Anti-Americanism in the Early Zengakuren and Japanese Communist Party

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Anti-Americanism during the early phases of the postwar occupation of Japan was remarkably muted. After more than a decade of war, few Japanese people had the means and motivation to vigorously oppose the American occupation. However, as the American occupiers “reversed course” after 1947, student radicals began organizing protests by appealing to anti-Americanism.

This paper will examine how anti-Americanism played a prominent role in the formation and development of the early Zengakuren, how this led to the alienation of Zengakuren students from the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) leadership, and how anti-Americanism was later adopted and modified by the JCP.

Anti-Americanism in the Early Zengakuren

1948 started with US Secretary of the Army Kenneth Royal’s speech on the need to rebuild Japan as a wall against communism. As the reverse course accelerated, the early postwar fluorescence of leftist workers’ and farmers’ movements gave way to fragmentation and stagnation. By contrast the student movement began to coalesce into a national movement headed by the Zengakuren. Anti-Americanism played a significant role in this development.

In March 1948 SCAP education reformers announced a proposal to relocate universities to the regions and to place them under the control of
Boards of Trustees which would include members from outside the academic community. Known as the “BT Proposal,” this, together with the unpopular tuition hike proposal of January, became a catalytic issue leading up to the formation of the Zengakuren.

Students’ critiques of the BT policy were initially ambivalent. The Kansai association of student governments pointed out that the BT proposal if realized would result in the decline in the level of academic research and the breakdown of university autonomy. However, it noted that the goal of opening up the university to the regional community was a noteworthy one, and that eventually students would have to come up with a viable alternative plan for a truly democratic university. Students from Kanagawa University of Economics noted that the fundamental issue had to do with reconciling the university’s autonomy and its responsiveness to social needs. The solution, they argued, was to include students into the university executive decision-making body since “the opinions of the students most correctly reflect public opinion concerning the education of society.” Tokyo University students made a similar proposal. They denounced the BT proposal as amounting to a “policy of colonization” but agreed with its principle of people’s rule over the university. The students announced an alternative proposal for establishing a ruling body consisting of the student government, university employees’ union and professors.²

A secret directive distributed among Tokyo University JCP cell members in May 1948 spelled out the need to raise student sentiment against the tuition hike and BT proposal to a new level. Entitled “Regarding the Shift in Strategy: The Reconstruction of Education Struggle as a Component of the Democratic National Front,” the directive also forcefully advocated the appeal to anti-American nationalism. Cell members were to present the issue of the tuition hikes and the BT proposal as part of a broader conspiracy by the American imperialists to colonize Japan. The colonization of Japanese universi-
ties by means of introducing foreign capital into universities’ Boards of Trustees and stripping Japanese professors of their powers was the harbinger of what would later occur in other industries. Christianity was another method by which the American imperialists were conspiring to colonize Japan. Through “feudal Catholic education,” they were seeking to plant in the Japanese nation a “slave mentality” that would facilitate colonization. The urgent agenda for cell members was to expose to Japan’s students such schemes and the true nature of the American imperialists hiding behind their “democratic masks.” iii

A leading advocate of expanding the student movement by means of anti-American sentiment was Okiura Kazuteru. Okiura was in charge of the Tokyo University cell’s shift from “economic struggles” like anti-tuition hike struggles to “political struggles” which tied such issues to broader ideological ones. Situating the students’ “reconstruction of education struggle” within the JCP’s “Democratic National Front” was a manifestation of this shift. Okiura was also largely responsible for defeating the postwar Shinjinkai, a serious threat to JCP influence in the student movement. Rallying around humanistic ideals and against the JCP’s “formulaic leftism,” Shinjinkai students close to the “modernists” associated with the journal Kindai bungaku had hijacked the JCP’s Tokyo University cell and had begun spreading their influence on other university campuses. Together with JCP leaders, Okiura ousted the Shinjinkai leaders from the student government. By doing so, he acted as a key collaborator in executing the postwar JCP’s first major purge. iv To the JCP leaders’ dismay, however, Okiura and fellow student radicals proved no more willing than the Shinjinkai to play a subservient role to the party leadership.

In the wake of the successful “Student Rally for the Reconstruction of Education” held on June 1 in Hibiya Park, Okiura assembled the Tokyo University cell members and announced that they were to start organizing for a “general strike.” He had just returned from a tour of Kansai campuses, where
he had met an auspiciously receptive student response to his anti-American agitation. He argued that if they agitated around the slogan of “national independence,” focusing on the BT issue and denounced the CIE plan as a policy of the “colonization” of Japanese universities and thus of the Japanese nation, strikes would be realized at once.

