

The Impact of the U.S. Occupation on Japanese Politics and Economy after the End of World War II

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ABSTRACT: During WWII, the US and Japan are enemies, however, after the war, the US occupy Japan and transform it into nowadays Japan. This paper analyzes the impact of the US occupation of Japan after the end of WWII on Japanese politics and economy by using the method of studies literature review. This paper also explores the process that makes Japan transform from feudal militarism into a parliamentary democracy country and summarizes the contributions of the US to Japan's rebuilding. It can be concluded that the rise of nowadays Japan is built on the foundation of the influence of the US during the occupation.

1 Introduction

The research in the field of the impact of the occupation of Japan is incomplete, most of the research just analyzes one part of it such as the economy, famine, keeping the Japanese emperor, and so on. The reason the author writes this paper is to summarize the events that happened during the period of Occupation of Japan then analyze each event and make a whole conclusion that can help people better understand and study the reasons for the rising of Japan after WWII, the fundamental factors of modern Japan, and the relationship between US and Japan. This paper analyzes the Japanese Monarchy Reform, new Japanese constitution, Land Reform, Disintegration of plutocracy, solving famine, and Industrial Reform.

This paper uses the method of literature review data, collects many papers on different aspects of the impacts of the occupation of Japan, summarizes the events during that period and analyzes the impact, and evaluates the results. This paper may help people better understand the history of the occupation of Japan and know about the fundamental factors of modern Japan. This paper may lack some detailed data, but the events that were described are accurate.

2 The historical background of US-occupied Japan

After Nazi Germany surrendered, the American Staff department begin to plan Operation Downfall which is the plan of how the Allies would attack the mainland of Japan, and how to occupy Japan after the end of the war. According to their calculation, the US needs to pay about 1 million casualties to land on Japan, and Japan will suffer casualties of 10 million people; for this reason, America even prepared half-million purple heart medals to prepare

for giving to soldiers[1]. To prevent this situation from really happening, the US use the atomic bomb to force Japan's emperor to declare surrender. Even, in fact, the Japanese people show a very friendly attitude to the occupation troops and the information shown in some relevant research like R. F Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and The Sword*. America originally decided to send 23 divisions, a total of 0.8 million soldiers. However, this huge number of troops is hard for the American people to accept. As a result, the US government requested other allies; which including the Soviet Union, the Republic of China, and the British Commonwealth, to occupy Japan's mainland together like the occupation of Germany, so the US only need to send fewer men.

The US asks each country should support its own occupation troops' supply, and all the occupation troops should be under the control of general MacArthur. However, a plan may not be able to keep up with changes. For the Republic of China, the situation of the Chinese Civil War is very bad for the Kuomintang of China. For this reason, Chiang Kai-shek claims that he doesn't have enough troops and also enough money and supply to sustain the occupation forces, so the Republic of China quits the occupation of Japan's mainland but regains Taiwan and its affiliated islands. For the British Commonwealth, Britain needs to rebuild its own city, and economy, and also Britain suffer heavy casualties during WWII. At the same time, the control of Great Britain reduce a lot after WWII, so India begins to request independence. To sum up, the British Commonwealth sends 3000 soldiers from India, New Zealand, and Australia stands for Britain to help the US occupy Japan[2].

For the Soviet Union, the situation is a little more complicated. Not to mention in fact the Soviet Union did little to fight against Japan; it only sends troops to the northeast of China which was occupied by Japan, after the

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first atomic bombs exploded in Hiroshima, and then 7 days later Japan surrendered. There are some possible reasons explained why the Soviet Union didn't occupy Japan's mainland: Not only the US doesn't really want the Soviet Union to occupy part of Japan, but Stalin also doesn't like his troops being under General MacArthur's control. Besides, the Soviet Union is more willing to expand communism in east Europe countries. As a result, the Soviet Union takes the Kuril Islands as part of the Soviet Union and put them under their control, so the Soviet Union didn't occupy the mainland of Japan either. In Conclusion, the fact is that all of Japan's mainland is occupied almost by the US.

3 The actions that the US takes to rebuild Japan

After Japan surrendered, and American troops arrived in Japan, the primary task for general MacArthur is to feed the Japanese people that are suffering from a famine. Not only because years of war destroy agriculture, ruined the government, and destroyed major cities; but also because of the return of millions of Japanese soldiers. The whole Japanese society is starving.

