

## Chapter 6:

### Student activism and the 'struggle' for democracy

In 1968 'modern Japan' - as a nation performed within protest and resistance, and forged in opposition in the state - never looked healthier. The disputes that were sparked at the country's most prestigious university, Tokyo University, and the country's largest, Nihon University, saw protesting students dominate the media and political affairs for almost 2 years. It has come to be known as the 'Zenkyōtō Era,' named after the most important student alliance of the period, and it saw 'activism spread though-out the country like wildfire.'<sup>1</sup> It was 1968, the year of global activism, and students were quick to define themselves within the context of international student demonstrations, reading the work of Marcuse and Luxemburg, latching onto the ideas emanating from the cultural revolution in China and setting up a Latin Quarter in Kanda, Tokyo after the French example. The student activism saw Japan participating within international radicalism and challenging the existing structures of power. More importantly the struggle provided the vital energy to the cultures of protest that were emerging in the lead up to 1970.

The scale of the university upheaval was unprecedented. Of the three hundred and seventy seven universities that existed in 1968, one hundred and seven were plagued by disputes. By 1969 this number had increased to one hundred and fifty two as students vied to challenge the university authorities and establish their place within the massive upheaval that was sweeping the nation's institutions. The disputes even extended to high schools where classrooms were barricaded and occupied, and young students entered into the fray of activism, participating in the street demonstrations. The 1969 White Paper on Security published by the National Police Agency noted that six hundred and two high school students had

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<sup>1</sup> Takazawa Kōji, *Rekishi to shite no Shinsayoku*, Shinsensha, Tokyo, 1996, 70-71.

been arrested in demonstrations.<sup>2</sup> The number of university students arrested, injured and even killed during this period was much higher. Universities were completely barricaded, classes cancelled and the streets and trains of the big cities regularly brought to a standstill by protesting students.

In this chapter I will explore the disputes that arose at the universities, the reaction of the student body to the crisis and the relationship between student activism (*gakusei undō*) and Beheiren. The problems that flared up in early 1968 quickly magnified into a massive struggle over the relationship between the university and the state, political values and the prospects for a democratic Japan. The university struggle (*daigaku tōsō*) carried on the 1960s tradition of protest and activism while also shifting the boundaries of that tradition through an understanding of activism and autonomy determined through ‘struggle.’ The ideals of responsibility, participation and protest emanating from civil society were brought into the fracas of opposition and were challenged as the foundation of the national imaginary.

### **The disputes at Todai and Nichidai**

Each university faced their own specific problems during the late 1960s. The demands of students, and the tactics that they employed, varied throughout the country. Nevertheless, as Takazawa Kōji notes, while the issues may have varied between the campuses students realized that they would not be able to fight individual reform battles and that aligning themselves within the national, and international network of activism was a far more effective strategy.<sup>3</sup> The national struggle was broadly based upon a number of common themes that first incited the opposition of students. First, the distribution of power within the university; second, the lack of power available to the student self-governing associations; third, the management of student buildings; and finally, the fee increases faced by students. In this regard the disputes that rocked individual campuses and the

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<sup>2</sup> Japan National Police Agency, *White Paper on Security, 1969*, Tokyo, 1970.

<sup>3</sup> Takazawa Kōji, *Rekishi to shite no Shinsayoku*, 34-35.

tactics employed by students challenging the authorities came to be represented within the broad network of ‘student power.’

*i. Tōdai*

Tokyo University (*Tōdai*), became home to the nation’s biggest student upheaval in early 1968. *Tōdai* is the most prestigious university in Japan and the *alma mater* to many of the top politicians, bureaucrats and business people. The massive protests, which flared up within the ranks of the most privileged at the University’s Hongo campus in early 1968, were sparked by disputes between medical interns and the university authorities over student rights and conditions.<sup>4</sup> Under agreements between the government and the hospitals, graduates were required to work in the hospitals unpaid for 12 months after graduation. The Doctors Registration Bill, under which these laws were enacted, had been revised in late 1967 and was set to go before the Diet in July 1968. But medical students felt that there had been little substantial change in the Bill and that the conditions would remain in which they were beholden to the university hospitals. The interns’ discontent was amplified by the fact that all their efforts to negotiate with their teachers and university authorities had failed. January 19 they took their fight to the hospital itself, attempting to confront Ueda, the Hospital Director, directly. In an episode that became known as the Harumi Incident (*Harumi Jiken*), named after a member of the medical staff at the Tokyo University Hospital, students were said to have violently confronted Doctor Harumi and harangued him outside the Hospital. February 11 the Medical Department responded to Doctor Harumi’s reports by punishing seventeen students and expelling four as a part of the disciplinary action. One of the students reprimanded was, it was later discovered, 1000 kilometers away in the southern island of Kyūshū at the time and thus not present at the negotiations in question. Meantime after holding meetings on January 27 1968, students entered into indefinite strikes and vowed

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<sup>4</sup> For timelines and details about the struggle see Nishi Kazuo (ed.), *1968 nen Gurafiti: Barikēdo no Naka no Seishun*, Mainichi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998; Takazawa Kōji, *Zenkyōtō Gurafiti*, Shinsensha, Tokyo, 1994; and Takazawa Kōji, *Rekishi to shite no Shinsayoku*, 1996.

to boycott examinations and disrupt the graduation ceremonies scheduled for late March. They also formalized their association within the Young Physicians Alliance (*Seinen Ishi Rengō*) and claimed that the ‘odd jobs’ that formed the basis of their education were simply ‘slave labor.’<sup>5</sup> The Medical Faculty refused to reverse its decision over the intern system or the punishments however, and the students’ protests were ignored. In March 1967, 87% of all medical students refused to sit the state examinations in protest and the graduation ceremonies were held under the protection of the riot police in individual departments rather than on a university wide scale. Even at this early stage the scope of the protests was becoming increasingly apparent with students issuing statements and handing out pamphlets declaring objections such as: ‘Absolute opposition to the presence of riot police on campus’ and ‘the introduction of riot police = the collapse of university self governance (*kidōtai tōnyū = daigaku jichi haikai*).’<sup>6</sup>

To the wider student body the punishments inflicted on protesting medical students seemed to be an arbitrary flexing of power and the protests escalated. On June 15 medical students who had come together as part of the campus-wide medical struggle (*izen gakutō*) occupied Yasuda Hall clock tower. It was a bold move by the students. Yasuda Hall was the hub of the university, the administrative heart, containing the office of the University President as well as the main auditorium. Just two days after the students moved in the riot police were called onto the campus and the graduate students were forced to leave the Tower. It was a move that confirmed what the medical students of the *Igakubu Zengakutō* had earlier pointed out to the wider student body, that it was not just about student rights or protesting discrimination but a struggle for power.

The fight of Tōdai students is about confronting the government Ministry of Education’s control of the University, it’s about bureaucratic control, and it’s about our separation from university governance. This has

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<sup>5</sup> Asahi Jānaru, ‘Sotsugyō shiki o nagashita todai igakubu tōsō,’ (*Asahi Jānaru*, April 14, 1968) in Nishi Kazuo (ed.), *1968 nen Gurafiti*, 79.

emerged as the fundamental point on which the entire Tōdai campus has come together.<sup>7</sup>

By entering the building students had laid the groundwork for a massive struggle. Not only had students brought the university to a standstill and drawn attention to their plight, but the presence of riot police inside the university inspired the vehement opposition of the wider student community and disparate groups fell in behind the cause. The demonstrations quickly escalated and about 6000 protesters came together in front of Yasuda Hall on the June 20, bringing classes to a halt and forming the All-Campus Struggle League (*Zengaku Tōsō Rengō*) which set the university-wide resistance into motion. Students of each faculty issued statements and posted proclamations around the university outlining their position. Students from the Law Department, which was one of the last to join the struggle, pointed out that it was the first strike in the 90-year history of the Department and, adopting the vocabulary of their trade, declared:

We, the 1400 students of the Law faculty, in order to realize the impeachment (*kyūdan*) of the riot police on campus, victory for the medical students and the democratization of the Tōdai self-governing association as a systematic and habitual process, have overwhelmingly (568: 187: 39: 13) decided to strike.<sup>8</sup>

With the University at a standstill University President Ōkochi, decided to meet with students June 28 and bring an end to the strikes that had rocked the campus. The meetings were a complete failure. Dr Ōkochi, who had come directly from his sickbed in hospital, refused to negotiate on the punishment of medical interns or their demands and failed to assuage the discontent of the wider student body

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<sup>6</sup> These slogans were issued at the March 28 *ZenTōdai Kyōtō Renraku Kaigi*. See, Nishi Kazuo (ed.), *1968 nen Gurafiti*, 109-110.

<sup>7</sup> Issued June 12 by the *Igakubu Zengakutō*. See, Nishi Kazuo (ed.), *1968 nen Gurafiti*, 110.

<sup>8</sup> Issued June 29 by the *Tōdai Hōgakubu Senkai*, ‘Suturaiki seimei.’ See, Nishi Kazuo (ed.), *1968 nen Gurafiti*, 112. In this context *kyūdan* means more than simply ‘impeachment.’ It was an important term in the context of 1960s protest denoting a systemic problem in Japan’s institutional structures.

that had gathered outside Yasuda Hall. July 2, Yasuda was re-occupied by 250 students and three days later they opened the doors for a mass meeting of 3000 students.

Sustained through all of this and lasting though the summer months (June–August) a tent village (*tento mura*) was established in front of Yasuda Hall at which students discussed their political philosophy and strategy. Within this political and cultural climate the Tokyo University All-Japan Joint Struggle Council (*Tōdai Tōsō Zengaku Kyōtō Kaigi – Tōdai Zenkyōtō*) was inaugurated with 26-year-old postgraduate physics research assistant, Yoshimoto Yoshitaka, voted Chair.

The responsiveness of students at Tōdai- the strikes, the barricaded buildings, the tent village in front of Yasuda Hall, and the proclamations that littered the campus - attest to the strength of student protest in 1968. With the students galvanized into action and the university quickly becoming a battle zone all of the major issues confronting the nation came onto the agenda. Oda Makoto lamented the fact that the plight of Vietnamese farmers was being associated with increases in student fees for Japanese university students and that the issues were being confused.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless it attests to the importance of protest and the willingness of students to tap into, and feed off, the cultures of protest and resistance that had emerged. Visitors to Tōdai were greeted with flags, banners and large sign boards with the various political manifestos scribbled out. Each responded to the policies of the university authorities and the claims of opposing sects and parties. Besides those devoted solely to university related issues, groups such as the ‘June Action’ Implementation Committee (*‘Roku gatsu Kōdō’ Jikkō Iinkai*), September 21 Demonstration Implementation Committee (*9.21 Demo Jikkō Iinkai*) and Anti-War Conference (*Hansen Kaigi*), contributed to the flood of pamphlets at Tōdai and drew attention to concerns such as the war in Vietnam, US-Japan relations, the Ampo treaty, as well as the university struggle itself. Zenkyōtō activists were

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<sup>9</sup> Oda Makoto, Takahashi Kazumi & Matsugi Nobuhiko, *Henkaku no Shisō o Tō*, Chikuma Shoten, Tokyo, 1969, 8.

in fact opposed to the incorporation of these disparate issues into the struggle, but as I will indicate below, they also developed an understanding of the university struggle that went far beyond the immediate issues facing medical interns and beyond the famous *Akamon* (Red Gate) that encloses Tōdai.