As students prepared for their General Strike, striking workers at the movie company Tōhō were barricading themselves in the studio to protest job cuts. Students felt a special attachment to the Tōhō studio, being the producer of movies such as “Waga seishun ni kui nashi (No Regrets for our Youth)” and “Ima hitotabino” that depicted the heroism and tragedy of prewar and wartime student activists. At Tokyo University, student leaders agitated around the slogan of “Protect minzoku culture!” and forged connections with the Tōhō struggle by inviting actors to speak on campus and going on site to support the strike. The strike lasted until August 19, when a large contingent of armored police and occupation military forces intervened to end the strike. “Only the battleships didn’t come,” people commented on the forceful military intervention. An angry Andō set out with fellow student radicals and agitated in front of the Shinjuku black market. Although their placard did not explicitly depict the occupation forces, its criticism of SCAP was obvious.

The “General Strike” of June 26 was an astounding success, encompassing 114 universities nationwide. Andō Jinbei recalled that student leaders reported the situation on the campuses to party leader Miyamoto Kenji before the strike. Miyamoto was impressed, commenting that the students could accomplish a General Strike if over 30 schools participated. A student leader responded emphatically that the number of participating universities would surpass 50. The result exceeded both Miyamoto’s and the optimistic student leader’s expectations and led to the formation of the Zengakuren in September.
The JCP and the Zengakuren

The JCP’s attitude toward the increasingly active student movement wavered between cautious support and vigilance. After the June 1 rally Nosaka Sanzô replied in vague terms that the JCP stood behind the students.¹ After the June 26 strike, the JCP published an opinion piece recognizing that the party had unduly neglected the positive role that the student movement could play in the democratic national front. They needed to develop a “superior student movement of the type we see in China” by heightening the political awareness of the students. While the JCP thus recognized the significance of the student movement, it was also wary of student independence from the party leadership. It stressed that the student movement needed to remain subordinate to party goals. The party needed to expand its influence on the campuses and mold “superior Bolsheviks” out of the students so that they would outgrow their “petit bourgeois unrealistic tendencies and theoretical dogmatism.” By placing the student movement under the direct control of the party leadership, they hoped to prevent the student cells from becoming their own party.²

Soon the JCP stance turned from vigilance to outright denunciation. Immediately following its birth, the Zengakuren began to be reprimanded by the JCP for its “Zengakuren party-istic tendencies.” A major reason for this was the student radicals’ aggressive organizing of “strikes.” In the wake of the failed 2.1 General Strike of 1947, JCP leaders reformulated their strategy away from strikes and toward “regional people’s struggle.” This was a bottom-up approach that stressed daily activities on a local scale that would eventuate in struggles against regional governments. The JCP leadership assembled student cell representatives in November 1948 and officially announced that Zengakuren activities went against this policy. They were thus guilty of “strike-man tendencies.”

A second reason for the JCP’s denunciation stemmed from the
Zengakuren’s “group-istic tendencies.” This was a problem that applied to other JCP related mass organizations as well, stemming from Tokuda Kyûichi’s creation of parallel authority structures within organizations. Instead of trusting the “fractions” composed of party members in leading positions in the respective organizations, Tokuda insisted on more direct party control by creating his own “fractions” composed of all party members in the organizations. The resulting rebellions against party infringement on organization autonomy were labeled by the party as “groupism.”

