributions for welfare funds; or benefit or similar funds which are actually used for payments to prevent or relieve economic misfortune or accident or to the furnishing of minimum office space.

ARTICLE 8. No employer shall claim indemnity from a trade union or members of the same for damages received through a strike or other acts of dispute which are proper acts.

ARTICLE 9. When a trade union intends to use for other purposes the funds specially set up for mutual aid and other welfare work, it shall obtain the resolution of the general meeting of the union.

ARTICLE 10. The trade union shall be dissolved in the following cases:

- (1) Occurrence of the circumstance requiring the dissolution as provided in the constitution of the trade union.
- (2) Resolution for the dissolution adopted by the general meeting of the trade union with majority of three-fourths or more of the total membership or of the affiliated unions.

ARTICLE 11. A trade union which has received certification of a Labor Relations Committee that it is in compliance with the provisions of this Law shall acquire the status of a juridical person by registering at the place where its main office is located.

2. The matters necessary for registration other than are provided in this Law shall be fixed by a cabinet ordinance.

3. As regards the matters which require registration for a trade union, they shall have no effect against any third person unless a registration has been effected.

ARTICLE 12. The provisions of Article 43, 44 (except the cases provided for in Article 8 of this Law), 50, 52-55 and 57 of the Civil Code (Law No. 89, 1896) and of Articles 35, 36 and 37-2 of the Law on Procedure of Non-Contentious Cases (Law No. 14, 1898) shall be applied *mutatis mutandis* to a trade union which is a juridical person.

2. The provisions of Articles 72-83 of the Civil Code and of Articles 136, 137 and 138 of the Law on procedures of Non-Contentious Cases shall be applied *mutatis mutandis* to a trade union which is a juridical person and which has dissolved according to the provision of Article 10 of this Law.

ARTICLE 13. Trade unions which are juridical persons shall be exempted from income tax and taxes charged on juridical persons in accordance with the provisions of a cabinet ordinance.

CHAPTER 3. *Trade Agreements*

ARTICLE 14. The trade agreement between a trade union and the employer or the employer's organization concerning conditions of work and other matters shall take effect when the agreement is put in writing and signed by both of the parties concerned.

ARTICLE 15. Trade agreements shall include a provision fixing a definite termination date and shall in no event continue in effect for a period exceeding three years.

2. Upon the expiration of the termination date provided in it, no trade agreement shall continue in effect against the wish expressed by either one of the parties concerned; provided, however, that this provision shall not be construed to preclude provisions in a trade agreement which provides that the effect of the trade agreement is renewed unless either one of the parties concerned expresses opposition in advance.

ARTICLE 16. Any provision of an individual labor contract contravening the standards concerning conditions of work and other treatment of workers provided in a trade agreement shall be void. In this case, the invalidated part of the individual contract shall be replaced by the provisions of the standards. The same rule shall apply to the part which is not laid down in the individual labor contract.

ARTICLE 17. When three-fourths or more of the workers of similar kind normally employed in a factory or other working place come under application of one trade agreement, the remaining workers of similar kind employed in the same factory or other working place shall ipso facto be bound by the same agreement.

ARTICLE 18. When a majority part of the workers of similar kind in a certain locality come under application of one trade agreement, the Labor Minister or the Prefectural Governor may at the request of either one or both of the parties concerned with the said trade agreement and according to the resolution of the Labor Relations Committee take the decision to extend the compulsory application of the trade agreement (including the part revised under provisions of Paragraph 2) to all the remaining workers of the same kind employed in the same locality and their employers.

2. In case the Labor Relations Committee deems, in making the resolution of the preceding paragraph, that the trade agreement in question contains inappropriate provisions, the committee may amend those provisions.

3. The resolution under Paragraph 1 shall become effective by public notification.

CHAPTER 4. *Labor Relations Committees*

ARTICLE 19. Labor Relations Committees shall be set up consisting of equal numbers of persons representing employers, workers and public interest.