## *ii. Nichidai*

Like Tōdai, the problems that broke out at Nihon University (*Nichidai*) during 1968 provided an immediately recognizable illustration of the strength of the protests spreading throughout the country. The contrast between Tōdai and Nihon University is stark. A private university with a student body of over 90 000, Nichidai was the largest in Japan and had the reputation for being the training ground for lower level ‘salary men’ (office workers, business and corporation employees). A leading figure in the demonstrations, Akita Akehiro saw it as a place for the ‘mass production of middle level technicians.’<sup>10</sup> The problems at Nichidai had been simmering for some time with many students criticizing the ‘dictatorial’ attitude of President Furuta towards student associations and activism. The spark for the massive protests came in early 1968 with revelations that two billion yen was missing from the University accounts.

On May 23 students from the Economics Department and the student associations held meetings in the university hall during which they staged the ‘inaugural’ 200 metre demonstration. Akita Akehiro noted that it was an auspicious occasion:

We had no particular goal in mind. We just walked 200 meters and that was it. But the very fact that there had been a demonstration at all ... there had been no such thing at Nichidai since the War ... or for that matter in the 80 year history of the University. So the effect was to give new courage to the other students, who when they saw our demonstration felt that they should also demonstrate.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Akita Akehiro (interview), ‘The student rebellion at Nihon University,’ *Ampo: A Report from the Japanese New Left*, Vol. 5, Amposha, Tokyo, 1970, 10.

<sup>11</sup> Akita Akehiro (interview), ‘The student rebellion at Nihon University,’ 10.

In many ways it was the Nichidai students' initiation into the sphere of activism, an opportunity for students with a status as would-be corporate employees to engage in protest and resistance.<sup>12</sup> They had no history of political activism and the large number of sects, parties and movements that filtered through Tōdai were almost non-existent at Nichidai. The University did not offer the same sense of privilege or opportunity for the students here; the future was mapped out but it was not particularly promising; and few had embraced the student activism and protest that was synonymous with other institutions, the 1960s student lifestyle. If clubs, protest and politics played a central part of the university experience in Japan, Nichidai was little more than a technical college. The 200 metre long demonstration was, in this regard, a journey of self-discovery; the students recovered their subjectivity as students of the 1960s through protest and thus found a release from the capitalist treadmill. In the process activists such as Akita believed that Nichidai became a typical Japanese university for the first time and was released from the shackles of the state-industrial complex in which it was so intimately tied. The 200 meters was a symbolic march for an identity as student activists.

On May 27, following the lead of their newfound counterparts at Tōdai, they formed the Nihon University All-Campus Joint Struggle Council (*Nihon Daigaku Zengaku Kyōtō Kaigi*), or *Nichidai Zenkyōtō*, with Akita Akehiro elected Chair. In the All-Campus Joint Mobilization Meeting on June 11, the Zenkyōtō students called for the resignation of the University trustees, the disclosure of University accounts, freedom of assembly, democratization of the university, the abolition of censorship over university publications, and the retraction of disciplinary action against activist students. The meeting dissolved in violence with Zenkyōtō students being set upon by the samurai swords, wooden kendo swords and the

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<sup>12</sup> Sawara Yukiko notes that Nichidai was unique in that there was no history of sectional radicalism. See Sawara Yukiko, 'The University Struggles', in Stuart Dowsey (ed.) *Zengakuren: Japan's Revolutionary Students*, The Ishi Press, Berkeley, 1970, 164. Akita Akehiro notes: 'The ordinary human rights of holding meetings, freedom of speech, freedom of publication, freedom to form organizations, all of which are guaranteed by the constitution were completely denied for the students of Nichidai.' Akita Akehiro (interview), 'The student rebellion at Nihon University,' 13.



iron pipes of rightwing students believed to be acting under instruction from the authorities. By the end of the day the riot police had been called in and the possibility of a negotiated settlement was all but lost. Over the course of the next month departments throughout the University were barricaded and occupied by protesting students, riot police were called in on more than one occasion, and Furuta reneged on promises to negotiate with the students.

According to activists, and their sympathizers, Nichidai was a university that was churning out fodder for corporate Japan and its board of directors were corrupt and unaccountable. Reflecting on the struggle in 1969 Akita Akehiro laments that Nichidai was supplying students ‘as commodities to bourgeois society.’ ‘There is no self-governance in the university’ [writes Akita],

the university is no more than a shell. Thus the form of our struggle is not determined directly in opposition to the state. Its pivotal focus has been the capitalist system itself ... and the dehumanizing functions of capitalist society.<sup>13</sup>

Even at this early stage in the university struggle the wider concerns of the students were clear. Lying at the heart of the problems that had emerged – the intern system and the punishment of students, university governance, corruption and the problem of riot police on campus – was the role of the state in capitalist society and its control over national institutions. The emergence of a ‘pervasive state’ in Japan was vehemently resisted and many groups pointed out the insidious nature of the academic industrial complex (*sangaku kyōdō*) that had emerged.<sup>14</sup> The progressive intellectuals who were so prominent over the course of the 1950s and 60s, and framed their academic lives on their independence from the state, were said to be in collusion with the enemy. Groups such as *Chūkakuha* and *Shagakudō*, who formed part of the Zenkyōtō alliance, believed that the university

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<sup>13</sup> Akita Akehiro & Fukuda Ishi, ‘Gakusei hanran kara sōhanran e: Nihon tōsō wa uttaeru,’ (*Jōkyō*, March 1969) in Yasko, Guy, *Zenkyōtō o Yomu*, Jōkyō Shuppansha, Tokyo, 1997, 52.

<sup>14</sup> See for example, Akita Akehiro & Fukuda Ishi, ‘Gakusei hanran kara sōhanran e.

had been brought under the control of the state and capital.<sup>15</sup> Similarly Yoshimoto Yoshitaka depicted the university as a mechanism of the state that was enslaving the individual to the needs of industry and government.<sup>16</sup>

In this political climate it was almost inevitable that the struggles at Tōdai and Nichidai evolved into a movement that usurped the instrumental aims and specific demands from which they were launched. The countless articles, intellectual forums and discussion groups that considered the implications of the events at the universities in 1968-69 both fed off, and greatly enhanced the fervour of opposition.<sup>17</sup> Few were under any illusions as to the importance of the various struggles and realized that the disputes at Tōdai and Nichidai, as well as other universities throughout Japan, were a harbinger of myriad radical political philosophies and ideals. The implications of this were three-fold. First, radically new conceptions of protest and organizational structure emerged within the student movement. Second, the universities were wracked by internal disputes and various student sects and alliances fought vehemently over political philosophy and tactical agendas. Finally, the political and social imaginary of progressive intellectuals - the way in which society, the state, and democratic ideals, were defined and articulated within the idea of civil society - became a focus of opposition and was radically transformed.

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<sup>15</sup> *Chūkaku* was short for *Marugakudō Chūkaku-ha* – the Marxist Student League Central Core. They wore a white helmet with the characters for *Chūkaku* (中核) in black. *Shagakudō Tōitsu*, Socialist Student League Unity Group. They wore a red helmet with *Shagakudō* (社学党) written in black. See, Marukyōren (Maruchimedea Kyōsanshūisha Rengō), *Marukyōren*, document created by Marukyōren, at <<http://marukyo.cosm.co.jp>>. Viewed December 2000.

<sup>16</sup> Yoshimoto Yoshitaka, 'Barikedo fūsa no shisō: Todai tōsō to 60 nen Anpo no kyōkun,' (*Jōkyō*, November 1968) in Guy Yasko (ed.) *Zenkyoto o Yomu*, pp. 6–13.

<sup>17</sup> See for example Shisō no Kagaku Kenkyūkai, 'Bunka kakumei to shite no gakusei undō,' (symposium) *Shisō no Kagaku*, August 1969, pp. 2-37; Sekai, 'Todai mondai no kakushin,' (tokushū) *Sekai*, January 1969, pp. 221-282.

## Zenkyōtō

### *i. The struggle for democracy*

At Tokyo University in particular there was a diverse range of groups, sects and political parties with competing agendas, and fundamentally different tactical and interpretive responses to the struggle in which students were involved. Zenkyōtō was a disparate alliance of groups and activists who identified themselves as ‘non-sect radicals’ and brought a variety of often-conflicting philosophical and tactical agendas together.<sup>18</sup> Articles published in *Situations (Jōkyō)*, and the reports published in the *Asahi Jānaru*, the weekly source of news for many students, give us some insight into the intellectual and political development of Zenkyōtō, the history in which it situated itself, and the important contribution that it made to discourses on protest.

From Zenkyōtō’s initiation at Tōdai the rejection of authority and the nurturing of diversity was central to the ‘non-sect’ radicals, and they fought to ensure the centrality of this principle to the alliance. The Zenkyōtō movement encompassed a vast array of sects aligned in the ideologically driven ‘anti-Yoyogi factions’ and relied on these groups for student support and an active base. Yoyogi refers to the location of the Japan Communist Party (JCP) offices in Tokyo, thus the ‘anti-Yoyogi’ factions were those that, like the ‘non-sect radicals,’ opposed the JCP-aligned *Minsei* (Democratic Youth League) students. Their opposition was based upon the apparent willingness of *Minsei* to acquiesce to the university administration and the Communist Party policy that saw the rejection of radical activism and the concurrent emphasis on ‘peaceful revolution.’<sup>19</sup> The principle

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<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of the principles of Zenkyōtō see Gavan McCormack, ‘The Student Left in Japan,’ *New Left Review*, January-February 1971, pp. 37-52; Yonehara Ken, *Nihonteki ‘Kindai’ e no Tōi – Shisō Shi to shite no Sengo Seiji*, Shinhyōron, Tokyo, 1995; Yonehara Ken, ‘Beheiren to daigaku tōsō,’ *Sekai*, April 1994, pp. 112-113; Takazawa Kōji, *Rekishi to shite no Shinsayoku*; Guy Yasko, ‘The Japanese Student Movement 1968-1970 – The Zenkyōtō Uprising,’ unpublished PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1997.

<sup>19</sup> *Minsei* (Democratic Youth League) was one of the largest student groups with 353 self-governing associations. They wore a plain yellow helmet. *Marukyōren*, at <<http://marukyo.cosm.co.jp>>.

anti-Yoyogi groups included *Chūkaku* and *Kakumaru*,<sup>20</sup> who were both founded in opposition to communism's post-1956 revisionist line. They were anti-imperialist and anti-Stalinist factions that focused on Marxist theories of revolution in order to avoid the pragmatism of the Communist Party. Other factions that came together in the *Zengakuren Three Faction Alliance* (*San-pa Zengakuren*) also placed emphasis on the international dimensions of activism and rejected the nation-state as an institutional framework for political reform.

