The US Cold War and the Japanese Student Movement, 1948-1968

Introduction

Between 1947 and 1968, a range of American officials and policymakers, from General Douglas MacArthur to John and Robert Kennedy, were forced to devote considerable energy in dealing with the powerful leftist student movement in Japan led by Zengakuren, formally named Zen-Nihon Gakusei Jichikai Sōrengō (All-Japan Federation of Students’ Self-Governing Associations). Zengakuren appeared to threaten political stability and ideological affinity that the US sought to maintain in Japan, where the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) hoped to make America’s “strongest anti-Communist center in Asia” in 1949.1 The interactions between the US Cold Warriors and the Japanese student movement forced each side to reassess and revise strategies and had profound and lasting impacts on the Japanese society and the US-Japan relations. In this paper, I will explore the Japanese student movement in contexts of the US Cold War in Asia and postwar US-Japan relations.

Recently historians have expanded our understanding of the Cold War through their exploration of local and non-state histories, which had been overshadowed by the exclusive focus on the superpower politics and state actors. Supporting scholarly attempts to de-center the history of the Cold War, my project presents a case that the Cold War was not only about the rivalry between the United States and Soviet Union, or two inherently opposing ideologies, but also that it was a complex multilayered, multisided conflict that intermingled with various international, regional, and local tensions, involving a large diversity of state and non-state actors. By studying US foreign policy in a specific local context, my project aims to illuminate

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social and political ramifications of US power and considers a long-term transformation shaped by the international situations involving the Cold War.

By exploring the Japanese student movement, the paper aims to challenges some of the conventions which dominate studies of the Global Sixties; particularly those resulted from Euro-American centric approaches. By observing similar tactics and languages of the US protest movements found abroad, some scholars had reached the simple conclusion that the international student movement had originated in the United States. Mark Kurlansky, for example, located the origin of the global 1968 student revolt at the sit-in protests of four African American students in Greensboro, North Carolina on February 1, 1960. He argued, “By 1968, all over the world, people with causes wanted to copy the civil rights movement. Its anthem, Pete Seeger’s ‘We Shall Overcome’ - a folk song turned labor song that Seeger had turned in to a civil rights song when sit-ins began in 1960 - was sung in English from Japan to South Africa to Mexico.”\(^2\) While the tremendous influence that American Civil Rights Movement had on protest movements abroad, including Japan, can not be denied, this portrait of the global revolt of 1960s fails to account for local historical diversities and local contrasts and more problematically confine them in a narrow category of the New Left.

My paper focuses on the period stretching from the US Occupation of Japan to 1968. The absence of what described as the “silent generation” of the 1950s in Japan, along with places like Latin American countries, Turkey and South Korea, forced the United States to continuously engage in activities to deal with “communistic” student radicals who challenged American Cold War foreign policy. Problematizing the general historical periodization of the “sixties,” my study argues that the Japanese student movement was an anti-imperial movement that originally

developed in the late 1940s with the aspiration to achieve peace and democracy and continued to exist until well into the 1970s.

**Finishing the Unfinished Revolution: the US Occupation and the rise of Zengakuren**

By the end of 1946, suspicion about the Communist influence over Japan was rising among Americans involved in the Occupation. The debates on the Occupation policy increasingly came to reflect America’s bipolarized worldview. In his report to the State Department on August 10, 1946, John Davies, the First Secretary of Embassy in the Soviet Union called attention to the situation in Asia where, he argued, “the American and Soviet frontiers meet in the Japan Sea.”

The crucial problem for the United States seemed to be political and economic vulnerability of Japan that could be exploited by the Soviets.

Not only the Soviet threat but also American’s self-perceived role in the postwar world affected its attitude toward Japan. The prevailing assumption was that “what is America today will be the world tomorrow” and its mission was to teach the liberty and freedom desired by the rest of the world. General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, believed that the Japanese were thirsty for America’s guidance, and his mission was to bring them democracy and Christianity, which would embed Western democratic and cultural values in Japan. Furthermore, he believed that the US Occupation of Japan was a great opportunity to “plant the seeds of the appreciation of Christianity and democracy” not only in Japan but throughout Asia.

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3 Memorandum by the First Secretary of Embassy in the Soviet Union (Davis) in *Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereinafter cited as FRUS), 1946, vol. 8, p285.
Meanwhile, the democratic movement caught the nation as a whole reflecting the Japanese desire to change their political culture. A large number of ordinary citizens joined public demonstrations and strikes initiated by the political left and labor movement. In 1946, the traditional May Day rallies were resumed and a number of demonstrations followed, gathering large crowds of people including children, housewives, students, and teachers. They gathered somewhere between 1.25 and 2.5 million people throughout Japan. Most of these people demanded the fair distribution of basic necessities, especially rice or expressed democratic consciousness calling for the application of democratic rights and equality during these demonstrations. The progressive-leftist forces tried to resume the task of building a popular front that had developed as a progressive coalition against fascism before the war.

At universities, *Jichikai*, or self-governing student association, was created after the war to secure their autonomy and became the basis of student activities in carrying out their perceived tasks in support of GHQ’s top-down democratic revolution. The self-governing associations played a central role in extending their activities beyond school or regional areas. By the end of 1945, these self-governing student associations began establishing regional collective bodies. Within a next few years, a number of students’ collective organizations grew, and they moved toward the unification of student self-governing associations throughout the nation, ultimately leading to the creation of Zengakuren (All-Japan Federation of Students’ Self-Governing Associations) in 1948.

After the spring of 1946, the GHQ and Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru’s government tried to control the wave of mass demonstrations. On May 20, 1946, over 250,000 participants

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8 Ibid., 262.
marched demanding food and better handling of the postwar poverty in the Food May Day.  

