

The Reception and Reinterpretation of Christian Socialism as an Antidote to Communism in Early Post-War Japan (1945–1972)¹

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1. The Christian-socialist encounter in modern Japan

Considering the close connection between theories of civilization/progress and world mission in the 19th century, it is not surprising that Christian converts in the ‘new’ churches of Asia became interested not only in capitalist, but also in socialist and later communist theories of social development. Scholars have stressed that socialist (Scheiner 1970, 109) as well as evolutionary thought (Yokoyama 2005, 34) was first introduced to Japan by Christian converts in the early Meiji period (1868–1912). Some further claim the Japanese socialist tradition as the oldest in Asia (Kublin 1952, 257). However, in 1903 the religious trial of Ebina Danjō 海老名弾正 (1856–1937), who propagated a social (though not socialist) gospel and liberal theology that led him to deny the divinity of Jesus, ended with his expulsion from the Evangelical Alliance (Fukuin Dōmeikai 福音同盟会) on grounds of Christological heresy. In relation to Christian social engagement, this event reaffirmed orthodox theology favoring the salvation of the soul over the salvation of the flesh. Around the

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same time and connected to the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War (1903–1904), Christians stopped their former cooperation with socialists, and the few remaining Christian socialists such as Abe Isoo 安部磯雄 (1865–1949) faced marginalization.

Only towards the end of the Taishō period (1912–1926) would Christians again show interest in socio-political engagement. The most well-known example here is Kagawa Toyohiko 賀川豊彦 (1888–1960) who also drafted the “Social Creed” (Shakai Shinjō 社会信条) of the National Christian Council of Japan (Nihon Kirisutokyō Renmei 日本基督教連盟) in 1928 (see Yokozeki 1994) and influenced labor union movements in Japan and China. In the same year, the International Missionary Council in Jerusalem “gave institutional status to the ‘comprehensive approach,’ which aimed to serve the whole human being in every aspect of life and relationships.” This approach led to the official equation of “sin and salvation” with “ignorance and education” and “underdevelopment and development” (Goheen 2014, 235). It also triggered the formation of the Theological Discussion Group, a group of thirty liberal public theologians whose approach is known as “Christian Realism” and who are generally regarded by historians as the Protestant Left. In Japan, the short-lived “Student Christian Movement” (Gakusei Kirisutokyō Undō 学生キリスト教運動, SCM) was directly inspired by the International Missionary Council in Jerusalem.

The SCM’s leadership included Kan Enkichi 菅円吉 (1895–1972), professor of Christian studies and philosophy of religion at Rikkyo University before, during, and after World War II. Furthermore, the SCM was at least temporarily related to Kagawa’s “Kingdom of God Movement” (Kami no Kuni Undō 神の国運動).² However, when a faction of the SCM started to emphasize the notion of class struggle, criticism against its “Marxist tendencies” abounded,

² See Kurahashi 2013 on the impact of Jerusalem on Japan, the goals of the SCM and Kan’s role in it.

and it dissolved in 1932. At this time police forces were already investigating the movement based on the Peace Preservation Law (Chianijihō 治安維持法) of 1925, which was enacted to suppress socialist, Marxist, and anarchist thought and activities. With the end of the SCM, the direct encounter between Christianity and socialism was interrupted again until Christian Realism was brought back to Japan after World War II.

The Peace Preservation Law was abolished under the pressure of Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964), the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers during the occupation of Japan, and his General Headquarters of the Allied Forces (GHQ) in October 1945. Nevertheless, the suppression of unwanted ideologies such as communism and criticism against the imperial system continued. Even more importantly for the discussion here, the GHQ sought to mobilize Christianity against unwanted ideologies. Declaring Christianity the foundation of modern democracy, the GHQ encouraged churches to contribute to the “People’s Campaign to Build a New Japan” (Shin Nippon Kensetsu Kokumin Undō 新日本建設国民運動). However, in a similar fashion to an almost homonymous campaign in 1932, post-war “new Japan” did not leave any room for communism. In 1950, members of the Japanese Communist Party (Nihon Kyōsantō 日本共産党, JCP) were removed from public office during the GHQ’s “Red Purge” (1948–1951).³

³ Although the JCP was legalized in 1945 and gained 5 seats in the first post-war parliament, its rapidly growing influence was met with suspicion and its general strike activities were suppressed by MacArthur. In a letter from June 6, 1950, MacArthur directed prime minister Yoshida Shigeru 吉田茂 (1878–1967) to “remove and exclude ... the full membership of the Central Committee of the Japan Communist Party ... from public service, and render them subjects to the prohibitions, restrictions and liabilities of my directives of January 4, 1946, (SCAPINS 548 and 550) and their implementing ordinances.” According to Hirata, “the target [of the Red Purge] went well beyond communists” and “directly called into question the foundations of the freedom and democracy guaranteed by the Japanese constitution” (Dower and Hirata 2007, 3).

Socialism, on the other hand, especially in the form of Christian social democracy, was tolerated as the less dangerous choice. The first elected prime minister of post-war Japan, Katayama Tetsu 片山哲 (1887–1978), came from the Social Democratic Party of Japan (Nihon Shakaitō 日本社会党, SDPJ). Katayama was also a Christian, and MacArthur stressed the importance of his belief over his political leanings when he proclaimed, “for the first time in history, Japan is led by a Christian leader” (Woodard 1972, 356). Placing Katayama in line with Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (1887–1975) and Manuel Roxas (1892–1948) from the Philippines, MacArthur claimed a growing influence of Christianity on Asia. It was hardly a coincidence that all three men were also committed anti-communists. Christian socialism seemed to be a useful tool to counter the rise of communism in Asia and was thus prescribed as an antidote.⁴

2. Research questions and procedures

Given the political situation just described, any discussion of the reception of Christian socialist thought in early post-war Japan must include Christian discourses on communism. The communist bloc extension into Asia after 1948 directly triggered the churches’ new focus on socio-political engagement, and anti-communism became the core constituent of post-war Christian revival, although in contrast to the situation in the U.S., in Japan it was hardly pursued by a “Spiritual-Industrial-Complex” (see Herzog 2011).⁵ Here, I

⁴ “American policy-makers also hoped it [i.e., absolutist Christian anti-communism] might serve to suggest a common affinity between the US as a nation of faith and religious peoples in the world’s poorest regions. The premise was that ‘religious’ anti-communism could inoculate against communism the very peoples to which it might otherwise most appeal.” (Kirby 2014, 136)

⁵ Herzog outlines measures taken by the United States government to encourage a religious revival on the premise that communism could not be defeated without it. He uses

highlight some events and ideas that were influential in the Japanese reception and reinterpretation of Christian socialism as an antidote to communism until 1972. A more comprehensive discussion is beyond the scope of this article. Anti-communism has definitely “changed the twentieth century’s religious landscape and bequeathed a legacy that has had lasting consequences both within and between states and churches” (Kirby 2014, 126). This is true for Japan and its global relations as well, but research on the topic is still limited.