In principle Zenkyōtō was free from the organizational and ideological constraints of political groups and made decisions based on particular circumstances rather than a predetermined ideological agenda. It was initiated under the auspices of participatory democracy but gradually evolved into a kind of autocratic oligarchy in which decisions were hastily made by the non-sect representatives and sect leaders in relation to the issues at hand. Saishū Satoru, a member of Tōdai Zenkyōtō, saw the structure of the movement as a direct challenge to the organizational structures of the university and Japanese society generally. He notes that Zenkyōtō adhered to three broad principles. First, that each person operates according to their own personal resolutions. Second, that there is no official leadership and that each issue is discussed and decided upon by all participants. Third, that it would not pursue its own preservation as a goal in itself.<sup>21</sup>

The principles that Zenkyōtō embodied were partly motivated by the hierarchical institutions and structures that they were confronting. Tōdai activist Shiokawa Yoshinobu notes that Tōdai Zenkyōtō was challenging the structures of established, elite and strongly hierarchical institutions.<sup>22</sup> It was also emerging

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<sup>20</sup> *Kakumaru* (革マル - Revolutionary Marxists) wore a white helmet with a red line. *Marukyōren*, at <<http://marukyo.cosm.co.jp>>.

<sup>21</sup> Saishū Satoru, 'non sekuto rajikaru no shisō: anpo tōsō kara Tōdai tōsō e,' (*Jōkyō*, March 1969) in Guy Yasko (ed.) *Zenkyōtō o Yomu*, pp. 14-23; see also Saishū Satoru, 'Watashi ni totte no paradaimu chienji,' in Jissensha (ed.) *Zenkyōtō Sanjū nen: Jidai ni Hangyaku shita sha tachi no Shōgen*, Jissensha, Tokyo, 1998, pp. 222-238.

<sup>22</sup> Shiokawa Yoshinobu, 'Joshu kyōtō no kokorozashi o tsuranuite,' in Jissensha (ed.) *Zenkyōtō Sanjū nen*, pp. 239-252.

from within a strongly sectarian student movement and thus the principles upon which it was founded directly challenged the structural constraints of its predecessors. In this respect Tōdai Zenkyōtō was regarded differently from the movement at Nichidai campus where student groups had been all but non-existent prior to 1968. Zenkyōtō Nichidai placed emphasis on the newness of its activism and sought to avoid sectarian differences within the student movement that emerged. An important part of this was not just confronting the institutions of a conservative state but by extension, confronting the structure of the Japan Communist Party. One member of Zenkyōtō stated:

I feel it necessary for each one of us to establish separate identities as distinct from one another before we can enter into a relationship of solidarity. But even then we should constantly be aware of the fact that ‘I am I’ and ‘you are you’, and that you and I should not be put together to form any stereotyped category. This is why I am repelled by *Minsei* and the JCP. The cause for my revulsion lies not so much in their revolutionary tactics as in their habit of disregarding separate identities.<sup>23</sup>

The competing views of student sects with regard to the tactics and strategy became increasingly apparent at Tōdai from August 1968 when the battles escalated. Many thought that the struggle might come to an end in August when the Dean of the Medical Department, Toyokawa and the Director of the Hospital, Ueda offered their resignations. But when the new Dean, Kobayashi, refused to negotiate with the students the battles lines were drawn again and most of the campus was barricaded. *Minsei* students were opposed to the barricading of the university, favoring negotiations with university authorities and the democratization of the campus. Throughout the struggle *Minsei* also objected to the inclusion of Zenkyōtō students in negotiations, claiming that they alone were the legitimate representatives of the student body. Thus, despite some initial

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<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Wheeler, Donald, ‘Japan’s postmodern student movement,’ in William Cummings et. al, *Changes in the Japanese University: A Comparative Perspective*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1979, 211.

consensus among students, there was no real basis for solidarity and skirmishes quickly broke out.<sup>24</sup>

Disputes between rival student groups concerning the underlying political philosophy, the tactical agenda and the meaning of the struggle were elemental in crystallizing the shape of Zenkyōtō activism. The non-sect radicals and their anti-Yoyogi faction counterparts began acting under the slogans ‘complete the blockade’ and ‘tear the university apart.’ These slogans were directed not only towards university authorities, but also the opposing Minsei students and even the professors within the universities. On November 1 1968 University President Ōkochi responded to student demands and resigned from his post. It was the first time in the history of the University that a President had resigned but had little real impact on the scope of the struggle. Many wondered what would have happened if the resignation had come earlier but by November 18 Zenkyōtō were well past accepting any ‘piece-meal solutions’ and there was no decipherable impact upon the under-currents of the struggle.<sup>25</sup>

Popular polls carried out by the *Asahi Shimbun* in October 1968 asked respondents their opinion of the university professors, and polls of students asked whether the professors were ‘worthy of respect.’ The response from the wider community was largely favorable towards the professors, but the question itself betrayed the nature of the protest and the focus of student opposition. Under the question ‘who do you consider responsible for the trouble in universities?’ the choice of answer was either ‘students’ or ‘the university.’ The LDP government was not even cited as a possible source for discontent. Rather, it was the

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<sup>24</sup> *Asahi Jānaru*, ‘Mune tsuki saka no todayo funsō,’ (*Asahi Jānaru*, August 15, 1968) in Nishi Kazuo (ed.), *1968 nen Gurafiti*, 86.

<sup>25</sup> *Asahi Jānaru*, ‘Muki dashi ni natta todayo no taishitsu – funsō no teiryū wa kowarazu,’ (*Asahi Jānaru*, November 17, 1968) in Nishi Kazuo (ed.), *1968 nen Gurafiti*, 90; Mutō Ichiyō & Inoue Reiko, ‘Beyond the New Left: in search of a radical base in Japan (Parts 1-2),’ *AMPO: Pacific Asia Quarterly Review*, Vol. 17, No. 2 & 3, PARC, Tokyo, 1985, pp. 20-35 & pp. 54-73.

professors, indistinguishable from the institutions of the state, who were coming under attack.<sup>26</sup>

At Tōdai students saw themselves as confronting the ‘deception’ that existed within the university. In September 1968 the students who had been camping in front of Yasuda Hall over the course of the summer in the Tent Village responded angrily to departmental attempts to broker negotiations. The fourth edition of the Tent Village Correspondence (*Tento Mura Dayori*) featured the article ‘Dispose of the fiction’ (*gisei o suteyo*): ‘We won’t recognize the type of fictional ‘dialogue’ undertaken by the (Liberal Arts Department),’ proclaimed the campers. ‘As long as the negotiations are like those carried out by this Department it will be fundamentally impossible for us to attend any meetings.’<sup>27</sup> The break down in the communication on campus and the unwillingness of students to negotiate on the terms prescribed by the University authorities signaled a major shift in the student struggle as it drifted further and further from the possibility of negotiated settlement.

September 30 President Furuta at Nichidai attended a mass bargaining session with 15,000 students during which the University trustees stood and expressed their sincere regret. Furuta himself signed a statement of self-criticism listing his past misdemeanors: First, that he had created gangster groups among the physical fitness students; second, that he had introduced the riot police onto campus; and third, that he had broken promises with regard to mass bargaining. In addition to the ‘self criticism,’ Furuta made several promises to the students including the resignation of the trustees. This final promise did in fact eventuate, but just one month later Furuta declared that his promises were null and void. The struggle became even more entrenched.

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<sup>26</sup> Asahi Shimbun, ‘The Asahi Shimbun public opinion surveys: strife in the universities,’ *Japan Quarterly*, Asahi Shimbun, Tokyo, Vol. 14, No. 2, April-June 1969, pp. 157-169.

<sup>27</sup> Yasuda Kōdo mae tento mura dayori henshūkyoku, *Gisei o suteyo (Tento Mura Dayori*, September 1968). See, Nishi Kazuo (ed.), *1968 nen Gurafiti*, 114.

Throughout November the new University President at Tōdai, Katō Ichiyo, entered into mass bargaining sessions with both Zenkyōtō and Minsei students but was not willing to sign the demands that they put forward. On each occasion skirmishes between the two broad student alliances became ever more intense. On November 22 approximately 12,000 students from universities throughout the country gathered in front of Yasuda Hall with helmets, staves and long metal pipes. On this occasion about 2000 unarmed students and professors who came between rival groups ward off the imminent violence. In early December violent skirmishes also broke out behind the barricades as *Kakumaru* and *Hantei Gakuhyō*, sects aligned within Zenkyōtō, came to loggerheads.<sup>28</sup> By this time the struggle had spread to the Tōdai Komaba campus, attracting the support of universities nationally, and encouraging an alliance between Tōdai and Nichidai Zenkyōtō, though it was plagued by internal wrangling (*uchigeba*).<sup>29</sup>

The negotiations that the students did enter into during the final months of 1968 illustrate the influence that the Chinese Cultural Revolution had on the style of activism. Photographs from the mass meetings show an overcrowded auditorium in which helmet-clad students surround the University President. In the frequent kangaroo courts hierarchy and status were all but forgotten as the students pressed their demands. The intimidation at mass bargaining sessions was only surpassed by the attacks on individual professors, such as Literature Department Dean Hayashi and Law Faculty Professor Maruyama Masao. The *Asahi Jānaru* referred to it as the dark days of Tōdai. It was a time in which professors, ‘whose primary role was to think,’ were confronted by the brute force of their students.<sup>30</sup> The incident involving Professor Hayashi saw him admitted to hospital after being locked in his office for over seven days with students. At least four professors

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<sup>28</sup> *Hantei Gakuhyō* (判定学表 - Anti-Imperialist Student Council) wore a blue helmet. Marukyōren, at <<http://marukyo.cosm.co.jp>>.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Tōdai = Nichidai tōsō shōri zenkoku gakusei sōkatsu teiki daikai ni kesshū seyo,’ (November 21) pamphlet. See, Nishi Kazuo (ed.), *1968 nen Gurafiti*, 121.