2. The Labor Relations Committee shall consist of the Central Labor Relations Committee, the Maritime Central Labor Relations Committee, Prefectural Labor Relations Committees and Local Maritime Labor Relations Committees.

3. The members and the staffs of a Labor Relations Committee as provided in this Law shall be regarded as staffs engaged in official business under laws and ordinances.

4. Matters relating to Labor Relations Committees other than those laid down in this Law shall be fixed by a Cabinet Ordinance.

5. The Central Labor Relations Committee shall be under the jurisdiction of the Labor Minister.

6. The Central Labor Relations Committee shall be composed of seven members representing employers (hereinafter referred to as "employer members"), seven members representing labor (hereinafter referred to as "labor members") and seven members representing the public interest (hereinafter referred to as "public members").

7. The Labor Minister shall appoint the employer members in accordance with the recommendations of the employers' organizations, the labor members with the recommendations of trade unions and the public members with the agreement of the employer members and the labor members.

8. Incompetent and quasi-incompetent persons and one who has been sentenced to penal servitude or imprisonment and still under the execution of the sentence cannot be a member. When a member shall become disqualified as a result of this provision, he shall automatically be retired.

9. As to appointment of the public members, three or more

of them shall not belong to the same political party. When a public member shall have by his own actions disqualified himself as a result of this provision, he shall automatically be retired.

10. In case the Labor Minister recognizes that a member of the Central Labor Relations Committee cannot perform his duties by reason of mental and physical defects or that a member has violated his duties in performing his functions or is guilty of misconduct as a member, the Labor Minister may discharge the said member with the approval of the Central Labor Relations Committee.

11. The term of office of the members shall be one year, provided that substitute members filling a vacancy shall remain in office during the remaining term of the predecessor.

12. The members may be re-appointed.

13. The members shall continue to perform their duties until their successor has been appointed.

14. Members shall receive such salaries, allowances and other pay as are fixed separately by laws and compensation for expenses necessary to perform their duties as fixed by a Cabinet Ordinance.

15. There shall be a chairman in the Central Labor Relations Committee.

16. The chairman shall be elected by all members from among the public members.

17. The chairman shall preside over the business of the Central Labor Relations Committee.

18. When the chairman has been prevented from performing his duties, one who has been elected according to the provision of paragraph 16 shall perform the business of the chairman in lieu of the chairman, and when the chair has become vacant, a new chairman shall be elected in accordance with the provision of the same paragraph.

19. A Business Bureau shall be established in the Central Labor Relations Committee to handle the administrative affairs of the Committee, and the Business Bureau shall have a Director and necessary staff appointed by the Labor Minister with approval of the chairman.

20. The provisions of this Article shall be applied *mutatis mutandis* to the Prefectural Labor Relations Committees; provided that the functions of the Labor Minister therein provided shall be performed by the Governor and the Committee shall be composed of five employer members, five labor members and five public members (in Tokyo Prefectural Labor Relations Committee, seven); and two or more of the public members shall not belong to the same political party (in Tokyo Prefectural Labor Relations Committee, three or more).

21. As regards the seamen covered by the Seamen's Law (Law No. 100, 1947), the functions of the Central Labor Relations Committee, the Prefectural Labor Relations Committee, and the Labor Minister or the Prefectural Governor as provided for in this Law shall be performed respectively by the Maritime Central Labor Relations Committee, the Maritime Local Labor Relations Committee and the Transportation Minister; and the provisions concerning the Central Labor Relations Committee and the Prefectural Labor Relations Committee shall be applied *mutatis mutandis* to the Maritime Central Labor Relations Committee and the Maritime Local Labor Relations Committee; provided, however, that "Prefectures" shall read as "Areas under the jurisdiction of the Maritime Transportation Bureaus."

ARTICLE 20. In addition to provisions under Articles 5, 11, 13 and 27, the Labor Relations Committee shall have authority to perform conciliation, mediation and arbitration of labor disputes.