As the young Zengakuren continued to organize strikes around the issue of the University Bill in 1949, they continued to face criticism and obstruction from the JCP leadership. Then came the deus ex machina. On 6 January 1950, the Cominform published in its journal For Eternal Peace and People’s Democracy the essay “On the Situation in Japan.” This essay, known as the “Cominform criticism,” denounced the postwar JCP’s advocacy of “peaceful revolution” within the framework of the American occupation and urged the JCP leadership to conduct a forceful “anti-imperial” struggle against the American occupiers. The Mainstream faction of the JCP, led by Tokuda Kyûichi and Nosaka Sanzô, chose to discard the “peaceful revolution” formula in accordance to the criticism. However they otherwise dismissed the criticism as based on the Cominform’s faulty knowledge of conditions in Japan. When the CCP joined in on the criticism on 17 January, the JCP leadership softened its stance but continued to maintain that no change in policy was necessary because the mistaken “peaceful revolution” policy had already been discarded. The dissenting “International faction,” led by Shiga Yoshio and Miyamoto Kenji, stressed the need for a full acceptance of the criticism and a complete overhaul of JCP strategy and tactics. A bitter division between these two factions lasted until the Sixth Party Congress of 1955, when the JCP tried with only partial success to reunify the party.
When Andō Jinbei read about the Cominform criticism in the evening paper of January 7, his immediate response was elated excitement. This “gift from the gods” would finally allow the Zengakuren to go on a full-fledged offensive against party headquarters. As party headquarters cracked down on the factional activities and placed International faction leaders Shiga and Miyamoto under strict surveillance, the Tokyo University Hongō campus cell joined in the factional activities by forming the G.P. (Geheimnis Partei). The G.P. secretly distributed prohibited International faction documents among student circles. However they eventually found Shiga’s and Miyamoto’s attitude toward party headquarters lukewarm and started their own “revolutionary factional activity” against the JCP. It was in this context that the Zengakuren ikensho was written.iii

The Zengakuren ikensho

The underlying theme of the Zengakuren ikensho was the advocacy of “anti-imperialist struggle” against the US occupation forces. The report pointed out that the June 26 strike grew out of students’ “anti-imperialistic energy” which student leaders harnessed by organizing the struggle against the “colonization of the campuses.”

While the party leadership continued to obstruct the student movement by its insistence on “regional people’s struggle,” students in Nagano, Akita, Kyūshū, and Kansai continued vigorously their “anti-imperial struggle.” Although these struggles were suppressed by the occupation forces and students appealed to the party to formulate a “jeep countermeasure,” party leaders merely repeated their criticism of the students’ “strike-man tendencies.” By stubbornly clinging to the need to confine activities on a local and regional scale, the JCP “diverted [the students’] burning anti-imperial anti-colonial consciousness into simply an anti-government direction.”xiii

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The report denounced the regional people’s struggle as a fundamentally flawed policy based on the JCP leadership’s insufficient awareness that Japan remained under the firm control of the American occupation. Attempts to build mass support against Japanese regional governments or against the traitorous Yoshida government would not lead toward revolution; only by directly attacking the “imperialistic military” ruling Japan could revolution be sparked. The duty of the revolutionary vanguard therefore was to move methodically from “anti-government struggle” against the Yoshida government to “anti-imperialist struggle” against the occupation forces. The JCP leadership should have realized this after the suppression of the 2.1 General Strike of 1947. Instead, their answer was the retreat into the local scale in the form of the regional people’s struggle. The report buttressed its claims with quotes from Stalin: “All regional problems...can be understood and solved only after intimately relating them to general problems of war and peace, revolution and counter-revolution.”

Another major point of criticism was the party’s mistaken neglect of the role of intelligentsia. The party’s “bossing around” of school cells was manifestation of the more fundamental problem of “the completely anti-Marx Leninist” thinking that the intelligentsia was of no use in the revolution until they were thoroughly retrained and molded into good Bolsheviks by the party. The final criticism leveled at the party was its “bureaucratism” that made the organization unresponsive to criticism from the rank and file. When Zengakuren students expressed dissenting opinions, the party would respond by reprimanding them for not obeying party policy.

Of note regarding the ikensho’s criticism of the JCP’s “bureaucratism” was that this was not necessarily an advocacy of a more open and democratic organization. “Naturally JCP members should obey policies decided by the party with revolutionary discipline... But at the same time, we
believed that when the party headquarters is mistaken on a fundamental problem, it was our duty as Bolsheviks to honestly and thoroughly criticize this and thereby aid in the party headquarters’ self-criticism."vi "Bolshevik discipline” was a valued trait among some student radicals, as evidenced by the popularity of Nikolai Ostrovsky’s socialist realist novel How the Steel was Tempered. Its protagonist, Pavel Korchagin, who through self-discipline and courageous self-sacrifice molded himself into a true soldier for the revolution, was an ideal that many student radicals aspired to. The JCP’s despicable “bureaucratism” and the students’ heroic “Bolshevik discipline” differed only in the purposes they served: the mistaken policy of regional people’s struggle or the correct policy of anti-imperialistic struggle.