<sup>30</sup> *Asahi Jānaru*, “‘Ippan kyōjū’ aware tōdai moto kurashi,’ (*Asahi Jānaru*, 15 December, 1968) in Nishi Kazuo (ed.), *1968 nen Gurafiti*, 93.



were said to have committed suicide during the turmoil while many others suffered from insomnia, acute depression, anxiety and stomach pains.<sup>31</sup> Maruyama Masao, the revered intellectual giant of the 1960 Ampo struggle, was another professor cornered in his Law Department office and interrogated for extended periods. Maruyama cites the November meetings with students as marking a major turning point in the student struggle. ‘Thinking about it now,’ he writes, ‘it was from around this time that the pseudo-religious and revolutionary character of the struggle became apparent.’ His notes, which were written a couple of years after the episode but not published until after his death, betray his incredulous reaction to the student struggle of 1968-69. Maruyama referred to it as ‘pointless’ (*hatashi naki tōsō*) and expressing contempt towards the very idea of the ‘New Left’ (*new refuto wa nan na no ka*).<sup>32</sup>

With the increasing radicalism of activists and the waves of violence between student sects escalating, November 1968 saw the ‘Caramel Mothers’ join the fray of activity on campus, scrawling notes and painting signs to add to those that already littered the area. These mothers of Tōdai students complained about the battles being waged and the ever increasing violence that was wracking the campus. They called upon the students to pull down the barricades and negotiate.<sup>33</sup> In a similar vein a poster designed by Hashimoto Nao from the Liberal Arts Department, carried the picture of male student with the Tōdai insignia tattooed to his body in the manner of the Yakuza. The poster pleaded for an end to the increasingly abstract and apparently directionless, struggle.

Please stop for us,  
The leaves of the Gingko tree weep as you pass by,

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<sup>31</sup> Sawara Yukiko, ‘The University Struggle,’ 219.

<sup>32</sup> Maruyama Masao, *Jikonai Taiwa – 3 Satsu no Nōto Kara*, Misuzu Shoten, Tokyo, 1998, 129-130.

<sup>33</sup> ‘Haha yori waga shitei ni onegai,’ (December 1968). See Nishi Kazuo (ed.), *1968 nen Gurafiti*, 124.

Men of Tōdai where are you going?<sup>34</sup>

The tactics adopted and the battles being waged indicated that the Zenkyōtō students were no longer heeding the reforms or compromise that the university authorities could offer. The students placed no faith in what they called the ‘Postdam democracy’ sustaining Japan’s institutions. Maruyama Masao and Fukuda Kan’ichi, both professors at Tōdai, issued an appeal to students in November 1968 calling upon them to respect the constitution and arguing that the students’ tactics were ‘inappropriate to the university as a realm of reason.’ In retrospect it was an appeal that made recourse to the very notion that the students were fighting against – bourgeois democracy.<sup>35</sup> Zenkyōtō turned to the barricades and the notion of struggle rather than a parliamentary democracy that they believed simply sustained the institutions of conservative control.

Taking the banners that began to appear across the campus and the attitude of the media as an indication, Japanese society could no longer support the increasingly unaccountable and violent nature of the students’ activism. Conversely, its support was no longer critical to the students. Behind the barricades they were at once fundamentally disengaged from the society and at the same time the self-ordained representatives of that society; they accepted a pre-ordained position within ‘the masses’ without being responsive to ‘the citizens’ of a ‘civil society.’ The notion of ‘divine violence’ that was contained in the term *gebaruto* could be sustained indefinitely.<sup>36</sup> The slogans written on the walls of Yasuda Hall illustrated the radical detachment of the students:

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<sup>34</sup> Hashimoto Nao, ‘Komoba Matsuri Posutā.’ See, Nishi Kazuo (ed.), *1968 nen Gurafiti*, 85.

<sup>35</sup> Maruyama Masao, Fukuda Kan’ichi and other University faculty members, ‘Gakusei Shokun ni utaeru,’ *Todai Funsō Bunsho Kenkyūkai* (eds.), *Todai Funsō no Kiroku*, Nihon Hyōronsha, Tokyo, 1969, 318-319.

<sup>36</sup> The term ‘*gebaruto*’ comes from the German word ‘*gewalt*,’ or power, authority and violence that is associated with an act of God. Women in the barricades were given the name ‘*gebaruto rōsa*’ after Rosa Luxemburg. Marukyōren, at <<http://marukyo.cosm.co.jp>>.

We seek solidarity but don't fear isolation. We are not ashamed of defeat if we have exhausted all our energies, but we refuse to succumb having exerted less.<sup>37</sup>

On January 18, after a month of negotiations with University President Katō and fierce battles between the Minsei and Zenkyōtō students, 8000 riot police were called onto the Hongo campus of Tōdai to pull down the barricades. By this stage each of the sects from the anti-Yoyogi faction were barricaded into separate buildings each smuggling in food and armaments, and vowing that they would fight to the end. Many student sects looked well beyond the everyday struggle within the university, hoping instead for a revolutionary movement. Students from the ML Faction<sup>38</sup> posted a portrait of Mao ZeDong and the slogan *Teidai kaitai* - dismantle the Imperial University - on the famous Red Gate of Tōdai. 'Dismantle the imperial university' carried the same message as the chastisement of professors such as Maruyama – despite the incessant rhetoric of progressives, the institutions of postwar Japan were the fixtures of a past era, the bastions of democracy's deceit.

After a fierce two-day struggle involving helicopters, water canons, tear gas and thousands of riot police the students were removed from their 'citadel' at Tōdai. One of the last groups to be hauled out of the buildings were the ML students who, having run out of ammunition were found snake dancing and singing the 'Internationale' on the roof of the Exhibition Building. Two hundred and fifty-six students were taken under arrest and Prime Minister Satō came to survey the wreckage of the university. Photos of him shedding tears due to the tear gas that hung in the air hit the newspapers the following day. The entrance examinations had previously been cancelled for 1969 and, though University President Katō hoped to reinstate the exams, the government refused to acquiesce. Smashing the

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<sup>37</sup> Printed in Takazawa Kōji, *Zenkyōtō Gurafiti*, 44-45.

<sup>38</sup> ML Faction (Marxist-Leninist Faction) and its student section, the Student Liberation Front (SLF), was a group formed from remnants of the old Bund. The ML Faction rejected the criticisms emanating from Chūkaku that the Chinese revolution was a bourgeois nationalist revolution. The ML Faction was essentially a Maoist faction. Marukyōren, at <<http://marukyo.cosm.co.jp>>.

entrance exams had been one of the key Zenkyōtō aims in the struggle and the government was unwilling to rekindle the flame of resistance.

*ii. The cultures of protest*

The slogans emanating from the barricaded buildings, the apparent rejection of civil society ideals, and the radicalism of student activism hints towards the great gulf that had emerged between Beheiren and Zenkyōtō students. Unlike Zenkyōtō, Beheiren did ‘fear isolation’ and aspired to being a popular citizen’s movement. Nevertheless, it is necessary to backtrack a little and draw attention to the congruence of ideas between the two groups. As I noted earlier, the ideals of protest and resistance in Japan had been carried through in the university struggles and the ensuing street demonstrations. With this in mind, there was a sense of hope and optimism that greeted the activism and protests that had engulfed the universities of Japan. Within movements such as Zenkyōtō, Beheiren and Hansen, new forms of protest and democracy seemed to be taking shape around the ideal of ‘struggle.’

There were three groups that were ideologically aligned during this period - the Anti-War Youth League (*Hansen Seinen Iinkai*), Zenkyōtō and Beheiren. From the time of their formation each group made appeals to different constituents – workers, students and citizens respectively. But their formation outside the auspices of the existing political parties or ideologically driven sects saw them closely associated together under the banner of the ‘New Left.’ Hansen was formed in 1965 from within the Japan Socialist Party and the labour union, *Sohyō*, and sought to bring workers and students together in alliance against the war in Vietnam and Japan’s treaty with South Korea (*Betonamu Sensō Hantai; Nikkan Jōyaku Hijun Sōshi no tame no Seinen Iinkai*).<sup>39</sup> By 1969 they had radically

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<sup>39</sup> Fukashiro Junrō, ‘Student thought and feeling,’ *Japan Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 2, April-June 1969, pp. 148-157; Fukashiro Junrō, ‘The New Left,’ *Japan Quarterly*, Asahi Shimbun, Tokyo, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 1970, pp. 27-36; Ishida Ikuo, ‘Hansen Seinen Iinkai: gakusei to rōdōsha no aida,’ *Chūō Kōron*, pp. 142-151.

departed from the JSP, refused to abide by party directives, and established a strong base among students with a membership of over 20 000.<sup>40</sup>

The Zenkyōtō style of activism began at around the same time as Hansen, during the demonstrations at Waseda University in 1965, which is widely regarded as the birthplace of the New Left.<sup>41</sup> During the Waseda demonstrations the goals of the students became more abstract, they became more pessimistic about the state of Japanese politics, and their tactics became more radical. In interviews with Ono Tsutomu one activist stated:

As you know, the postwar student movement in Japan started as a struggle for the reconstruction of war devastated campuses. It was a movement of hope because its hope was to win peace and build democracy. By contrast, ours is a movement of desperation because it is, in fact, a last ditch defence of ideals the Japanese people once shared. As we see it, today both peace and democracy are on the verge of total collapse.<sup>42</sup>

In 1968/69 Zenkyōtō went beyond this position, relinquishing any hope of saving the existing notions of peace and democracy, but the antecedents of Tōdai and Nichidai Zenkyōtō were clearly established at Waseda.<sup>43</sup> Zenkyōtō, Hansen and Beheiren each maintained a non-sectarian, non-ideological, approach to protest and resistance, and each had a common history on which to draw. The three movements emerged as radically different not only to the organizations of the old left but also different to the protest movements that had come before, including the 1960 *Ampo* struggle.

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<sup>40</sup> Marukyōren, at <<http://marukyo.cosm.co.jp>>.

<sup>41</sup> See for example Gomi Masahiko, 'Beheiren to "urufugai" no aida ni,' *Shisō no Kagaku*, October 1975, pp. 70-75; Yonehara Ken, 'Beheiren to Zenkyōtō'; Mutō Ichiyō & Inoue Reiko, 'Beyond the New Left'; Takazawa Kōji, *Rekishi to shite no Shinsayoku*.

<sup>42</sup> Ōno Tsutomu, (*Chūō Kōron*, May 1966) 'Student protest in Japan - what it means to society,' *Journal of Social and Political Ideas in Japan*, Center for Japanese Social and Political Studies, Vol. V, No. 2-3, Tokyo, December 1967, pp. 251-280.

<sup>43</sup> Ōno Tsutomu notes that the number of universities involved in disputes was just 6 in 1961, 9 in 1963 and swelled to 50 in 1965. Ōno Tsutomu, 'Student protest in Japan,' 252.

Yonehara Ken's account of the period's activism published in a recent edition of *Sekai* brings Zenkyōtō and Beheiren together under the one, encyclopedia like, reference.<sup>44</sup> Yonehara alludes to the international frame of reference as a point on which the two movements came together depicting Beheiren within the non-violent radicalism of the civil rights movement in the US and Zenkyōtō as being aligned with the Cultural Revolution in China.<sup>45</sup> According to Yonehara, both groups explored and embraced the international dimensions of activism and both were thereby radically different to the other organizations and sects in Japan. In many ways the two movements fed off each other and Beheiren members placed renewed hope in the possibilities for 1970 with the onset of the students' struggle.