In what follows, I examine two texts of foreign origin that were translated and published around the time of the Red Purge as guidelines for Japanese churches. As for events, I consider the importance of the so-called Akaiwa Incident in 1949, church consultations during the 1950s and 1960s as well as the student protest movement’s impact on Protestant churches.

Concerning these texts and events, this article will, first, analyze arguments brought forth against communism and in favor of social advocacy, second, show how Christian socialist thought and anti-communist ideology were indigenized and, third, how they were used to provide a new identity for the Protestant church in Japan.

3. Bennett’s *Christianity and Communism* (1948)

Since the immediate post-war reception of Christian socialist thought took place in the context of American occupation, it is not surprising that guidelines were given to Japanese churches on how to revive Christian churches as socio-political actors and transform them into bastions against communism. Here, I focus on two books that were translated for this purpose. The first is

“spiritual-industrial complex” in reminiscence of the term “military-industrial complex” to emphasize the intensity of collaboration between government, military, industrialists, and religious leaders. Their combined efforts led American citizens to imagine the Cold War as a war of “God versus godlessness” rather than “democracy versus communism.”

the classic *Christianity and Communism* (first published in 1948)⁶ by John Coleman Bennett (1902–1995), professor of social ethics and president of the Union Theological Seminary in New York. Bennett was a major force in the ecumenical movement, a highly regarded political activist and member of the Theological Discussion Group. He was closely linked to the Christian Action group and to the World Council of Churches (WCC). His book *Christianity and Communism* was immediately translated into Japanese by Iino Norimoto 飯野紀元 (1908–?).⁷ The translation includes an outline of Bennett’s life and thought as well as some remarks on the book by the translator. According to Iino, Bennett was to be appointed special consultant by “MacArthur’s Headquarters” to help deal with the “communist problem in Japan” (Benetto 1949, 3).⁸ At that time, however, Bennett could not accept the invitation to move to Japan. As these remarks show, Bennett’s book provided the GHQ’s sanctioned Christian answer to communism.

Surprisingly few studies exist on Bennett’s impact on Christian anti-communism worldwide. Studies on Christian Realism so far have focused on Niebuhr and Paul Tillich (1986–1965). In his book *The Right of the Protestant Left: God’s Totalitarianism* (2012), Mark Thomas Edwards investigated Heather Warren’s claim that the initial Realist movement was much more diverse than is commonly assumed (Warren 1997). Therefore, Edwards attempts a “group biography” that analyzes the emergence of the Christian Realists from the “Old Protestant Left,” their further development into “God’s Totalitarians” and their final transformation into “Conservative Socialists.” Part I of his book

⁶ The book was reprinted in 1960 with new material inserted to accommodate the death of Joseph Stalin (1858–1953).

⁷ Iino also translated other works by Bennett such as his *Christian Ethics and Social Policy* (1946) along with works by Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971) and works on religion in contemporary American education.

⁸ Against the original plan for publication by an American publisher and subsequent dispatch to Japan, the book was published by the National Council of YMCAs of Japan.

“outlines the cultural, political, and religious formulation of Christian Realism,” whereas Part II “looks at Realists’ role in crafting the cultural politics of ecumenical world Protestantism.” The final part “considers Realists’ and ecumenists’ renovation of their countertotalitarian thought, as well as how those changes intersected with other post-war political developments on the right and left” (Edwards 2012, 5).

As the structure of his book indicates, Edwards is determined to prove that “the evangelical left and right cannot be segmented so easily,” since historically, “both parties have sought to save their souls by gaining the whole world” (Edwards 2012, 2). Christian Realists, he argues, “sought to overcome the ‘worldly’ totalitarianism arising from nation-state rivalries by developing a world interchurch (or ‘ecumenical’) Protestant internationale” (Edwards 2012, 3). Edwards identifies this “Protestant internationale” with what Eli Stanley Jones (1884–1973)⁹ named “God’s Totalitarianism.”

Edwards’ book highlights Bennett’s influence and dedicates three chapters to the impact of Christian Realism on World Protestantism. His insistence that the evangelical left and right are closely intertwined in post-war evangelical ecumenism is important for our discussion here. For one, it explains why MacArthur, a strict conservative maintaining close relations with the political right, would choose Bennett as special consultant. Furthermore, Edwards’s conclusion of the importance of counter-totalitarianism as central characteristic of Christian Realism during the 1940s corresponds to the main message of Bennett’s book.

Bennett wrote his book as a “brief and elementary” yet “systematic statement” of the relation between Christianity and communism for “students and other young people.” Attempting to explain communism’s appeal, he defines

⁹ Jones was a Methodist “Missionary Extraordinary” to India, supporter of the Indian Independence Movement, and author, among others, of two books on Christianity and communism.

it as “the promise of a new order,” as “an interpretation of life,” and as “revolutionary method,” but also criticizes its “methods of terror” (Bennett 1948, 36) and ruthlessness towards dissenters. The term “terror” is used 17 times throughout the book, mostly in connection with “communist.” Alternatively, Bennett uses “tyranny” (10 occurrences), however, not exclusively in relation to communism, but rather as a “politically and culturally,” “universal” or “totalitarian,” “oppressive” state of the world which must be prevented at all costs. Bennett claims a “dual approach” to communism which emphasizes, on the one hand,

the obligation to resist it as an oppressive form of power and, on the other hand, acknowledges the validity of much that Communism represents as a strong reminder of the moral limitations of our own middle-class world and as a promised goal that meets the aspirations of millions of people who have been excluded from the benefits of that world. (Bennett 1948, 9)

Nonetheless, the good in communism should not be balanced against the evil in favor of a “middle course” towards it, because “the good in its idealism and in its achievements makes it more effective and so more dangerous than a movement that can be shown to be rotten and cynical at its center” (Bennett 1948, 10).

The “evil” (34 occurrences) in communism stems from its failure to provide moral and spiritual guidance which are indispensable to support institutions of political and personal freedom (Bennett 1948, 45). According to Bennett, Christianity can contribute to the solution of socio-political problems based on its understanding of God’s purpose for creation and Christian love. With its teachings on human nature (sin), forgiveness, and ultimate hope, Christianity maintains a context of meaning and a measure for correction which commu-

nism is not able to provide. For Bennett, “there is no other faith which can compare with Communism except Christianity” (Bennett 1948, 127). Christianity prepares people to become radicals pushing the transformation of society “to the depths of their personal lives and to the ultimate purpose of God.” However, “the first responsibility of the Christian community is not to save any institutions from Communism, but to present its faith by word and life to the people of all conditions and of all lands that they may find for themselves the essential truth about life” (Bennett 1948, 128).

According to Edwards, Bennett’s book provides a Cold War rationale for theo-political advances that stress cultural internationalist alternatives to armed conflict. Bennett’s view of communism as “‘Christian heresy’ resulting from the churches’ failure to become revolutionary on behalf of the world’s exploited” enables him to link his “moderate anticommunism to pleas for Evangelical Catholic reformation, a new political economy guaranteeing full employment, and promotion of minority rights.” Thus, he upholds “a vision of transnational social democracy in a time of global disarray” (Edwards 2012, 115).