Due to the destruction of war, the product of crops in 1945 is not reached half of the product in 1942. Normal people can't get enough food, down to the Minister of Agriculture, Matsumura, himself goes to the countryside and pleads farmers to sell crops. However, farmers don't want to sell the crops either because of the magnificent devaluation of the currency due to the destruction of the economic system. On the first day, MacArthur arrived in Japan, the hotel even lack the egg that it planned to serve to MacArthur, and only serve two dishes. In the end, American troops provide the beef, bread, and so on to the kitchen of the hotel, so that MacArthur didn't get hungry on the first day[3]. To change this situation. MacArthur made strict orders that Americans mustn't take any food from the Japanese, even buy. Furthermore, He asks to distribute all the food that can be found in the Allies Command, and even collect the US supply in the pacific region to distribute 3.5 million tons of food; At the same time, the Allies distribute about 10 million clothes which are seizures from Japan army during the WWII to exchange food from farmers. For this reason, the US congress is very shocked and angry, they call to MacArthur why he use US supplies to feed the enemy not long before. MacArthur claims that it is quite important to sustain Japanese society stable by letting people won't be starved, so whether you give me bread or give me bullets.

As a result, the US choose to provide "bread". Between May and October 1946 alone, the U.S. occupation authorities distributed 600,000 tons of rice and canned food to the Japanese. 62% of the rice ration in Tokyo was imported in June and 41% in Yokohama; by July and August, 100% of the rice ration in both areas was imported. For the country as a whole, the ratio of imported grain to consumption was 34.2% in July, 33.5% in August, and 27.2% in September. In other words, in the third quarter, the United States supplied almost one-third of Japan's food needs, and it was this scale of U.S. aid that

kept Japan from experiencing widespread famine. Unwittingly, MacArthur had conquered the hearts and minds of the Japanese people by saving their stomachs[4].

4 Reform of the monarchy and establishment of a new constitution

After solving the food problems, MacArthur begins to make plans to meet the Japanese emperor. Before this, the US considered the Japanese emperor to be useless and existed in name only, besides this, the US wanted to abolish the emperor also because they think in this way will be helpful for them to wipe out the militarism of Japan, and transform Japan better. However, whether the emperor himself is a pacifist or a war criminal, his importance is very significant. Before Japan surrendered, despite the weakness that Japan's army showed, the war officers still yelled: "Broken Jade", and want to prevent the US marines take their islands by unrestricted recruitment, banzai charge, and "Kamikaze" attack. American indeed experience the determination of the Japanese to defend their country. For this reason, it is quite shocked for American soldiers when they first arrived in Japan. There is a word that can demonstrate the scene that happened there: in the morning, soldiers need to put their hands on the gun. In the noon, soldiers don't need to put their hands on the gun anymore, and talk with Japanese people very friendly. In the afternoon, soldiers can hang out and go shopping on the street.

This significant transformation is all because of the emperor. If the emperor asks nationals to fight to the last man, people will follow even only with bamboo spears[5]; but if the emperor asks people to surrender, even there are millions of armies exist, all of them will put down their weapons and use very friendly attitude to face Americans. The reason causes this phenomenon is the tradition of Japan, the culture of loyalty to the emperor. Not only did many Anthropologists find out this like Benedict, but MacArthur himself also said that the emperor is more powerful than 20 full-armed armor divisions.

As a result, general MacArthur convinced Allied General Headquarters, and Hideki Tojo, to let the International Military Tribunal for the Far East make Hideki Tojo the primary character who start a war instead of the emperor Hirohito. In the end, the emperor kept, but by the pressure of the US since America want to prevent future extremist acts by the Japanese in the name of the Emperor. Emperor Hirohito delivered a speech that claims he is not a god, and the superiority of the Japanese is not true. The relationship between the emperor and the Japanese people is mutual trust and mutual respect[6]. The threat of the emperor is eliminated, the next step is to fix the Japanese constitution to make Japan transform into a peaceful country that won't start a war in the future. Despite the that the US was involved much in making this new constitution, the Japanese people still welcome it. It not only makes sure the basic human rights of people such as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of thought, and equality between men and women, which even allows women to vote, but also bans aristocracy, and implements the symbolic emperor system. Besides these,

maybe the most important one is that Japan is not allowed to keep every army. Though Japan is allowed to keep self-defense forces after signing the Treaty of Peace with Japan and mustn't declare war on other countries. By taking all these measures, the US makes Japan transform into a modern democratic country, which become the fundament of nowadays Japan.

5 The Land Reform

America does not want to feed Japan for its whole life, so the key can solve this problem is to let Japan feed itself by land reformation. Actually, before Japanese peasants can own their land, they can't support their daily expenses so they have to join the army and become sacrifices of Japanese Militarism [7].

In the beginning, both the General Headquarters (GHQ), which is the top government department set by the Allies during the period of occupation, also called Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), and the Japanese government want to lead the creation of land law. But the first law made by the Japanese government, not only biased landowners but also made GHQ unpleasant. However, at that time, both China and North Korea were making land transform. For this reason, GHQ accommodates the Japanese government, Japan successfully set the Homesteading system, and transform peasants in the countryside into the middle class with higher economic status, and political status.