Alarmed by the demonstration, MacArthur warned that he would have to act against demonstrators for the purpose of the Occupation and security of Japan if the “undisciplined elements” continue “mass violence and the physical processes of intimidation.” The common anxiety about possible Communist control of the labor movement drew the GHQ and Japanese conservatives further closer. On January 31, 1947, MacArthur for the first time issued an order for the labor unions to call off a planned major strike, justifying that his order was a necessary action to prevent “dreadful consequences.”

The powerful popular democratic upsurge, which caught fire from the GHQ’s democratization and demilitarization programs, continued without losing its intensity even after the US objectives of the Occupation had reversed its course. While the United States began putting efforts to establish an economically self-sufficient center of anticommunism in Asia, the student movement began consolidating its power to achieve their twin objectives: democratization and demilitarization of Japan, in other words, to finish the unfinished democratic revolution initiated by the US Occupation. The differences in their objectives and priorities became apparent as they approached the 1950s.

**Confronting American Democracy: The anti-Red Purge Struggle of 1949-1951**

Since the beginning of the Occupation, Japan was considered America’s “laboratory in which western ideas, institutions, and methods were tested within the context of an Asian society” as described by Hans H. Baerwald, former GHQ officer who was in charge of the purge

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9 *Yomiuri Shinbun*, May 20, 1946.
10 *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 20, 1946.
11 Ibid.
The Occupation collaborated with the Japanese government to initiate a large-scale red purge program, targeting individuals and groups both in public and private sectors, which met fierce opposition from Zengakuren students. In January 1949, the State Department reported that it had been “informed that Communism is especially strong in university and intellectual quarters in Japan.” Within a month, the Civil Information and Education (CIE) of GHQ announced its formal decision to focus on combating communism in education and cultural affairs of Japan and set up the Committee to Study Methods to Combat Communism. The CIE officials did not perceive of their anticommunist campaigns as a drastic shift in their overall objective, rather they considered it an extension of their ongoing efforts to democratize Japan. Communism totalitarianism, in their view, was as inimical to democracy as Japanese fascism had been. From 1949 to 1951, the Adviser on Higher Education to SCAP, Eells led anti-Communist campaigns in Japanese universities.

At the opening ceremony of Niigata University on July 19, 1949, Eells delivered a speech that became a catalyst for the rapid mobilization of student protests against the red purge. In the speech, Eells called for the discharge of Communist professors and the expulsion of student strikers from universities so that universities could safeguard democratic education and academic freedom on campuses. In the speech, Eells indignantly argued that the presence of Communist professors would erode academic freedom because “they are not free. Their thoughts,

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13 Between 1949 and 1951, the total of over 27,300 people in Japan were purged from their jobs and positions in both public and private institutions including schools, according to Tetsuo Hirata, *Reddo Pāji no Shi-teki Kyūmei* (Tokyo: Shin Nihon Shuppan Sha, 2002), 22.

14 From Department of State to the Acting United States Political Adviser for Japan, Tokyo, January 4, 1949. RG 84. Box 49. NARAII.

beliefs, their teachings are controlled from outside. Communists are told from headquarters *what to think and what to teach*” (emphasis in original).  

Viewing the official anti-Communist campaign initiated by Eells as the potential threat to academic freedom and democratic education, students mobilized against the coming of the red purge in education. In September, Eells and another CIE officer Donald Marsh Typer drafted a “Program for Activities in Universities” to initiate a nationwide anticommunist tour, which would begin at Tokushima University on Shikoku island on November 7 and finish at Iwate University in the northeast region on May 19. The massive wartime crackdown of the leftists and progressive scholars remained fresh in the memory of the students in Japan. Zengakuren students accused the GHQ and the Japanese government for their “Fassho-tekki (fascist-like)” repression. Students responded by resisting the arrival of Eells to their campuses, which they interpreted as that of mass red purge at their schools. Eells recalled that students often interrupted him on campuses by calling him “liar,” “enemy of democracy,” and “warmonger.”

The largest protests occurred at Tohoku University on May 2. Students forced Eells to cancel his lecture titled, “Academic Freedom and Communism.”

The direct confrontation with the GHQ’s red purge radicalized the student activists and led to open criticism of “American imperialism.” On May 4, students at Tohoku University held a school-wide meeting to discuss tactics to resist Eells and formed the ad hoc Tohoku University

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18 In the March 15 incident of 1928, the government arrested about 1500 Communists and alleged Communist sympathizers under the 1925 Peace Preservation Laws; the Kyoto University Takigawa Incident of 1933 began when the Education Minister Ichiro Hatoyama ordered Kyoto Imperial University to expel the liberal professor Yukitoki Takigawa, accusing him for advocating a Marxist ideology. Despite fierce protests from students and professors, Takigawa was forced to resign from the university.
Joint Struggle Committee on the campus. The students proclaimed, “Having been enslaved by and used as the bullets of Japanese imperialism led by the zaibatsu (industrial and financial conglomerates) and military clique, the Japanese citizens, who were not yet fully enjoying the joys of liberation after the war, now face the danger of being drawn into another war.”

Zengakuren students simultaneously went onto the streets in solidarity with Tohoku University comrades, collecting funds and picketing to send their message to the public. About 5,000 students participated in the demonstration held in Tokyo, expressing their support for Tohoku University’s struggle against Eells. Protesting against Eells, student activists grew less hesitant to openly attack “American” imperialism. Although criticism of capitalist imperialism had been pervasive among the circles of Zengakuren, Yanada Masataka, a former student leader in the anti-Eells strike at Hokkaido University recalled, even most radical students had hesitated to publicly attack “American” imperialism in the face of the absolute power of the Occupation.

