

Political Struggles and Settlements of the High-Growth Era

Political Map in the early 1950s

- Conservative Forces
 - Liberal Party (Yoshida Shigeru) led the peace treaty and the US-Japan Security Treaty.
 - Democratic Party (Hatoyama Ichiro) objected the “subordinate independence.”
- Progressive Forces
 - Socialist Party (Left faction) sought a revolutionary transformation of capitalism at home and opposed to the partial peace treaty. .
 - Socialist Party (Right faction) sought partial reform of capitalism and accepted the partial peace treaty.
 - Communist Party lost popular confidence since they took violent actions suggested by Stalin.

1955

- The two conservative parties merged to found the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).
- LDP would remain in power in the following 38 years.
 - Business Leaders financially supported.
 - The bureaucrats offered policy expertise and manpower to the party. Leading midcareer bureaucrats left their posts to run for political office under the LDP banner.
- The two factions of the Socialist Party reunited.

Economic Policy Debate

- Arisawa Hiromi and Tsuru Shigeto stressed that Japan should develop natural resources (coal and hydroelectric powers) within it and minimize interdependence, fearing foreign conflicts that might endanger oil supplies.
- Nakayama Ichiro argued that the only sustainable choice for Japan was to join the global economy, by importing raw materials and exporting manufactured goods.

Yoshida VS Hatoyama

- The followers of Yoshida Shigeru followed the American lead in containing the communist bloc.
- Hatoyama and his allies sought independence from US. They succeeded in normalizing relations with Soviet Union in 1956 without Peace Treaty.



Revision of the Constitution

- Hatoyama and his faction scorned the constitution as the coercively imposed “MacArthur Constitution.”
- They wanted to raise the emperor’s status and abolish Article 9.
- In order to ratify any revision of the constitution, the LDP need 2/3 of the Diet seats, and it failed.
- Gradually in 1960s, the drive to revise the constitution lost momentum.

Energetic Progressive Forces

- Labor Unions.
- Anti-Nuclear Organization protested against the US nuclear tests: In 1954 a Japanese fishing boat *Lucky Dragon* was showered with radioactive fallout from an American nuclear test on Bikini Island.
- *Zengakuren* (All-Japan Federation of Student Self-Governing Associations) was founded in 1948. They were major progressive forces throughout 1950s.

The Anpo Revision

- In the late 1950s, the revision of US-Japan Security Treaty was a major agenda for the conservative government.
- The US and Japan agreed on the revision in early 1960 with:
 - American bases would protect Japan.
 - Japan would accept US bases, help pay for them, and help protect them in an emergency.

The Anpo Struggle

- Socialist and students groups opposed to the nearly permanent subordinate independence under American hegemony.
- On May 19, the Kishi government called the Diet into session and passed the law with a snap vote.
- After that night, huge protests took place daily in the vicinity of the Diet.



The Treaty Revised

- US President Eisenhower planned to visit Japan to sign the new treaty.
- On June 10, his press secretary James Hagerty arrived Japan. His car was surrounded by the angry crowd, and he was rescued by a helicopter.
- On June 15, a young female student of Tokyo U (Kamba Michiko) was killed. Protesters blamed her death on police brutality.
- Eisenhower called off his visit at the last minute.
- Kishi resigned, but achieved his political goal.

“Income Doubling Plan”

- There was another major political protests in Kyushu: The Mitsui Corporation’s Miike Coal Mine in 1960.
- Since then the conservative government deemphasized the drive for constitutional revision and confrontation with unions.
- The result was a new politics of high growth of the economy.
- Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato launched the “Income Doubling Plan” to commit economic growth to double GNP by 1970.

New Conflicts and Protests

- *Behiren* against the Vietnam War: The movement blamed US for its imperialistic intervention into civil wars in Asia.
 - The protesters were afraid of Japan's involvement with the war, violating the article 9 of the constitution.
 - They failed in generating a successful movement in 1970 against the second renewal of the US-Japan Security Treaty.

Environmental Protests

- Chemical pollution-related diseases appeared in 1950s.
- Mercury poisoning struck and killed residents in southern Japan (Minamata-Kumamoto) and northern Japan (Niigata).
- Other notable protests:
 - Air pollution (Mie)
 - Cadmium (Jinzu River-Toyama)

Student Radicals

- In late 1960s, university students, like their counterparts the world over, were involved with intense and often violent protests,
- They protested increased tuition and demanded a curriculum reform and their participation to university governance.
- Zengakuren was divided through faction conflicts into communist-like groups and non-communist “new left.”

Geba (Gewalt)

- Helmeted demonstrators took over class room buildings and dormitories.
- Conflicts in the University of Tokyo:
 - The Yasuda-Memorial Hall was occupied by helmeted students.
 - Deans were taken captive by students.
 - Maruyama Masao resigned.
- The government sent riot police into campuses to retake control.



Struggle against Narita Airport

- The government chose the site northeast of Tokyo for the construction of a new international airport.
- Farmers and student activists formed a powerful alliance against the government pressure on farmers to sell the remaining land.
- Students saw the conflict as a chance to attack the arrogant bureaucratic state.

“Progressive Local Government”

- Citizens' movements against environmental pollution and/or US military bases brought communist or socialist politicians to power.
- Many of major cities and prefectures (Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Fukuoka) were headed by mayors or governors of left-wing parties.

Minobe Ryokichi

- He was a former Marxist economist, elected governor of Tokyo, and the most famous progressive leader.
- He was the son of Minobe Tatsukichi, the author of the emperor-as-a-state-organ theory.



Okinawa Returns

- In 1968 the US president Lyndon Johnson promised to return Okinawa to Japanese control.
- In 1972, Okinawa returned to Japan.
- The US military continued to maintain a huge presence on the island.