The specific method can be described as the government buying lands from land owners and selling them to the peasants, so peasants own the lands. The agricultural land reform is considered to be the most in-depth, effective, and widespread democratization reform. As a result of the agricultural land reform, class relations in rural Japan underwent fundamental changes, with feudal parasitic landlords ceasing to exist, tenant farmers gaining ownership of land and freeing themselves from the shackles of semi-feudal tenancy relations, and subsistence farmers dominating the countryside. The liberation of agricultural productivity led to an unprecedented boom in postwar agricultural production and a significant increase in agricultural investment, which served as a "tractor-trailer" for Japan's economic recovery[8].

6 The disintegration of plutocracy and control of industry quality

After solving the agriculture problems, the next importance which needs to be fixed is the influence of plutocracy. The US considered that plutocracies are the main reason that causes both the Japanese people are not able to be paid well, live well, and for Japan to start a war. Plutocracy is like the monopoly company in Japan. They control both the product market and labor market, which means they cause that workers are paid low, but the price of the products in Japan is high.

As a result, Japan not only needs to find the resource to keep producing but also find the market to sell its

products. In other words, disintegrating plutocracy can also eliminate both the reason and ability to start a war. On November 6, 1945, the Memorandum on the Dissolution of Holding Companies issued by the occupation authorities directed the dissolution of the four major headquarters of Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Yasuda, known as the Big Four, and required the Japanese government to accept the approval and supervision of the occupation authorities in the process of implementation. Among them, Mitsui and Mitsubishi were dissolved and split into 200 and 139 small companies, respectively.

The United States pursued this policy because these four were strong supporters of Japan's aggressive policies [9]. In January 1948, The Law of Exclusion of Plutocratic Family Dominance was issued. As a result, 3000 more people were investigated, and 2000 more people were fired. By these methods, Far East Commission makes sure that it won't work to control the firms by blood relationships and stocks. In December 1947, the Japanese government issued The Law of Economic power over-concentration exclusion whose purpose is to prevent the Trust revival; to establish and protection of a free competitive economic system. A deeper consideration remains the pursuit of a policy of democratization and demilitarization in Japan. After all these, plutocracies become Foundations and are allowed to back to the market to prove themselves again (but actually Plutocracy was not eliminated, since the purpose of anti-communism in the US, these Foundations provide the basics for the rise of the Japanese economy in the future). Some Foundations begin to invest in education, maybe for the purpose that cultivating speakers in the political circles.

Typically, Matsushita Electric, a subsidiary of the Sumitomo Foundations, established the Matsushita School of Government and Economics in 1979 and has trained more than 200 students, nearly 70 of whom have gone on to enter politics[10]. Since the chaos of both economies and the influence of plutocracy, actually whether during WWII or after it, Made in Japan is the name of inferior products for that period.

As a result, MacArthur invites professor W. Edwards Deming to Japan and teach those Japanese companies how to regulate quality. Deming has two most important theories that he taught to those Entrepreneurs: first, the reason for the quality problem is the administrators because it is administrators who make the process of producing; second, achieving high-quality products will instead decrease cost, as long as avoid waste. Toyota is now the quintessential company for producing high-quality products and was the first to embrace Deming's ideas. The core of Toyota is to avoid waste, while the picture of Deming hanging in Toyota is bigger than the pictures of Toyota's founder and Toyota's current president. Deming also predicts that as long as Japanese companies regulate the quality by using statistics, they will exceed American firms in 5 years, and so it is. For this reason, Deming become famous in the US, and those American companies feel threats, so Ford invites Deming to its company, too.

7 Conclusion

This paper explores the process that makes Japan transform from feudal militarism into a parliamentary democracy country and summarizes the contributions of the US to Japan's rebuilding.

During the occupation, the US and general MacArthur have done many methods to transform Japan into a more modern, democratic, rich country which is the foundation of nowadays Japan. The U.S. occupation of Japan alone was an accident, but it was this accident that saved Japan from the difficulties of Germany and received much help from the United States. The basics such as agriculture, constitution, industry, and economy that made Japan rebuild so quickly and transform so quickly are all related and even dominated by the US. These transformations, provide the reason why The US and Japan sign the Treaty of Peace with Japan in just 6 years, and why Japan become an important ally or friend country to the US so soon.

This paper may lack some detailed data which can prove the effects of actions taken by the US. Future research may focus on What U.S. policies have shifted toward Japan and cooperation between the U.S. and Japan after the 1950s.

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