One can also see the student radicals’ dismissive attitude toward democratic procedures in favor of revolutionary ends in this anecdote on the 1950 Tokyo University final examination boycott. After successfully playing a leadership role in organizing the exam boycott in October, Yoshikawa Yūichi heard that the leaders of the student government were preparing to counter the university’s plans for a re-scheduled final examination by organizing another “strike.” The majority of students had supported the first boycott but the general feeling among students was that they should take the re-scheduled exams. Yoshikawa conveyed this opinion to Ôno Akio, leader of the student government, who expressed his acquiescence and promised that he would not propose a second strike at the class representative meeting. However, to Yoshikawa’s surprise and dismay, International faction students led by Ôno started agitating for a second strike at the meeting. Yoshikawa expressed his opinion that they should take into account the feelings of the majority of students and cancel the strike. In form, the meeting allowed for open discussion as Yoshikawa was allowed to speak his mind without being heckled. However, the International faction student who chaired the meeting ensured that the argument for the sec-
ond strike would be strengthened by deliberately opening the floor to fellow faction students at key junctures. Yoshikawa confronted Ōno for breaking his promise, to which Ōno replied that as a leader of the student movement, he could not fulfill his responsibility by always listening to the opinions of “the masses.” Yoshikawa recalled that with these words, his trust in the International faction leadership was practically destroyed.xvii

The report’s anti-bureaucratism was not a call for democracy; nor was its advocacy of anti-imperialist struggle an advocacy of independent neutralist nationalism. Indeed the latter was explicitly denounced as “bourgeois nationalistic tendencies.” The choice that Japan faced was either to “succumb to imperialism and become its military colony” or to “join the world’s peace forces and rise up in an anti-imperialist struggle for peace and independence.” Independence signified joining and playing a subordinate role to Soviet power. It cited Stalin: “Internationalism is to strive to protect the Soviet alliance unconditionally, without demands or hesitation. This is because the Soviet alliance is the base of the world revolutionary movement, without which the revolutionary movement cannot move forward…” In this context, the report criticized Nosaka Sanzō for failing to forcefully rebut charges from the DLP that he had rejected parliamentary politics to serve Soviet authority. Nosaka denied rejecting parliamentary politics in service of the Soviets and fired back that the DLP, as slaves to America, were the real traitors. The report critiqued this response as ineffective: Nosaka should have strongly argued the case for serving the Soviet camp because it stood for peace, independence and progress. Furthermore, he should have explicitly stated that there was no point in protecting Japan’s “bourgeois parliament” as it had already ceased functioning as the representative body of an independent nation.xviii

The Cominform criticism was praised reverentially. According to the report, the criticism successfully exposed to the Japanese people the American
imperialists’ plot to enslave the Japanese nation and transform it into a base for military adventures against the Soviet Union and China. It also successfully exposed the mistaken policies of Nosaka and the JCP. Reconsidering the students’ past struggles in light of the criticism, the report stated how “we are struck by the infinite greatness of the international criticism and we cannot help but feel intense shame for the opportunism that remained within ourselves.” The students criticized themselves for not being able to realize the completely mistaken nature of the JCP policies. Because of their “opportunism and low theoretical level,” the students were not able to break out of the “un-Bolshevik attitude” of “wait and see-ism.” It was the international criticism that “shed light on Japan’s conditions and the mistakes of the party’s policies with remarkable clarity” and thereby allowed the students to take the offensive against the JCP leadership.¹⁹

Many student radicals in the late 1940s and early 1950s read Cominform publications and listened to the daily Moscow Broadcasting with excitement. From the mid 1950’s “Stalinism” would take on a negative connotation. However, recalling the students’ Stalin worship of the late 1940s, Andô Jimbei emphasized that it had the important positive function of aiding the students’ move toward independence from the JCP. “Lenin before Marx, Stalin before Lenin, JCP leadership before Stalin, Akahata before JCP leadership” was the Tokuda-led JCP’s attitude toward students. For Andô and fellow Tokyo University cell members, being thus treated like the “stupid masses” was frustrating. It was through Stalinism that the International faction students led by the Tokyo University cell were able to embark on a systematic theoretical offensive against the JCP. “When our disordered knowledge and theories were given the solid framework [of Stalinism], we felt the surprise and joy of having discovered the aim of the scientific socialist movement.”²⁰

