PRESSURE GROUPS IN JAPANESE POLITICS

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INTRODUCTION

Capitalism generates two distinct social phenomena in the course of its maturity into monopoly capitalism and further to state monopoly capitalism: one is the formation of lasting and often large-scale professional groups among the various classes, social strata, and occupations; the other is the infiltration of government power into every part of the socio-economic order. These two phenomena, emanating from a single source, act together to urge the professional groups to exert constant influence upon the political process. This may be seen in all the capitalist countries. Japan, whose capitalistic development had reached an advanced stage even prior to the outbreak of the last World War, has been no exception. Nevertheless, it has been only little more than a decade since people began talking about the overt emergence of "pressure groups" in this country. What, then, was the background of this development?

In prewar Japan, particularly from the Taishō era, the formation of intra-class, stratum or professional groups began to gather momentum. Under a regime loyal to the Emperor system, however, organized group action, when spontaneous, was invariably looked upon as something inimicable to "peace and order." Those who participated in such movements could not escape the stigma of "communism." It was, therefore, hazardous for any autonomous group to develop freely amidst the oppression and restraints which were introduced at every possible opportunity. With the introduction of the 'Quasi-War-Order' at the beginning of the Shōwa era, almost all groups were reorganized *en masse* into control-bodies subordinated and subservient to a government which functioned primarily for the perpetuation and perfection of wartime state monopoly capitalism.

After the Second World War, an institutional framework for parliamentary democracy was established in Japan and the fundamental human rights of freedom of speech, assembly, and association were guaranteed by

the Constitution. So far, postwar social groups have been free from legal restrictions in regard to political activities. Yet, Japan had to experience indirect rule by the Occupation Forces, mainly American, from 1946 to 1952. The trade unions, farmers' unions, and many other popular organizations which came to be formed in quick succession during this period functioned more as organizers of anti-authoritarian "mass movements" than as pressure groups. With the signing of the Peace Treaty and the recovery of independence in 1952, the external restrictions which had been placed on the indigenous operation of parliamentary democracy under the stewardship of the political parties were swept away. At the same time, groups and organizations in each field of political, economic, and social activity started to realign and reorganize as if in reaction to the Occupation which had up to then controlled the country. The formation of groups were accelerated and intensified on a nationwide scale by the determined effort, especially after the recovery and reconsolidation of Japanese capitalism have been more or less achieved.

By 1955 or so, the efforts at group reforming were organizationally complete: politically, two-party system came into existence (it is in fact a one-and-one-half party system[1]); economically, the Federation of Economic Organizations (Keidanren, founded in August 1946), the Japanese Federation of Employers' Associations (Nikkeiren, founded in April 1948), and the Japanese Management Association (Dōyūkai, founded in April 1946) took shape as representatives of financial groups and big business while the Political Federation of Japanese Small Business (Chūseiren, founded in April 1966) came to play a similar role for small business. Trade unions were formed for labor, particularly the two national confederations, that is to say, Nihon rōdōkumiai sōhyōgikai (Sōhyō, General Council of Trade Unions of Japan, founded in 1950) and Zen-Nihon rōdōkumiai kaigi (Zenrō, Japan Trade Union Congress, founded in 1954 and reorganized into Zen-Nihon rōdō sōdōmei—Dōmei—in November 1964). Other occupational or professional groups formed include: farmers' groups (the strongest being Nōgyō kyōdō kumiai—Nōkyō—Agricultural Co-operative Associations, which have been in existence since 1947); and Nihon ishi kai (Japan Medical Association, founded in November 1947). Various businessmens' associations were organized according to craft or trade; ex-servicemen organized their own groups; the hard-stricken landlord class also formed organizations. On the prefectural and local government levels, the so-called "six

1 Because the government party, the Liberal Democratic Party, have been occupying about two-thirds of whole seats in the National Diet, whereas the largest opposition party, Japan Socialist Party, have remained one-third minority.

local bodies"[2] were formed.

From 1955 on, the Japanese government, in a single-minded drive to achieve "Rapid Economic Growth," extended its direct interferencc in the socio-economic processes of the country and strengthened its grip over the nation by asserting its power on every aspect of life. The government frequently resorted to political measures in order to quicken the tempo of economic growth. In short, the preconditions required to enable pressure groups to develop overtly existed by the mid-1950's. These included the assurance of the freedom of speech, assembly, and association; the operation of parliamentary democracy through political parties; the enlargement and intensification of the administrative function of the state; and the organization and reorganization of various professional groups on all levels. It is not accidental, therefore, that the behavior of pressure groups began attracting the attention of journalistic and academic circles since 1957–58.