While not necessarily associating Beheiren within the category of the New Left many responded enthusiastically to the ideal of 'struggle' emanating from behind the barricades. In 1969 Tsurumi Yoshiyuki picked up an expression prevalent among young people to highlight the confluence in philosophical agendas. *Oyogasarete iru no dewa nai ka* (isn't it because you are being made to swim), implying that the young people had to swim against the tide; to turn against the current of social mores that were dominating their lives.<sup>46</sup> Tsurumi took heart in the expression identifying it as an indicator of individuality and an expression denoting young peoples' pursuit of originality. Making explicit reference to the struggle behind the barricades Tsurumi wrote 'it's an expression that relates to the denial of the self' and the discovery of activism.<sup>47</sup> Yoshikawa Yūichi also indicated that Beheiren's agenda was influential on the students and that its philosophy could be easily identified within the Zenkyōtō movement. He

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<sup>44</sup> Yonehara Ken, 'Beheiren to Zenkyōtō.' See also, Yonehara Ken, *Nihon teki 'Kindai' e no Toi*, 144.

<sup>45</sup> Americans Howard Zinn and Ralph Featherstone, and groups such as the SNCC and the Civil Right's movement in the US visited Japan at the invitation of Beheiren. Their influence is noted in Asahi Jānaru, '6.15 Beheiren to kyūsan ha no tōitsu kōdō,' *Asahi Jānaru*, June 29, 1969, pp. 102-106.

<sup>46</sup> Tsurumi Yoshiyuki, '1970 nen to Beheiren – tōitsu ni tsuite no shiteki oboesho,' in Oda Makoto (ed.), *Beheiren*, San'ichi Shoten, Tokyo, 1969, 62.

<sup>47</sup> Tsurumi Yoshiyuki, '1970 nen to Beheiren,' 62.

indicated that Oda's ideas about resistance and participation – about the importance of being active – were central to the university struggle and may form the basis of solidarity between disparate groups.

As a means of coping with state power forcing us into such a situation, actions of refusal, disobedience and resistance should be taken. Through such actions, human solidarity should be established among those who are struggling. A new order should be born.<sup>48</sup>

Oda Makoto applauded the students for their activism and depicted it as an important means through which to escape the contradictions of the human condition. As I outlined in Chapter Three, Oda was informed by a dialectical understanding of the 'intertwining complicity' of humanity and the notion of a victim/victimiser dichotomy of the human condition. It was based on a notion that each individual was both the victim of oppression and the perpetrator of injustice. The circularity of his argument and the 'inescapable mechanism' that binds humanity together makes it necessary to focus back on the particular experience and become active on the basis of individual issues.

Using an expression that sounded remarkably similar to Zenkyōtō's slogan 'the Tōdai within us' (*uchi naru Tōdai*) Oda expressed the 'inescapable mechanism' as identifying the 'Vietnam within us' (*uchi naru Betonamu*) and embracing activism from that perspective.<sup>49</sup> This brings us back to the ideas that underpinned Zenkyōtō. The philosophical underpinning of each was the idea that a strong ideological agenda, and sectional interests, inhibited individual freedom and personal expression. Struggle had its own logic and could free the actor from the contradictions of human existence and did not need to be sustained by a concrete political agenda or ideological position. Freedom could be lived by radicalizing

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<sup>48</sup> Yoshikawa Yūichi, '1970 nen Ampo to torikumu Beheiren,' (*Rōdō Mondai*, April 1969), in *Betonamu ni Heiwa o! Shimin Rengō, Shiryō: 'Beheiren' Undō*, Kawade Shobō Shinsha, Vol.1, Tokyo, 1974, pp. 26-30.

<sup>49</sup> Oda Makoto, 'Heiwa e no gutaiteki kigen: Nichibei shimin kaigi de no kōen,' (*Bungei Shunjū*, October 1966) in Oda Makoto (ed.), *Shimin Undō to wa Nani ka*, Tokuma Shoten, Tokyo, 1968, pp. 35-61.

the everyday and rejecting the system that is binding the individual in a ‘web of complicity.’ Oda tailored this position to the ideal of democracy arguing in his 1968 essay ‘Man as rebel,’ that the most concrete form of direct democracy is resistance.<sup>50</sup>

In a remarkably similar vein to Zenkyōtō activists, Oda’s stress upon political activism was based on a contention that resistance provided the only means through which to liberate the individual from social and political mores. Oda drew a correlation between Nichidai students and the plight of African Americans active in the Civil Right’s movement. He felt that the two had evolved in similar ways and that through the struggle for civil rights, activists in both cases had become aware that, despite a few concessions for which they had valiantly fought, their place within society remained the same. According to Oda, having access to the limited rights offered by existing institutions alerted both groups to the privileges that they were unable to obtain, and the hopelessness of their plight.

From the position of citizens active in the anti-Vietnam War movement ... the important point about the Nichidai struggle is that, within the struggle itself, activism is being launched from the standpoint: ‘as human beings (the situation) cannot be tolerated.’ Another important element is that the shock of the struggle has begun to awaken the individual within many people, including the students.<sup>51</sup>

Oda believed that from the simple beginnings of the Nichidai struggle students, like their civil rights counterparts in the United States, became aware of their broader plight within society.

Mutō Ichiyō notes that it was this binding web of complicity – the victim/victimiser mechanism - that underpinned the determined break with the Old Left and sustained the category of ‘New Left’ in which he saw Beheiren. Responding in part to the student struggles in 1969 Mutō writes:

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<sup>50</sup> Oda Makoto, ‘Hanransha to shite no ningen,’ *Chūō Kōron*, October 1968, pp. 45-56.

<sup>51</sup> Oda Makoto, Takahashi Kazumi & Matsuki Nobuhiko, *Henkaku no Shisō o Tō*, 7-8.



In the course of the Vietnam War Japan is not merely the oppressed, it is the oppressor. Oda has pointed out that the oppressed and the oppressor are bound together within a single mechanism. Caught within this [mechanism] it could be said that the old left's determined focus on breaking the Ampo treaty in 1970 is little more than political posturing. Beheiren activism, which has drastically widened the base of the New Left has been a watershed in the split with the old left.<sup>52</sup>

In a similar vein interviews between Oda and novelists and teachers Takahashi and Matsugi in 1969 revealed that all three men recognized the confluence of ideas between Zenkyōtō and Beheiren. They emphasized the anti-establishment focus and the non-ideological agenda that informed the activism of both movements as the points of distinction with other political organizations. Takahashi indicated that Beheiren provided important 'nourishment' for the students of Zenkyōtō since its formation in 1965. He playfully suggested that Oda may like to 'investigate' the remarkable similarity and hints at the negative implications of the association. Oda, at his arrogant best, responded to Takahashi by suggesting that there was nothing new about Zenkyōtō activism and that its formation represented a natural progression in the resistance politics that was first initiated by Beheiren.

With regard to [Zenkyōtō's] form of activism Beheiren certainly had an indirect influence. So really, I don't have a sense that there was anything new about the activism, not so far as I am concerned. I think that what they are doing is completely obvious.<sup>53</sup>

The student movement represented the new face of protest and resistance that was centred upon individual activism and self-discovery. Thus the acknowledged association between Beheiren and Zenkyōtō was not a sign that Oda rejected the early 1960s democratic activism but that protest had moved on; Zenkyōtō and

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<sup>52</sup> Mutō Ichiyō, 'Shinsayoku ni atarashiku towareru mono,' in Mutō Ichiyō, *Shinsayoku to wa Nani ka*, Jiyū Kokuminsha, Tokyo, 1970, 18.

<sup>53</sup> Oda Makoto, *Henkaku no Shisō o Tō*, 231.

Beheiren were signs of the times, the latest in the evolution of Japanese democracy. Oda notes that Zenkyōtō's activism was born, not in a history of student activism – in a rigorously tested and debated political ideology - but from within a spirit that refuses to be subjugated (*gaman dekinai*). The students, like ordinary citizens, were driven by the contradictions of the human experience and a basic instinct to speak out and be active in the face of these contradictions. Thus, Beheiren's ideal of participatory democracy and the stress upon individual activism were confirmed by the formation of Zenkyōtō. In fact, as Oda casually points out, Tōdai Zenkyōtō Chairman Yoshimoto Yoshikazu had regularly taken part in Beheiren demonstrations.<sup>54</sup>

### *iii. Beheiren and 'unified action' (tōitsu kōdō)*

In an apparent confluence of political and tactical agendas the ideals that underpinned Beheiren, Zenkyōtō and Hansen seemed to have come together as the new frontier in Japan's democratic development. With the 1970 *Ampo* protests looming in the foreground, the older generation of Beheiren activists sought to define the parameters of the new activist movements through 'unified action.' They vied to bring competing movements, ideals and ideologies, together in peaceful protest against the *Ampo* treaty.

Writing in 1969 Beheiren Chairman Yoshikawa Yūichi joined Mutō Ichiyō in advocating unified activism and the formation of a New Left alliance to confront the *Ampo* treaty in 1970.<sup>55</sup> Yoshikawa outlined the important role that citizens' movements could play in the protests of 1969-70 and Beheiren's unique position as a unifying force in between radical students and peaceful citizens. He writes:

Now that the reformist role played by groups of intellectuals in 1960 and in the earlier period of the movement against the Vietnam War cannot be

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<sup>54</sup> Oda Makoto, *Henkaku no Shisō o Tō*, 231.

<sup>55</sup> Yoshikawa Yūichi, 'Beheiren to wa nani ka – kisei no wakugumi de ha rikai dekinu mono,' Oda Makoto (ed.), *Beheiren*, Shin'ichi Shobō, Tokyo, 1969, pp. 7-22; Mutō Ichiyō, 'kiki no tembo,' in Iida Momo (ed.) *70 nen e no Kakumeiteki Shiron*, San'ichi Shobō, November 1968, 7-26.

expected, as seen in the recent Tokyo University struggles, the role to be played by the citizens' movements may become larger.<sup>56</sup>

Tsurumi Yoshiyuki's 1969 essay on unified activism also marked an attempt to shape the protest agenda and outline the centrality of groups such as Beheiren.<sup>57</sup> He noted that the New Left alliance was not bound by ideological constraints, and that the idea was not to establish consensus or a unified political party, rather groups were bound together by the principles of freedom, spontaneity and participation. Unified activism, in his conception, was about transforming the nature of political alliances and activism rather than establishing any concrete revolutionary or even instrumental political goals.

It should come as little surprise then that student Beheiren groups emerged on campuses around the country in 1968/69. Besides setting up 'anti-war teashops' and distributing 'US imperialist Coca-Cola' at the campus festivals, student Beheiren groups shifted the focus of activism within the citizens' movement. They established concrete links between the education-related issues on campus and the anti-Vietnam War struggle, and they challenged the boundaries of Beheiren's founding philosophy, that 'anyone can take part.' Gomi Masahiko, in his article 'Between Beheiren and the Wolf Guy' notes that, while student Beheiren groups emulated the basic principles already established, it also tried to redefine the acceptable limits of street demonstrations and the type of protest in which Beheiren members could engage.<sup>58</sup> 'Wolf Guy' referred to the unsavory edge of protest, the radical element, that Gomi sought to bring into touch with the quiet demonstrations of citizens' activists and in the process bring the notion of struggle to the Beheiren demonstrations.