The Zengakuren ikensho became a source of intensifying conflict
between International faction students and JCP leaders. On March 11, school cell representatives visited party headquarters. An argument between the students and party elders ensued, escalating into a “mass negotiation-like state.” Students hostilely bombarded the party leaders with questions. When Shiino Etsurô, a leading JCP figure, entered the room and tried to quell the situation, the student leading the mass negotiation pointed an accusatory finger at Shiino and proclaimed, “Shokun, I don’t know who this is, but this man who looks like he should be selling bread... (pan-ya no ossan no yô na hito ga...)” The students exploded in laughter and continued their offensive. The meeting adjourned temporarily and resumed in a Hôsei University classroom, where a JCP leader expressed agreement to the students’ policies. The student head of the meeting proudly declared, “It has been a long time. Finally we were able to hear the party headquarter’s revolutionary stance.” This was met with rousing approval from the students.**

In early May, the JCP dissolved the Tokyo University Hongô campus cell.

**Waga tomo ni tsugen**

The last and one of the most widely publicized instances of the International faction students’ “anti-imperial struggle” was *Waga tomo ni tsugen*, a pamphlet (later book) dramatically documenting how sixteen Tokyo University students were put on SCAP’s military tribunal for their anti-war agitation. The pamphlet gained a wide and sympathetic readership among and even outside student circles. The pamphlet told a triumphant story of the students’ political courage as they resisted unjust repression by Japanese police authorities serving an America plotting to remilitarize Japan for war.

It described how the students, working for the spring 1951 election campaign of Tokyo University Professor Ide Takashi, lectured to passers-by in
front of Iidabashi station. One of their placards read: “Youth, do not take up arms!! Workers, do not produce arms!!” On top of an outlined map of the Korean peninsula and Japan, fully armed Police Reserve Force members trained under the supervision of an American officer. In the remaining space was listed the numerous Japanese arms producing factories and the military products they produced. Another placard described how the Public Employment Security Office secretly recruited workers to go work in Korea, 247 of the workers later returning dead. “The Gifts of Warmongers,” the placard read. “Sign immediately the Five Power Peace Treaty!! Sign immediately a Comprehensive Peace Treaty and All Occupation Forces Withdraw Completely!!”

Soon a group of police officers surrounded the students and announced they were being arrested. “The students started to appeal to the crowd. They felt danger but did not fear. Intense anger came over them. The crowd instinctively supported the students. In the gathering darkness the crowd grew to more than 200. The situation grew explosive.” One bystander yelled at the police, “If you are Japanese stop arresting fellow Japanese!” and was promptly arrested. After examining the placards, the police arrested the students despite the students’ resistance and the crowd’s protestations. As they were forced onto the police truck, a student leaned outside and yelled to the crowd, “This is a vehicle of war...the voice of peace is being repressed!” As the truck drove away, he yelled out simply, “Everyone, peace, peace, peace!!”

The story described the forging of a powerful bond of friendship between the imprisoned sixteen students. Nakao Tomiko, the sole woman student among the sixteen, started singing the German resistance song “The Crucible of Hate.” Unlike Nakao, some of the students were shy, did not sing, or did not speak German. However her courageous solo voice “united the
diverse personalities under one ideal and placed all their spirits into battle-ready positions.” Nakao taught her comrades the song and the sixteen students sang in unison. Knowing that they would eventually be subject to interrogation, the sixteen pledged to each other that they would maintain their silence throughout the questioning. The police, faced with the students’ powerful and united resolve, turned to the tactic of divide and conquer. When the students saw that they were going to be put into separate cells, they resisted fiercely by forming a scrum. Eventually however they were physically overpowered and the students were divided.

The pamphlet described how, every time students uttered the words “America” or “occupation forces,” the restlessly trembling prosecutor would scrupulously take note. When he cracked a smile in response to a student’s statement, the prosecutor drew the wrath of Ide Takashi: “What do you think of the students’ anger? It might be your personality, but you are smiling while the students are expressing intense outrage and anger. I cannot forgive your insensitivity. It is no smiling matter.” Professor Ide continued, “No matter how much you hide it, students have a new ability to sniff out the truth. Seeing everything that is connected to war, they cannot remain silent. Blocking all roads to war is the way to protect peace and to win the independence of the nation...” On the campuses, students protesting the sixteen’s arrest denounced the prosecutor for having “sold his soul to the warmongers.”