I. POWER STRUCTURE AND PRESSURE GROUPS

When we use the terms "pressure groups" and/or "pressure politics," we usually take for granted that, although there may be conflicts of interest among the groups exerting organized influences upon the political process, these groups have come together because of an implicit consensus among them on the fundamentals of the political system, with the aim of forming a system which might be called a pressure-group system. In Japanese politics, however, there exists the grave cleavages which cause the division of interest-groups into two conflicting camps parallel to or affiliated with the conservatist and progressivist political parties. Accordingly, there is no coherent and all-embracing pressure group system in this country. The best example may be seen in the antagonism between the majority of the trade unions affiliated with Sōhyō on the one hand, and the financial and industrial organization on the other. The lack of essential homogeneity at both the group and party levels and, indeed, the propensity for polarization, brings about affiliation of particular political interest-groups with each party. The reader's attention may be called to the interdependent relationship maintained between the Jiyū minshutō (Liberal Democratic Party), the conservative party, and various organizations representing financial-cum-industrial interests as well as other conservative pressure groups, and that between Nihon shakaitō (Japan Socialist Party) and the trade unions

2 These are comprised of following six All-Japan conferences of (1) Prefectural Governors, (2) City Mayors, (3) Town and Village Mayors, (4) Presidents of Prefectural Assemblies, (5) Chairmen of City Assemblies, and (6) Chairmen of Town and Village Assemblies.

affiliated with Sōhyō or that between the Minshu shakaitō (Democratic Socialist Party) and the trade unions affiliated with Dōmei.

Within the context of the unusual postwar circumstances, the tendency toward a "perpendicular party-aligned systematization" of pressure groups helped to establish a hierarchical order among those groups according to the size and the influence each could exert upon the decision-making process. By "unusual circumstances" we mean the fact that, except for a relatively short period during the Occupation, the political power of this country has been almost exclusively wielded by the conservative forces and, since their "Grand Coalition" into the present Liberal Democratic Party in 1955, the majority of seats in the Houses and the monopoly of governmental power has been securely held by the conservatives. This phenomenon stands out as one of the unique features of postwar Japanese politics. For the last few years, the prestige of the LDP has declined so much that it is often argued that the Liberal Democrats are faced with a crisis. But the situation is not that simple. The strength of the Japan Socialist Party, the second largest political party in Japan and quantitatively the main force of the progressives, is declining as drastically or even more than that of the LDP. As a result, the smaller parties such as the Democratic Socialist Party, the Komeito and the Japan Communist Party, are increasing their strength within certain limits and a trend toward a "multi-party system" is often talked about. In spite of all these developments, however, the possibility of the transition of political power from the LDP to the opposition forces centering around the JSP seems rather slight. Under these circumstances, even though in the near future the LDP should fail to maintain an outright majority, they would still enjoy a plurality with a larger number of seats than any one of the opposition parties, thereby occupying an advantageous position for reinforcing its strength and maintaining a favorable balance of power through coalition with either or both the Democratic Socialist Party and the Komeito.

The very fact that political power has long been monopolized by the conservative party and that there is little probability of any drastic change menacing this established pattern in the near future, has led to the emergence of an idiosyncratic feature in Japan's power structure and her decision-making process. This idiosyncrasy is, in short, the quasi-monopolistic usurpation of the decision-making function by the "Triangular League" made up of the top leaders of the ruling party, the senior officials of the government, and the financial tycoons. Financial tycoons and big business exert political influence of an overwhelming nature upon the conservative party by means of political contributions offered to the party or to the

party's dominant factions. Senior government officials also come under their control, through various channels both public and private. Big financiers and industrialists have the means to participate in the actual execution of state policies. They can do so in the capacity of members of government committees, as advisors and counselors, and also as members of such "advisory organs" as the councils, Investigation Commissions, etc., which are set up by both the cabinet and the ministries. Accordingly, in Japan (probably more or less in common with a majority of the capitalist countries in the world) the financial kingdom is the strongest pressure group or interest group in the country and simultaneously, an important part of the nerve-center of political power and supreme decision-making organs. The conservative party, especially its executive committee, is the operator of a gigantic state-mechanism and can manipulate, by subordinating senior government officials to its control, administrative as well as financial apparatus in favor of monopoly capital as required. On the other hand, senior government officials serve the conservative party and the financial and business worlds during their tenure in office. They look foward to being enrolled into the LDP upon their retirement, and, upon winning in an election, to being admitted to the center of political power, which is securely held by the party. Otherwise, they can look forward to "slipping sideways" (*yokosuberi*) or "descending from heaven" (*amakudari*) to monopoly enterprises or extra-departmental bodies right across the hall from their office-door.