Interestingly, the Japanese translation of Bennett’s book concludes with three critical remarks by the translator. For one, Iino bemoans the “metaphysical dualism of the book and the theological system built upon it.” Unfortunately, Iino does not go into detail here. He further suggests that more sympathy is needed towards people without any interest in Christianity or communism such as Buddhist believers to popularize “this sort of books” on the social responsibility of religions. Lastly, Iino argues that the Japanese need not only improved living conditions, but spiritual relief through art and pleasure as well, since their standard of living is yet so much lower than that of the average American. To make this point, Iino cites from Niebuhr’s *Faith and History* (1949) and thus objects to Bennett with the words of one of his close associates (original source not found). Iino feels that “apart from ab-

solute and rigorous Christian ethics, they [i.e., the Japanese] need to refresh their minds with a feeling of comfort and above all in a serene atmosphere” (Benetto 1949, 211).

These remarks show that not all Japanese Christians embraced MacArthur’s expectations for them to spearhead the war against communism.¹⁰ Having just survived a World War and humiliating defeat, they were not eager to immediately fight a new one. Instead, they longed for a comforting message to sustain their lives. Iino’s remarks also indicate that he perceived Bennett’s book more as an appeal to foster social advocacy among Christians than as an ideological treatise against communism. His remarks further question the usefulness of American model answers and the GHQ’s response to the challenge of communism in Japan. Why a minority of less than 1% of the population was expected to neutralize the communist threat while the Buddhist¹¹ majority was ignored altogether, is very puzzling indeed. Perhaps, MacArthur’s personal belief and Bennett’s insistence that Christianity is the only religion capable of withstanding communism have played a role in this decision.

4. Forman’s *A Christian’s Handbook on Communism* (1952)

I now turn to *A Christian’s Handbook on Communism* compiled by Charles

¹⁰ Concerning the special treatment, MacArthur offered in return, Lawrence S. Wittner refers to “one missionary” who objected to MacArthur’s encouragement of Christianity as a violation of the constitutional right to religious freedom and the separation of religion and state. He continues, “some of the members of the liberal Protestant denominations, while rarely overtly hostile to MacArthur, kept their distance from the American authorities during the occupation and tried to avoid receiving special treatment” (Wittner 1971, 92).

¹¹ Since the Meiji period some Buddhists showed interest in socialist ideas. During the 1930s and 1940s Senoo Girō 妹尾義郎 (1890–1961) became a leading figure of Buddhist socialism. His anti-war movement and dialogue with social Christianity has already received academic attention (Terasawa 2017). In other Asian countries such as Laos Buddhists were drafted into anti-communist, national movements.

W. Forman (1916–2014) in 1952. Like his father and grandfather, Forman served as a missionary with the Presbyterian Church in India (1945–1950). Later he taught missiology at Yale University Divinity School (1953–1987). The *Handbook* had been published in three editions by 1962, translated into Japanese in 1954 by Endō Yoshimitsu 遠藤義光 (1910–1966)¹² and distributed by the National Christian Council of Japan (日本キリスト教協議会, NCCJ) under the title *The Christian's Answer to Communism* (based on the book's final chapter). Although Forman held the copyright on the English edition, the Japanese translation names the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (Amerika Gasshūkoku Kirisuto Kyōkai Kyōgikai Sekai Keimō Bunshobu Iinkai 1954) as editor.

According to Forman, the *Handbook* “was prepared by a group of Christian workers from Latin America who spent a period of four months together making an intensive study of communism”; five of the named six authors were American missionaries. The *Handbook* specifically addresses Christians in the “young churches.” The NCCJ, as distributor of the translation, expresses its wish that the *Handbook* shall “contribute to the revision of common conceptions” about the socio-political responsibility of Christians in Japan.

The *Handbook* presents communism as a “philosophy, a passion, and a plan of action” (Forman 1952, 5) and argues, in unison with Bennett, that “Christians share the responsibility for the growth of the Communist movement” (Forman 1952, 10). In “Chapter 2: What is Communism?” it is further defined as “an atheistic, materialistic religion, embodied today in a political and eco-

¹² Endō is introduced as “a former communist who converted to Christianity and is now a professor at a theological seminary [i.e., The Central Theological College of the Anglican Church in Japan]” (Amerika Gasshūkoku Kirisuto Kyōkai Kyōgikai Sekai Keimō Bunshobu Iinkai 1954, preface). He graduated in 1938, was ordained a priest in 1942 and completed his Ph.D. in systematic theology in 1964. Endō had already authored his own monograph on Christianity and communism by 1948, which was published by The National Council of YMCAs of Japan.

nomic system with totalitarian power” (Forman 1952, 11) as well as “a theory of history and economics, a power movement, a religion” (Forman 1952, 20).

The *Handbook* stresses the “completeness of Moscow’s control of the party in every country” and claims that “often Communists are sent to work secretly in non-Communist organizations” (Forman 1952, 16). Almost as if it wanted to legitimize Red Purge policies, the *Handbook* emphasizes that infiltration of those organizations starts with the formation of “cells” which “often begin as study groups” on common socio-political issues such as workers’ rights, world peace, and racism (Forman 1952, 17). In time, these cells make the individual “completely dependent on it” (Forman 1952, 18). In contrast, in countries where communists achieved power, “they establish a dictatorship ... of the proletariat” (Forman 1952, 19).

As a “religion,” communism “demands man’s ultimate loyalty,” and its “final good,” that is, a “perfect society, takes the place of the kingdom of God in men’s hopes” in the same way as “the writings of Marx and Lenin take the place of the Bible.” Communism acknowledges the existence of evil (i.e., private property) but claims that man can end the source of sin (through the collectivization of property) all by himself.

Thus communism sees the source of evil outside of man (in the social system) and the source of salvation within man; Christianity finds the source of evil within man and the source of salvation outside of man (in God). (Forman 1952, 20)

Since the *Handbook* presents communism as a religion, the dogmatic comparison with Christian teachings reconfirms Bennett’s vote on communism as a Christian heresy. It also repeats Bennett’s emphasis on the totalitarianism of communism as well as the impossibility to choose only its good aspects.

While communism is all these things — a theory of history and economics, a power movement, a religion — it cannot be too strongly emphasized that it is none of these in separation ... We cannot help one part of communism without helping all of it ... It is not only totalitarian in its methods of government, its approach to every man is a total one, touching every part of his being and therefore demanding his total allegiance. It must be understood in its totality. (Forman 1952, 20)

After this introduction, the *Handbook* presents a balance sheet of “good” and “evil” traits of communism (Forman 1952, 30-32). The list of the latter includes disregard of human personality, dictatorship of the Politburo, insufficient improvement of living conditions, militant atheism, and imperialism (Forman 1952, 31).