On April 26, the sixteen were transferred to GHQ’s military tribunal where they were to be tried for “Acts prejudicial to the security of the occupation forces.” As they were led into the MP headquarters, they saw firsthand the subservience of the Japanese authorities in service to America. The Japanese police stood uneasily and fumbled around as they took directions from the translator. Nakao Tomiko wrote, “…to the military trial we go. An irrepressible emotion came over me. Pitiful Japan. I looked forward out of the jeep...and
thought of what a pitiful state Japan was in…” Receiving word that the sixteen were being transferred to the military tribunal, Zengakuren called out to students, “The enemies of humankind who threaten to incite war fear above all the people who fight for peace….Our fellow sixteen students expressed frankly their will to peace and exposed the facts regarding the preparation for war that is being undertaken today in Japan with specific facts….It is the holy duty of all peace loving students of Japan to protect them, win their freedom, and follow in the footsteps of their heroic struggle.”

On May 23, thirteen of the sixteen were released without charge. The thirteen emerged triumphant before a crowd of welcoming students the following day. The thirteen spoke of the abuses they suffered in jail, the unjust nature of the trial, and their conviction to fight to the end to liberate their comrades from the military trial. Ide Takashi spoke last, commending the thirteen for “successfully tearing down the prison walls of a foreign country. But our homeland is one big prison. We must tear down the walls of this prison.” Three days later, International faction students followed in the footsteps of Ide with an appeal to “save the three fellow students from the foreign country’s court.” “Today three fellow students are going to be subject to a military trial. What we must not forget…is the fact that with the Dulles separate peace formula, they are trying to permanently establish [the right to conduct] military trials on the Japanese nation. Fellow students. If you are unable to throw away the correct pride in the Japanese nation, who can endure this humiliation?…In order to liberate the foreign country in our native country, join the struggle to liberate the three fellow students! Prepare with anger to conduct direct action! Crush the separate peace and the Japan US military agreement! Reject Japanese rearmament! Sign immediately the comprehensive peace treaty and withdraw the occupation forces!”

While Ide Takashi became a hero of International faction students,
some became goats for taking a more conciliatory stance toward the Americans. When he heard that the professor acting as the liaison to the tribunal had apologized to the American prosecutor for the three's behavior in an effort to win lenient treatment, one of the three imprisoned students responded with an angry open letter. "A professor like you, whose responsibility it is to act as 'the brain of the nation,' has taken a subservient action...This means that you have committed the mistake that amounts to forfeiting with your own hands not only the conscience of the researcher but also the autonomy of the nation."\xxx In the end, however, the American judge read the professor's letter: "I beg you to consider with generosity the fact that these students are still young and have a promising future ahead of them. I would like you to take into consideration that these youths can play a role as good citizens." The prosecutor said he agreed with the professor, and with this conciliatory gesture, the judge decided to free the remaining three students.\xxx

Throughout the story, the sixteen students were portrayed glowingly as heroic warriors of peace and independence. Books and movies such as "Kike, wadatsumi no koe" propagated widely among students a visceral anti-war sentiment and a sense of urgency to "never again" let militarists mislead the nation into war. Such works tended to powerfully appeal to a negative tradition of failed wartime student resistance. In the minds of many, the spectacle of the sixteen students courageously fighting against repression and war likely overlapped with the tragic resistance of wartime students, many of whom eventually plunged into futile deaths. In addition, Waga tomo ni tsugen reported how Japanese students were progressively building a positive tradition of student resistance. The report declared: "In Spain, France, Italy, and in Latin America, Vietnam, the thousands, tens of thousands of students sing ceaselessly the song of peace, freedom, and liberation and through imprisonment and death continue to be persecuted. [The sixteen students] also followed their
norm of action which bows to no one. The sixteen students of Japan.”xxxii One of the sixteen students concurred in the closing line of the book: “I had thought it sad that the words we used in many peace rallies were French words. But now, we have our own words. This I can state unequivocally.”xxxiii

Defeat of the International Faction

*Waga tomo ni tsugen* turned out to be the “last hurrah” for the International faction students. In March 1952, the Mainstream faction leaders officially took control over the *Zengakuren*.