The pattern of the power-structure in Japan has emerged under the long-term political suzerainty of the conservative party, and its characteristics are related to the constellation, characteristics, and mode of action of the pressure groups in the country. First, let us discuss constellation. The trade unions, especially those affiliated with Sōhyō, are far removed from the nucleus of power and thereby have been divorced from the decision-making process. They are apt to resort to political action which assumes the shape of "resistance" and "anti-government mass-movement." In contrast, the financial groups and monopoly organizations do not need to use overt pressure as they themselves constitute the main part of the nucleus of power; they can attain their purposes through routine legislative and administrative procedures in return for their financial contributions to the government party, etc. Between the trade unions at one end and the financial groups and monopoly organizations at the other, there are innumerable pressure groups among the so-called "new and old middle strata" made up of small and medium businesses, petty traders, farmers and professionals, each working for its own professional or other interests. Most

of these groups are linked to the LDP primarily due to their inherent conservative inclination, but also due to their calculation that the long-term monopoly of the political power by the conservative party will remain unchanged for the time being. This does not mean that all these pressure groups are equally capable of exerting political influence upon both the ruling party and the bureaucratic machine. The factors determining the extent of their influence are many, but the distance which intervenes between any specific group and the center of power or the position it occupies within the hierarchical power structure, is no doubt one of the ultimate factors.

All through the period of "Rapid Economic Growth" since 1955, and amid the great move toward consolidation of a full-fledged state monopoly capitalist system, no socio-economic sphere in the country has been left unaffected by the systematic drive for subordination. (For instance, monopoly capital subordinates small and medium enterprises and the latter, in turn, subordinate the petty traders, thus setting up a pyramidal structure of control and subjugation, with monopoly capital at the apex and petty traders at the bottom.) It was also during this period that the constellation of pressure groups within the power-interest structure came to be fixed hierarchically.

Another important element in constellation is the scale and internal cohesion of the group concerned, as well as the resources and facilities—the votes and money—it could mobilize. Combination of these two elements determines the extent of political influence each of the pressure groups in the conservative camp can exert and, accordingly, its position within the whole power-interest structure. In the case of the Japanese Medical Association, for example, although its membership is quantitatively small, the Association's bargaining power in dealing with the government and the ruling party is disproportionately large because of (1) the intimacy and closeness of personal contact maintained between the Association's leaders and the people who are at the helm of state affairs, (2) the abundance of operational funds the Association can keep on hand; and (3) the social prestige which still clings to practising physicians (though considerably lessened since the war) and which can be very effectively utilized for exerting political influence upon the voters. The reason for the great pressure wielded by agricultural organizations, Nōkyō in particular, lies in the fact that Nōkyō have the nation's farm households—well over 6 million in total—as their members, and they thus have the ability to mobilize the vote in both general and local elections. The extent of the pressure exerted by Nōkyō is demonstrated every summer in the determination of the pro-

ducers' rice price. In spite of remarkable decline of the agricultural population[3] in terms of total Japanese population which took place during the period of rapid economic growth, Nōkyō's pressure activities remain as formidable as ever because mainly of the mechanism of over-representation of rural constituencies on the national level which works to enhance the political influence of Nōkyō.[4] In sharp contrast to these pressure groups and their enormously influential power, countless consumers in the big cities are still largely unorganized and the political influence which can be exerted by, for instance, Housewives' Federation (Shufu rengōkai), representing the interests of urban consumers, is confined to an extremely small scale. Organizational relationships between the political parties and the pressure groups affiliated with them will be explained in detail in Section II.

The uniqueness of the Japanese power structure has a serious bearing on the characteristics and behavior-patterns of pressure groups. Elucidation of the characteristics and behavior-patterns may be most profitably made in terms of (1) access-point, or where the pressure groups direct their pressure; (2) objectives, and (3) method of pressuring.

First, the strategic access-points for the pressure groups are, of course, the party in power, that is the Liberal Democratic Party, and the bureaucracy. No doubt, this is true in all countries invested with a collective

3 It is noteworthy that, first, the ratio of agricultural population to total employed population in Japan is for the first time less than 20%, and that, second, of all agricultural households only one-fifth are "full-time farmers"; the rest are "part-time farmers." The decline of agricultural population in absolute terms, and the intensification of class diversification among agricultural households organized within Nōkyō were also remarkable in this period.

4 The so-called Agrarian M. P.'s occupied about 300 seats out of 486 in the House of Representatives. Due to disproportionate representation among urban and rural constituencies, the number of votes needed to elect a Dietman to the House of Representatives varies widely according to district. Typical examples can be seen in the following table, taken from the results of the 1967 General Election.

	URBAN AREA	RURAL AREA
	The Seventh District of Tokyo Prefecture	The Fifth District of Hyōgo Prefecture
Number of Seats	5	3
Total Number of Voters	1,315,688	225,569
Number of Votes per Candidate	1. 156,131	1. 54,174
	2. 110,892	2. 52,186
	3. 107,873	3. 42,523
	4. 107,342	
	5. 101,792	
	6. 96,620	4. 39,732
	7. 93,273	
	8. 90,222	

government structure (as the U.K.). The difference between the other countries and Japan lies in that, as government power has been monopolized by the conservative party for a long time and as there is little possibility of its changing hands in the near future, the access-points for the pressure groups are almost exclusively focused on the conservative party and the government. As only a few groups are privileged to exert direct influence through public and private routes connecting them with the leaders of the ruling party, most of the conservative pressure groups try to influence decision-making of the governing body indirectly, through the Members of Parliament who have been "sponsored" by the votes and money of the group concerned. When legislative measures promising benefits to any particular groups are under discussion, maneuvers are generally directed toward the relevant Standing Committee and its members by a bloc of M.P.'s who are under the "sponsorship" of the would-be-beneficiary groups; in this case, the initiators of the maneuver must belong to the government party because, although a Standing Committee includes a few opposition party members, the majority come from the government party. The Members of Parliament, especially those belonging to the conservative party, work as so many lobbyists on behalf of various interest groups, acting upon leaders of the government party, their fellow M.P.'s and the bureaucracy. That the relationship between the pressure groups and the government authorities are tight and cordial indeed is a matter which will be discussed in the following section.