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<sup>56</sup> Yoshikawa Yūichi, '1970 nen Ampo to torikumu Beheiren,' 26.

<sup>57</sup> Tsurumi Yoshiyuki, '1970 nen to Beheiren – tōitsu ni tsuite no shiteki oboesho.'

<sup>58</sup> Gomi Masahiko, 'Beheiren to "urufugai" no aida ni,' *Shisō no Kagaku*, October 1975, pp. 70-76. See also Gomi Masahiko, 'Behangakuren no tachiba kara,' *Shisō no Kagaku*, November 1968, pp. 50-53.

We have distinguished between three styles of activism. a) Walking at a normal speed and anyone can take part style of demonstration; b) the zigzagging, French style or sit-in style of ‘demo’ where the possibilities are limited only by what one is willing to do; c) guerrilla style.<sup>59</sup>

Throughout this period students associated with Beheiren were known to don their helmets and zig-zag along the streets in large student rallies. Gomi, who had first become active as a student at Waseda University in 1965, was initially enthused by the diversity within Beheiren and its willingness to experiment with various forms of activism. For student protestors the non-sect alliances, the confrontation of police, and arrests were deemed an important aspect of radicalism that they could incorporate into Beheiren. For some the symbol of the *geba* (the staff), though perhaps not its use, was crucial to the sustenance and relevance of Beheiren in the milieu of late 1960s student radicalism.

### **Zenkyōtō, Beheiren and Yoshimoto Takaaki**

The confluence of thought the swept through movements such as Zenkyōtō and Beheiren, and the efforts to establish unified activism, saw a radical shift in the character of protest in 1960s Japan. Intimately tied to the strategy of building barricades, haranguing the professors, and closing down the university, was a political and philosophical position that sought to rethink the issues of autonomy, agency, activism and democracy. The work of Yoshimoto Takaaki, Zenkyōtō activists and members of Beheiren, provide us with insights into the new ways in which these ideas were conceptualized in the lead up to 1970. The Zenkyōtō movement emerged as a struggle over the conceptualisation of ‘the people’ and a rejection of the progressive intellectual notions of democracy and modernity that, even in their post-1960 *Ampo* manifestation, had apparently failed the postwar generation. The critiques of Beheiren member Takabatake Michitoshi and Yoshimoto Takaaki illuminate the new conceptions of protest that emerged on campus and the sense of national identity implicit within them.

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<sup>59</sup> Gomi Masahiko, ‘Beheiren to “urufugai” no aida ni,’ 75.

People such as Beheiren founder Takabatake Michitoshi believed that the student agenda represented a radical challenge to the inertia of 1960s politics. He clearly didn't share Maruyama Masao's sneering attitude to the New Left and expressed an antipathy towards the 'progressive intellectuals' surpassed only by the Zenkyōtō students themselves. Takabatake was thoroughly disillusioned with democracy by the end of the 1960s and, like the students, criticized those who had tried to make it a reality in Japan.

We have failed to foster the spontaneity in making decisions and sharing responsibilities. We have not developed the methodology of organization that will, at one and the same time, promote a sense of group responsibility, encourage consensus, and still retain respect for individuality.<sup>60</sup>

Takabatake saw the student activism as a 'bolt of lightning' that would awaken Japanese society and goes so far as to identify the university and academics within the ideological and structural frameworks that he had been struggling against for much of the postwar period. 'Through the use of violence (*gebaruto*),' [writes Takabatake]

students have, for the first time exposed the fact that intellectuals and Minsei are one and the same thing. Framing it slightly differently, postwar democracy and the prewar Emperor System are the same. It has become apparent that conservatism and progressivism are the same and that the students are the very antithesis of this.<sup>61</sup>

In other articles Takabatake refers to the students as a 'renaissance-like' force that had the potential to galvanize Japanese society and bring about fundamental

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<sup>60</sup> Takabatake Michitoshi, 'Citizens' movements: organizing the spontaneous,' in Victor Koschmann (ed.), *Authority and the Individual in Japan: Citizen Protest in Historical Perspective*, University of Tokyo Press, Tokyo, 1978, pp. 189-199.

<sup>61</sup> Shisō no Kagaku Kenkyūkai, 'Bunka kakumei to shite no gakusei undō,' (symposium) *Shisō no Kagaku*, August 1969, 5-6.

reform – they were like the vanguard in Japan’s Cultural Revolution.<sup>62</sup> According to Takabatake the confluence of society and state, the democratic rhetoric of the government and the posturing of progressive intellectuals, had been exposed through student radicalism; postwar democracy and the prewar Emperor System were as one.

For Takabatake the activism of students represented a crucial development in the ‘unfinished project of modernity.’ In an essay published in January 1969 Takabatake discussed student activism as one of the defining features of the modern industrial world and alluded to the community of activism that had developed in advanced industrialized countries. He noted that the development of mass society and the radicalism of the students had brought Japan firmly into this camp, but that impediments existed that made the Japanese situation unique. Takabatake related three features that entrapped Japan within a zone between the advanced countries of the world and the backward. First, the inflexibility of sects with regard to ideological agenda and tactical theory; second, the physical armaments; and third, the violent confrontation between the various sects. Takabatake concluded that Japan was a ‘developing country’ (*hatten tōjōkoku*).<sup>63</sup>

This was partly a negative reading of Japanese politics in the late 1960s but also points us towards the radically new understandings of democracy and protest that were being ushered in through movements such as Beheiren and their ‘young student counterparts’ in Zenkyōtō. Takabatake noted in 1971 that the spirit behind Zenkyōtō was the same spirit that was ‘embodied in Beheiren and the general citizens’ movement, groups that might be called the non-sectarian radicals of the adult, non-student world.’<sup>64</sup> The emergence of Zenkyōtō seemed to solidify his understanding of Beheiren as the reaction to an undemocratic Japan. It is worth recalling here that Takabatake chose Oda Makoto to lead Beheiren because he had

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<sup>62</sup> See for example Takabatake Michitoshi, ‘Organizing the spontaneous’; Takabatake Michitoshi, “‘Hatten kuni kei’” *gakusei undō no ronri*,’ *Sekai*, January 1969, pp. 244-250.

<sup>63</sup> Takabatake Michitoshi, “‘Hatten kuni kei’” *gakusei undō no ronri*,’ 245.

<sup>64</sup> Takabatake Michitoshi, ‘Organizing the spontaneous’, 196.

nothing to do with the 1960 Ampo struggle. By 1970 Takabatake was completely disillusioned with Japan's democratic institutions.

The critique of the students by Takabatake Michitoshi was clearly indebted to the work of Yoshimoto Takaaki. As I indicated in earlier chapters, Yoshimoto was a crucial figure in 1960s Japan and elemental in giving shape and focus to the protest of non-sect radicals and the anti-Yoyogi faction students. One of the nostalgic images that has emerged in recent accounts of the struggle is of students clutching copies of Yoshimoto Takaaki's books and the weekly publication *Asahi Jānaru*.<sup>65</sup> In relation to the university struggles Yoshimoto's essay 'The End of Fiction' (*Gisei no Shūen*), which was written in the aftermath of the 1960 Ampo struggle, is instructive. In this essay Yoshimoto launched an attack on the Japan Communist Party that was elemental in defining the character of political activism throughout the period. The anti-institutional and anti-old left sentiment that underpinned his ideas were central to the founding philosophy of groups such as Beheiren, Hansen and Zenkyōtō. 'Among the Ampo protesters, the Communist Party played the most curious role,' [writes Yoshimoto]

without being able to fade into the masses on account of its foolish vanguardism, but at the same time unable to stand with Zengakuren at the front lines, the Communists stood in the middle, dividing the people like a shrewish hag from an old fashioned household, and throwing a wet blanket on creativity and spontaneity.<sup>66</sup>

Yoshimoto eschewed ideological constraints and grand narratives as the ultimate form of self-deception and turned instead to a conception of the 'masses' (*taishū*). He believed that a *meta*-narrative such as Marxism could only be realized if it was adapted to the daily life of the masses. Intellectual thought had to be fused with

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<sup>65</sup> Yoshida notes that students understanding of Yoshimoto's work may have been limited but it was widely read. She also points to Sartre and Marcuse as important figures on the student reading lists. See Yoshida Waaki, *Yoshimoto Takaaki for Beginners*, (Japanese) Gendai Shokan, Tokyo, 1995, 114.

<sup>66</sup> Yoshimoto Takaaki, 'Gisei no shūen,' *Minshūshūgi no Shinwa*, Gendai Shinchōsha, Tokyo, 1966, 44.

the political and social reality that the people met in the particular of the everyday. Yoshimoto's 1958 essay on the ideological conversion of communists during the Pacific War (*tenkō*) provided a stark illustration of this contention.<sup>67</sup> In this essay he claimed that the people who had converted from their ideological illusions, the *tenkōsha*, were in fact more in touch with the masses than the heroes of communist resistance. The former had successfully eschewed ideological deception while the latter had lost touch with the masses' original form of existence (*taishū no genzō*), as symbolised by the Emperor. It is from this perspective – with a desire to align oneself with the masses – that Yoshimoto developed the notion of *jiritsu*, or autonomy and agency.

As I noted in Chapter One the notion of *jiritsu* had its roots in the life style (*seikatsu*) of the people and was diametrically opposed to the ideals of citizenship and democracy embraced by the progressives. Their ideas were simply distortions of a greater reality – ideologies divorced from the everyday life of the people, the ultimate 'illusions' (*gisei*) of the postwar political landscape. In this respect 'The End of Fiction' marked an attack not just on the JCP but on ideas such as rationalism, individualism and democracy – an attack on the modernist discourses of postwar Japan.