Most university cells joined the International faction after the 1950 split. A minority joined the Mainstream faction. Which faction student radicals joined often had much to do with sheer luck. Yoshikawa Yûichi recalled that the above-mentioned incident with International faction leader Ôno Akio during the 1950 strike and personal contacts with Mainstream faction members led him to the Mainstream faction.xxxiv In addition to luck, temperament and attitudes toward the student movement may often have influenced which faction students joined. Yoshikawa, for example, had an intense interest in ethnology and joined the Mainstream faction’s activities to research on and mobilize the rural masses. The Mainstream faction was often described as “wreaking of dirt” (*doro kusai*) whereas the International faction was theoretical and “smart” (*sumató*). International faction students, as evidenced by the arguments in the *Zengakuren ikensho*, were more prone to value the student movement in itself, shunning the Mainstream faction’s tendency to go “into the masses.”

In 1950, with the help of the Cominform criticism, the *Zengakuren*, led by International faction student radicals, fought vigorously against the intensifying reverse course and the resulting “Red Purge” on the campuses. By doing so they were putting into practice the anti-American “anti-imperial struggle” they affirmed in the *ikensho*. They were also fighting against the JCP lead-
ership and the Mainstream faction students who impeded their struggle.

In June, the Korean War broke out, intensifying SCAP’s and the Japanese government’s repression of the JCP. The JCP leadership and the Mainstream faction students moved toward an anti-American stance, but their antagonism toward the International faction did not diminish. Rather, it intensified, with both sides now arguing for anti-American struggle. Ironically, the JCP leadership moved past the International faction in calling for a more extreme anti-American stance, advocating not an “anti-imperial struggle” based on strikes and public campaigns, but rather a military struggle to forcefully overthrow the American occupiers. Before, the International faction students were “extreme leftist adventurists”; now they were “rightist opportunists.” The intra-party feud was essentially concluded in August 1951, when the Cominform, once again the deus ex machina, expressed support for the Mainstream faction’s new military line. The International faction’s offensive against the JCP leadership, having relied heavily on “international” Soviet authority, came to an abrupt end. Shima Shigeo, who would later lead the student protests against the 1960 Anpo treaty, had just recently entered the International faction by sheer chance. He was dumbstruck to see the devastating impact of the international criticism. Being a hot summer day just like 15 August 1945, the scene became for Shima a replay of that day when jingoistic adults abruptly turned tearful and impotent after hearing the emperor’s surrender broadcast.

Conclusions

The early Zengakuren’s “anti-imperial struggle” was not simply a short-lived interlude that ended with the Cominform’s support of the Mainstream faction. When the student movement stagnated after the JCP abandoned its military tactics in the Sixth Party Conference of July 1955, it was the
former International faction students who took the leading role in reconstructing the movement. They did so by looking back toward and drawing inspiration from the “tradition of anti-imperial struggle” established during this period.

How students in the early postwar period conducted their anti-imperial struggle shows that they were far from cowed by JCP authority. Even after the mainstream student movement completely broke ties with the JCP leading up to the 1960 Anpo struggle, the shadow of the JCP continued to loom large. So much so that in the wake of the 1960 protests, prominent student leaders and intellectuals considered the disqualification of the JCP as a vanguard party to be the most significant outcome of the struggle. This leads to the misleading image of the early postwar student radicals as entrapped in the JCP’s “myth of non-conversion” during the war, looking up to the JCP leaders with religious reverence. The International faction students’ offensive against the party leadership in the form of anti-American “anti-imperial struggle” clearly shows that this was not the whole picture.

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1 Zen nihon gakusei jichikai sōrengō (All Japan Student Government Union), formed in September 20, 1948.
2 Shiryo senso gakusei undō v.1, (Tokyo, 1968), p.237,233
3 Ibid., p.249-250
4 Ibid., p.157-171; Itō Takashi et.al., Watanabe Tsuneo kaikoroku, (Tokyo, 2000), p.43-53
5 Andō Jimbei, Sengo nihon kyōsantō shiki, (Tokyo, 1976), p.23
6 Ibid., p.42-44; Ôno Akio, Zengakuren keppūroku, (Tokyo, 1967), p.51
Andô Jimbei, *Sengo nihon kyôsantô shiki*, p.33

*Shiryô sengo gakusei undô* v.1, p.252

Ibid., p.272-273


Andô Jimbei, *Sengo nihon kyôsantô shiki*, p.95.99


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*Shiryô sengo gakusei undô* v.2, p.36-38

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Andô Jimbei, *Sengo nihon kyôsantô shiki*, p.100


Ibid., p.9-16

Ibid., p.15-25

Ibid., p.51

Ibid., p.63

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*Shiryô sengo gakusei undô* v.2, p.306

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