Second, the objectives of the pressure groups are, unmistakably, to obtain whatever benefits are available from the state. This is surely the universal objective of pressure groups in capitalist countries. Such benefits range over a wide scope, from legislative action and administrative conveniences meant for realizing or protecting the interests and benefits of the groups concerned, to the "sharing" of state funds in varying quotas. The latter, i.e., the obtaining of funds from state finance, is the major objective. Unique to Japan, pressure groups compete among each other in order to secure the closest approach to the government party and the bureaucracy and in getting the biggest share of the funds, because the privileges of state fund allocation and other major policy decisions are the monopoly of the ruling party and the bureaucracy. This fact is closely related to the method or pattern of applying pressure.

The methods adopted by the pressure group to attain their goals are characterized not by an air of arrogant and open use of the power of organized influence, but rather by an attitude of submissive begging for alms. This latter attitude is particularly evident in and characteristic of

the method of "petition" which, as used in Japanese pressure politics, has certain unique features. The criticism that Japanese pressure groups are indeed bands begging for alms rather than gangs using game-hunting techniques, does not fail to strike at the true nature of pressure groups, which are both parasitic and submissive to the authorities. Circumstances, however, sometimes urge them to practise or adopt, through learning from the successive exploitation of the various mass-movement techniques by the postwar trade unions, farmers' unions, and students' groups, such tactics as mass-meetings, demonstration, sit-down strikes, and mammoth collective bargaining sessions with the government and the ruling party. Even when they use such tactics, however, it is a rare case when there is no implicit mutual understanding as to the political attitude or political stand between the pressure groups and ruling party-bureaucratic super structure. The tough gestures of the pressure groups are a display of the threat to withdraw their support, while harboring little intention of opposing to the last or defecting from, the government and the party in power, in case the latter is reluctant to honor their requests. In full understanding of the situation, the government and the party reply to such gestures with appropriate concessions and compromises.

Any stock-taking of the characteristics inherent to the nature and patterns of behavior of Japanese pressure groups will remain incomplete, if another trait, the insignificant weight attached by them to public relations activities, is left unexplored. In fact, it is readily conceivable that so long as the pressure groups remain as so many beggar-groups, parasites of the state, relying on the policy of pestering the ruling party and the bureaucratic machinery for alms, it is unreasonable to expect them to develop a style of action directed at provocation and mobilization of public opinion in justification and for materialization of their claims. Not that they are completely unconcerned with public relations activities. However, the remarkable and flagrant neglect of this branch of activity remains a fact and constitutes one of the distinctive features of Japanese pressure-politics, when compared to other foreign countries. Under these circumstances, pressure group politics cannot help but become political corruption. This problem will be scrutinized again in the closing section of the article.

II. THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE CONSERVATIVE, PRESSURE GROUPS, AND BUREAUCRACY

In the relationship between the conservative party and the pressure groups linked to it, the latter are apart from those groups representing the

financial kingdom which are themselves a part of the power nucleus of the country, generally in a position to exert influences which seem considerably stronger and more effective than in the cases seen in other countries. On the other hand, the balance of power between the bureaucracy and the pressure groups is heavily weighted in favor of the former, with the latter placed under the tangible and intangible controls of the former. Again, the relationship between the political party, especially the government party, and the bureaucracy is characterized by the dominance of the former over the latter and it is a glaring fact that the conservative party began exercising increasing control over the bureaucracy since the formation of the Liberal Democratic Party in 1955. Thus, the relationship maintained among these groups may be understood as a function of a triangular co-regulating, in which the political party is on the offensive vis-à-vis the bureaucracy, but defensive vis-à-vis the pressure groups; in which the pressure groups are on the offensive vis-à-vis the political party but defensive vis-à-vis the bureaucracy; and in which the bureaucracy is on the offensive vis-à-vis the pressure groups but defensive vis-à-vis the political party. How and why such interrelationship have taken shape will be analyzed here from the organizational point of view, mainly in reference to the relations between the political party and pressure groups and between pressure groups and the bureaucracy.