ARTICLE 21. When the Labor Relations Committee deems it necessary for the public welfare, the proceedings of a Labor Relations Committee may be made public.

2. The meetings of the Labor Relations Committee shall be called by the Chairman.

3. The Labor Relations Committee shall be disallowed to open a meeting and to make a decision unless at least one employer member, one labor member and one public member be present.

4. Decisions shall be made by a majority of the members present, and in case of a tie the decision shall be made by the chairman.

ARTICLE 22. When the Labor Relations Committee deems it necessary for carrying out its work, the Labor Relations Committee may require the attendance or presentation of reports of the employer or the employers' organization or the trade union or others concerned or it may require the presentation of necessary books and documents or it may also have the members or staff of the Labor Relations Committee (hereinafter simply called "staff") inspect factories and other working places concerned or inspect the conditions of business, books and papers and other objects.

2. In case the Labor Relations Committee shall have the members or staff inspect or investigate under the preceding paragraph, the Labor Relations Committee shall make them carry a certificate certifying their position and show it to a person concerned.

ARTICLE 23. The members and those who were members as well as the staffs or those who were on the staff of a Labor Relations Committee shall be disallowed to disclose any secret information obtained in performing their functions.

ARTICLE 24. Only the public members of the Labor Relations Committee shall participate in the adjudication of cases arising under Articles 5, 7, 11 and 27 and Article 42 of the Labor Relations Adjustment Law; provided, however, that this shall not preclude labor members and employer members from participating in hearings held prior to a decision.

ARTICLE 25. The Central Labor Relations Committee shall have authority to perform the functions prescribed under the provisions of Articles 18, 20, 26, and 27. The Central Labor Relations Committee may assume initial jurisdiction in all cases of conciliation, mediation, arbitration, and adjudication of cases which cover two or more prefectures or which present issues of national import.

2. The Central Labor Relations Committee may review the adjudications of the Prefectural Labor Relations Committees pursuant to the provisions of Articles 5, 7 and 27 with full authority to reverse, accept, or modify such adjudications, or it may reject appeal for review. Such review shall be initiated by the Central Labor Relations Committee or by appeal of either

party from the adjudication of the Prefectural Labor Relations Committee.

ARTICLE 26. The Central Labor Relations Committee shall have authority to formulate and promulgate rules of procedure for the Prefectural Labor Relations Committees, as well as rules of procedure for its own proceedings.

ARTICLE 27. Whenever a complaint is filed that an employer has violated the provisions of Article 7 with a Labor Relations Committee, the Labor Relations Committee shall make an immediate investigation and if it is deemed necessary shall have a hearing of the issues on the merits of the complaint. Such investigation and hearing shall follow the Rules of Procedure prescribed by the Central Labor Relations Committee in accordance with the provision of the preceding Article, and at such hearing, sufficient opportunity to present evidence and cross-examine the witnesses shall be given to the employer concerned as well as the complainants.

2. At the conclusion of the hearing provided for in the preceding paragraph, the Labor Relations Committee shall make a finding of fact and issue its order in accordance therewith, either granting in full or in part the relief sought by the complainants or dismissing the complaint. Such findings of fact and such order shall be in writing, and a copy thereof shall be served on the employer concerned and the complainants. Such order shall be in full force and effect from the date of service. Proceedings under the provisions of this paragraph shall be in accordance with the Rules of Procedure prescribed by the Central Labor Relations Committee as provided for in the preceding Article.

3. In case the employer received the order of the Prefectural Labor Relations Committee according to the provision of the preceding paragraph, he may within a period of 15 days file a request for review by the Central Labor Relations Committee. However, such request shall not have the effect of staying the order and it shall lose its force and effect only when the Central Labor Relations Committee reverses or modifies it as a result of review in accordance with the provision of Article 25.

4. In case the employer elects not to request a review by the

Central Labor Relations Committee or in case the Central Labor Relations Committee issues the order he may within a period of 30 days from the date of service of the order file his petition according to the provision of the Exceptional Law for Administrative Suit Cases (Law No. 91, 1948).