Tōdai Zenkyōtō activists Saishū Satoshi and Yoshimoto Yoshikazu had both participated in the 1960 demonstrations as young Bund students and referred to it as a point of departure for their activism in 1968. They were able to establish a genealogy of protest and resistance with 1960 but emphasized the radical new direction in which protest had gone and the limitations of all that had come before. Saishū Satoshi wrote that the inertia that beset the intellectuals in 1960 had crippled the cultures of protest and that a greater, more passionate commitment would be required. Saishū drew two important lessons from the 1960 Ampo demonstrations. First, he lamented that students had been unwilling to put their lives on the line and 'put too much trust in the slogans of "peace and

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<sup>67</sup> Yoshimoto Takaaki, 'Tenkōron.' Cited in Guy Yasko, 'The Japanese Student Movement,' 65.



democracy.”” Second, he believed that intellectuals had been unwilling to stand by the Zengakuren students when they were confronted by the riot police. For Saishū, the professors’ reticence symbolized the confluence of the university and state, forewarning the 1968/69 struggle.<sup>68</sup>

Saishū revealed that the act of struggle was central to the realization of democracy and that postwar intellectuals were, on the whole, unable to live the democracy that they claimed to represent. Yoshimoto Takaaki responded to the activism in 1968/69 by pointing out the irony of this situation. Despite decades of progressives ‘protecting democracy,’ and fighting for a new democratic subjectivity, it was within student activism that purity and truth had finally emerged. ‘Shimin activists,’ wrote Yoshimoto, ‘have abandoned the radical students despite their incessant lectures on individual responsibility ... The university struggles have seen postwar democracy come to a complete philosophical end.’<sup>69</sup>

Zenkyōtō students did not unquestioningly embrace the ideas of Yoshimoto Takaaki but he certainly did open up an intellectual critique in which they located their activism. Yoshimoto helped to write students into revolutionary discourses by suggesting that pressure would come not from worker organizations but from those who thought beyond the constraints of postwar ideals. According to Yoshimoto there was no need to consciously connect oneself to the masses because one was already among them; rather, it was a matter of establishing a sense of autonomy (*jiritsu*) in the everyday. Yoshimoto dismissed the importance of global politics, stressing instead autonomy and the importance of ‘struggle’ - concepts that were to characterize one’s daily existence. In contrast to communist ideas on revolution, which prioritized the ‘worker,’ the critique of Yoshimoto attributed the student’s agency within the university; the university become an

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<sup>68</sup> Saishū Satoru, ‘Non sekuto rajikaru no shisō: Anpo tōsō kara today tōsō e,’ (March 1969) in Guy Yasko (ed.) *Zenkyoto o Yomu*, 15-16.

<sup>69</sup> Yoshimoto Takaaki, ‘Daigaku kyōdō gensō ron,’ (*Jōkyō*, March 1969), in Guy Yasko, *Zenkyōtō o Yomu*, 132.

important sphere in which to locate their political activism. Student leaders did not need to identify with the life experience of the abstract masses or citizens, they simply needed to live their own truth and dispense with the ‘fiction’ that was governing their lives.

By 1968 the Zenkyōtō students, using Yoshimoto and their representation of 1960 as a guide, identified the progressive intellectuals firmly within the ‘managed society’ that they sought to escape. Unlike the professors the students recognized that their situation as students and researchers actually sustained the institutions and practices that they sought to confront. In the terminology of another influential thinker, Herbert Marcuse, it represented the ‘convergence of opposites.’ ‘Contemporary society,’ [writes Marcuse]

seems to be capable of containing social change – qualitative change which would establish essentially different institutions, a new direction of the productive process, new modes of human existence. This containment of social change is perhaps the most singular achievement of advanced industrial society; the general acceptance of National Purpose, bipartisan policy, the decline of pluralism, the collusion of Business and Labor within the strong state testify to the integration of opposites which is the result as well as the prerequisite of this achievement.<sup>70</sup>

Students identified with the critique of Marcuse and placed no hope in the ‘Postdam Democracy’ of the state or the participatory democracy of the civil society.<sup>71</sup> It was from this position that students developed the idea of ‘pulling the

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<sup>70</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1964, xii. In a critique that captures many of the concerns that informed the activism of Zenkyōtō, Marcuse outlined the unification of opposites that curtails the possibility of an independent and active society. He writes, ‘the unification of opposites bears upon the very possibilities of social change where it embraces those strata on whose back the system progresses – that is, the very classes whose existence once embodied the opposition to the system as a whole.’ (p.19)

<sup>71</sup> It is on this point that we can also identify the importance of Rosa Luxemburg on Zenkyōtō thought. Luxemburg maintained that the notion of national self-determination was a metaphysical formation that could only be realised on the basis of a socialist regime. The nation ceased to exist

university apart' and struggling against the 'imperial university within.' As noted by Yonehara Ken these slogans and the action undertaken at Tōdai and Nichidai were illustrative of the student agenda. The barricades shut down the university, representing the rejection of the 'deception' that defined students' everyday experience (the containment of social change); while the idea of 'tearing the university apart' symbolized both the self negation (*jiko hitei*) and self destruction (*jiko kaitai*).<sup>72</sup> In interviews carried out in 1969 Akita Akehiro states:

Our fight changed from a fight for [particular] demands into a fight against the established order itself. And I think that in the process of a struggle one's elite consciousness is denied, and there is this process of self-negation that occurs during the struggle.<sup>73</sup>

The idea of struggle provided a radical basis from which to rethink ideas about autonomy and modernity in relation to Japan's postwar identity. It saw the questioning of the possibility of a democratic Japan and a challenge to existing notions of political activism.

### **Struggling to define protest**

The 'unified action' that Beheiren attempted to muster in the lead up to 1970 provides some indication of the enormity of the university struggle and its political importance. Conversely, the idea of 'unified action' hints towards the ambiguity of the university struggle and Beheiren's desire to direct the meaning and significance of a protest that they had no real control over. The strength of student activism and the philosophy of Zenkyōtō posed a unique dilemma for Beheiren. While we can point to the confluence of ideals, the way in which the movements conceptualised 'the people,' and their impetus for activism, was radically different. Zenkyōtō activists had lost sight of many of the ideals that underpinned the political agenda of Beheiren, and defined their movement largely

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within bourgeois society. See for example, Rosa Luxemburg, *Leninism or Marxism*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1961.

<sup>72</sup> Yonehara Ken, *Nihon teki 'Kindai' e no Tōi*, 144-145.

<sup>73</sup> Akita Akehiro (interview), 'The student rebellion at Nihon University,' 13.

in terms of opposition to existing institutions and ideas rather than in the context of alternative visions.

In response to the violence and the increasingly esoteric nature of student activism in late 1968-69, Beheiren members staged demonstrations, published essays, and engaged in protests that sought to influence the student agenda and define the terms of protest. Oda Makoto was publishing up to four essays each month in the various journals and magazines, as well as traveling throughout the country and organizing demonstrations. Small-scale publications played a central role in the protest politics of the 1960s and in February 1969 Oda announced the publication of a free magazine through which to garner support behind the anti-treaty campaign.<sup>74</sup> As mentioned earlier, publications such as *Asahi Jānaru* and the pamphlets published by the various student sects and alliances were widely read and distributed. Beheiren already published *Beheiren Nyūsu* and *Dassōhei Tsūshin* (Deserter Correspondence) but these were both restricted to directly anti-war concerns. Oda, with the financial assistance of writer Ōe Kenzaburo, began publishing a 'street wise' publication titled *Shūkan Ampo* in June 1969.<sup>75</sup> It was designed to last for just one year in the lead up to June 23 1970, thereby making it a kind of 'call to arms.' The first trial issue published in June 1969 carried a large 70 on the cover with the heading 'Towards the smashing of Ampo: a whirlpool of humanity,' and under the heading 'What is *Shūkan Ampo*?' it reads:

*Shūkan Ampo* is not a mere magazine, the world has enough of those.

This is a weapon. An antiwar attack on the US/Japan military complex.

This is a printed bullet.<sup>76</sup>

Oda recognized the power of protest in the late 1960s and *Shūkan Ampo* represented an attempt to shape its development and bring meaning to its myriad

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<sup>74</sup> In 1960 *Asahi Jānaru* surveyed the plethora of small publications that had emerged. See, *Asahi Jānaru*, 'Mini komi 71 honryū suru chikasui,' *Asahi Jānaru*, 1969, pp. 4-47.

<sup>75</sup> *Shūkan Ampo* lasted from June 1969 until the poster edition of June 1970. A total of 15 issues. Oda Makoto (ed.), *Shūkan Ampo*, No. 0 (June 1969) – No. 15 (June 1970), Amposha, Tokyo, 1969-1970.

parts and disparate cultures. Central to this agenda was the notion of ‘whirlpool of humanity’ (*ningen no uzumaki*). The idea behind the *whirlpool* was that ordinary citizens would be dragged into the current of activism that was being nurtured and sustained by the active organizations and movements at its center. The longer that the energy lasts the larger the whirlpool becomes as people are dragged into the commotion of protest and activism.<sup>77</sup>

Another important means through which to define the political agenda in this period were the folk guerilla demonstrations in Shinjuku’s underground subway station on Saturday nights that I referred to in the Introduction. These ‘sit-ins’ were yet another style of activism that was thought to characterize the Beheiren agenda. By early 1969 thousands of young people were gathering in the West Exit of the underground station to sing folk songs, stage political discussions and encourage peaceful activism. They were eventually seen as a public nuisance and driven out of the area by the police, but the demonstrations were symbolic nonetheless. In addition to bringing student protest into touch with the ‘average citizen,’ Beheiren was colonizing a public space that was regularly the staging ground for violent student demonstrations. It was in stark contrast to the usual scenes emanating from the station and shifted the relationship between Shinjuku Station and protest.<sup>78</sup>

Oda lamented that students had embraced violence within the university during 1968 and taken it onto the streets in 1969. He saw the stave as a legitimate symbol at demonstrations, because it highlighted the violence of the riot police and the authority of the state, but he deplored its actual use. One of the goals of the ‘Tokyo Folk Guerilla demo’s’ was to redefine the space, to shift the

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<sup>76</sup> *Shūkan Ampo*, No. 0, June 15 1969, 1.

<sup>77</sup> Asahi Jānaru, ‘Han Ampo shimin undō,’ *Asahi Jānaru*, February 16, 1969, pp. 19-24. Oda Makoto, ‘Nani ka ga hajimette iru – 69 nen 6 gatsu 15 nichi kara no ningen no uzumaki,’ *Sekai*, August 1969, pp. 100-110.