Before the war, political parties in Japan, particularly the conservative party, were noticeably regime-obedient, and bound themselves to the power-structure both at its apex (the bureaucracy of the Emperor System) and at its base [the so-called "middle strata" of society composed of small factory owners, building constructors, proprietors of retail shops, master carpenters, small landowners, independent farmers, school teachers (especially in primary schools), employees of village offices, low-grade officials, Buddhist and Shinto priests, etc. All of them were concurrently the basic social constituents of the Emperor regime.][5]

Basic characteristics of the conservative party in terms of power structure were carried over to the postwar conservative parties. Therefore, the conservative party today, viewed from the organizational point, is no more than a coalition of so many cliques with loosely maintained party discipline, lacking a well-knit rank-and-file outside of the Diet. The progressive parties, on the other hand, leaving aside the Communist Party for the time being, are likewise an amalgam of various factions of leftist par-

5 Regarding the significant role played by the "middle strata" in Japanese politics, see Masao Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, edited by Ivan Morris, London, Oxford University Press, 1963, pp. 57f.

liamentarians: The JSP itself, the standard-bearer of the progressive parties, was built by the splinter groups of the prewar proletarian parties.

Postwar political parties in Japan are mostly parliamentarian parties, with feeble mass organization outside the Diet and extremely vulnerable party organs. The parties had to survive and develop amid the violent reforms and social upheavals which brought the collapse of their traditional political foundations—in the case, especially, of the conservative parties, the disintegration of the old-style "constellation of reputable families" meant a heavy loss; they had also to cope with successive reshufflings of the social as well as economic systems; they had to deal with the new trend toward the formation of groups of every possible shade and intent, particularly after the signing of the Peace Treaty and the achievement of "Independence" in 1952. Under these circumstances, it was, in a sense, natural that the political parties desperately looked to the various social groups as valuable substitutes for the crumbling political foundations and vote collecting agencies. On the part of the social groups, it was both possible and beneficial to bind themselves to a particular political party and to strengthen their influence upon the latter by undertaking to work for the party at election-time; the ideal and material gains they could derive from such activity were worth-while. The relationship between the LDP and Nōkyō and that between the JSP and Sōhyō will be taken up here as typical example.

The history of the activities of Nōkyō may be divided into three eras, if we use as the criterion for periodization the methods employed to apply pressure: First Period (from its formation to the signing of the Peace Treaty in 1952): This was the period of mass movement activities, when Nōkyō, hand in hand with the farmers' unions, etc., adopted tactics to assert severe stress upon the government, for the purpose of communicating the demands of the farmers in general rather than for its own organizational interest. Second Period (from 1951–52 to the time of the Grand Conservative Coalition in 1955): Nōkyō had, during this period, many serious problems such as badly-run business management and offensive launched against it by the government and bureaucracy which were attempting, through the program of Reorganization of Farmers' Associations, to force Nōkyō to surrender the privileges which it had acquired during the Occupation. Nōkyō tried to tide over these difficulties by appealing to the government for financial assistance to rescue it from its financial difficulties and by turning itself into a channel for disseminating of the government's farm policies among the nation's farmers. At this juncture, the pressure activities engaged in by Nōkyō in safeguarding its own organi-

zational interests were a series of petitions and other similar appeals directed to the conservative parties as well as the relevant ministries. During the same period, the conservative forces in this country were split into two or three parties and the ruling party, then the Liberal Party (Jiyūtō), could scarcely maintain a majority in the House. This allowed the opposition parties, particularly the Progressive Party (Kaishintō) (the biggest) to play a relatively important role in the policy-making process. Nōkyō took advantage of this situation by entering into an alliance with the opposition parties, the Progressive Party in particular, and succeeded in diverting the offensive of the government and bureaucracy which aimed at reorganization of farmers' associations.

Third Period: It was after the Grand Conservative Coalition in 1955 that Nōkyō commenced its career as a typical pressure group and its enormous political influence came to be strongly felt. In this period, the conservative forces advanced by recovering political stability through organizing into a single Liberal Democratic Party but, at the same time, they retreated in matters of policy, in this case, the return to a Protectionist Agricultural Policy. Meanwhile, safeguarding of vested interest became an increasingly acute problem for Nōkyō. Circumstances being what they were, Nōkyō developed a strategy of offering assured electoral support to Diet members returned from rural constituencies mostly those belonging to the LDP—on the condition that they would work for the benefit of Nōkyō. When the producers' rice price is fixed each summer (this event came to be an annual convention or when issues having serious bearing on the interest of its organization crop up, Nōkyō applies strong pressure on the Agrarian M. P.'s and the "Co-operative" M. P.'s who are individually "sponsored" by or indebted to Nōkyō, urging them in turn to work upon the government and party leaders to deal favorably with matters affecting Nōkyō. Simultaneously with such indirect pressure from the inside, Nōkyō initiates frontal attacks on the policy-making machinery from the outside. In both cases, a large number of Nōkyō members are mobilized as auxiliary tools for creating pressure.

Political efficacy of this kind of pressure group activity can be explained as a result of dual causes: (1) the conservative LDP lacks a solid substructure; and (2) Nōkyō is a mammoth professional group and plays a strategic role in national elections through its thorough organization of the agricultural population, though the latter is a minority both in term of absolute population and industrial manpower. Nevertheless, the conservative party could hardly win the national elections—and even the local elections—unless the organized backing of Nōkyō and its member-farmers.