In relation to communist policy towards churches three principles are given as decisive: first, the Communist understanding of religion as opium of the people, second, the demands of the totalitarian state, and third, the principle of democratic centralism (Forman 1952, 34). The third principle is seen as what distinguishes communism from other “tyrannies of old,” since “in the new tyranny everyone must be involved in everything that the government decides; constant participation is required” (Forman 1952, 36). Therefore, Christian believers in communist countries “are always in uncertainty and can depend on God alone.” However, this uncertainty also leads to “a deepening and intensification of faith” (Forman 1952, 41).¹³ Rebutting the opinion that churches in communist countries cannot give social witness, the *Handbook* insists, “the quality of Christian life itself has political importance, and it stands as a rebuke to many political demands and political stands.” “To preach

¹³ The “new life movement” in Hungary, the activation of laymen in East Germany, and a letter from Czechoslovakian theologian and founder of the Christian Peace Conference, Josef Lukl Hromádka (1889–1969), are introduced as examples of such intensified faith.

Christ” is all that can be done against communism (Forman 1952, 42).

Chapter 5 declares communism incompatible with Christianity, because of its “blindness” to the reality of God, of the human soul and of sin. The *Handbook* concludes, “When the full light of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ is thrown on the teaching of communism its errors stand glaringly revealed” (Forman 1952, 48). Although everyone must choose for him/herself whether to cooperate with communists or not, the *Handbook* asserts that cooperation “can only lead the Christian into a dead-end street ... at length ... there is no way but renunciation: *faith in communism must go, or faith in Christ*” (Forman 1952, 49).

Thus, instead of recommending co-operation with communists, the *Handbook* reminds the reader that “Christian beliefs apply to all of life, including politics and economics” (Forman 1952, 50). Furthermore, it reconfirms the doctrine of creation, the teachings of the prophets, the doctrine of the incarnation, the teachings of Jesus, the doctrine of redemption, and the Lordship of Christ as doctrinal foundations of social witness (Forman 1952, 52–54). However, these doctrinal foundations do not allow Christians “to identify the Christian faith with any political program,” since “there is no economic or political system which can come up to Christian standards” (Forman 1952, 54). The *Handbook* argues that “freedom from a concise program” allows Christians to welcome “people of many different political allegiances and economic philosophies” into the church. Besides such inclusiveness guarantees the church’s survival during the “rise and fall of economic and political systems” (Forman 1952, 55).

Challenged by the presence of communism, the church must strive, first, to uphold “the standard of Christ and the Christian conscience as the test of all social systems;” second, “to educate its members on the problems and needs of society from the vantage point of the Christian conscience;” and third, to “encourage individual and group action by responsible Christian citizens

along economic and political lines” (Forman 1952, 55f.). In this pursuit, the church needs to seek a middle ground between generalizations (i.e., the mere reiteration of commonly accepted ideals) and specific political programs, the so-called Middle Axioms, an idea proposed by Joseph Houldsworth Oldham (1874–1969) at the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work Conference in Oxford in 1937.

Education on social problems should include the study of basic capitalist and socialist socio-economic systems and their connection to various imperialisms (Forman 1952, 57). Furthermore, the WCC’s Commission of the Churches on International Affairs supports the establishment of translational links. However, what counts in Christian action is not success, but faithfulness (Forman 1952, 61).

The final chapter of the book summarizes the Christian answer to communism in the following words.

We are called to live, to work and to suffer in such a way that those who are not yet controlled by communism may find a Christian faith and a hope for social change; so that those who live under communism may turn to Christ and see that the good for which they strive can endure only as it is committed to Him. (Forman 1952, 63)

This, however, cannot be accomplished without radical changes in individual lives and the “complete revitalization” of the church. While Protestants should not support military action or engage in ideological warfare against communism (like the Catholic Church), they should strive to live a “faith that gives meaning to life,” build “fellowships in passionate commitment” and engage in “dynamic action to right social wrongs” (Forman 1952, 64–69). The *Handbook* ends with “a plan of action” summarized in five arguments, which include the proposal to set up a Committee on Social Education and Action

in every local church to stimulate all members to fulfill their social responsibilities. While this proposal aims at the collective recognition of the importance of social advocacy, the *Handbook* also suggests that action may start with the formation of Christian “cell[s] ... of concerned men and women” (Forman 1952, 67f.), that is, with the appropriation of communist infiltration techniques.

Ultimately, the action plan is expected to lead to a new “Wesleyan revival” that will confront communism with “other men of passion, equally concerned about human need, struggling daily for social justice, who will develop Christian alternatives to communism and will offer a genuine new hope for the future of the world” (Forman 1952, 71). With these statements the *Handbook* returns to its definition of communism in the introduction as philosophy, passion, and plan of action and explicitly seeks to replace the communist with a Christian model of social mobilization.

Although the *Handbook* draws a clear dogmatic line between Christianity and communism, we will see later that Japanese Christians who followed its suggestions during the 1960s and 1970s and studied capitalist as well as socialist systems and their relationship to imperialism in passionate commitment to the solution of social issues, were rebuked as “communists” by fellow Christians less passionate about these goals.

When the translation of the *Handbook* was published in 1954, Japan’s largest Protestant denomination, the United Church of Christ in Japan (Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan 日本基督教団, UCCJ), however, had already established a new Social Committee during its restructuring in December 1950. This committee sought “to increase overall social welfare” and was expected “to accentuate its function by providing the necessary guidance” (NKKS 3, 157). The committee’s establishment was a direct result of a “Research Consultation on the Church and Social Problems” with Bennett in June of the same year. The UCCJ Synod also issued a “Resolution on Peace” against militarism in the

context of the Korean War (1950–1953) which announced to “install a *particularly powerful committee*,” that is, the Social Committee to accomplish its agenda (NKKS 3, 238f; emphasis added).

Judging by the above development, Bennett’s book and visit paved the way for the actions the *Handbook* called for. Therefore, I suggest that the *Handbook*’s meaning for Japanese churches lay not so much in the proposal of new ideas, but rather in their legitimization by an ecumenical Protestant organization, on the one hand, and a “Third-World perspective,” on the other. The *Handbook* is also more detailed than Bennett’s book in its description of concrete socio-political problems and may thus have more easily inspired Japanese Christians to engage in specific fields. Yet, the establishment of study groups and the issuing of declarations¹⁴ or action plans did not immediately lead to the realization of concrete social projects. Declarations and appeals play an important role in the socio-political engagement of Japanese churches till today (see Sonntag 2018).

5. The Akaiwa Incident and polarization within the UCCJ

Before turning to the 1960s, we must pay attention to an “incident” that illuminates the early post-war Japanese Christian engagement with communism very well. In the so-called Akaiwa Incident in 1949, the UCCJ minister Akaiwa Sakae 赤岩栄 (1903–1966), declared his intention to join the JCP, but ultimately did not do so due to immediate criticism and formal measures taken by the UCCJ’s central administration. In the late 1920s, Akaiwa had converted to Christianity during his study at the Tokyo Theological School (Tōkyō Shingakusha 東京神学社) under the influence of Takakura Tokutarō 高倉徳太

¹⁴ Declarations referring to communism during the 1960s are related to the Vietnam War and argue that Japan had claimed to fight a war against communism attacking China in 1931 when, in fact, it started an imperialist expansion into Asia (NKKS 4, 268).

郎 (1885–1935), the leading theologian of Japanese Protestantism during the war. Takakura emphasized eschatology based on the works of the Swiss theologian Karl Barth (1886–1968). After his graduation, Akaiwa became editor of the journal *Gospel and Present* (*Fukuin to Gendai* 福音と現代) while serving as minister at Uehara Church from 1932 until his death.