<sup>78</sup> Both the *Mainichi* and the *Asahi Shimbun* covered the demonstrations at Shinjuku Station noting the new style of activism and the unexpected scenes of peaceful protest and folk music. *Mainichi Shimbun* (May 25, 1969) & *Asahi Shimbun*, (June 22, 1969) printed in *Betonamu ni Heiwa o! Shimin Rengō, Shiryō: ‘Beheiren’ Undō*, Vol. 2, 46-47 & 97-99.

representation of Shinjuku Station from that of rampaging students carrying staves and wearing helmets, to folk singing, flowers and guitars. In this sense Beheiren was attempting to alter the symbols of protest and resistance.<sup>79</sup>

Despite attempts to encourage ‘ordinary citizens’ and peace within the student movement, Beheiren was not immune to criticism and some members expressed concern at the violence associated with Beheiren-sponsored rallies in 1969-70.<sup>80</sup> The vagueness of the boundaries set by Beheiren and the minimal control exercised over its membership brought them into the fray of violent activism and threatened their reputation as a law abiding, ‘citizens’ movement.’<sup>81</sup> Beheiren groups from around the country dubbed Tokyo Beheiren the ‘Kanda Cabinet’ during this period for its attempts to nurture ‘unified action’ without having established agreement among the groups throughout the country.<sup>82</sup> In interviews in 1971 Beheiren member Muro Kenji stated: ‘Today, Beheiren has become a youth movement on a limited scale ... It is now a cell of radical students who don’t know where to go now that the campus rebellions have died down, and other individuals opposed to the war who are seeking some ideology to hang onto.’<sup>83</sup>

Despite the ‘non-violent confrontation’ espoused by Beheiren they could not be clearly divorced from the violence that marred the demonstrations. Voices at the

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<sup>79</sup> Oda Makoto, Takahashi Kazumi & Matsugi Nobuhiko, *Henkaku no Shisō o Tou*, pp. 201& 251-256; Oda Makoto, *Beheiren Kaikōroku dewa nai Kaikō*. A group called ‘Young Beheiren’ and the ‘Folk Guerilla Beheiren’ were established in *Jingumae* near *Harajuku* Station at this time and participated in the demonstrations every Saturday night. See, *Betonamu ni Heiwa o! Shimin Rengō*, ‘Nishi guchi hiroba o shimin no te ni,’ *Shiryō: ‘Beheiren’ Undō*, Vol. 2, 105-106.

<sup>80</sup> See for example, letters in *Beheiren Nyūsu & Shūkan Ampo*, passim.

<sup>81</sup> This problem was exacerbated by the discovering of a pistol in Beheiren’s Tokyo office just prior to the violent Anti-War Day demonstrations in October 21 1969. Oda saw it as a ploy by the police to discredit Beheiren. See, *Betonamu ni Heiwa o! Shimin Rengō*, *Shiryō: ‘Beheiren’ Undō*, Vol. 2, 185-186.

<sup>82</sup> Yoshikawa Yūichi, *Shimin Undō to Mondai*, 116-122.

<sup>83</sup> Muro Kenji quoted in ‘The collapse of transplanted rationalism,’ staff of the Asahi Shimbun, *The Pacific Rivals – A Japanese View of Japanese-American Relations*, Weatherhill/Asahi, Tokyo, 1972, 354. See also Ono Akio in which he applauds *Shisō no Kagaku Kenkyūkai* for having survived the disagreement engendered by Zenkyōtō and the University struggle. Ono Akiō, ‘Nana jū nen to “Shisō no Kagaku”,’ *Shisō no Kagaku*, September 1970, pp. 8-13.

Beheiren national conference of February 1969 in Tokyo betrayed the uncertainty. One representative from the Sendai Beheiren spoke out about the problem saying: ‘Our Beheiren was inaugurated by citizens and students and engaged in its own activities, but, as students’ activities escalated and became radical, citizens ceased to join them until our Beheiren came to the brink of collapse.’<sup>84</sup> Others playing a less direct role in the Beheiren affairs but submitting letters to Oda Makoto’s publication *Shūkan Ampo* questioned whether Beheiren’s desire to embrace multiple types of activism and a diversity of participants provided a good enough excuse for the violence that was carried out under its name.<sup>85</sup>

Writing about ‘petit bourgeois radicalism’ in a Communist Party publication, Takahashi Yoshio elicited letters and articles published in *Beheiren Nyūsu* to argue that a united front was being established at the expense of existing political principles.<sup>86</sup> Takahashi cited the June 21 demonstrations as a great success for Beheiren’s ‘unified activism’ but asked, ‘at what cost?’ He noted that while Beheiren had established strong ties with Zenkyōtō and relinquished organizational controls, the result was to isolate the movement from the citizens, and endanger their founding principles.

The result of disavowing organization and placing ones hope in ‘direct democracy’ has in fact been ‘inhuman’ (*hi ningen teki*) – just look at the sanctioning of murder with the stave – and increasingly ‘un-individualistic’ (*hi kosei teki*) – look at the flags and helmets. Soon there will be no choice but the Trotskyist violence.<sup>87</sup>

Yoshikawa Yūichi indicated that Beheiren’s strength was its plurality and thus no attempts were made to bring members into line with a central directive or to eradicate the violence. Nevertheless the perception that Beheiren was changing

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<sup>84</sup> Asahi Jānaru, ‘Han Ampo shimin undō,’ 20.

<sup>85</sup> *Shūkan Ampo*, Vol. 2, December 1969, 2.

<sup>86</sup> Takahashi Yoshio, ‘Beheiren wa doko e iku: shimin undō no tōitsu sensen,’ *Bungei Hyōron*, January 1970, pp. 108-126. Also published in Nihon Kyōsanto Chūō Iinkai, *Shō Burujōa Kyūshinshugi – Gendai Ideorogi Hihan II*, Nihon Kyōsantō Chūō Iinkai Shuppanyoku, 1970.

and that ordinary members were losing control over the agenda could not be disguised.

While Oda was keen to maintain ties with the student activists, and to retain the pluralism inherent in Beheiren he was also ambivalent about the political ideals of the Zenkyōtō activists. Oda's understanding of the victim/victimizer dichotomy, the 'web of complicity,' and the importance of activism was tinged with a degree of political pragmatism and concrete political policies that did not materialize in the student agenda. He felt that their violent tactics and focus on resistance as an end in itself was blinding them to issues of responsibility, participation and political activism. Asukai Masamichi summarizes the fundamental difference between Oda Makoto and Zenkyōtō's activism in his March 1969 essay, 'Oda Makoto: The optimistic fighter.' 'The terms bandied about by Japan's political activists,' [writes Masamichi]

such as isolation (*koritsu*), frustration (*zassetsu*) and despair (*zetsubō*), don't seem to bear any relation to Oda Makoto. For Oda personal experience is intimately tied to the total circumstances (*zentai jōkyō*). And, the basis of Oda's confrontational political activism is his experience as a Japanese person.<sup>88</sup>

Asukai points out that Oda had a pragmatic understanding of politics and protest and that he was concerned about maintaining a relationship between the movement, society and the state. In fact, Zenkyōtō's isolationist agenda provided a major stumbling block for the *shimin* activists who were endeavoring to alter the wider political culture, to engage the nation's political institutions.

Oda's response to the incidents of January 18 at Tōdai were indicative of his political and philosophical outlook. As he points out in his article 'Return to the Self' Oda watched the events at Tōdai on his father's television set in Osaka. In other words, he was painfully aware of 'society' and the older generation, as

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<sup>87</sup> Takahashi Yoshio, 'Beheiren wa doko e iku,' 117.



represented by his father, and the way in which protest was being read via the mediated images on television.<sup>89</sup> It was from this perspective that Oda watched the riot police move onto the campus and drag the barricades down. Like Takabatake and many others in Beheiren, Oda felt that the academics at Tōdai had reneged on their democratic ideals and were no different to the riot police that they had called onto the campus. Nevertheless, he also felt that the students had lost sight of the people that they were apparently fighting for, and in turn, the people had lost sight of the students' principles and motivations. Contrasting the situation of February 1968 when the massive aircraft carrier Enterprise came into port at Sasebo, and the scenes at Tōdai, Oda identified a marked shift in the style of protest and signaled a rupture between the people and the activists.

Between the scenes emanating from Sasebo and those of Yasuda Citadel there was an important difference. With the cameras invariably placed on the students, the viewer, watching the scenes emanating from the television, saw the scenes from the one sided perspective of the riot police ... The people were, of course, far removed (from the scene). For those sitting comfortably at home, away from the smell of the tear gas, it was by no means not the case that the figure of the students and that of the Enterprise could not be one and the same thing.

From the perspective of the students, the television audience that was watching almost certainly became one with the riot police who were already indistinguishable from the professors and the Enterprise. In actual fact most people probably did view the students from this perspective.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Asukai Masamichi, 'Oda Makoto: rakuten teki na tōshi,' *Asahi Jānaru*, 23 March 1969, pp. 103-108.

<sup>89</sup> Oda Makoto, 'Jibun ni tachikaeru' (*Sekai*, March 1969), in *Betonamu ni Heiwa o! Shimin Rengō, Shiryō: 'Beheiren' Undō*, Vol. 2, pp. 9-18.

<sup>90</sup> Oda Makoto, "'Mono" to "ningen",' (*Sekai*, March 1968), in Oda Makoto, *Nanshi no Shisō*, Bungei Shunjū, Tokyo, 1969, pp. 99-119.

In Oda's reading of the struggle, 'the people,' as participating members of civil society, were brought into focus as the enemy of the students. Zenkyōtō activists, in turn, could only maintain their position as representatives of the people by disavowing the possibility of civil society, and characterizing society and the state as one. It was a depiction of events that at once prioritized the characterization of protest propounded by Yoshimoto Takaaki, while also lamenting its fulfillment in the student movement. Through their struggle the students had depicted themselves as the representatives of 'the people' (or, the masses as Yoshimoto might say) but they had turned against society.

Saishū Satoru indicates that this criticism was hardly threatening to Zenkyōtō and that it simply clarified the difference between the agenda of Zenkyōtō and that of Beheiren. 'We were similar to Beheiren in our unwillingness to superimpose the authority of an organization over individual concerns,' writes Saishū, 'but we went one step further. We refused to emphasize the concept of 'citizenship' (*shimin*) because it implies citizenship to the nation, and we were attempting to negate the concept of nation.'<sup>91</sup> For Oda, society and 'the people' were one in the same thing. Beheiren was concerned with social transformation and the realization of a democratic self rather than revolution or liberation.

This was the crucial difference between Zenkyōtō and Beheiren that their apparent confluence disguised. Zenkyōtō was not interested in imaging a postwar national identity. They sought transcendence through protest rather than identity and nationality. Far from being a struggle over political values, society and citizenship, Zenkyōtō activists completely disavowed these ideals. The point of attachment, the site at which they engaged the existing institutions and practices was as its antithesis. Zenkyōtō activists disavowed the postwar nation that had been envisaged by Japan's progressive intellectuals.

Comparison with the student movement in Germany partially illuminated the ambiguity of the Zenkyōtō philosophy. The student movement in Germany bore a

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<sup>91</sup> Saishū Satoru quoted in Donald Wheeler, 'Japan's postmodern student movement,' 212.

number of similarities to that of Japan. Activists protested the authoritarianism that they identified within the apparently democratic postwar state, they opposed the military alliance and economic links with the United States, and they fought bitterly against the curtailment of political freedom.<sup>92</sup> In both West Germany and Japan the state emerged as the primary focus for opposition. But, while a fear of Nazism and a distrust of the older generation of political leaders drove German students, Japanese students seemed to have lost sight of the war and the postwar ideals. In fact Maruyama Masao accused them of being little better than fascists in the tactical battle that they waged on the campuses.<sup>93</sup> The students were being driven by a distrust of Japan's democratic institutions, contempt for the generation of progressive intellectuals who defended those institutions, and complete disillusionment with the very notion of a 'civil society.'

In the light of this philosophy Tsurumi Shunsuke maintained a profound distrust of the student agenda. