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Working Paper Number 23

The Japanese Working Class Movement from the 1950s to the Middle of the 1970s

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December 1991
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Presentation

The following text was originally written during a stay in Paris, in 1982, with limited materials at hand. I have made some stylistic changes to the original text, but weaknesses remain and Chapter 3 is very unsatisfactory. Comments from readers will be welcomed.

Y. Sakai (March 1982/November 1991)

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1. Postwar Trade Union Structure

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Japanese working class did not have its classic period of the Second International, a period of mass workers movement before the first world war, nor did it have mass trade union movement and mass workers parties even between the two world wars, during which there was no bourgeois democracy in Japan. Numerical size of the Japanese working class was roughly 3 million in 1914, 7.2 million in 1925 and 8.18 million in 1935 (R. Ohishi, "Class Composition of Japan", Tokyo). Manufacturing workers and miners were 2.24 million in 1925 and 2.9 million in 1935 (ibid.).

Modern workers movement began to develop under the direct impact of the Russian revolution only in the 1920s. Number of unions and size of unionized workers were respectively 387 and 137,000 in 1922, 457 and 254,000 in 1925, 712 and 384,000 in 1930, and 973 and 420,000 in 1936, the year 1936 being one year before the beginning of the Japanese colonial war against China. The workers movement was permanently harassed by the state repression, and there were two major currents; straight rightwing social-democrats and non-communist and communist leftwingers.

The organized workers movement remained a minority of the working class, and there was no mass explosion of workers struggles all through the 1920s and the first half of 1930s. When Japanese imperialism started the full-scale colonial war against China, the trade union movement was totally suppressed, and there was no organized workers movement from the late 1930s to the defeat of Japanese imperialism in 1945.

Only after the defeat of Japanese imperialism, Japanese workers exploded massively in their struggles in late 1945 and thereafter. About 400,000 workers were unionized at the end of 1945, and number of unionized workers became about 3 million in 1946, while the absolute size of working class was between 13 and 14 million in 1945.

Thus, very much different from the cases of major Western European countries and even from the US trade union movement, the massive trade union movement of Japanese working class developed only after the second world war, and mass workers parties also developed closely inter-related with the trade union movement.

1.1.2 A structurally reformist and bourgeois democratic mass workers movement was established only in the middle of 1950s, after the end of the Korean war. The Sohyo (General Council of Trade Unions of Japan), which was founded by combined forces of major reformist elements and minority rightist, Social-Democrat elements under the encouragement of the US military occupation command in 1950, two weeks after the outbreak of Korean war, represented such a structurally reformist trade union movement as majority mass workers movement in the latter half of 1950s and towards the 1960s.

The Sohyo was founded upon the decisive defeat of the immediately postwar militant trade union movement (Sanbetsu-Kaigi: All Japan congress of Industrial Trade Unions) under the CP leadership through a drastic rationalization of whole economy in 1949. More than 100,000 workers of the national railway, postal and telephone-telegram services and 170,000 governmental employees were dismissed and 370,000 workers were fired in the private sector in 1949. Through this rationalization, the Japanese capitalist economy was linked to the world capitalist market with the fixed exchange rate of $1=360. Furthermore, immediately after the outbreak of Korean war in 1950, the US military occupation command ordered political dismissals of the CP members and sympathizers as "Red Purges"; 10,972 workers were sacked in the private sector and 1,196 governmental employees were thrown out in 1950.

Foundation of the Sohyo was a result of definite split between the militant CP elements and the reformist elements in the Sanbetsu-Kaigi trade union movement, and the former's almost total defeat through the 1949 rationalization and the subsequent "Red Purges" at the beginning of Korean war. When the Sohyo was founded in 1950, it embraced almost all the major national trade unions both in the private and public sectors, and it claimed 3.65 million membership. As for the Sanbetsu-Kaigi under the CP leadership, it retained only about 40,000 members in 1951.

Setting-up of the reformist Sohyo was supported by the US military occupation command, which had been the real political power in Japan since the Japanese defeat in 1945. The founding congress of Sohyo gave its political support to the US "democratic efforts" at the Korean war.

It might be important to note the difference between the case of immediately postwar workers movement in Japan and those of France and Italy confronted with the new "Cold War" from the late 1940s to the early 1950s. The Japanese CP, which had been an active majority of mass workers movement from 1946 to 1948, was almost totally smashed in the trade union movement in 1949-50, but, in Italy and France, both CPs kept their dominant position in their respective national trade union movements from the late 1940s to the 1950s. In the latter cases there were continuities, but in Japan there was a real defeat and interruption/discontinuity. Since then, the Japanese CP had never regained a majority position in the national trade union movement.

1.1.3 The 1949-50 rationalization was the starting step for the postwar Japanese capitalist economy in its recovery and subsequent sustained expansionist growth in the capitalist world market. Japan was the advanced
base for the US war in Korea, and the Korean war boosted the Japanese capitalist economy which had just carried through the drastic rationalization in 1949-50. In 1953-54, the economy recovered the previous peak of war economy during the early 1940s, and it entered a sustained and long-span growing process. Thus, an internal balance of national economy was established between the governmental fiscal structure and the private sector economy through the general growing process during the 1950s.

And, this economic framework was the very basis upon which the Sohyo trade union movement could establish itself as a mass reformist movement, embracing the great majority of workers both in the public and private sectors, in the late 1950s. This "institutionalization" of Sohyo as a mass reformist workers movement was an organic part of the simultaneously on-going relative stabilization of bourgeois democratic system of the Japanese state, which had been introduced under the US military occupation immediately after the second world war.

When the question of energy/chemical-industry transformation from coal to oil was posed at the end of the 1950s, there were severe and prolonged struggles of the coal miners, whose union movement had been the strongest in the private sector, in 1959-60, but they were betrayed by the reformist Sohyo leadership and were defeated definitely in 1960. Thus, the energy/chemical-industry transformation proceeded massively, and the whole Japanese economy entered the accelerated expansionist growth of the 1960s.

In summary, the reformists, who sold out the militant workers movement during the drastic rationalization of 1949-50, founded the Sohyo, and the Sohyo trade union movement had never met a large scale capitalist economic crisis the mid-1950s to 1973-75. Confronted with the dramatic collapse of the expansionist economic growth and depressurization and structural readjustment measures of the government and the bosses, the Sohyo union bureaucrats capitalized totally and the mass of workers were paralyzed in the framework of Sohyo union movement.

1.2 Intra-enterprise unions and the employment system

1.2.1 More precisely, problems of the specific Japanese intra-enterprise unions must be taken up and analyzed critically.

According to a bourgeois expert on the Japanese industrial relations, "the Japanese labor-management relation has three pillars; the intra-enterprise union system, life-long employment system and seniority-order wage system(wage-scale parallel to age-order)." (Y. Ashimura, 'Short Introduction on Labor Movement', Tokyo)

"Most of the Japanese unions are organized on the basis of individual enterprises; they are not organized horizontally on the basis of job-categories or industries. Those unions, organized on the basis of enterprises, form industrial federations as their upper structure ." "Intra-enterprise unions are organized only among those permanent employees who are life-long employed, blue-cors and white-cors mixed all together, excluding non-permanent, periodic-contract workers and subcontract workers, and "those unions tend to concern themselves centrally about their own enterprises and to limit the activities within the enterprises." It is not unusual for union office-bearers to become staff-personnel of the management."(ibid.)

"There is an autonomy of intra-enterprise unions; individual unions can reject directions and orders from their industrial federation. Thus, it is rather not so easy for an industrial federation to have a complete unity of component unions' actions." "Basic units of trade union finance are those intra-enterprise unions. Those unions collect the union dues from the membership through the check-off system, and "the unions pay regular fees to their industrial federations."(ibid.) Thus, intra-enterprise unions can boycott their federations financially very much easily.

1.2.2 Basic concept of the intra-enterprise unions: the basic unit of a union is the employer who employs workers and other employees for their life-time at least theoretically; those workers and employees constitute their intra-enterprise union, corresponding to their common and single employer, and those non-permanent, periodic contract workers or subcontract workers are excluded from the intra-enterprise union.

In the private sector, there is normally one intra-enterprise union at one enterprise, even though the enterprise has several factories scattered regionally, and those unions gather to form their industrial federation as their upper structure. It is not necessarily unusual that there are two or three intra-enterprise unions among the workers/employees of a enterprise, due to union split(s).

In the public sector, the national railway system, postal system, telecommunication system and tobacco corporation are national enterprises, and workers/employees of individual national enterprises are organized in their own intra-enterprise union(s). In the case of the national railway, there are three national unions(two reformist unions and one right-wing) and other local unions(one of them is under the CP leadership, and another one is under left-centrist group). There are two national unions, reformist one and right-wing one, among the postal workers/employees, and one national union and some local unions(one of them is under the CP leadership, and another union is under our leadership) among telecommunication workers/employees. The two local unions of the national railway and the two local unions of the telecommunication are results of expulsions by the union bureaucracy. (Those union situations were at the time of 1982.)

As for the local governmental workers/employees and municipal transportation and water-supply workers/employees, they are unionized according to individual prefectures, municipalities and towns, and those unions are federated nationally. Teachers have the same union structure as the local governmental workers/
employees, but there are also a great number of private
schools (primary schools, middle schools and high
schools), colleges and universities, teachers/employees
of which are unionized separately under the same sys-
tem of intra-enterprise union. There are also reformist
unions and rightwing ones among the teachers/employees
of the "public sector" schools.

1.2.3 The rate of unionization is extremely high in
the public sector, except the education system, and the
rightwing unions are anti-workers-movement basically
as agents of the authorities and managements.

In the private sector, life-long employed workers/
employees are almost totally unionized in individual
intra-enterprise unions at big enterprises, due to the
specific intra-enterprise union system itself, and it was
not uncommon that, when a serious conflict developed
between the workers/employees and the management,
the given intra-enterprise union split between a mili-
tant part and a pro-management part, or the intra-
enterprise union expelled those who wanted to fight for
their cause against the management. In the public sec-
tor, too, almost all the unions splits have been results of
various union struggles.

At the smaller enterprises in the private sector, the
rate of unionization becomes lower, paralleling to the
size of enterprise. Non-permanent, periodic workers,
subcontract workers and part-time workers (mostly
women) are basically not unionized.

In 1972, there were 30.31 million wage-earners in
the private sector, and 8.47 million were unionized, the
rate of unionization being 28%. There were 9.23 mil-
lion wage-earners at the enterprises which hired 500 or
more, and the rate of unionization among those 9.23
million was 63.6%. There were 4.85 million wage-
earners at the enterprises which hired from 100 to 499,
and 31.5% were unionized among them. There were
5.05 million wage-earners at the enterprises which
hired less than 29, and 3.4% were unionized among
them.

| Table 1: Union membership and estimated rate of unionization (private sector) |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|                                 | members | memb. % | memb. % | memb. % |
| enterprises                     | (000)   | (000)   | (000)   | (000)   |
| 500 or more                     | 4,134   | 61.3    | 5,356   | 63.0    | 5,873   | 63.6    | 62.8    |
| 100 - 499                       | 1,180   | 37.6    | 1,455   | 33.5    | 1,528   | 31.5    | 28.1    |
| 30 - 99                         | 372     | 10.3    | 444     | 9.8     | 454     | 9.0     | 8.3     |
| 29 or less                      | 292     | 3.1     | 513     | 4.9     | 376     | 3.4     | 3.2     |
| Total/average                   | 6,154   | 26.7    | 7,890   | 28.3    | 8,473   | 28.0    | 24.7    |

1.2.4 Life-long employment is common in the pub-
lic sector and at bigger enterprises in the private sector.
Big businesses, public corporations/enterprises and cen-
tral/local governments recruit young people as life-long
employed, normally immediately after the latter's grad-
uation of schools (now mostly highschools and colleges/un-
iversities). Enterprises train those young people as their
permanent workforce.

At the big private manufacturing enterprises, those
life-long employed constitute the permanent and core
workforce of individual enterprises, and, at the same
time, those enterprises hire non-permanent workers un-
der the system of periodic contracts (3 months, 6
months or one year) and, in some industries (shipbuild-
ing, steel), introduce subcontract (indirectly employed)
workers. The managements are free to refuse renewal
of those contracts, that is, to dismiss those non-
permanent workers. They are conjunctural workforce
for individual enterprises.

Status of a life-long employed permanent worker is
very much different from that of a non-permanent, con-
tract worker. The former is a component or insider of
the given enterprise, and the latter is a noncomponent or
outsider who is temporarily employed or subcontracted
by the enterprise. The life-long employed permanent
workers have their specific material benefits within
their enterprises. Those permanent workers are privi-
leged in their enterprises, and those life-long employed
are organized in their intra-enterprise unions on the ba-
sis of their common status in relation to the individual
enterprises. They are intra-enterprise workers. Thus,
intra-enterprise unions are very specific, especially in
the case of big businesses.

One can find similar relations between the perma-
nent core employees and the part-timers (mostly wom-
en) in the commercial and service sectors.

This whole system of life-long employment and its
significant implications in relation to the specific intra-
enterprise unions were fully established in the private
sector through the expansionist economic growth of
the 1960s. Thus, strictly pro-management rightwing la-
or bureaucracies developed very quickly in the big
manufacturing enterprises in the first half of the 1960s,
and they became definitely dominant force in those in-
dustries in the latter half of the decade.

1.2.5 However, it does not mean that the life-long
employed permanent workers/employees are really
guaranteed life-long employed. In fact, big manufactur-
ing businesses dismissed a large number of those per-
manent workers, especially the older layer, in the de-
pressionary years of 1974-78.

In the shipbuilding industry, 7 major enterprises had
87,095 permanent workers/employees and 26,599 sub-
contract workers in the shipbuilding section in October
1974, and there were 53,487 permanent workers/
employees and 7,874 subcontract workers in April
1979. That is, 38.6% of the permanent workers/ em-
ployees in 1974 had been pushed out of the shipbuild-
ing at the time of April 1979, and there was 70.4% de-
crease of the subcontract workers during the period.
In the case of Mitsubishi shipyard at Nagasaki, there were
16,401 permanent workers and 11,241 subcontract
workers in October 1974, and 11,138 permanent work-
ers (32.1% decrease) and 5,166 subcontract workers
(54% decrease) in August 1979. As for dismissal of the
non-permanent contract or subcontract workers, it does
not matter to the intra-enterprise unions, because they
are not union members. But, when dismissal is posed
to the permanent workers, it is a serious problem for the concerned intra-enterprise union, and the matter depends on the degree of the union’s independence from the management and the balance of forces between the union and the management. If there is a serious conflict/flight on the matter, the union at the given enterprise splits normally, and such cases have been more common at the smaller enterprises. However, at the bigger enterprises, unions are basically under the control of the managements, and those unions accepted the dismissals and even forced the concerned workers to accept the dismissals during the depression. When permanent workers are dismissed, they lose their union membership automatically and logically, because they are no longer components of the given enterprise.

1.2.6 Seniority-order wage system (a system of automatic wage-increase parallel with age) is closely intertwined with the life-long employment system. When a young one is employed by some enterprise, his/her wage is very low, and his/her wage will rise gradually in parallel with his/her age as long as he/she remains to be employed by his/her enterprise. In the private sector, it is extremely difficult for female workers/employees to continue their jobs for the “life span”; normally they are forced to give up their jobs, when they marry or get kids. In the public sector, the situation is better for women. Thus, in the private sector, the life-long employment system and the seniority-order wage system are not applied to women workers. When a woman has got a kid, she must find a part-time job. This is one of the institutional reasons why the level of female wages is very much lower (the female wage level was 48% of the male one in 1977).

“In the major Western European countries, wage level of the age group less than 18 years old is about 60% of the average wage level of male workers, that of the age group of 60 years old or more is in the range of 95-100%, and that of the age group of 40 years old is around 105%. In Japan, wage level of the age group less than 18 years old is 46% of the average, 115% for the age group between 40 and 50 years old, and 75% for the age group more than 60 years old.” (K. Furuya, “Knowledge on Wage”, Tokyo). The wage difference between the younger and the middle aged is bigger at the bigger enterprises than that of smaller ones (see the table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>W. Germany</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Italy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less than 18</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 20</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 24</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 29</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 34</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 39</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 44</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 49</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 54</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 59</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and more</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Average of total workforce = 100)

The wage difference among age groups decreased relatively under the pressure of young-workforce shortage in the latter half of the 1960s and the early 1970s (see the table 3).

Table 3: Seniority-wage system in Japan (manufacturing sector)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age less</th>
<th>18-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-34</th>
<th>35-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50-59</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration of employment (years)</td>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>more than 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprises: 1,000 or more workforce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprises: between 10 and 99 workforce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no uniform national minimum wage system. Each enterprise, especially bigger one, has its own complicated wage-scale system, although there is no significant inter-enterprise wage difference among the big enterprises in the same industries.

In the 1950s, the Sohyo trade unions normally had their specific youth caucuses/sections and women caucuses/sections, or mixed youth-women caucuses/sections at all the levels of branches, unions, industrial federations and the Sohyo itself. Even today (1982) the Sohyo and its reformist unions keep the system formally. As for the specific women caucuses/sections, it is due to the specific oppression of women, with the immediate historical background of a male family-head system and the denial of female suffrage before the defeat of Japanese imperialism in 1945. As for the specific youth caucuses/sections, it is due to the low level of wage for younger layer of workers.

As mentioned earlier, significant number of life-long employed permanent workers, especially the older section, were dismissed in the manufacturing sector in 1975-78. Simultaneously, the big manufacturing businesses restrained the automatic wage-increase of older workers, oppressing the function of seniority-order wage system for the that section of workers, as a part of the capitalist rationalization. The older section of workers have been hit most severely, precisely due to the seniority-order wage system, and the unemployment is the highest among those older workers.

1.2.7 At the smaller enterprises, the life-long employment system does not mean much, nor the system of periodic subcontract employment. Smaller enterprises are unstable and easy to go bankrupt. Especially in the manufacturing sector, many of them are subcontract factories of the big enterprises, and the typical example is the automobile industry, which also utilizes the non-permanent workers extensively.

Wages at the smaller enterprises are much lower than those at the bigger ones. Wage difference in the manufacturing sector in 1972 is as follows: 100/
average wage at the enterprises with 1,000 or more workers, 86.2Enterprise with 500-999 workforce, 75.3/100-499, 65.3/50-99, 61.7/10-49, and 56.5/1-9.

In the middle of 1960s, shortage of young workforce became severe, and the average age of workforce became older in the smaller enterprises. At the enterprises with workforce of 10-99, weight of 35-years-old or more age group increased from 27.1% in 1958 to 39.5% in 1968, and weight of 24-years-old or less age group decreased from 47.3% in 1958 to 32.6% in 1968. Out of the total workforce between 35 and 39 years old in the manufacturing sector, those who worked at the enterprises with 1,000 or more workers decreased from 43.1% in 1960 to 39.5% in 1968, and those workers at the enterprises with 100-999 increased from 24.1% in 1960 to 28.7% in 1968. As for the age group 40-49, a decrease from 46.5%/1960 to 41.6%/1968 at the enterprises with 1,000 or more workers, and an increase from 22.3%/1960 to 27.0%/1968 at the enterprises with 100-999. In 1969, in the manufacturing sector, weight of the workers/employees aged 50 or more was 5.8% of the workforce at the enterprises with 1,000 or more workers, 8.5% at the enterprises with 300-999, 11.2%/100-299, 17.8%/30-99 and 22.5%/29-and-less.

In 1972, out of the total 30.31 million wage-earners in the private sector, those employed at the enterprises with 500 or more workforce were 30.5% (9.23 million), 16.0%/4.85 million at 100-499 workforce enterprises, 16.7%/3.05 million/30-99 and 36.6%/11.10 million/29-or-less.

Smaller the enterprises, bigger the mobility of workers. Smaller enterprises cannot be the basis of material privileges for specific categories of workers in any significant way. In this context, a reformist/left-reformist current of trade union movement continued exist at the medium/small-size enterprises all through the 1960s and 1970s. The Zenkoku-Kinzoku(Zenkin), an industrial union of machinery workers, represented the current most typically. This union had 222,000 members in 1974, and the membership decreased to 167,000 in 1979 (roughly 25% decrease), due to bankruptcies and dismissal during the depression and industrial restructuring. The CP is rather strong in the union, although it is a minority. In this sector, there is other rightwing industrial union Zenkin-Domei, which had 311,000 members in 1974 and 288,000 in 1979 respectively (roughly 9.5% decrease). The Zenkoku-Kinzoku was targeted by the bosses during the depression.

1.2.8 In the public sector(national railway, postal system, telecommunication system and tobacco corporation) and the governmental sector(mostly local governments, public education, water-supply and partially local transportation system), the life-long employment is also the standard.

However, there are two important differences between the public and governmental sector and the private sector.

One aspect is the fact that the weight of non-permanent workers/employees is small, material basis for internal division among the workers/employees being rather limited, although managements and authorities began to introduce the subcontract system as much as possible in the 1970s.

The other aspect is the fact that the technological innovation has been extremely uneven in the public and governmental sector during the economic expansionist period of 1960s. The telecommunication system had extensive and successive technological innovations in the 1960s and 1970s, and the whole system had gone through a profound and thorough transformation. As for the national railway and the postal system(mail and saving), various technological innovations were introduced in the 1960s and 1970s, but the situation had remained very much uneven and mixed with the older systems and new ones. As for the local administrations and public education, introduction of technological modernization had been limited in the 1960s and 1970s.

In the public and governmental sector, the reformist trade union forces, affiliated to the Socialist Party, had retained their hegemonic position and the mass base of the Sohyo reformist trade union movement had not been destroyed in the 1960s, although a pro-CP, rank-and-file militant current, which had developed rather widely in the whole Sohyo trade union movement in the latter half of 1950s, had got a significant defeat and retreat around 1960.

However, at the big manufacturing businesses, straightly pro-management labor bureaucrats were formed and took over the control of intra-enterprise unions, principally based on the younger layers of workers who were capable to adapt to the profound technological innovations far more better than the older layers, very quickly in the early 1960s. As a result, the reformist trade union forces, which had been affiliated to the SP in the 1950s, were almost totally wiped out at the big manufacturing businesses.

1.3 Trade union situation until the early 1970s

1.3.1 In 1957-60, there were various clashes and confrontations between the reformist Sohyo trade union movement and the bourgeoisie/LDP(Liberal Democratic Party)-government; the national railway(spring 1957), steel/shipbuilding(Autumn 1957), public-sector schools and paper-manufacturing(1958), postal and telecommunication systems(1957-58) and coal industry (1959-60).

These confrontations and clashes were basically between the militant, rank-and-file mass spontaneity in the framework of reformist Sohyo trade union movement and the bourgeoisie/LDP-government. As a whole the Sohyo reformist leadership capitulated, and the Sohyo-wide left-reformist and militant current was defeated and forced to retreat. Those defeats and retreats of 1957-60 had an important political significance toward the whole 1960s and 1970s, somehow similar to the French working class defeat and retreat in face of the rise of De-Gaulle bonapartist regime in 1958.
As mentioned earlier, the success of the 1949-50 structural rationalization was the initial starting step of Japanese economic recovery and subsequent long-span growth, and the 1957-60 defeats/retreats of the Sohyo workers movement was also an important political factor for the sustained expansionist growth all through the 1960s and toward the early 1970s.

As indicated before, the 1960 defeat of coal miners cleared the way for the bourgeoisie to carry through the profound energy/chemical-industry transformation from coal to oil. Secondly, as indicated before, too, at the big manufacturing enterprises, combined with the profound technological modernization of production itself, the defeats and retreats of militant rank-and-file mass spontaneity cleared the way for the management to establish their direct control on the mass of workers, especially the younger workers, at workshops, thus wiping out the Sohyo reformist trade union movement. The result was a qualitative reinforcement of the specific intra-enterprise nature of unions, and a very quick rise of new and strictly pro-management union bureaucracies in this hegemonic part of the manufacturing sector.

At the public and governmental sector, the government and management provoked rightwing splits of the Sohyo unions at the national railways, postal system and the public education, and the Sohyo reformist forces were thrown into a deep passivity and developed their own bureaucratization all through the 1960s, although they retained the dominant position in this part of the trade union movement during the decade (the Sohyo affiliated union membership was about 2.74 million and the rightwing Domei affiliated 0.18 million in the public and governmental sector in 1973).

As for the telecommunication system, there was a profound technological modernization all through the 1960s, and the reformist trade union force developed their bureaucratic centralization very strongly and made a deep pro-management shift, expelling CP elements from the union and suppressing various oppositionist elements in the union, during the decade. The centralized bureaucratic apparatus of the telecommunication workers union established a close collaboration with the management, very much similar to the case of the new intra-enterprise union-bureaucracies of the big manufacturing businesses, from the late 1960s to the early 1970s.

In this context, the mass of workers and employees were brought into a defensive situation in relation to the management and authorities, and a new oppositionist current began to develop among young workers and employees against the bureaucractizing Sohyo reformist forces in the trade union movement of the public and governmental sector and the medium/small-size manufacturing enterprises in the middle of 1960s.

1.3.2 In the 1960s and early 1970, that is, before the dramatic collapse of the expansionist economic growth in 1973-74, there were basically two major currents in the Japanese trade union movement: the reformist current and the pro-management and rightwing current.

The reformist current, which represented the continuity from the 1950s as the majority of the weakened Sohyo trade union movement, was entrenched mostly in the public and governmental sector and among the workers of smaller enterprises of the private manufacturing sector.

In this reformist current, the majority was the SP affiliated Sohyo union bureaucrats, called as Sohyo Min' do or simply Min'do, and a significant minority was the CP current strictly in the reformist framework of Sohyo unions. The CP was rather strong among school teachers and municipal employees, and it was a substantial minority current among the national railway workers and the workers of smaller manufacturing enterprises. At the same time, there was an oppositionist small-minority current of young workers/employees against the reformist bloc of Sohyo Min'do and CP.

In 1973, the Sohyo had 4.34 million affiliated membership, out of which 2.76 million were in the public and governmental sector (slightly less than 0.9 million in the public sector) and 1.58 million were in the private sector. As for the 1.58 million membership of Sohyo in the private sector, more than half might have been under the hold of pro-management union bureaucrats (especially the steel workers union of 200 thousand membership and the chemical workers union of 126 thousand membership).

1.3.3 The pro-management and rightwing current was entrenched mostly at the big manufacturing enterprises and supplementarily among the workers of smaller manufacturing enterprises. Inside this current, there were also two subcurrents.

The one was represented by Domei (Japanese Confederation of Labor), a rightwing national trade union federation, which had 2.1 million members in the private sector and 180 thousand membership in the public and governmental sector. The Domei was directly intertwined with the anti-communist rightwing social democracy of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), as the Sohyo Min'do union bureaucrats were with the reformist and pacifist social democracy of the SP. The Domei-DSP complex represented the historical continuity of anti-communist rightwing social-democratic current from the period of 1920s and 1930s and all through the late 1940s and 1950s. The Domei was organized rather much politically on the basis of aggressive anti-communism. The Domei was very strong in the shipbuilding and automobile industries, and it had significant union organizations among the workers of smaller manufacturing enterprises.

The other subcurrent was represented by the newly formed pro-management union bureaucrats of steel, chemical and electric/electronics workers unions. They were formed rather simply as new intra-enterprise union bureaucrats under the direct control of the management at the rapidly expanded big manufacturing enterprises. They didn't have their history; they were new-right forces in the 1960s. The steel workers union and chemical workers union were formally affiliated with the Sohyo, and the electric/electronics workers union was the major union of the third national federation of
unions, Churitsu-Roren (Federation of Independent Unions of Japan), with 1.57 million membership almost exclusively in the private sector, which had had a joint committee for annual wage-increase campaign with the Sohyo.

All the pro-management union forces of the metal and machinery manufacturing sector had constituted the IMF-JC (International Metalworkers' Federation Japanese Council) as their gathering body, crossing over the three national federations (Sohyo, Domei and Churitsu-Roren). Industrial bodies of the similar nature were founded in the automobile, shipbuilding/heavy-machinery and paper-pulp industries in 1972.

In the unions and factories under the pro-management union forces, the CP had its weak current, and there were small-minority oppositionist groupings of the left-reformist and far-left currents. The Sohyo-Mindo forces did not have their direct lever among this part of workers.

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<th>Table 4: Major national trade union federations</th>
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Sohyo (General Council of Trade Unions of Japan): Sohyo is the trade union basis of the SP, and its majority union bureaucrats of Mindo are intertwined with the SP of reformists and pacifist social democracy. The CP is a substantial minority. Sohyo also comports the pro-management union forces of the steel and chemical industries.
Churitsu-Roren (Federation of Independent Unions of Japan): Its major union is the electric/electronics workers union, and it formally supports the SP, especially later's rightwing current. It has a joint committee for annual spring wage-increase campaign with the Sohyo.
Shinsanbetsu (National Federation of Industrial Organisations): It supports the SP formally, and recently it affiliated with the Churitsu-Roren.
Domei (Japanese Confederation of Labor): Anti-communist rightwing federation. It is closely intertwined with the DSP of rightwing social democracy, which has been strongly pro-LDP (ruling bourgeois party).

2. Political parties

2.1 Socialist Party (SP)

2.1.1 The Socialist party has been a reformist and pacifist social-democratic party and the working-class majority in the parliament from the 1950s to the 1970s.

It has been a pure parliamentary party with the membership of 30-40 thousand in the 1960s and about 60 thousand in the 1970s, the Sohyo being the major electoral basis. Or, the SP has been a parliamentary reflection of the Sohyo workers' movement, Sohyo's reformist apparatuses being the major organized force of the party.

2.1.2 In the latter half of 1940s, immediately after the defeat of Japan's imperialism and before the 1950 Sohyo foundation, the SP was a majority working-class party in the parliament, and the rightwing current was the party majority.

The SP formed a coalition government under SP premiership with bourgeois parties from June 1947 to February 1948, and it joined another coalition government under bourgeois premiership from March to October 1948. The two governments were a complete failure and came to an end with a corruption scandal, in which the SP rightwing boss was involved together with the bourgeoisie prime minister of the second coalition government.

Thus, the SP rightwing current was discredited much and the whole SP was thrown into a big confusion. An internal recomposition process began to develop inside the party, combined with the reformist recomposition process of the trade union movement from the late 1940s to the early 1950s. The SP leftwing current began to increase its intra-party weight, supported by the reformist union forces which eventually became the majority current of the Sohyo trade union movement in the 1950s.

2.1.3 Confronted with the global "cold war" situation and the Korean war, the SP congress took a neutralist "non-alignment" position and opposed the "peace treaty" between Japan and the imperialist and neo-colonialist governments, with the USSR and the newly established People's Republic of China being excluded, and with the US military bases and the Japanese military rearmament.

The reformist union forces of Sohyo supported this
neutralist and pacifist position upheld by the party leftwing current, and the self-styled "Marxist" leftwing secured the majority of the leadership at the congress.

Subsequently the SP split between a leftwing faction and a rightwing faction, the former being supported by the majority of Sohyo, in 1951. The leftwing SP and rightwing SP respectively got 54 and 57 seats at the 1952 general elections (the CP got none), 72 and 66 seats at the 1953 general elections (CP/1), and 89 and 67 seats at the 1955 general elections (CP/2). The balance of forces turned in favor for the leftwing SP.

2.1.4 In 1955 the SP was reunited, and immediately after two major bourgeois parties were unified as the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Thus, a quasi-two-party system was established between the ruling bourgeois LDP and the pacifist SP in the latter half of 1950s. At the 1958 general elections, the LDP got 267 seats and the SP got 166 seats (CP/1).

The best period of the SP was the latter half of 1950s. The SP under the leftwing majority leadership kept its neutralist pacifist stance against the US-Japan security treaty, US military bases in Japan, the newly formed Self-Defense Forces and the US "containment" policy toward People's Republic of China. The SP represented the broad and deep pacifist consciousness of the Sohyo workers against the US "cold war" policies and Japanese militarization in the 1950s. The SP became a massive reformist trade union movement and became the solid electoral basis of the SP in the latter half of 1950s.

In this context, the leftwing current continued to increase its intra-party strength under the direct support of Sohyo reformist forces, at the expense of the rightwing, and finally the rightwing pro-imperialist social democrats were marginalized politically at the beginning of 1960s.

In 1959, some substantial part of the rightwing current split again as a minority (45 members of the lower house) from the SP on the question of US-Japan security treaty, and the rightwing splinter group founded the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) in 1960. This split became a big failure for the rightwingers, and the SP got 145 seats and the DSP only 17 at the 1960 general elections.

2.1.5 With the 1960s, however, the SP entered a period of stagnation, precisely reflecting the weakened position of the reformist Sohyo trade union movement and its stagnation.

Results of various general elections for the SP show its stagnating situation: 145 seats out of total 467 in 1960, 144 out of 467 in 1963, 140 out of 486 in 1967, 90 out of 486 in 1969, and 118 out of 491 in 1972. Toward the end of 1960s, the SP's electoral position was weakened successively to the advantage of an urban petit-bourgeois party of Buddhist Komei(Clean Politics) Party and the CP.

The leftwing SP majority of the 1950s split internally between a moderating "structural reformist" current and an anti-"structural reformist" current in the 1960s. The new division inside the SP corresponded to the similar internal differentiation among the Sohyo reformist union forces in the 1960s.

The "structural reformist" current was supported by moderating reformist elements of the Sohyo unions. The anti-"structural reformist" current was composed of two subcurrents, pro-Peking and pro-Moscow. The pro-Peking "Socialist Study" faction, which was extremely opportunist, secured the party president in 1965, and it took a tolerant attitude toward left-centrist elements in the party, while the pro-Moscow "Socialist Society" faction took a rigid leftist and reformist stance, adopting an uncompromising position against left-centrist and far-left elements in the Sohyo trade union movement, especially among young workers.

In 1967, the "Socialist Study" faction's party president was replaced by a new president T. Narita. Faced with the youth explosion of students and young workers in 1968-69, the SP took a hostile attitude toward the militant youth movement, and the Socialist Youth was thrown into a deep crisis and various splits, through which left-centrists and Trotskyists left the SP and Socialist Youth. Under the party president Narita, the pro-Moscow "Socialist Society" faction increased as a new party-leftwing in the Sohyo trade unions and the SP itself from the late 1960s to the early 1970s. The "Socialist Society" faction was pro-Moscow internationally, and very much Kautskyist domestically.

At the end of 1950s, the SP changed its organizational structure in the effect that only the party's prefectoral units were entitled to elect delegates to the congress, depriving the members of parliament of their automatic right to be congress delegates, and through this party structure the "Socialist Society" faction be-
came the majority, actively recruiting new party members, in the first half of 1970s.

2.1.6 Eroded by the "Socialist Society" faction, the position of the "Socialist Study" faction was weakened, and the faction made a rightwing turn, joining the force with the "Structural Reformist" current, from the end of 1960s to the early 1970s. The rightwing turn of the "Socialist Study" faction was accelerated by the new pro-imperialist and anti-Soviet international policy of the Chinese bureaucracy in the early 1970s.

Thus, there were two major currents inside the SP in the middle of 1970s: the leftwing around the "Socialist Society" faction as the SP majority and the rightwing of joint anti-"Socialist Society" groupings.

2.2 Democratic Socialist Party(DSP)

2.2.1 At the time of early 1980s, the DSP was an anti-communist rightwing social-democratic party, with the Domei as its trade union basis and with some smaller-scale bourgeois elements as its basis; a political minority inside the working class.

As mentioned earlier, the rightwing Social Democracy was the SP majority in the latter half of the 1940s, immediately after the defeat of Japanese imperialism. It lost the SP majority position in the early 1950s, and its intra-party weight decreased progressively all through the 1950s. When this rightwing social-democratic current splitted from the SP in 1959, it was a small minority, and the newly founded Democratic Socialist Party(DSP) got only 17 seats at the 1960 general elections, the SP getting 145 seats.


2.2.2 As mentioned earlier, too, the rightwing trade-union forces were strengthened very quickly and were established definitely as an overwhelming current among the workers of large-scale manufacturing enterprises all through the 1960s, and the Sohyo-affiliated steel workers and chemical workers federation were also dominated by the pro-management union forces. Thus, the SP-affiliated reformist union forces were weakened very much at the level of trade union movement.

However, this new balance of forces between the rightwing pro-management forces and the reformist forces at the level of trade union movement had not been transplanted at the level of general parliamentary politics all through the 1960s and 1970s. The SP kept its position as the working-class political majority.

The trade unions at the large-scale private enterprises were very much intra-enterprise, not being able to exercise their socio-political influences over the general workers and lower layers of petit-bourgeois population outside of their respective enterprises, and the DSP's international and domestic policies were always extremely close to those of the LDP government, being regarded as a political supplement of the LDP. Thus, the DSP remained to be a political minority of the working class, in spite of the strengthened position of rightwing pro-management forces in the trade union movement.

2.3 Communist Party (CP)

2.3.1 The CP was the dominant political force of the militant national trade union federation Sanbetsu-Kaiig(All Japan Congress of Industrial Trade Unions) from 1946 to 1949. In those years, the militant Sanbetsu-Kaiig was the leading force in the trade union movement, but the CP's position at the parliament was very much weak in comparison with the SP, which was under the rightwing majority at the time.

The CP got 5 seats at the first postwar general elections, the SP getting 93 seats, and the CP and the SP got 4 and 143 seats respectively at the 1947 general elections, the SP becoming the biggest party in the lower house. The SP formed a coalition government with bourgeois parties, but the coalition was a total flop. Consequently, the SP seats decreased drastically to 49, and the CP seats increased very much to 35 at the January 1949 general elections.

But, as mentioned before, 1949 was the year of large-scale rationalization of the economy, and the militant trade union movement of Sanbetsu-Kaiig was defeated definitely by the US military occupation command and the Japanese bourgeoisie.

2.3.2 From 1945 to 1949, the CP took a position to define the US occupation armed force as "liberation forces" and kept to follow a consistent conciliatory policy toward the US occupation command, thereby politically disarming the militancy of Sanbetsu-Kaiig workers, and laying down the course for the 1949 defeat.

At the beginning of 1950, the Cominform/Moscow criticized the CP's conciliatory orientation and forced the CP to harden its position against US imperialism, and the criticism from Moscow provoked an internal division between the majority apparatus and the oppositionists inside the party.

The US occupation command hardened its attitude toward the CP, and it ordered to deprive the CP leading members of their civil rights about three weeks before the outbreak of Korean war. Immediately after the outbreak of the war, the CP was de facto legalized, and the US occupation command ordered the massive "Red Purges".

The CP was thrown into a deep crisis, and the CP majority apparatus went into building its own sectarian underground structure, excluding the oppositionist elements and, thereby, carrying out a party split forcibly. The Chinese Communist Party supported the underground restructurization of the JCP majority apparatus,
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and the JCP leadership moved to Peking in 1950. In 1951, the majority CP adopted a new nationalist and adventurist orientation of armed struggle for liberation of Japan from the US domination.

However, the CP's retreat continued during the Korean war, and the CP lost all the seats at the 1952 general elections and got only one seat at the 1953 general elections. The CP defeat was complete in 1953-54.

The rise of the CP and its defeat were both dramatic during the five years immediately after the defeat of Japanese imperialism.

2.3.3 In 1953-54, Moscow and Peking changed their international policies, adopting the "peaceful co-existence policy", and the Japanese CP followed the turn. A special national conference was held in 1955, and the CP liquidated the adventurist orientation of the early 1950s, adopting an extremely opportunist orientation of reformism, and it took an initiative to heal the party division.

The party was thrown into a chaotic situation as a result of the national conference, and the 20th congress of the USSR CP and the Hungarian and Polish events in 1956 accelerated the internal confusion, the party apparatus being discredited very much. A de facto internal democracy prevailed spontaneously at the rank and file in 1956 and 1957.

Under such an internal situation, a party congress was held in 1957. The pre-congress discussion was conducted partly publicly and rather democratically, although a Trotskyist delegate, who was a member of the Kyoto prefectural committee and elected from the prefectural unit, was deprived his right to participate the congress at the final stage.

At the congress there were two major currents; the majority current stood for a "national-independence revolution" and the minority current of about one third of the delegates stood for an "anti-monopolist-capital socialist revolution". The two major current remained to exist after the 1957 congress.

The "national-independence" majority as the apparatus current supported the Chinese CP against Moscow, when the Sino-Soviet debates broke out in the early 1960s. The minority "anti-monopolist-capital" current became "governmentalist", supporting the Italian CP's "strategy", and most of its active members were expelled from the party, supporting Moscow against Peking, in the first half of the 1960s.

2.3.4 From 1956 to 1958, there was a national student faction inside the party. The student faction was the leadership group of the Zengakuren (National Federation of Student Unions) student movement, which was successfully rebuilt independently from the party apparatus in 1956-57. The student faction was very much opposed to the official party leadership, and it was a part of the "anti-monopolist-capital socialist revolution" current.

Student CP members were radicalized through the massive and militant student movement, under the influence of the Algerian armed independence struggle, and Trotskyists got a chance to influence those student communists inside the party. In 1958, there were clashes between the party leadership and the radicalized student communists, and about 500 student members were expelled from or left the CP, together with less than 100 worker members, in 1958-59. This was the beginning of Japanese far-left movement, and there were two major currents among those expelled; spontaneity/left-centrism and Trotskyist.

Through the 1957-60 clashes between the spontaneous mass militancy of Sohyo workers and the bourgeoisie/government, the CP was not in a position to be able to play any active role, because the CP had not yet recovered as a centrally organized party, although individual workshop-groups and workers of the party participated the Sohyo workers' struggles. But politically the CP leadership took a right-wing opportunistic position, giving its de facto support to capitalizationist reformist forces of the Sohyo unions, being in contradiction to the militant position of the national student faction of the party. This was the immediate political reason which caused the split of radicalized student communists from the CP. As for the "anti-monopolist-capital" current in general, the current did not have its uniform position on the trade union struggles of 1957-60.

2.3.5 As a result of the 1957-60 trade union struggles, and especially due to a large and massive mobilization against the revision of US-Japanese security treaty, a politicization process developed among the Sohyo workers. At the same time, there was a significant rise of trade union movement among workers of medium/small-scale enterprises and other weaker sections (hospital nurses, taxi drivers) from the end of 1950s to the early 1960s.

The CP capitalized the politicization of Sohyo workers and the radicalization of new layers of workers rather well in the early 1960s, and this was the beginning of CP's rebuild-up and new growth toward the late 1960s and early 1970s.

As mentioned before, the CP majority apparatus took a pro-Peking position against Moscow, expelling all the pro-Moscow elements of "anti-monopolist capital" structural reformists", from 1962 to 1964. The CP took a kind of "Third period" type political "leftism", adopting a strong anti-US stance in parallel with the Chinese international position, and, at the same time, the Japanese CP's relation with the North Korean Workers Party became very good.

In spite of this political "leftism", the CP's orientation was timid and cautious in actual workers struggles. Thus, the CP leadership was openly opposed to the 1964 spring-wage increase strike actions of Sohyo public-sector unions, playing a role of blatant strikebreaker. This timidity and hopeless sectarianism of the Japanese CP was a precise reflection of the China's international isolation and the Chinese CP's international policy at the time.
At the very moment, General Secretary of JCP, K. Miyamoto, happened to be on his visit to Peking. The blatant strike-breaking action of the CP boomeranged to the party as a major political blow. The CP was discredited politically among the Sohyo workers, and the reformist apparatus of the telecommunication workers union threw off the CP members massively from the union. Consequently the CP lost its offensive momentum in the Sohoy trade union movement, and this was the exact result of JCP's pro-Peking orientation in the first half of 1960s.

2.3.6 When the US started its direct military intervention in Vietnam in 1965, the JCP supported the Vietnamese Workers Party in its call for formation of international united front of all the workers states against the US imperialism, differing from Mao's sectarian intransigence against Moscow.

Shortly before the outbreak of Mao's "Cultural Revolution" in 1966, the JCP general secretary visited Peking. The both delegations of the JCP and CCP finalized a draft joint statement, which included a point on Vietnam, and at the time Liu Shao-chi was at the CCP leadership position. But at the final stage Mao himself intervened in the business of CCP-JCP joint statement, and the draft text was totally scrapped. Thus, there was no joint statement, and this was the definite break of the JCP's relationship with Peking.

Peking began to denounce the JCP as "revisionist", and the latter denounced the "Cultural Revolution" as Mao's criminal act, from very much petit-bourgeois legalistic stand. Simultaneously, all the pro-Peking Maoist elements were thrown out of the JCP. The JCP kept its international bloc with the Vietnamese Workers Party and the North Korean Workers Party in the latter half of 1960s.

All the pro-Moscow elements were expelled from the JCP in the first half of 1960s, and all the pro-Peking elements were thrown off from the party in 1966-67. The JCP's international relationship with the Soviet CP and the Chinese CP was totally broken off. The JCP became an independent nationalist party, in spite of its closer bloc with the Vietnamese and the North Koreans. Thereby, the JCP's deep nationalist adaptation to the Japanese bourgeois democracy began to develop definitely, showing its active interest in the parliamentary reformism of Italian and French CPs.

2.3.7 Contrary to the Italian and French CPs, the JCP was very much weak in the trade union movement, the Sohyo reformist majority being affiliated to the SP. However, the JCP developed its own specific parliamentary reformism through its active intervention in local municipality/community reformist politics.

The continuous expansionist growth of Japanese economy brought about a huge exodus of rural population, especially its younger layers, to the rapidly industrializing urban centers. There were 37.67 million of agricultural- household population, 46.1% of the total population, in 1950. The agricultural-household population began to decrease drastically around 1960, and average annual rate of decrease was 12% in the first half of 1960s. There was an exodus of 8.23 million workforce from the rural area to the urban centers during the ten years of 1959-68, and there was an inflow of 5 million population into the three biggest urban centers (the Tokyo and greater metropolitan area, Kyoto-Osaka-Kobe area, and Nagoya and its three neighboring prefectures) in the decade of 1960s.

Consequently young proletarian population of suburban areas around big cities grew very rapidly, but their conditions of city-life were very much poor - problems of housing, education, health, child-care, etc.. Here the CP found a fertile ground for its parliamentary municipality reformism in the latter half of 1960s and the early 1970s.

The CP became the most active reformist force of municipality activities among the urban proletarian population and partly among lower layers of urban petit-bourgeois population. Thereby, the CP's electoral basis expanded very quickly from the latter half of 1960s to the early 1970s. The CP's seats at the lower house were following: 3 at the 1960 general elections, 5/1963, 5/1969, 14/1969, 39/1972, 19/1976, 41/1979 and 27/1980.

At the same time, the SP-CP-Sohyo supported prefectural governors and municipal mayors increased rapidly, too. The SP-CP-Sohyo bloc won the Tokyo metropolitan governor in 1976, and governors of Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto were under the control of the reformist bloc in the early 1970s.

2.3.8 It is important to note the fact that the current CP was framed basically as a mass workers party, with the municipality reformism as its major sphere of activities, from the late 1960s to the early 1970s.

As mentioned before, contrary to the Italian and French CPs, the Japanese CP was a minority force in the reformist trade union movement. In the early 1970s, the CP built up its strong influence in the teachers' unions and municipality employees unions, and in a lesser degree in the national railway workers union and Zenkoku-Kinshoku (national union of machinery workers of medium/small-scale enterprises). However, the center of CP activities and electoral influence was its municipality reformist practice.

Thereby, there was a specific mutually-complementing division of labor between the SP affiliated trade union forces and the CP municipality reformism, and there was a structural logic that the political limitation of the SP affiliated trade union forces would be an automatic limitation for the CP's perspective, the former being in a structurally hegemonic position in relation to the latter.

In the early 1970s, the CP had more than 300,000 party members and a daily paper of more than 300,000 copies with its own independent national circulation system. It had build up a vast influence among part-time working women and proletarian housewives, and it had a massive youth organization.
2.4 Far-left groups

2.4.1 Origin of the Japanese far-left movement was the expulsion of radicalized student and worker members from the CP in 1958-59. As mentioned before, about 500 students and less than 100 workers were expelled from the party at the time.

As for the student members, they had formed a national fraction inside the party, and worker members were expelled not as a national current of workers, but as a part of the student current. Those worker members were basically composed of a whole leadership of a Tokyo district committee, members of which have now disappeared from the working class politics, a group of Osaka telecommunication workers, key members of whom continue their activities as Trotskyists even today, and a group of Mitsubishi Nagasaki shipyard workers who also continue their activities now.

Major reason why the far-left split from the CP was limited mostly among the student members was the fact that the rank-and-file militancy of Sohyo workers was defeated through the struggles of 1957-60. The militant Zengakuren student movement under the CP student faction had rather good and fraternal relations with the rank-and-file left-centrist/left-reformist current of worker activists inside the Sohyo unions from 1956 to 1958. But, when the radicalized student communists split from the CP, they could not penetrate into the worker-activist current.

2.4.2 Among the former CP student members, there were two major currents; the majority spontaneous Communist League which took a state-capitalist position on the workers states and rejected the Fourth International, and the minority Trotskyist current (Japan Revolutionary Communist League and Internationalist Communist Party) which stood for the Fourth International. The former might have had about 900 members at its height of 1960, and the latter had about 250 members (JRCL/200 as a national group and the ICP/50 as a Tokyo group).

The Trotskyist current, particularly the JRCL, played the leading role in support of the teachers union's struggle against the government in 1958, and the Communist League played the leading role in the massive street mobilizations against the revision of US-Japanese security treaty in 1960.

However, the Communist League was totally disintegrated in the latter half of 1960, immediately after the massive mobilizations against the US-Japanese security treaty, and it did not exist as an organization in 1961. The two Trotskyist groups were also thrown into politico-organizational crises in 1960-61, having various splits. The background of the crisis of the incipient Japanese far-left movement was the fact that the movement failed to penetrate into the Sohyo workers movement, while the Japanese capitalist economy entered a period of sustained expansion, bringing about the stagnation of the workers movement in the 1960s. Thus, the far-left movement entered a period of recomposition from 1962 to 1964.

There is one important aspect in regard to the formation of Japanese far-left movement; that is, there was no Maoist pro-Peking current inside the movement. This is due to the fact that the far-left movement was born in the late 1950s, before the open Sino-Soviet debate, and partly due to the fact that there was the CCP-JCP bloc against the USSR CP when the Sino-Soviet debate developed in the early 1960s. Only after the deterioration of the CCP-JCP relationship, a far-left Maoist current began to develop in the latter half of 1960s.

2.4.3 In 1964-66, the recomposition process of the far-left movement was finalized, and there were following major groups.

Kakumaru (Revolutionary Communist League, National Committee, Revolutionary Marxist Faction): Defining the workers states simply as "Stalinist states" and rejecting the defense of those states from imperialism, adopting a trade-unionist orientation with a substantial implantation inside the national railway drivers union, this group rejected a solidarity position with the Vietnamese liberation struggle against the US, and took reformist position against the militant and violent explosion of students and young workers in 1968-69. This group is politically much similar to the French Lambrinist group, and has eventually become a part of the Sohyo reformist bureaucracy.

Chukaku (Revolutionary Communist League, National Committee, Core Faction): This group's position on the workers states was much similar to that of the Kakumaru, but it emphasized an anti-imperialist position more strongly, and was forced to side with the Vietnamese liberation struggle after the 1968 Tet offensive. The general political orientation was a "Third-Period"-type political leftism. The group penetrated among young workers rather well both in the private and public sectors, and was the best organized group and one of the most militant far-left groups at the height of students/young workers explosion in 1968-69.

Bundo (Communist League): This was a heterogeneous Mao-spontaneous group, very much loosely organized, and again totally disintegrated at the height of the youth explosion. From this disintegration, the "Red Army" faction, a genuine Maoist group and other spontaneist groups developed.

Trotskyists (Japan Revolutionary Communist League, Japanese section of the Fourth International): The former JRCL and the ICP were unified as the section of the Fourth International, and the section basically carried out Marxist works inside the SP and its Socialist Youth, especially among young workers of the Sohyo unions.

Kaiho (Liberation Faction of the Socialist Youth and the SP): This group was born as a self-styled "Luxemburgist" current inside the the Socialist Youth and the SP, and it rejected the Leninism and the Third International as a whole. The group was an opportunistic left-centrist group, and had a rather good implantation among the Sohyo young workers of public sector in To-
kyo.

2.4.4 Under the stagnating situation of the Sohyo reformist trade union movement, young workers began to move in opposition to the reformist leadership inside the Sohyo unions, independently from the CP leadership, in 1963–64, and the various far-left/centrist groups began to gain influence among the Sohyo young workers in the mid-1960s.

When the youth department of the SP took an initiative to found a nation-wide structure of young workers movement, composed of youth caucuses of the Sohyo unions, the Socialist Youth and various groups of young workers, against the normalization treaty of Japan and South Korea relation and the US military intervention in Indochina, it was the SP's attempt of maneuver to outflank the CP among the Sohyo young workers. The nation-wide structure was called as the "Antiwar Youth Committee".

However, all the far-left/centrist groups participated the antiwar youth committee actively, and turned it into an effective united-front vehicle to mobilized young workers militantly against the Japan/South Korea normalization treaty and the US war in Indochina, especially at the greater metropolitan area, in 1965. Thus the SP-affiliated reformist leadership of Sohyo was forced to freeze the antiwar youth committee at the end of 1965.

2.4.5 There was an ebb of all the mass movements in 1966. In 1967, the far-left/centrist groups took initiatives to rebuild the militant movement of young workers and students against the US war in Indochina, and there were various signs of new youth militancy under the leadership of those groups even before the 1968 Tet offensive.

Anyway, the Vietnamese 1968 Tet and French May 1968 had great impacts on the Japanese students and young workers. Mass of students and a significant layer of the Sohyo young workers exploded violently in 1968-69.

The SP, CP and the reformist Sohyo leadership took the hostile attitude toward the youth explosion, directly or indirectly supporting the police repression against the youth, and the far-left/centrist groups, except the Kakumaru, took the leadership of the explosion. In this context, the Japanese section of the FI left the SP and its Socialist Youth, and the majority of the Kaiho faction was forced to split from the SP, too. The peak of youth explosion was in 1969, and there were various violent confrontations with the police forces in the campuses and streets.

All the far-left/centrist groups, excluding the Kakumaru, had more than 5,000 active members, and all those were jointly in a position to be able to mobilize about 10,000 young workers under their direct command. Furthermore, the campus/street explosion of students and young workers had significant impacts on the youth caucuses of Sohyo unions, and there was a strong tendency to join the militant movement among those trade union youth caucuses, in opposition to the reformist union leaderships and CP.

However, the far-left force, headed by the Chukaku at the time, failed to take full advantage of the big potential to build up an organized and independent opposition current inside the Sohyo trade union movement. The Chukaku dominated the far-left forces in 1969, and it adopted a much simplistic linear street-confrontation orientation.

About 8,000 students and young workers were arrested in 1968-69, and the campus/street youth radicalization exhausted itself at the end of 1969. The riot police established its control over the campuses and streets in 1970.

2.4.6 In spite of the defeat of campus/street explosion, radicalization of the young workers continued to develop at the workshops, especially at the national railway and postal system, in 1970-72. This radicalization among the national railway and postal system young workers triggered a new general rise of the Sohyo workers militancy in 1972-73.

But, at this moment, the far-left forces around the Chukaku, except the Japanese section of the FI, took hopeless "militaristic" orientations, and at the same time the physical internal fightings started between the Chukaku and Kaiho on the one hand and the Kakumaru on the other under the initiative of the latter. As for the disintegrated Bundo, there were numerous intra-Bundo physical fightings.

Thus, the Japanese far-left/centrist groups entered a tragic period of self-destructive degeneration. The Japanese section of the FI was the only far-left group which was opposed to the degenerating method of internal physical fightings.

Table 5.2:
General Elections Results
(Lower House) 1958-80

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<td>491</td>
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Almost all of Independents are bourgeois politicians.
3. New Rise of Sohyo Workers' Militancy and the Impasse

3.1 From the middle of 1960s, the annual wage increase was decided basically by the two major elements at the spring wage increase campaign: the industrial negotiations between the big manufacturing businesses and the industrial groupings of big intra-enterprise unions (the key negotiation was the steel industry one) on the one hand, and the balance of forces between the government and the public-sector big national unions (the railway workers union, postal workers union and telecommunication workers union) on the other.

Big businesses' intra-enterprise unions did not have any meaningful autonomy from the managements, thereby placing the latter in a dominant position in the annual wage increase deal. As for the balance of forces in the public sector, the unions were rather in a passive situation in the 1960s. Thus, in the latter half of 1960s, the big bourgeoisie and the LDP government were in a hegemonic position at the annual wage increase bargain.

However, the situation changed significantly from the late 1960s to the early 1970s.

The vast reserve of labor force which had been embraced in the rural society was exhausted by the expansionist economic growth at the urban centers in the late 1960s (see table 6). Thus, the real wage increased 52.4% from 1965 to 1970 at the manufacturing industries (50.8% increase during 1955-65), in spite of the fact that the big bourgeoisie and LDP government were in a favorable position in relation to the trade union movement. On the other hand, an inflationary situation developed, especially in the early 1970s (annual deflator of the private final consumer expenditure: 4.8%/1967, 5.7%/68, 4.75%/69, 7.6%/70, 6.5%/71 and 5.4%/72).

3.2 Under these conditions, first of all, the youth radicalization exploded violently among students and young workers in 1968 and 1969. The campus/street youth explosion was defeated by the riot police in 1970. But the explosion had a deep impact on the whole society, and the youth radicalization continued to develop among young workers of the public sector and the small/medium-size factories.

The most advance expression was the national railway and postal young workers movement in 1971 and 1972. Those young workers had wide-scale direct clashes with the management apparatuses at the workplaces, the latter being in a new move to tighten their control over the workers. The result was a total defeat of the managements in the national railway and postal system. Elder workers, who had been feeling pressures from the inflationary situation under the prolonged stagnation of trade union movement in the late 1960s, gave their sympathetic support to the young workers, and finally the union bureaucrats took side with the young workers.

Thereby, the Sohyo trade union movement entered an offensive situation in the economic struggle in relation to the LDP government in 1972-73 and at the 1974 annual spring wage increase campaign, which happened to coincide with the explosive inflation under the direct impact of the oil price increase in 1973. The initiative turned from the big bourgeoisie and LDP government to the Sohyo public-sector trade union movement, and the latter had distinct influences among the workers of big manufacturing factories and also on the farmers in their national campaign to increase the government's purchase price of rice.

Such was the situation of the Sohyo trade union movement, when the oil price increase hit the last spurt of the expansionist economic growth from 1973 to 1974. Under the exploding inflation, the 1974 spring wage increase campaign secured more than 30% wage increase, although the net result became only 5.8% increase all through the year.
3.3 From the bourgeois point of view, the situation was really chaotic politically and in terms of the economy from 1973 to 1974, and there was a real chance for the working class to turn to a full offensive against the LDP government and the bosses. However, the Sohyo public-sector reformist leadership tightened their control in order not to let the mass militancy of workers slip out of their bureaucratic/reformist control, at the time of 1974 spring wage increase campaign, and those reformist leaderships turned to moderate the workers movement definitely later in the fall.

The result was the 1975 spring wage increase campaign, where the nominal wage increase was 15.1%, less than half of the previous year's wage increase, the net increase being only 2.9% in 1975. This result was essentially due to the definite moderation of the Sohyo Mindo reformist leadership. As for the mass of Sohyo workers, they had the militancy and readiness to fight. This was proved later in the fall.

In November 1975, there was a very successful and complete 5-days general strike by the public sector workers (about 900,000 workers of the national railway, postal system, telecommunication and tobacco corporation), with the support of part-time strikes of governmental-sector employees, demanding their right to strike. The union leaderships issued their strike calls, and the rank-and-file gave their complete response without any problem or any strike-sabotage attempts. The response of the workers was total. However, confronted with a seemingly strong response from the LDP main-stream forces in the government, the Sohyo Mindo reformist leadership did not push through the demand, and it gave up the confrontation, thus ending the whole strike.

3.4 This public-sector general strike eventually became the final test of will between the major Sohyo reformist trade union forces and the LDP government and bourgeoisie. With the former's giving-in, the reformist Sohyo trade union movement entered a new period of impasse and successive retreats in face of the LDP government and bourgeoisie.

At the 1976 annual wage increase campaign, the nominal gain was 7.5%, again less than half of the previous year's wage increase, the whole-year net result being 1.6% decrease in 1976.

The new rise of massive militancy among the Sohyo workers, which had developed under the initiative of young workers from the end of 1960s to the early 1970s, came to an end under the Sohyo Mindo reformist leadership, and the rank-and-file did not have any alternative national-wide leadership current. The CP was hostile even toward the strike waves of 1973-74, due to its deeply parliamentarian orientation of municipality/community activities as its central axis.

At the time, the LDP prime minister was T. Miki, who replace K. Tanaka in 1974 due to the latter's financial ill-doings, and Miki's faction was a small and "non-main-stream" one in the LDP. Early 1976, the Lockheed bribery scandal happened to be exposed, and premier Miki allowed the arrest of his predecessor Tanaka. Thus, the LDP and its government were thrown into a chaotic political crisis. The LDP was divided internally, and its government had no uniform function.