During the war, Akaiwa — like most Christians — refrained from critical political engagement based on Takakura’s teachings. But after Japan’s defeat, he repented this attitude and strongly felt the need for social action. To this end, he first supported Katayama’s SDPJ, but out of disillusionment became a supporter of the JCP. During a summer camp for young UCCJ leaders in 1948, Akaiwa engaged in a debate on the relation of Christianity and communism (*NSSK* 3, 220–225) with Hirayama Teruji 平山照次 (1907–2004),¹⁵ a supporter of Katayama and influential speaker in “Christ’s Campaign to Build a New Japan” (*Shin Nippon Kensetsu Kirisuto Undō* 新日本建設キリスト運動). Akaiwa argued that Christians should voice their support for specific political goals.

A year later, Akaiwa explicitly supported the JCP’s agenda in the general elections, arguing that Christianity and communism are compatible with each other not only theoretically, but also in practice. He declared his intention to join the party with an article in the JCP’s official newspaper *Red Flag* (*Akahata* 赤旗). In Akaiwa’s opinion, Christianity provided eternal truth while communism provided a temporary truth. Thus, one could remain faithful to Christian teachings and at the same time participate in communist theorizing and practice.

¹⁵ In the same year, Hirayama founded Yamate Church which became a focal point during the student protest movement. Hirayama’s daughter Matsui Yayori 松井やより (1934–2002) became a journalist and feminist activist who founded the Asia Japan Women’s Resource Center and the Violence Against Women in War Network Japan. This network seeks justice for women that were drafted into sexual slavery by the Japanese military during the war. Her brother Hirayama Motoo 平山基生 (b. 1938) joined the JCP and is active in movements against the United States Forces in Okinawa.

The general administration of the UCCJ reacted immediately, first with a public statement of its moderator (*NSSK* 3, 179) that denied the compatibility of Christianity and communism, and second with the creation of a special committee to investigate the matter and convince Akaiwa to renounce his intention. Only after the special committee had issued a formal recommendation, Akaiwa made the required statement of his loyalty to the UCCJ and willingness to submit to future recommendations.¹⁶ Following this, the special committee issued a summary of the incident to consider it solved. Therein, however, it explicitly doubts the sincerity of Akaiwa's remorse and demands further self-reflection based on the following reasons:

1. The current reality of communism is characterized by the anti-religious materialism of Marxism-Leninism and its practice based on a distinct notion of class; it seeks direct realization of class struggle and the revolution of society through class despotism. Christianity as good news based on belief in God who was revealed in Christ acknowledges solidarity with all of humanity; insofar as it postulates respect for every person and love of one's neighbor, its fundamental principles for practice are not consistent with communism.
2. In the same way as theory and practice are firmly linked in communism, belief and practice are firmly linked in Christianity and impossible to take apart. Therefore, the claim of 'Christianity for belief, communism for practice' is completely unacceptable. (*NSSK* 3, 182)

Official historiography of the UCCJ concludes that Akaiwa's "declaration of intent raised a number of problems such as [the relationship between]

¹⁶ The case of Abe Kōzō 阿部行蔵 (1907–1981) is worthy of note and further study as an example of a UCCJ minister who became the governor of Tachikawa City of Tokyo with the support of the SDPJ and the JCP.

Christianity and Marxism, belief and thought, the socio-political practice of Christians as well as the question of control and freedom inside the UCCJ” (NSSK 3, 146).

The incident sparked intense debates, during which Akaiwa made his position heard with several publications. Although he refrained from joining the JCP, he continued his critique of the church and issued further political statements. The debates ultimately led to the formation of a pro-Akaiwa (i.e., pro-social-advocacy) and an anti-Akaiwa (i.e., anti-communist) faction within the UCCJ. Theologically, Akaiwa departed from Barth in 1955 and began to focus on the historical Jesus based on Rudolf Karl Bultmann’s (1884–1976) work. In 1964, two years before his death, he declared his departure from orthodox Christian doctrine with the publication of his book *Exodus from Christianity* (Kirisutokyō Dasshutsuki キリスト教脱出記).

During the Akaiwa Incident, the central administration of the UCCJ had to take action to keep the sympathies of the GHQ. Bennett’s *Christianity and Communism* as well as the *Handbook* compiled by Forman were most welcome tools to pour oil on troubled water.

Interestingly, Akaiwa’s interpretation of the relationship between Christianity and communism is later criticized as “classic dualism” by the philosopher Iijima Munetaka 飯島宗享 (1920–1987; Iijima in *Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan Senkyō Kenkyūjo* 1972, 132). This corresponds to Iino’s critique of Bennett’s book. Iijima labels Akaiwa’s early encounter with communism as “superficial” and as “one sort of engagement in the post-war period” (*Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan Senkyō Kenkyūjo* 1972, 133). Akaiwa’s later works, however, are interpreted as an “attempt to unite Christianity and communism in one origin through an anthropological understanding of the gospel that connects to the desacralization of Christianity” (*Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan Senkyō Kenkyūjo* 1972, 132).

6. Church consultations and socio-political policy making of the UCCJ in the 1950s and 1960s

1950 was marked by the beginning of the Korean War and the subsequent implementation of the GHQ's "reverse course." Although MacArthur was unsuccessful in hiring Bennett as special consultant, the UCCJ's Mission Research Institute (Senkyō Kenkyūjo 宣教研究所) together with the Tokyo Union Theological Seminary (Tōkyō Shingaku Daigaku 東京神学大学, TUTS) and the NCCJ invited Bennett in 1950 and again in 1962 to hold lectures at "Research Consultation[s] on the Church and Social Problems." As the consultation title indicates, their main goal consisted in "research"; subsequent public statements on various problems were issued in the form of a summary of research findings. The agreement that was adopted at the end of the first consultation was drafted by Bennett himself and demanded the establishment of a "committee bestowed with authority in relation to the social responsibility of the church" (NKKS 3, 234). This demand was realized with the Social Committee mentioned above.

The UCCJ's central administration first set up an Expert Committee for Research on Social Problems (Shakai Mondai Kenkyū Senmon Iinkai 社会問題研究専門委員会), renamed Committee for Research on Social Problems (Shakai Mondai Kenkyū Iinkai 社会問題研究委員会) in 1952 (NKKS 3, 232). From December 1950, this research committee seems to have been subordinated to the Social Committee. Bennett's lectures in 1950 also led to the establishment of a Committee for Mission in the Workplace (NKKS 4, 61). The Committee for Research on Social Problems reached out to labor unions in 1954 and urged them to follow the example of British labor unions, which retain a Christian spirit and "practice *moderate democracy* and socialism instead of the Marxist class struggle" (NKKS 3, 235; emphasis added).

Bennett was one of several guests invited by the UCCJ's Mission Research

Institute. Further invitees include the German economist and social scientist Edward Heimann (1889–1967). Like Bennett he was closely affiliated with the Christian Action group and the WCC. Each of their lecture series concluded with a declaration of the participants to engage yet more eagerly in social activities (NKKS 4, 220–236). The “Consultation report and proposal” of 1962 further declares “social action as indispensable for the realization of the ‘improvement of the constitution’ of the UCCJ,” and agrees that “evangelization and service (*diakonia*) are both works of the church” to be pursued with 10-year plans (NKKS 4, 224).