Yet, as the students began emphasizing their current struggle as not merely opposition against red purge, but as the resistance to the “colonial-course,” the Eells struggle gradually developed into the first open anti-imperial struggle against the Occupation.

After the end of Occupation, the student radicalism and Communist influence in education remained as a major concern in Japan for Cold War America. American Embassy and other US posts in Japan continued producing a number of reports on the Japanese student movement. In 1953, for instance, Glen Bruner, a consular officer in American Council in Kobe

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21 Ibid., 93.
22 Ibid., 98
23 “Tōhoku Daigaku Jiken - Rupotājyu,” Gakusei Hyōron, no. 6 (1950): 118.
25 Takakuwa Suehide and Ogura Jyōji Sumiya Etsuji, Nihon Gakusei Shakai Undō Shi: Kyoto wo Chūshin ni (Kyoto: Doshisha Daigaku Shuppan-bu, 1953), 264.
produced a detailed report on student radicalism entitled “An Example of the Failure of Material Success to Eliminate Student Leftism” in which he concluded that Americans should “correct” the Japanese students’ understanding of the United States, rather than simply filling their stomach, in order to fight Communism in Japanese universities.26

**Clashing Concepts of Security: The Sunagawa Struggle**

Another major student struggle of the 1950s was the Sunagawa case in which the student protestors, joining the local farmers and labor unions, resisted the official plan to extend the runways of the US-occupied Tachikawa Airbase adopted after the Korean War. Here, I bring attention to the contested conceptualizations of the “security” granted by the US-Japan Security between the student activists and the US and Japanese authorities. Washington was aware that Japanese concept of security had to be in unison with that of Cold War America. In April, Dulles argued that building security did not simply mean the expansion of a Washington-centered military alliance bloc but also indicate “the growing acceptance of the collective security concept we describe.”27 The National Security Council (NSC) similarly pointed out the importance of crafting a homogeneous concept of “security” between the two nations.

In the mid-1950s, the US-Japan bilateral defense cooperation grew accordingly. As a sweetener, the US Air Force signed a contract in 1955 to allow the production of about 500 jet fighter aircraft, in addition to seventy F-86 jet aircrafts, at the total cost of 40.6 million dollars.28 The Japanese government agreed to America’s demands for extensions of military bases in turn. The plan included the extension of the runways at Tachikawa Air Base, located in the Tama

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26 Foreign Service Despatch from Glen Bruner, American Council, Kobe to the Department of State, Washington, Subject: An Example of the Failure of Material Success to Eliminate Student Leftism, July 31, 1953. RG 59. Box 4238. NARA II.
28 Memorandum from the Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs (McClurkin) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson), February 1, 1955, *FRUS, 1955-57*, vol. XXIII, Japan: 15.
region to the west of the Tokyo metropolitan area, from 5,500 feet to 7,000 feet.\textsuperscript{29} The Japanese government agreed to offer 120,000 m\textsuperscript{2} for the base and designate another 55,206 m\textsuperscript{2} as an obstacle-free zone, extending the runways into a small town called Sunagawa, with a population of 12,655 (2,542 families), mostly small landowning farmers.\textsuperscript{30}

Immediately after the plan was announced, it provoked fierce opposition from the local residents of Sunagawa. A rumor that the US was planning to station aircrafts that carried nuclear bombs soon became widely circulated among the residents. Many residents feared that the accommodation of modern US jets would make the town a likely target in destructive, possibly nuclear, war between the superpowers. The fear raised by the rumor circulated widely among the local residents as it revived the horrific memories of the wartime bombings, which had burnt and damaged a total of 226 houses in Sunagawa alone.\textsuperscript{31} In June 1955, Zengakuren announced its decision to join the local residents in Sunagawa to protest against the plan to extend US military base in order to defend “world peace and independence of Japan.” From the fall, Zengakuren began regularly dispatching its members to Sunagawa.

On September 13, the first physical confrontations in Sunagawa occurred as the surveying squad backed by the police force attempted to enter the scheduled survey area, which had been barricaded with barbed wire and protestors who held sit-in strikes.\textsuperscript{32} The Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department had assigned its force to provide protection to the survey squad. A phalanx of police pushed the “human wave” resisters who in turn pushed back to prevent the survey team from entering the survey area. The American mainstream news media reported the

\textsuperscript{32} Yomiuri Shinbun, September 14, 1955.
issue and often criticized the leftist agitators for provoking villagers to engage in violent resistance. The Los Angeles Times called the protests at Sunagawa “anti-America disorders” that were “obviously encouraged if not actually promoted by the recently revived Communist Party.” The local residents, joined by Socialist Party members, labor unions and Zengakuren, continued to resist the entrance of the surveying team for more than one year. During the two weeks of the most intense struggle against the extension plan that took place in October 1957, a total of 23,600 Zengakuren students come to Sunagawa, and they represented more than a third of all participants.

For the student activists, the Sunagawa struggle was a formative experience. Zengakuren’s central office celebrated the remarkable solidarity among the local farmers, union workers, leftist political organizations, intellectuals and artists, and students that constituted a powerful mass movement that transcended political and ideological differences. It proclaimed, “We no longer have the sense of defeat in the fight against the US-Japan reactionary forces that abuse the state power and use violence. The development of the mass movement showed us a new possibility.” At the tenth national convention held in June 1957, Zengakuren exhibited its renewed confidence and stated that the Sunagawa struggle demonstrated Zengakuren’s strength and heightened national and international expectations about its role.