Nōkyō has taken upon itself the role of active electioneering agent since the May 1958 General Election. First, among its electioneering procedures is the recommendation of specific candidates at both national and prefectural levels; this is followed by actual vote-collecting campaigns on behalf of the recommended candidates. Both recommendations and vote collecting, however, are carefully executed so as not to involve the central organizational network of Nōkyō; the actual polling campaigns are usually taken over by the political wing including the Farm Policy Association and Youth League (which are formally bodies independent of Nōkyō) and by the executive members and employees of the co-operative in each town and village. Candidates running for elections who are eligible for Nōkyō's organized support are of two types: one coming from among the leading or executive members and employees of Nōkyō itself, and the other from the rural constituencies in general. Methods and tactics employed by Nōkyō in electioneering activities differ according to the type of candidate, and these are reflected in the extent of mobilization of the members' votes. When returned, the former is called an Agricultural Co-operative M. P. (Nōkyō giin) and the latter, Agrarian M. P. (Nōrin giin), each with a different role to play as a sponsored parliamentarian.

This formula for action is not the monopoly or patent of Nōkyō. It is known and used by other pressure groups linked to the conservative party, notably the Japan War-rereaved Association (Nihon izoku kai, 8 million nominal membership), the Federation of Repatriates Association (Hikiagesha dantai zenin rengōkai, 3,470,000 members), the Japan Ex-servicemen Pensioners' League (Nihon gunjin onkyū remmei, 730,000 members), the All-Japan Environmental Sanitation Service Traders' Association (Zenkoku kankyō eisei dōgyōsha kumiai), etc. Not a few of these are trying to attain their purposes by offering political contribution to the conservative party as a whole or to some particular faction of the same party.

Next, let us examine the relationship between the progressive party and the trade unions. The relationship between the Japan Socialist Party and Sōhyō provides a typical example. The close relationship binding the Socialist Party and Sōhyō can be dated back to the days of the Katayama government (May 1947–March 1948) when a group of 16 left-wing members formed the Satsukikai (May Group) within the JSP and associated themselves with the organizers of the Minshuka dōmei (Democratization League) which was opposed to the Japan Communist Party's domination of the trade unions. This was the time of *Sturm und Drang* in Japan's labor movement, immediately after the abortive First February General Strike. In 1950, elements of the Democratization League formed Sōhyō

which, at its first meeting, chalked out a policy to "Support the Japan Socialist Party and Fight against Communism." On the other hand, at its 1951 Convention, the JSP split into right and left wings through disputes centering on the issues of the Peace Treaty. Sōhyō made clear its support of the Leftist Socialist Party, which was then able to increase its strength in the Diet by leaps and bounds, thanks to the allout backing by Sōhyō, from 16 seats to 54 in the October 1952 General Election, and then to 72—well surpassing the Rightist Socialist Party—in the General Election in April the following year. This victory paved the way for the left wing to take initiative in unifying the Socialist Party in 1955, and to hold the leadership of the unified Party thereafter.

From 1950 to 1955, the political bloc made up of the Leftist Socialist Party and Sōhyō leaders was virtually a locomotive pulling the whole train of the Japanese progressive forces, under the slogan of "Peace, Independence, Democracy." The leadership of the bloc was unshakable partly due to disunity and inactivity within the Japan Communist Party. However, since the unification of the Socialist Party vis-à-vis the Grand Conservative Coalition in 1955, the character of the bloc began to change gradually although the alliance between the JSP, especially its left wing, and Sōhyō remained as close as ever. Such change was due to the combination of certain changes occurring within each of the two groups. On the one hand, as Sōhyō gained prestige and influence worthy of full recognition as one of the powerful institutions in Japanese society, its leading principle came to closer to trade unionism; while on the other hand the tendency for the JSP to become a parliamentary party developed steadily within the framework of the "One-and-One-Half Party System." Thereupon, the political character of the JSP-Sōhyō bloc as a joint-headquarters for the progressive forces and popular anti-government campaign, was turned into that of a liaison-office where trade unions' economic-basis struggles and the JSP's parliamentary tactics were co-ordinated in an atmosphere of mutual dependence; inspite of the later vicissitudes which no doubt left some effect on the nature of the relationship, these characteristics remain basically the same to this date. This relationship of mutual dependence between the JSP and the Sōhyō-affiliated trade unions may be summarized as below. The Sōhyō-affiliated unions, by officially deciding to support the JSP, provide the JSP with candidates, votes, and funds for elections. The JSP, in return, offers Party-tickets to trade union leaders who have ascended to the top of the "Status Elevator" and engage in tactful maneuvering inside the Diet, so that they may promote the interests of the Sōhyō trade unions and may protect the unions from attacks made by the government and the