The report also contained a list of proposals to the Synod, which included the introduction of a ministerial category exclusively for social workers, the introduction of social security for ministers and church staff, a movement for the preservation of the post-war peace constitution as well as increased funds for social action seminars in each church district, for mission in special areas and for the response to the problems of the youth, in particular their attraction to communism. The Social Committee promised to take measures towards the establishment of local committees for social action in all churches and to regularly update the “Guideline for Christians’ Social Action.”¹⁷ And lastly, in a call to cooperate with other institutions, the “study of communism, not merely as an ideological problem, but as a problem relating to the [believers’] fields of activity” was encouraged. For this purpose, the consultation participants demanded the establishment of an entity which “gathers the latest information and distributes it among churches in order to enable them to *make prophetic observations and statements*” (NKKS 4, 223–225; emphasis added). The report also listed several concrete topics for a political statement to be made in the name of the UCCJ’s moderator (e.g., the abolition of nuclear tests as well

¹⁷ The “Guideline for Christians’ social action” (Kirisutosha no shakaiteki kōdō no shishin キリスト者の社会的行動の指針) was compiled by the Mission Committee in 1958 and revised in 1965 (NKKS 4, 226–232).

as the development of nuclear weapons).

These church consultations led to the implementation of the new “Basic Guideline for Social Activities of the UCCJ” (Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan shakai katsudō kihon hōshin 日本基督教団社会活動基本方針) in 1966. Drafts for new guidelines for mission and social action had already been compiled in 1963. The earliest draft of a “Fundamental theory of mission” (Senkyō kiso riron 宣教基礎理論) determined “the prophetic calling of the church in today’s society” to be fulfilled through “watching over” (mimamoru 見守る) society. More specifically, the “church must watch that no state nor people, no matter if belonging to East or West, to the capitalist system or the socialist system, and also no system nor organization within them deviates from their God-given mission” (NKKS 4, 195).

In fact, Bennett’s and other Westerners’ influence on Japanese church policy making during this period was so intense and specific that “Chapter 2: The UCCJ’s theories and policies of mission” of Volume 4 of the *Collection of Material on the UCCJ’s History* concludes, “here, we need to think about the question which theologians [i.e., non-Japanese theologians] really mobilized Japanese churches as a problem of Japanese theology” (NKKS 4, 153).

However, the “Consultation report and proposal” also insisted that “the ‘improvement of the constitution’ is not simply a strategy of response to the current changes in society but relates to the true meaning of the church” (NKKS 4, 224). Consequently, the “improvement of the constitution” (taishitsu kaizen 体質改善) became a key goal for the UCCJ’s post-war reconstruction during the following years. At the same time, the introduction of this term marked a new stage in the indigenization process of Western discourses on social advocacy.

Whereas my argument so far suggested an overwhelming impact of Western discourses, the term *taishitsu kaizen* was proposed by Sumiya Mikio 隅谷三喜男 (1916–2003), professor of economics at The University of Tokyo who

specialized in labor economics and was a member of the Mission Committee of the UCCJ. He argued for a reformulation of the guidelines for mission in the light of the UCCJ's history, that is, its collaboration with the state during the war as well as early post-war mission crusades' failure to take mission beyond prayer. Despite initial doubts whether something like a "constitution of the church" existed at all, Suzuki Masahisa 鈴木正久 (1912–1969), who was elected as administrative head (moderator) of the UCCJ in 1966, appropriated the term and made it a key concern (Sumiya and Hara 2001, 99).

Although I chose "constitution" as translation for *taishitsu* 体質 in *taishitsu kaizen*, the term can also be translated as physical condition, body composition, predisposition, genetic makeup, status, diathesis, and habitus. Habitus has been an important concept in sociology since Max Weber (1864–1920). According to Sapiro, Weber generally preferred "ethos," but used "habitus" in response to criticism against his work "Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus,"

... to name that which drove protestants to adopt behaviors in accordance with primitive capitalism, and which found its origins in their religious life, family tradition, or lifestyle imbued with religiosity ... [thus] it refers to a *virtuous way of life based on deliberately adopted habits*. (Sapiro 2015, 484; emphasis added)

After Weber's death, the concept of habitus was further developed and largely lost its religious dimension. Phenomenologists used it with emphasis on "individual consciousness in its relationship to the surrounding world," while sociologists stressed "collective consciousness and transmission" (Sapiro 2015, 484). In fact, the concept can accommodate a variety of perspectives.

In retrospect, Sumiya explains that he adopted the term *taishitsu kaizen* from

public discourses of the late 1950s which stressed the “improvement of the constitution of corporations and the society which surrounds them as necessary condition for progress during [the post-war] economic recovery” (Sumiya 1999, 20). Given, however, that Sumiya based his socio-economic studies on Christianity in modern Japan on Weber, I suggest that he understood the then-popular term *taishitsu kaizen* within the framework of Weberian theory. It is well known that Weber’s work had an enormous impact on post-war Japanese sociology (including the sociology of economics) and Christian studies. For this reason, Weberian theory recurs frequently in discourses on the Christian relationship to communism/Marxism and social advocacy.¹⁸

Nonetheless, Sumiya realized that the term he proposed tended to acquire other meanings. The “Fundamental mission policy” (Senkyō kihon hōsaku 宣教基本方策) compiled in 1961, for instance, associates *taishitsu kaizen* with

¹⁸ One example can be found in the thought of Mutō Kazuo 武藤一雄 (1913–1995), a philosopher in the tradition of the so-called Kyoto School of Philosophy who specializes in Søren Kierkegaard’s (1813–1855) approach to ethics. Mutō contributed an article to the book *Christian Existence: A Critique of Marxism* in 1950, in which he denies the existence of an ideological conflict between Christianity and communism. He seeks to understand the historical relationship of Protestantism to capitalism in dialogue with Weber and to assess the paradoxical heritage of bourgeois, individualist liberalism. His discussion of totalitarianism, too, is indebted to Weber. He argues that totalitarianism can be found in the First World as well as in the Second World and can be traced back to the demonic powers of the modern state. He further tries to integrate the contemporary subjectivity debates (*shutaisei ronsō* 主体性論争, 1946–1949) in his argument on individual ethical responsibility and practice (see Mutō 1950). In a contribution to the same volume, Matsuda Tomoo 松田智雄 (1911–1995), an expert on the economic history of modern Germany who briefly taught at Rikkyo University, also draws on Weber to explain the worldview of “old Protestantism” which was embraced by the bourgeois class so comprehensively that both came to protect each other. He concludes that a “new ethics of Protestantism is possible only through a denial of the material which constitutes history and society, that is, through a denial of both, man and nature” (Matsuda 1950, 101). Matsuda’s last sentences invoke Martin Luther’s (1483–1546) statement before the Diet of Worms as the foundation of Christian ethics, which consists in complete submission to God alone.

the “consolidation of the unity and solidarity [of the UCCJ] as united church” (NKKS 4, 183). In contrast, Sumiya himself proposed *taishitsu kaizen* as “an examination of the constitution of one’s own belief ... repentance may be missing, love may have become hollow. It is [about] the state of belief itself” (Sumiya 1999, 21).