5. In the event the employer files his petition with the court according to the provisions of the preceding paragraph, the court with which the petition is filed may, on appeal from the Labor Relations Committee concerned, issue an order by its decision requiring the employer concerned to comply in full or in part with the order of the said Labor Relations Committee pending final judgment by the Court, or it may reverse or modify the decision on application from the parties concerned or by its own initiative.

6. In the event the employer requests a review by the Central Labor Relations Committee according to the provisions of Paragraph 3, the period granted for recourse to the court under the provision of Paragraph 4 shall commence to run from the day on which the Central Labor Relations Committee either refused to accept the appeal concerned or otherwise made final action.

7. In the event employer does not file his petition within the period under Paragraph 4, the order of the Labor Relations Committee concerned shall be fixed. In this case, if the employer does not comply with the order of the Labor Relations Committee, the Labor Relations Committee shall inform of it to the District Court in the place where his domicile is located. The worker may also inform of it.

8. In case all or a part of the order of the Labor Relations Committee is sustained by the fixed judgment of the Court based on the petition under Par. 4, the Central Labor Relations Committee cannot review the order of the Prefectural Labor Relations Committee.

9. The Provisions of this Article shall not preclude a trade union or a worker from requesting a review by the Central Labor Relations Committee according to the provision of Article 25 or from filing petition with the Court.

10. The provisions of Paragraphs 1 and 2 shall be applied *mutatis mutandis* to the procedures of review by the Central Labor Relations Committee.

CHAPTER 5. *Penalties*

ARTICLE 28. In case of violation of the order of the Labor Relations Committee when all or a part of the said order has been sustained by the fixed judgment of the court in accordance with the provisions of the preceding Article, those who commit such violation shall be liable to imprisonment not exceeding one year or to a fine not exceeding one hundred thousand yen, or to both.

ARTICLE 29. Those who contravene the provisions of Article 23 shall be liable to imprisonment not exceeding one year or to a fine not exceeding thirty thousand yen.

ARTICLE 30. Those who contravene the provisions of Article 22 and fail to present reports or make false reports or fail to submit the books or papers or contravene the provisions of the same Article and fail to present themselves or refuse, obstruct or evade the inspection under the provision of the same Article shall be liable to a fine not exceeding thirty thousand yen.

ARTICLE 31. When the deputy, co-habitant, employees, or others engaged for work of a juridical person or a person contravene the provisions of the first portion of the preceding Article, in connection with the business of a juridical person or of a person, the said juridical person or person shall not be immune from penalty on the ground of not having given an order for such contravention.

2. The provisions of the first portion of the preceding Article shall apply to the directors, managers or other officers who execute the business of the juridical person in case the employer is a juridical person and to the legally fixed deputy in case the employer is a minor or a person adjudged incompetent; provided that this rule shall not apply to a minor that has the same capacity as an adult in the performance of business.

ARTICLE 32. In case an employer has violated the order of the

Court under the provisions of Paragraph 5 of Article 27, he shall be liable to a fine not exceeding one hundred thousand yen (if the order concerned requires positive action, the total amount of money made by multiplying one hundred thousand yen by the number of days of noncompliance, may be assessed as a fine). The same rule shall apply to the case when an employer has violated the order of the Labor Relations Committee which has become fixed according to the provision of Paragraph 7 of Article 27.

ARTICLE 33. The liquidator of a trade union which is a juridical person who has violated any of the provisions of the Civil Code which are set out in Article 12 of this Law and violation of which is made punishable by Article 84 of the Civil Code shall be subject to the same fine of the same extent of amount as provided for in the said Article of the Civil Code.

2. The provisions of the preceding paragraph shall be applied *mutatis mutandis* to the representative of a trade union which is a juridical person when such representative failed to register changes in the matters registered concerning the said juridical person as provided in the ordinance as set out in Paragraph 2 of Article 11 of this Law.

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