ruling party. It is to such a relationship that the JSP owes its nickname of Trade Union Leaders' Party or Sōhyō's Politbureau inside the Diet. There seems to exist a sort of vicious cycle: the JSP has to depend heavily on Sōhyō for candidates, votes, and funds because of the small number of party members (not more that 50,000 since the time of the unified Socialist Party) and of its feeble organization: and of its essential nature as a parliamentarians' party; while at the same time it is because of the inability on the part of the JSP to transcend its dependence on trade unions that the JSP is stalemated and its basic party organization remains ill-equipped. Particularly today, Sōhyō is being pushed into a corner by both external situations and internal conditions—its organization base is being badly shaken under the joint offensives of the government, employers, Dōmei, IMF-JC, etc., and its weight in the total labor front is declining, while inside Sōhyō itself, the voices clamoring for "Freedom of Political Choice" of trade union members who are feeling more affinity for other parties are becoming louder. As a result, this "Crisis of Sōhyō" directly affects the JSP by diminishing of its sphere of influence. Thus, it is clear that the relationship of mutual dependence between the JSP and Sōhyō has reached a turning-point.

A relationship similar to that which binds the JSP and Sōhyō may also be seen between the Democratic Socialist Party and Dōmei. The Democratic Socialist Party likewise depends to a considerable extent upon Dōmei forces for votes, funds, and candidates, though seemingly in lesser degree than the JSP does on Sōhyō. This must not be interpreted, however, as indicating that the Democratic Socialist Party is better equipped than the JSP in basic party organization, but rather should be understood as due to the fact that the Democratic Socialist Party is less "radical," and hence collects as much or even more political funds from financial and industrial groups than from Dōmei. Also, Dōmei itself is more loyal to trade unionism or "industrial peace" than Sōhyō, hence Dōmei has no need to resort to political activities to realize its particular interests. (This is not contradicted by the fact that during the elections it is customary for the trade unions affiliated with Dōmei to give to those candidates running from the same unions the united support of both management and the labor.)

The above is a brief sketch of pressure-politics in Japan wherein it is seen that organizational weakness of the political parties compels them to depend on professional groups who take the place of the party's substructure, and thus help make the political influence exercised by pressure groups upon the political parties excessive. Next, we shall explore the origin of the tendencies for the pressure groups to be dependent on or sub-

ordinate to government bureaucracy, from the point of view of the organization of the groups.

The following characteristics are usually pointed out as typical of the organizational setup of Japanese pressure groups. First is the conspicuous difference in the degree of rationalization and functionalization between the apex and base levels of the organization. Nōkyō and Chūseiren are typical examples. In both associations, the executive level is comparable to that of any large enterprise or big business. But at the base level, in the cases of both Nōkyō and Chūseiren, the smallest unit is organized by more traditional means, specifically, the means by which membership is elicited. Each member joins the group not on the basis of a voluntary decision to do so on account of the benefits which might accrue therefrom, but rather because of the fact that his neighbors have joined. That is to say, participation derives from social pressure rather than rational and/or functional decisions.[6]

Consequently, second is the lack of a sense of belongingness and of voluntary participation among the constituents of the organization. Accordingly, the managerial rights of the whole organization rest with a minority of office holders and senior employees, almost to the extent of '*carte blanche*.' Under these circumstances, the organization can scarcely help but become oligarchical, while centralization and bureaucratization advance without serious hindrance.

Given these characteristics, and given the necessity to realize particular interests through working upon the government, what sorts of methods of operation will the cadres and leaders of the pressure groups choose? Because the sense of participation on the part of individual members is virtually non-existent, purposeful activity aimed at achieving interests by individual members is impossible, particularly activity directed at bureaucratic machinery. The leaders of the pressure groups, therefore, attain their aims and demands through the use of various methods, the most important of which is to deliberately allow their organizations to be used as a means of control by the government; that is, to become channels through which government policies can flow to their members. To repeat, the distinctive characteristic of Japanese pressure groups' method of operation is that, in their relation with the government, they do not jealously uphold their organizational autonomy; rather, they surrender it to the authorities

6 One scholar has aptly criticized the organizational structure of Nōkyō for being like "an amphibious animal stretching its huge body from the plant-state to the family-state in accordance with the distance from the center." [Keiji Kamiya, *Nōgyō kihon mondai ni tsuite no bunseki hōhō* (The Methods of the Analysis of the Fundamental Problems in Agriculture), c.1961, p. 14.]

and try to maintain their organization and realize their aims by voluntarily submitting to the control or protection of the government. Even though they may not go to the extreme of becoming channels for the government, still, the maintenance of friendly relations (or "blood-relation intimacy" as it used to be called) with the officials of the relevant ministries is a matter of great concern to the pressure groups. For the maintenance and promotion of such friendly relations with the bureaucratic machinery, the pressure groups welcome into their ranks officials retiring from the relevant ministries or politicians with personal influence.