While Sumiya considers himself to have drawn attention to the necessity of the “improvement of the constitution” of the UCCJ, official historiography attributes the suggestion to the Dutch theologian Hendrik Kraemer (1888–1965), who was the first director of the WCC’s Ecumenical Institute (1948–1955). Kraemer visited Japan repeatedly during the 1950s and 1960s (NKKS 4, 8). At the so-called Amagi Sansō Consultation in 1960, he criticized Japanese churches for being “isolationist and autotelic.” Furthermore, he “raised searching questions about [the relationship between] Japan’s cultural climate and Christianity, the encounter with [other] religions as well as [the relationship between] ministry and lay believers” (NKKS 4, 9). His book *A Theology of the Laity* (1958) emphasizes the responsibility of the laity for the church and the church’s responsibility for the world. Although Kraemer himself does not use the term *taishitsu kaizen*, the two pillars of his theology of the laity were closely related to the meaning of the “improvement of the constitution” as it is described in official historiography. The following two quotes shall suffice.

The “Fundamental mission policy” aimed at a church that fulfills its responsibility of mission to all people, which means the formation of a church that serves this world. It stressed the “improvement of the [UCCJ’s] constitution” into a church that breaks its self-centered shell and carries its social responsibility in addition to “mission in mission areas” (*dendōken dendō* 伝道圏伝道) to be pursued in solidarity with local society. (NKKS 4, 10)

In the improvement of the constitution of the church, the most urgent task is leadership training for lay believers. (NKKS 4, 207)

Taishitsu kaizen became a slogan that was used by various people with various implications, often without sincerely questioning the “old constitution” and without drawing clear demarcation lines between old and new. According to official historiography, this was the reason why many members of the UCCJ retained their wartime attitudes and thinking until the late 1960s for which they were then harshly criticized (NKKS 4, 10f.).

On the other hand, younger members who sought to realize the “improvement of the constitution,” among others through activities against the nationalization of Yasukuni Shrine, began to prepare a declaration of war responsibility. As a result, the “UCCJ’s confession on the responsibility during World War II” (*Confession*)¹⁹ was issued on March 26 (Resurrection Sunday), 1967, by the UCCJ’s moderator Suzuki. The *Confession* addressed concerns about the UCCJ’s reliance on state authority to achieve organizational unity in 1941 and its subsequent war collaboration. But it also provided a new identity for the UCCJ by aiming at reconciliation with Asia and announcing its mission to be that of a “watchman” (*mihari* 見張り) over state and society.

Influences from the sources introduced earlier can easily be identified.

¹⁹ The original text “Dainiji Sekai Taisen ka ni okeru Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan no sekinin ni tsuite no kokuhaku” 第二次大戦下における日本基督教団の責任についての告白 (<http://uccj.org/confession>, see also NKKS 4, 337f.) and an English translation (<http://uccj-e.org/confession>) are available on the UCCJ website. Amidst negotiations with Korean churches the *Confession* functioned as a token and a pledge given in hope of reconciliation. Following the UCCJ, other religious organizations issued similar statements (Fujiyama 2015). Later statements of responsibility issued by other denominations in the 1990s in response to the 50th anniversary of Japan’s defeat were very carefully prepared to prevent the kind of internal division, that resulted from the *Confession* in the UCCJ.

“Watchman” provides a catchy term for the *Handbook*’s definition of the first task of the church, that is, to uphold “the standard of Christ and the Christian conscience as the test of all social systems” (Forman 1957, 55) as well as Bennett’s notion of Christianity as corrective measure. The *Handbook* confirmed the teachings of the prophets as one foundation of social witness, whereas the “Consultation report and proposal” of 1962 stressed the church’s responsibility to “make prophetic observations and statements.” Furthermore, the earliest draft of the “Fundamental mission theory” explained “the prophetic calling of the church” to be fulfilled by the church’s function as watchman. Thus, we can safely assume that “watchman” was used as synonym for “prophet.” This new identity of the UCCJ, however, immediately faced opposition from inside and was severely tested during the student protest movement of the late 1960s.

7. The student protest movement and the reconsideration of Christian-communist relations

During the 1960/70s’ “season of politics” (*seiji no kisetsu* 政治の季節), Christianity became a focal point of criticism against religion in Japan. Two obvious reasons for the focus on this minority religion are the impact of Marxism on the academia at the time and Christianity’s majority position in the field of higher education. Already in the 1950s, a generation of independent, democratic intellectuals had come to prominence who had been influenced and made aware by Marxism of the impairing effect of the emperor system on intellectual and personal freedom and independence since the 1930s. Although deeply sympathetic to Marxism and critical of authority, these intellectuals also voiced criticism against the JCP. They understood Marxism not as a doctrine, but as a science, that is, above all as a science of social realities, and thereby fostered the evolution of social sciences in post-war Japan (Takeuchi 1967, 745f.). Nonetheless, their “social science” was criticized by party-

aligned Marxists as “modernism” and “petty bourgeois ideology” (Takeuchi 1967, 746).

The critical analysis propagated by this new approach to social science was also applied to the institutions that create and transmit knowledge, among them Christian universities. According to the sociologist Akae Tatsuya, in this context “Christianity functioned as a ‘metaphorical’ substitute for objects of political critique” and “through this ‘metaphorical reading’ the critique of the ‘Bible’ was smoothly connected to the critique of ‘political parties,’ ‘the church’ and ‘the Christian university’” (Akae 2005, 83f.).

Drawing among others from such criticisms, the student protest movement reached Christian educational institutions and, insofar as they were still directly connected to Christian denominations, it also affected churches. The best known, although not very well researched, example is the student protest at the Tokyo Union Theological Seminary (TUTS) which had assisted the UCCJ in Bennett’s invitation in 1950. The student protest was led by a Struggle League which erected barricades to foster the TUTS’s dedication to socio-political engagement and its theological critique of Christian ideology. The first generation leader of the TUTS Struggle League, Sakurai Hidenori 桜井秀教 (b. 1946), writing under the pen name Himonya Hajime 碑文谷創, understood his activities as realization of his Protestant identity.²⁰ Thus, he was

²⁰ Himonya (2012) interprets central propositions of the Reformation and declares loyalty to them: “Universal priesthood,” he says, seeks to abolish hierarchy and discrimination, but must still tackle the issue of authority arising from the distribution of labor according to function and systems of professional qualification. “By faith alone” acknowledges that humans have no other resources than faith to invest in their “works,” but does not attach supreme value to it. “By scripture alone” insists on a simplification of rules for human behavior. “Through Christ alone” expresses the salvation of all mankind, regardless of religious affiliation, through Jesus’ crucifixion. Finally, “by grace alone” confirms a universal right to exist, regardless of one’s deeds. In the light of its violent and oppressive history, Christianity has no right to place itself above other beliefs (Himonya 2012, 329f.).

explicitly responding to Marxist criticism against Christianity *and* to the propagation of a new Protestant identity established with the above-mentioned *Confession*.