In March 1959, the Sunagawa struggle moved to the court as the trial for the convicted protestors who crossed the fence into the US military base in July 1957 began. The trial was held at the Tokyo District Court headed by Justice Date Akio. The prosecutors’ argument was that the

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33 Los Angeles Times, September 14, 1955.
36 Ibid., 138.
demonstrators violated Article 2 of the Special Criminal Law of the Security Treaty agreed by the US and Japanese governments, and it was the country’s responsibility generally expected by the international community to provide security for foreign troops. The defense pointed out that the presence of the US military force contradicted to the Article 9, the pacifist clause of the Japanese Constitution. The prosecutors responded by arguing that the peace clause of the Constitution prohibited maintaining war potential, not the defense force. On March 30, 1959, the Tokyo District Court ruled the defendants not guilty and called the maintaining of an armed force, either Japanese or American, as unconstitutional under Article 9.\(^{38}\) Alarmed by the decision, Ambassador Douglas MacArthur II called for a meeting with Foreign Minister Fujiyama Aiichiro. In the meeting, the Ambassador said, “While I was not familiar with many aspects of Japanese jurisprudence, I understood two possibilities were available to GOJ [Government of Japan]. 1. To appeal decision of Tokyo District Court to Appellate Court or 2. To appeal decision direct to [the] Japanese Supreme Court.”\(^{39}\) On December 16, the Supreme Court annulled the verdict issued by the Tokyo District Court and proclaimed, “the pacifism advocated in our Constitution was never intended to mean defenseness \([sic]\) or non-resistance.”\(^{40}\) MacArthur hoped that the Supreme Court’s decision would not only overturn the unacceptable decision made by the Date court but also put an end to the debate over the constitutionality of the Security Treaty by silencing the anti-treaty elements.

For the Japanese, the Sunagawa case for the first time raised serious questions about the “security” granted by the treaty, exhibiting the real cost of the Security Treaty. The Court’s

\(^{38}\) Ibid.


\(^{40}\) Judgment Upon Case of the So-called “Sunakawa \([sic]\) ] Case, Series of Prominent Judgments of the Supreme Court upon Questions of Constitutionality No. 4, General Secretariat, Supreme Court of Japan, 1960. RG 84. Box 201. NARA II.
decision did not end the Anpo struggle; rather it had invigorated the opposition against the treaty, in particular among the student left. Through the Sunagawa struggle, Zengakuren had grown more powerful and confident and begun perceiving its role as the vanguard of the mass movement, criticizing “US-Japan imperialism.” Despite the ruling of the Supreme Court, the Sunagawa struggle demonstrated that the student left could mobilize and lead a mass opposition against militarism in Japan. This sense of power gained through the Sunagawa struggle became a crucial factor that encouraged the students to lead a major Anpo struggle in 1960.

**The anti-Anpo Struggle of 1960**

In 1960, the mass demonstrations against the revision of the US-Japan Security Treaty took place. The official decision to revise the Anpo treaty sparked vigorous public opposition and brought new intensity to the Zengakuren student movement. June 15 marked the largest demonstrations in its history with hundreds of thousands of people went onto the streets to protest against the ratification of the revised Anpo treaty. By the fall of 1960, sixteen million Japanese people were reported to have participated in the anti-Anpo demonstrations.41 Scholars have paid considerable attention to the anti-Anpo demonstrations of 1960 as one of the most crucial postwar events in Japan, yet it still remains only understood in terms of Japanese history alone. In this paper, I place the anti-Anpo demonstrations of 1960 within specific historical conjunctures of the Cold War in the 1950s by analyzing primary and secondary sources housed in Japan and the United States. For Japan, the Anpo demonstrations of 1960 marked a critical point from which the debate on the US-Japan Security Treaty developed into a discussion of postwar democracy. For the United States, this “Tokyo riot,” in addition to situations in places

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like Latin American countries, Turkey and South Korea, brought shock to American self-confidence in the Republican leadership.

The anti-Stalinist Marxist faction called, *Bundo* (Japanese pronunciation of the German word, *Bund*), which took over Zengakuren leadership in June 1959, called the opposition against the *Anpo* treaty “the most important political mission” to bring down the “Japanese imperialists” led by Kishi.42 During the time, Japan’s renewed regionalism also had given the student left a new sense of urgency. Kishi had begun focusing on Southeast Asia as the area to pursue Japan’s economic and political interests between 1957 and 1958. History had proven, Zengakuren students argued, the Japanese capitalists would pursue their economic interests in Asia, even at the cost of peace and national independence of others. Zengakuren declared that the purpose of the Security Treaty revision was “not only to defend its class dominance but also to economically expand into Southeast Asia.”43 The students condemned the Security Treaty as the intra-bourgeoisie treaty between the United States and Japan to mutually benefit their imperial ambitions. Arguing that the purpose of the revision was strengthening US-Japan economic and military “imperial” cooperation, Zengakuren began concentrating its forces on opposition against the US-Japan Security Treaty. A large segment of students joined the anti-*Anpo* struggle sharing genuine anxiety about the Cold War tensions as well. When the revision of the treaty began to dominate the public debate, fear spread among the Japanese that the revision of the *Anpo* treaty, which meant closer alliance with the United States, would ultimately expose Japan to the Cold War’s hot war.