In spite of the chaotic crisis of the LDP and its government, the working class movement could not intervene in the situation at all in 1976. The total incapacity of the whole reformist structure of Japanese workers movement, embodied as a reformist complex of SP/Sohyo-Mindo bloc and CP, was definitely revealed through its impotence under the deep political crisis of the ruling bourgeois party LDP and its government. The Sohyo workers were forced to feel their powerlessness strongly, and they began to develop tendencies of dispersion from their traditional reformist structure of SP-Sohyo-CP.

3.5 The moderation of the Sohyo Mindo leadership confronted with the dramatic collapse of the expansionist economic growth in 1973-74, and its giving-in face of the LDP government on the right of strike must be explained from three angles.

In 1974-75 and thereafter, there was a classic economic crisis of excess production capacity, and, as a result, dismissals of workers - firstly non-permanent workers and bankruptcies of smaller enterprises and secondly older layer of permanent/life-long-employed workers - prevailed in the private manufacturing sector. However, there was no serious threat of unemployment in the public and governmental sector in the mid-1970s. As a matter of fact, Sohyo union membership increased from 2.757 million in 1973 to 3.189 million in 1980. Number of the governmental employees increased 1.80 in 1973 to 1.99 million in 1978. That is, there was no immediate unemployment threat for the Sohyo reformist leadership to moderate its stance or capitulate politically. Only in the 1980s the question of dismissals become a reality especially for the national railway workers.

The Sohyo Mindo leadership had always been a reformist leadership strictly within the framework of capitalist national balance of the Japanese economy since the end of 1940s. The Mindo reformist trade union forces cooperated with the US military occupation command and the Japanese bourgeoisie around the 1949 great economic rationalization. The Sohyo was established as a mass reformist trade union movement, based on the initial recovery of Japanese capitalism as a national economy.

When the militant spontaneity of workers clashed with the bourgeoisie and LDP government in 1957-60, the Sohyo Mindo reformist forces betrayed the struggles of the workers and capitulated. They retreated in the passivity and continued to do so all through the 1960s, being content to be supplied with benefits of the the expansionist economic growth.

Only when broader Sohyo workers began to move under the initiative of young workers in the early 1970s, the Sohyo Mindo forces accepted to take the leadership of the movement in their specific reformist manner, and they betrayed the movement again, when it was confronted with the crisis of Japanese capitalist
economy in 1974-75.

As a conclusion, it must be said that the Sohyo Mindo forces were essentially "intra-enterprise" reformist at the level of capitalist national economy. Their major and central bases were the public and governmental sectors, being "free" from the competitive interests of individual enterprises in the private sector, but the material basis of their reformism had been the Japanese capitalist national economy as a whole.

3.6 Secondly, the reformist Sohyo Mindo forces faced the question of government and parliamentary bourgeois democracy objectively in 1974-75.

There were violent clashes between national railway strikers and parts of the daily commuters, who were agitated by the bourgeois anti-strike campaign, at the 1973 spring wage increase strikes. The LDP government had been thrown into its political crisis since the oil price increase in 1973.

The central strike force of the Sohyo trade union movement was the public sector workers, and the direct supervisor was the government. The public sector workers had been deprived of the right of strike since 1948. The movement of Sohyo public sector workers had been already centralized at the national level in relation to the government in 1973-74.

In April 1975, Phnom Penh and Saigon were liberated finally.

In this whole context, if the Sohyo mobilized their workers even under the wage increase demand in confrontation with the LDP government's wage-restrain policy at the 1975 spring wage increase campaign, the struggle might have become really political, and the parliamentary bourgeois democratic system itself might have been thrown into a critical situation.

In reality, immediately after the clashes between the national railway workers and the crowds of commuters, the union leadership reacted quickly, moderating the workers actions and moving to establish its bureaucratic control over the strikers. At the time of 1974 spring wage increase campaign, the Sohyo Mindo forces exercised their bureaucratic control over the strikers, not to "provoke/distabilize" the parliamentary bourgeois democratic system, from the very beginning. The CP leadership, too, responded very sharply against militant strike-related actions and even against the strikes themselves in 1973-74.

Thus, when the Sohyo Mindo forces faced the test of will with LDP mainstream forces on the issue of right to strike in November 1975, they had no choice but to give in and retreat in face of the government. Precisely and especially at this political level, an alternative leadership current was lacking inside the Sohyo trade union movement, and this was the failure of the far-left/left-centrist movement among the young workers from the late 1960s to the early 1970s.

3.7 Thirdly, there was a weakness in regard to the historical accumulation of trade union organization as an autonomous class organization among working masses themselves.

Apart from the lack of continuity of organized mass workers movement between the 1920s-30s and the postwar period, this point was related with other discontinuity of the organized workers movement in the whole postwar period.

First of all, there was the 1949-50 crushing defeat of the militant workers movement, represented by the CP-led Sanbetsu-Kaigi, which burst out immediately after the defeat of Japanese imperialism. The militant Communist forces were virtually annihilated in the organized workers movement through the great rationalization of 1949 and the 1950 "Red Purges". Thus, there was no continuity of organized militant current inside the workers movement from the late 1940 to the 1950s.

Mass workers militancy had developed again under the framework of Sohyo trade union movement since 1953-54, and a left-reformist/left-centrist current developed inside the Sohyo unions, in opposition to the SP-affiliated reformist Mindo forces, in the latter half of 1950s. The current represented the mass workers militancy, but it was extremely heterogeneous and was not organized well across the industries.

The targets of the late 1950s bourgeois attacks were this mass workers militancy and the left-reformist/left-centrist current. In 1957, 58, 59 and 60, the latter was hit severely and weakened, being betrayed by the Sohyo Mindo reformists. The current was virtually eliminated among the workers of large manufacturing enterprises in the early 1960s. In the public sector, a significant part of the current joined the CP in the early 1960s, and the Japanese CP stood for the Chinese CP against the USSR CP at the time. However, in reality, this was an end of the current's active and militant role inside the Sohyo trade union movement.

Thus, there was the second discontinuity of militant current inside the organized workers movement from 1950s to the 1960s, and, as mentioned before, the Japanese far-left movement, splitted from the CP at the end of 1950s, was isolated from the Sohyo trade union movement in the early 1960s.

In this context, when young workers began to develop their oppositional potential in 1963-64, again the process of opposition formation was very much empirical, lacking a continuity with the period of 1950s. From the mid-1960s to the late 1960s, the far-left/left-centrist groups played some significant role to develop a new oppositionist current inside the Sohyo trade union movement.

However, when those groups faced a great potential to build up a nationwide left oppositionist current in the Sohyo trade union movement from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, they could not capitalize the potential and they themselves entered the self-destructive political degeneration, thereby leaving the radicalized young workers of Sohyo unions under the leadership of reformist "Socialist Society" or "Kakumaru".
Here was the third discontinuity of militant current inside the organized workers movement. Thus, when the Sohyo trade union movement faced the moderating policy of its reformist Minde leadership in 1974-75, it had no alternative leftwing leadership which would be able to fight against the reformist capitulation.

3.8  Faced with the dramatic collapse of the expansionist economic growth in 1973-74 and the subsequent economic depression in 1974-75, the Sohyo trade union movement under the Minde forces and the municipality/community movement under the CP capitulated completely to the bourgeoisie and the LDP government in 1975.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7: Annual wage increase (real, %)</th>
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<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>All industries</td>
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<td>Manufacturing industries</td>
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After 1975, the annual wage increase declined definitely (see table 7); the so-called "Streamline Management" rationalization to lay off and decrease workhands got full momentum in the private manufacturing industries; the social welfare expenditures through the local governments were restrained severely and the masses' direct share of burden was increased; public utilities' charges and the consumer price of rice were increased; and annual rice-price increase of governmental purchase from the farmers was also restrained, in parallel with the radical decline of the workers' annual wage increase.

The immediate capitalist economic difficulties, international and domestic, as the result of the collapse of last-spurt expansionist economic efforts, were basically overcome at the social and economic expenses of the working class, farmers and lower-layer petit-bourgeois masses. The "Streamline Management" intensive rationalization was carried out rather successfully in the manufacturing industries, combined with the national-economy-level sacrifices of the workers and farmers. It was realized through the actual change of the balance of class forces. Thereby, Japanese manufacturers increased its exports to the inflationary US market successfully, and the deficit of current international account was overcome rather quickly.

The bourgeoisie and LDP government were in crisis from 1973-74 to 1976. However, the Sohyo workers movement capitulated totally to the bourgeoisie and the parliamentary democratic state under the LDP government. The totality of capitulation of the Japanese organized workers movement was so glaring and so exceptional among the imperialist countries that US and Western European bourgeoisie developed their fresh interest in the Japanese management-labor relations.