According to him, students' activities such as "the 'barricades' and the 'boycott of registration,' were supposed to point as preemption of the intellectual act into the direction of [Hegelian] sublation" (Himonya 2012, 174). Marx's interpretation of Hegel's notion of sublation (shiyō 止揚) was central to the protesting students' self-image. This seems to be one reason why the students were accused of "heresy" and named "rebels," based on the Maoist slogan "reason sides with rebellion" (zōhan yūri 造反有理), followers of the "social revolutionary Jesus or the Gewalt-Jesus" (Tōkyō Shingaku Daigaku Kyōjukai 1974, 170), and after 1973 "evil worshippers of violence" (Kobayashi 2011). In March 1970 the TUTS called on the Special Police Forces (SPF) to remove the barricades and suppress the student protests. This decision to rely on state authority in the solution of internal problems led to new criticism against the TUTS and complicated its relationship with the UCCJ.

As Akae's comment indicates, Marxism also impacted on approaches to biblical interpretation such as Tagawa Kenzō's 田川健三 (b. 1935), which in turn impacted on the views of students of theology. This article cannot go into post-war developments in theology and biblical studies,²¹ such as the criticism against "Paulism"²² and the emphasis on the humanity and political activism of Jesus. Nonetheless, these aspects are intrinsically linked to the internal power struggle the UCCJ experienced in the wake of the student protests. This power struggle, which I call "UCCJ Antagonism," continues to hamper the effectiveness of the UCCJ till today but is a topic too large to discuss here (see Sonntag Forthcoming).

²¹ Phillips 1974 provides a concise summary of the period until 1974.

²² That is the understanding of Christianity through the writings of Paul instead of the practice of the Jesus Movement.

Here, I consider just one example that shows how the student protests affected Protestant reasoning about the relation between Christianity and communism. Four months after the TUTS called on the SPF to remove the barricades, the UCCJ's Mission Research Institute organized a 3-day study workshop to "reflect on the history of the encounter between Christianity and Marxism since the Meiji period ... consider current problems and try to provide visions for the future" (Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan Senkyō Kenkyūjo 1972, 1). The lecture manuscripts and discussion transcripts resulting from the workshop were published in 1972 under the title *Encounter: Christianity and Marxism in Japan*.²³

Participants included scholars of various fields such as history of Japanese Christianity, theology, philosophy, religion, and Marxist theory of economics as well as students strongly sympathizing with communist and/or socialist ideas, among them the aforementioned Sakurai and Hori Mitsuo 堀光男 (b. 1931), who would later select and annotate sources from 1954 to 1968 for the UCCJ's official historiography. Some scholars such as Inoue Yoshio 井上良雄 (1907–2003) supported those students. The workshop was an attempt to reconcile opposing parties during the student protests, but this goal was missed, especially since no faculty from the TUTS (except Inoue) participated in it.

In contrast to Bennett's *Christianity and Communism* and Forman's *Handbook*, however, participants of this workshop did not focus on criticism against communism/Marxism but attempted to respond in a constructive manner to the Marxist critique of Christianity/religion. Eager to reaffirm Christianity, or more correctly their understanding of Protestantism, the participants discussed it largely in Marxist terminology and sought to establish theoretical/philosophical commonalities of the two worldviews. Consequently, instead

²³ The choice of "Marxism" instead of communism proves that the organizers and participants were conscious of the existing variety of approaches to communism and, perhaps, also shows their intention to distance themselves from any specific political party.

of postulating Christian socio-political engagement as an *alternative* to communism/Marxism, they emphasized the merits of *dialogue* between the two.

Central topics in this discussion were: first, the definition of self/subjectivity; second, the distinction between individual and private (person); third, imagined goals (*telo*i) of history; forth, theist and atheist notions of transcendence and immanence; fifth, theoretical and practical atheisms; sixth, the overcoming (sublation) of dualisms and of the alienation (of the worker as well as of the bourgeois) towards a state of “shalom” (Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan Senkyō Kenkyūjo 1972, 316). Furthermore, these topics were not only discussed based on Western philosophy and theology, but explicitly related to modern and contemporary Japanese philosophical thought.

As these central topics suggest, the discussion generally did not include specific problems of practical nature, except for Harajima Keiji’s 原島圭二 (b. 1930) presentation. Nonetheless, they show that the impact of Marxism and the new social sciences invigorated theological discussion. If communism/Marxism had been perceived as dogma, religion, economic theory, social science, and theory of modernism in the preceding decades, it was now more explicitly discussed as a philosophy. Attention was also drawn to the variety of Christian positions. The scholar of religious studies Takao Toshikazu 高尾利数 (1930–2018) strongly asserted that the variety of Christian identities does not allow for an oversimplified juxtaposition of “Christianity” and communism (Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan Senkyō Kenkyūjo 1972, 300–304). While attention is called to the plurality of communist positions as well, dialogue between the two is affirmed as possible and desirable. However, it is seen as fruitless, if pursued only for strategical reasons. As the Marxist philosopher Takeuchi Yoshitomo 竹内良知 (1919–1991) explains,

For the development of a real dialogue Marxists will have to deepen their atheist standpoint. If atheism does not [properly] keep its tense relation-

ship with religion, dialogue will be limited to the dimension of political action and cannot extend to the dimension of thought. Of course, Marxism started with Feuerbach's critique of religion, but Marxists should not be satisfied with a superficial understanding of Feuerbach's idea that God is nothing but the outward projection of man's inward nature. (Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan Senkyō Kenkyūjo 1972, 364)

Conclusions

Let me close this article with three brief conclusions. First, the discussion above gave us glimpses at the indigenization process of Christian socialism and communism/Marxism (as well as anti-communism) in Japan. Whereas references to Western thinkers abounded in the beginning, discourses in the late 1960s and 1970s showed strong impulses to discuss these Western concepts in the terminology of Japanese traditions of thought. This comes as no surprise, given the pronounced emphasis on indigenization in Christian discourses during the 1960s (cf. Suzuki 1964). Second, I would argue that changing power relations, that is, the growth of Marxist authority especially in Japan's academia influenced the way Christians related to communism and Marxism. Whereas Bennett and Forman argued from a position of alleged Christian superiority, the discourses of the late 1960s and 1970s rather sought to reconstruct and reorientate Christianity with the help of Marxist critique. And third, the influences, incidents, and discussions introduced here seem to be characterized by a gradual shift of focus away from concrete socio-political action towards theorizing and theological inquiry. If that were true, they would give witness to Kumazawa Yoshinobu's 熊沢義信 (1929–2002) theory that in modern and contemporary Japan theological progress had always led to social retrogression (through the marginalization of social action). Only a few years after the events described in this article, Kumazawa therefore concluded

that theology in Japan must actively “integrate text [i.e., the biblical message] and context [i.e., its interpretation and application in society]” (Kumazawa 1976, 184). However, more research into instances of Christian theorizing and practice is necessary before we can determine if Kumazawa was right.

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