The demonstrations against the revision of the Security Treaty culminated in June. On June 3 and 4, Zengakuren launched large-scale demonstrations under the slogan, “Began the

42 Ibid.
general political strike of the working class at the nationwide student general strike at the Diet on June 3." On June 4, 254 anti-Anpo meetings were held and the total number of 222,604 people attended nationwide. Demonstrations took place in 78 places, participated by 171,018 people throughout Japan. The total of 605,979 workers engaged in anti-Anpo strikes in 9,758 workplaces. According to the Public Safety police report, Zengakuren’s demonstrations gathered 11,000 students in Tokyo and 7,000 in Kyoto on that day. A total of 55,000 Zengakuren students of over 100 schools in Japan participated in anti-Anpo protests. The demonstrations against the revision of the Anpo treaty reached their zenith on June 15. Zengakuren students, approximately over 17,000 arrived around the Diet. About 1,500 student protestors entered the Diet premises, and the police responded by mobilizing 3,000 forces and attacked them with their cudgels. A student at the University of Tokyo, Suzuki Hajime recalled, “Never had I felt a contradiction of the capitalist society more strongly than I did then. The police officers were so alienated that they could not do anything but sell themselves to the bourgeoisie in order to live, uncritically accept the false ideology without understanding the truth, and could find their means of survival only by violently attacking the Zengakuren. There was nothing I hated more than that.” Outside the Diet premises, Zengakuren and labor union snake-dancers filled the streets, carrying various signs against the revision of Anpo and the Kishi government.

45 Yomiuri Shinbun, June 5, 1960.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Yomiuri Shinbun, June 16, 1960.
51 Ibid.
The physical confrontation with the police injured 270 students and caused the death of a female Zengakuren student from the University of Tokyo, Kanba Michiko.\textsuperscript{53} The death of Kanba shocked and infuriated Zengakuren students, as well as many ordinary citizens, who viewed it as the result of the naked state violence aimed at its own citizens. Kanba died from compression and intracerebral hemorrhage reportedly after having been severely attacked and trampled upon.\textsuperscript{54} Kanba’s death became a rallying cry for the student protestors, and they continued to clash the police phalanxes aggressively through the night, expressing their anger toward the government that killed Kanba.

President Eisenhower received news of the June 15 mass demonstration in Tokyo while in Manila. He mentioned neither the Tokyo demonstrations nor Communism in his speech to the students of the University of the Philippines, but criticized “those who are allied against us and those still in bondage under them” and claimed that “the minds and souls” that were “chained in the dictates of a tyrannic [sic] master plan” consequently increase “resentment that finally ignites revolt.”\textsuperscript{55} The fear of possible repercussions around the world, especially in the areas that host American military bases, increased among American officials.\textsuperscript{56} According to the \textit{New York Times}, the US government “feared that the wave of student uprisings that has triggered political explosions in South Korea, Turkey, and Japan might now receive additional momentum, affecting other areas of unstable political structure.”\textsuperscript{57} Indeed, in Korea, powerful demonstrations driven by high school and university students, demanding the resignation of the US-backed President Syngman Rhee since February, had been further radicalized in April, following the

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Yomiuri Shinbun}, June 16, 1960.  
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
reelection of Rhee. A series of large-scale protests forced the Japanese government to request that for his own security President Eisenhower his planned visit to Tokyo, and the President grudgingly accepted the decision. At the midnight on June 19, the revised US-Japan Security Treaty was automatically ratified. Kishi announced his resignation after the treaty was put it to effect on June 23.

The members of the conservative foreign policy establishment in the United States maintained that Communism was the major source of the “mob violence” in Tokyo. In August 26, the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws published a sixty-page report titled, “Communist Anti-American Riots: Mob violence as an Instrument of Red Diplomacy, Bogotá- Caracas - La Paz- Tokyo” to the Committee on the Judiciary and devoted nearly a half of the pages to “The Red Riots in Tokyo.” The subcommittee’s chair was Senator James Eastland of Mississippi, a powerful southern Democrat who was unabashedly a supporter of racial segregation and a notorious anti-Communist. The report was intended to determine “the techniques employed and the purposes sought” by “anti-American riots” that took place in Latin America against Nixon in 1958 and in Tokyo against the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1960. It concluded that outside “agitators” mainly from Communist China and North Korea were the main agents of the “Red Diplomacy” in Japan that acted to prevent the ratification of the security treaty with the United States.

The liberal Democrats in Washington exploited the demonstrations in Tokyo as the failure of the Republican leadership. On July 15 at the Democratic National Convention, the

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58 For further discussion on the South Korean student protests in 1960, see Charles R. Kim, “Moral Imperatives: South Korean Studenthood and April 19th,” The Journal of Asian Studies 71 (May 2012), pp. 399-422.
60 Ibid., 31.
young presidential candidate, John F. Kennedy criticized the old style of Republican leadership for having failed to block the spread of Communist influence in the world. Kennedy said, “Friends have slipped into neutrality - and neutrals into hostility. As our keynoter reminded us, the President who began his career by going to Korea ends it by staying away from Japan.”

The Tokyo riot brought another shock to American self-confidence in the Republic leadership that had remained low since the Soviet success of launching the world’s first artificial satellite into orbit on October 4, 1957. In November, Americans voted not for the old anti-Communist, but youthful Kennedy who promised the “New Frontier.” The new President expressed his ambition to provide new, youthful leadership for the nation that had suffered from consequent setbacks in their fight against Communism. In respect to the US-Japan relations, the coming era of the new Kennedy administration meant the end of the old MacArthur era and the beginning of the new liberal approach, under the leadership of John F. Kennedy and his appointed Ambassador to Japan, Edwin O. Reischauer, - which the Japanese left termed the “Kennedy-Reischauer offensive.”