On the part of the bureaucracy this relationship with pressure groups is not the least embarrassing. The bureaucrats are mindful to maintain and, if possible, expand their departmental "jurisdiction" and, particularly, to bring the biggest possible slice of the budget into their departmental coffers. Bureaucratic departmentalism prefers to keep under its patronage many pressure groups so as to maintain or expand its sphere of influence both directly and indirectly. (It is possible for a ministry or department to increase its budgetary allocation by manipulating its pressure groups.) The bureaucracy aspires to maintain related extra-departmental bodies or organizations capable of attaining financial or other subsidies from the government. (In the case of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, it is said that extra-departmental bodies receiving aid from the state through the Ministry total not less than 60.) This is one of the reasons why the bureaucracy is not willing to rationalize the considerable number of extra-departmental bodies.

The findings of the above study may be recapitulated as follows: (1) Japanese political parties (especially the conservative party), pressure groups, and the bureaucracy not only co-exist but also complement, as well as take advantage of, each other's shortcomings. (2) Japanese conservative-aligned pressure groups often make a show of resorting to overt pressure activities, but in fact, participating in a complementary relationship with the government and the ruling party; based on the philosophy of mutual dependence and mutual utilization, they try to realize their particular interests within their own means. (3) The bureaucracy maintains and expands its "jurisdiction," while the conservative party is assured of the support of organized votes. (4) The weight of "bureaucratism" in this network of pressure politics is significant and deserves special attention. When we take into consideration the well-knit combination and collaboration of the "senior officials-turned-politicians" who constitute the core of the conservative party, and the host of retired officials who constitute a large proportion of the leadership of the pressure group, plus active senior

officials, we may safely say that pressure politics in Japan is, in a sense, a "Triangular League" under the hegemony of senior active and retired government officials.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we would like to consider what effects the system of pressure groups is having on Japanese politics. The system of the Japanese pressure politics may be equated to minority group politics in several ways. First, among the countless interests in Japanese society which deserve representation, only those of a few groups are taken care of in this system; for instance, the interests of the mass of urban consumers are barely represented. Again, in regard to industrial workers, the interests of the unorganized employees of the small/medium and petty enterprises, who make up as much as two-thirds of the total industrial labor force, are left unattended. Second, as has already been pointed out, among those groups which actually articulate their own interests, there are considerable differences among the degree of influence they can afford to exercise. Third, as oligarchic control is well developed within the pressure groups themselves, the fruits of the activities undertaken in the name of the group or groups are more often than not enjoyed almost exclusively by either the office holders and a few others. For example, the beneficiaries of the annual rice-price campaigns are about 60% of the nation's farmhouseholds (the remaining 40% draw no benefit at all); out of this 60%, only 35% produce rice in such an amount that the price-increase brings a meaningful addition to their farm-income. It has also been reported that 43.5% of total receipts from the rice goes to 7.2% of the total farmhouseholds. Moreover, a big part of 1,400 billion yen which is paid to the farmers every year in lieu of rice is pooled in the credit department of or the bank affiliated with Nōkyō as savings and deposits, and 38 billion yen is paid yearly to Nōkyō for rice-collecting and storage fees. Of course, it may be neither fair nor correct to judge the merits and demerits of the rice-price campaign of Nōkyō from these figures alone; yet it offers a specific example of how the fruits of pressure-group activities fall straight into the hands of the organization itself and a minority of its members.

If Japanese pressure politics is nothing but minority group politics, where and how will the interests aspiring for representation which are as yet left unattended, find their outlets? There is little space remaining for a discussion of this question. Briefly, we may presume that the expansion of Sōkagakkai, and political advancement achieved by the Komeito, using

Sōkagakkai as its springboard; the steady increase of the Japan Communist Party's strength; the outbursts of citizen's political movements and Student Power, etc. have both direct and indirect relations to pressure group politics.

Another important consequence of pressure politics in Japan is that it has come to provide fertile soil for all sorts of bribery and corruption. Even the facts that (1) political power has for long been monopolized by the conservative party under whose control the administrative machinery of the State has been turned into a mammoth interest-distributing mechanism, with a pompous retinue of parasitic pressure groups, big and small in size and power attached to it; and (2) that in addition there exists a kind of political collusion, an abstruse give-and-take relationship of benefits and supports among the ruling party, the bureaucracy and the pressure groups, it is extremely difficult to check political corruption. Above and beyond this, business-deals between the financial and big business groups and the top-ranking elements of the government and the ruling party are always cloaked in a legal mantle hiding any illegal relationships which might exist. On the other hand, the bargaining between the other conservative pressure groups and the conservative party, conservative M. P.'s, and the bureaucracy to attain realization of the former's particular interests are generally carried on in secrecy, barred from the eyes of the rank and file of the specific groups let alone the general public. Hence these activities often assume illegal shapes and, therefore, are often exposed by the public prosecutors. To overcome these and other negative aspects of pressure politics in Japan, a thorough reform of the structural pre-conditions which support it—the termination of the conservatives' monopoly of government-power, reorganization of the political parties along rational and systematic lines, and democratization of pressure groups—are necessary.