The 1960s: Kennedy-Reischauer Liberal Offensive

Between the end of the Anpo struggle of 1960 and the beginning of the US bombing in North Vietnam in 1964, the Japanese student movement faced an American liberal offensive and, in the face of it, appeared defensive. Reischauer’s intellectual attack on Japanese Marxists and Robert Kennedy’s visit to Japan proved significantly effective in weakening Zengakuren influences in Japan. The large-scale mass opposition to the US-Japan Security Treaty alarmed many observers in the US, leading to a reassessment of current US policy toward Japan. In 1961, John F. Kennedy appointed Professor Edwin O. Reischauer, who taught Japanese studies at

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Harvard University, as Ambassador to Japan. Reischauer recalled, “I had been chosen [by President Kennedy] specifically to make better intellectual contact with all the people of Japan, especially with those not in government circles or in the opposition camp from the government in power.”

The Senate unanimously approved Reischauer’s appointment, considering him as holding both a “sympathetic understanding” of the Japanese and stint anti-Communism.

In Japan, Reischauer particularly tried to improve the Embassy’s ties with students in moderate oppositional camps. After arriving in Tokyo, Reischauer visited universities on many occasions. Fearing the possible eruption of violence on campuses, Japanese university officials had been reluctant to host any American official visit, yet Reischauer successfully gained access to Japanese university campuses as a scholar. In January, *Times* honored Reischauer for his popularity with the Japanese and his success as a “cultural ambassador.”

Reischauer also appointed a graduate student of Asian Studies at Harvard, Ernest Young to work with him in Tokyo. Young recalled, “His idea, as expressed to me, was to have someone close to him who would focus on the world of Japanese university students. He knew that I was somewhat of a dissenter from US foreign policy and thought that would be an advantage in contacts with Japanese students, radicalized by the recent ‘Ampo [Anpo] hantai [opposition]’ movement.”

While developing friendly images of the United States, he also launched intellectual attacks on Marxists in Japan. This consisted of “correcting” Japanese understanding of democracy and promoting modernization theory against Marxist-Leninist understandings of Japanese modern history. Reischauer believed that unlike “the Anglo-Saxon society where such

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64 *Time*, January 12, 1962.
65 Author’s interview with Ernest Young, February 16, 2015.
things as the anti-\textit{Anpo} demonstrations were condemned as undemocratic,” the Japanese were still unaware of the incompatibility between violent demonstrations and the representative democracy.\textsuperscript{66} Reischauer also criticized Marxist interpretations of modernization process. Like many other modernization theorists of that time, Reischauer provided the analysis on “success” of Japanese modernization, defining the Meiji Restoration as a “take-off” stage that triggered Japan’s transition from feudal Asiatic society to the nation that embraced Western values and its capitalist development model, countering Marxist-Leninist interpretations of the modern history of Japan that emphasized war and imperialism as an inevitable outcome of the processes of capitalist development.

Leftist students challenged modernization theory by arguing that the objective of this “Reischauer Offensive” was to transform Japanese academia into an intellectual ally of Cold War America. At the school festival called \textit{Go-Gatsu Sai} (May Festival) in 1966, the students of Western history at the University of Tokyo created the “Refutation of Reischauer and Rostow.”\textsuperscript{67} In their explanatory paper for the exhibition, students wrote that the history of the Japanese developmentalist imperialism seemed to bear a striking ideological similarity to Cold War ideology of modernization and Japan’s postwar capitalist expansion, backed by the United States, into its former colonies in Asia.\textsuperscript{68} The students insisted that imperialism was neither a brief period of aberration nor anachronism, but the present reality.

While Marxist students and intellectuals in Japan challenged modernization theory, Reischauer and other modernization theorists’ positive interpretations of the modern history of Japan, 

\textsuperscript{68} \textit{Teikoku Shugi no Shomondai, Gendai Teikoku Shugi to Kindai-ka}. Correspondence during tenure as Ambassador: 1961-1966, HUG (FP) 73.12. Box 1. The Harvard University Archives.
Japan proved appealing to many Japanese people. By the end of 1960s, Victor Koschmann argued, “the peculiarly American combination of ‘objective’ social science and anti-Communist fervor encouraged the trend in Japan away from self-critical concern about peace and democracy toward a preoccupation with becoming a ‘great power’ through economic prosperity.” This was a welcoming trend for America, which had grown frustrated by the Japanese who hesitated to play a larger role in the Cold War, acting like a “big boy who prefers to sit in the back row of the classroom in the hope that no one will notice him,” as Reischauer described.

Another key moment of American liberal “offensive” in the 1960 was Robert F. Kennedy’s visit to Tokyo and Osaka in February 1962. Prior to his visit to Japan, the State Department had informed RFK that the popularity of Marxism among Japanese intellectuals was one of the major problems in Japan. What seemed promising for the United States was its JFK-style youthful image that symbolized American liberalism, which would challenge Marxist disdain for America’s version of bourgeois liberal capitalism. In addition to Kennedy’s effective campaign, Zengakuren’s post-1960 factionalism and the widespread euphoric feelings among the Japanese public, resulting from economic prosperity and peace, made it difficult for Zengakuren to advance its movement against imperialism.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Special Assistant to the President provided RFK with a five-page paper titled, “Themes for Meetings with Students,” to help him prepare for this trip. He wrote, “The Japanese are a practical people too, and we should therefore be in intellectual harmony.” Schlesinger emphasized the pragmatism of mainstream liberalism in contrast to the utopian and

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prophetic radicalism of the New Left he witnessed in the United States and elsewhere. Schlesinger also advised RFK to advance this argument by linking it to the issue of self-determination in dealing with Japanese student radicals. According to Stephen P. Depoe, Schlesinger believed that the liberal consensus would be “strong enough to absorb the growing diversity of viewpoints in America.” With Schlesinger’s memorandum in hand, Robert Kennedy and his wife Ethel arrived at Tokyo in the evening of February 4, capturing significant media attention.

In Japan, Kennedy requested cancelling the tea ceremony with the Emperor and Empress and instead asked to arrange a meeting with Zengakuren. The Japanese officials grudgingly accepted the request and tried to set up the meeting at Waseda University. Professor Nakatani Hiroshi, who was in charge of organizing Kennedy’s visit at Waseda, was asked to have Zengakuren members at his speech. Nakatani complained, “It was not in my power to mobilize Zengakuren, so I thought if they come, that would be fine,” but grudgingly accepted to make some efforts to attract Zengakuren students, including making colorful flyers. One February 6, Kennedy and his company, including Reischauer, arrived at Waseda University. Probably taking Schlesinger’s advice, Kennedy expressed his eagerness to engage in the exchange of views and to listen to dissenting voices in the “democratic way.” Students asked Kennedy a range of questions that challenged America’s commitment to self-determination of the Third World, freedom of speech at home and abroad and world peace. In the middle of the event, students’ long list of questions, the microphone accident and euphoric excitement generated by Kennedy’s visit led to confusion in the auditorium. The students in the audience began shouting, “I can’t

74 Ibid.
hear well,” “Stop,” “How about the United States?” “Kennedy go home,” “Imperialistic,” and “Return Okinawa.”75 After Kennedy left, a feeling of guilt about what had happened to Kennedy seemed to emerge among the audience. A group of students at Waseda even organized an informal meeting for “self-reflection on Mr. Kennedy’s lecture meeting” and decided to make an apology to Kennedy.76 The hundred fifty students, representing Waseda University students, visited the US Embassy on that day and made a formal apology for their rudeness to Kennedy.

The Japanese public criticized Waseda students for their rudeness to the important foreign visitor. In the Asahi Shinbun on February 7, Professor Ikeda Kiyoshi of Keio University, the famed author of Discipline and Freedom: British School Life (Jiyū to Kiristu: Igirisu no Gakkō Seikatsu), criticized the students for rejecting a democratic way of exchanging views.77 Being shamed by the students in Japan, Ikeda lamented, “This kind of thing would be unthinkable in universities in Britain, Germany, and the United States.”78 The US Embassy even received a letter from a sixth grade elementary school student to Kennedy, which read, “I read an article saying that you were jostled in the crowd of students at Waseda University. I felt mortified as if my dear uncle had been spit. I wonder why those people who cannot talk quietly despite difference in opinion could be admitted to the university… I regret the acts of those students at Waseda University.”79 Zengakuren students responded to such criticisms, but were not successful in convincing the public. Reischauer reported to the State Department on February 15 that the incident at Waseda had a positive impact on US policy and the future of Japan. Reischauer believed that the Communist-led student movement discredited itself in the

75 Ibid.
77 Asahi Shinbun, February 7, 1962.
78 Ibid.
nationally well-publicized event, and this “may have healthy consequences for future of student movement in Japan.”80 Reischauer and Kennedy successfully generated positive publicity, making the Anpo crisis a thing of the past.

After he returned to Washington from the trip, Robert Kennedy became an advocate of cultivating of the positive views of the United States among the foreign youth. At a debriefing with President Kennedy, Vice President Johnson, and Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Robert Kennedy told them that he had found a “tremendous reservoir of goodwill toward the United States and the democratic way of life” in the countries that he had visited during the trip.81 According to a memorandum released by State Department, “He [RFK] particularly was struck by this situation in Japan and Indonesia” during the debriefing.82 RFK said, “I was particularly encouraged with the many student groups I met. They’re not saying everything we do is right. But they’re asking questions, asking [for] the truth. And that gives us a great advantage, because truth is on our side.”83 RFK strongly recommended to President Kennedy and Secretary Rusk that the United States should engage in “more aggressive representation abroad.”84 The White House and State Department endorsed Kennedy’s ideas. A special committee on the international youth and student affair was convened in Washington, which was soon officially named the Interagency Youth Committee (IAYC) in April 1962. In the summer of 1963, President Kennedy sent a memorandum to give the IAYC further endorsement, and this became one of the last documents signed by President Kennedy. President Lyndon B. Johnson promised to continue Kennedy’s programs, including the IAYC. The new President worried “if youth would go away

82 Memorandum to [Philip] Coombs from William H. Brubeck, Deputy Executive Secretary, “Follow-up” to Attorney General’s Debriefing, April 5, 1962. RG 353. Box 14. NARAII.
with the Kennedys. To his dismay, the youth world did move away, yet it was not because of Johnson’s lack of youthful image but because of US policy in Vietnam.

**Protesting across the Borders: the Vietnam War and the Global 1968**

The beginning of direct large-scale American military intervention in Vietnam in 1964 galvanized the young radicals around the globe to rapidly mobilize against the war. The Vietnam War in particular had a significant influence on the rise of a global 1968. The IAYC was aware of growing international networks and communication among the youth. In January 18, 1967, it reported that “There exists, of course, a tremendous flow of information and contacts” and “the young Berkeley radicals are said to have been discussing the Provos of Amsterdam as far back as a year and a half ago, before the general public had heard of them; they had their own informal contacts. University students in Japan were found by a visiting Berkeley professor to be at least as well informed as he about the unrest at Berkeley while it was going on (underline in original).” The question was “Which Americans have a wavelength with whom? (underlines in original).” In opposition to the war, local and national protest movements converged and transformed student radicals into global players of the 1968.

In protesting the Vietnam War, Zengakuren sought international anti-imperial solidarity with the radicals in the West. Japan’s economic growth convinced the student left that their country had once again joined the Western empires, and this view provided a new sense of anti-imperial international solidarity for the Japanese students. Zengakuren activists believed that forming solidarity between the anti-imperial struggles within the empires and the liberation movements in the Third World would bring about a crisis of the bourgeoisies domination of the world. In its English-written bulletin published in October 1965, Zengakuren proclaimed:

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86 Study of European Youth, January 18, 1967. RG 353. Box 6. NARA II.
87 Ibid.
Since imperialists of US, Great Britain, Japan, West Germany and France are in international concert with local bourgeoisies of South Vietnam, South Korea, Philippines and Formosa in order to control politically and economically Asian people, American friends, as of Students for Democratic Society, British Committee of a Hundred, Japanese Zengakuren and other friends must fight in international solidarity with South Vietnamese National Liberation Front and Students Union of South Korea etc.\(^8\)

Ishii Eiki, a former Zengakuren activist, recalled that words like, “the world (\textit{sekai})” and “international (\textit{kokusai})” became more frequently used among the student radicals in 1968.\(^9\)

The areas that hosted US military faculties and bases in Japan became the hotbeds of anti-Vietnam War protests as the war escalated and begun converging various transnational radical movements. Between 1967 and 1968, the Sunagawa struggle had reached a new level of intensity, being connected to the Vietnam War, ultimately forcing the US military to give up the plan to extend the runways at Tachikawa Airbase in December 1968. In Asaka, Saitama, the two members of the Black Panther Party from the United States spoke on the radio broadcasted by antiwar protestors on October 12, sending direct messages to black soldiers stationed there.\(^9\) The Panthers brought leaflets, “Appeal to Black Soldiers” that called to “Rise and Unite Against War Oppression & Racial Domination,” and it was distributed near the US Army medical center in Asaka. The American GI antiwar movement was also active in the US military base areas in Japan and converged with local Japanese antiwar protests. By the time of the ending of the Vietnam War, Japan hosted at least twenty-one GI newspapers and it recorded the largest number of American GI antiwar newspapers published abroad.\(^9\)


US-Occupied Okinawa proved particularly vulnerable to student protests in the late 1960s. In the fall of 1968, Zengakuren and other young radicals planned to launch a major campaign in Okinawa against the Vietnam War and for the liberation of Okinawa. Alarmed by the offensive planned by the Japanese radicals, US Army, Ryukyu Islands (USARYIS) immediately completed the study called, “Agitator Study” in October, with the assistance of USCAR and the High Commissioner (HICOM) Political Adviser. The report concluded that the most effective and least provocative countermeasure would be to elaborately restrict entry to Okinawa by “any Japanese national in the 17-30 age group,” whose period of stay on the island included days between October 18 and 21, through elaborate immigration procedures.\(^{92}\)

Given its status as the US-occupied territory governed with the Japanese “residual sovereignty,” Okinawa also played a unique role as the point of convergence for transnational radicalism. Toma Kنسحوكه، an antiwar activist reporting from Okinawa claimed, “There are about 10,000 black soldiers in Okinawa, and 6,000 of them were ardent supporters of black power and 2,000 are involved in the Black Panther Party.”\(^{93}\) In December 1970, when a crowd of 3,000 Okinawans stormed to the US bases responding to a car accident by an American serviceman that led to the death of an Okinawan woman, some African American GIs joined them, linking the long liberation struggle of African Americans and that of Okinawans. The Black GIs took the incident as the protest against the structure of power that oppress them.

**1970s: The end of Japan’s long sixties**

The anti-imperial student movement of the long Sixties seemed to reach its ending in 1973. In the early 1970s, events involving small student extremist groups significantly

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\(^{92}\) Appendix I (Analysis of Zengakuren) to Annex A, Federation of All Japan Student Self-Governing Council (Zengakuren), Agitator Study. USCAR. HCRI-LN. RG 260. Box1. NARA II.

contributed to the hostility of the general public toward the student movement as a whole. In the early 1970s, the terrorist activities of several violent factions drew significant media attentions and eroded the public sympathy for the student movement as a whole. As many scholars have pointed out, student factionalism that resulted in the murders of over a hundred students by members of rival factions and the ongoing acts of terror committed by small groups of radicals, and the passage of laws that were aimed to control student radicalism were important factors that led to the decline of the student movement.

Major diplomatic events of the early 1970s resulted in permeating the feeling that the struggles with the alliance between the American Cold Warriors and Japanese conservative government had been finalized. The revision of the US-Japan Security Treaty was automatically ratified in 1970. The US Occupation of Okinawa was officially ended in May 1972. It seemed not much effort was required for the United States to make an adjustment for the post-Occupation US-Japan alliance. The Japanese national consensus proved strongly in favor of the US-Japan alliance and maintaining US military bases, which were predominantly in Okinawa. In 1972, furthermore, the radical change in the US policy toward China, or what the Japanese termed “Nixon Shock,” ended Chinese opposition to the US-Japan Security Treaty. The North Vietnamese capture of Saigon in 1975 and the end of the anti-Vietnam War movement further deepened the feeling of an end to the tumultuous revolutionary period among the young radicals in Japan, reducing the pressure on the US-Japan Security Treaty in mainland Japan.

The decline of the radical movements in Japan in the 1970s cannot be discussed without considering the impact of a long process that crafted a “solid consensus” among the general public in Japan. Collaborating US foreign policy became a major purpose of the Japanese foreign

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policy since the 1970s, not only for the conservative leaders but also for many ordinary Japanese citizens. Indeed, the early 1970s marked the end of what one historian of the global cold war has called America’s “battle of global alliances and political ideas” in Japan.95

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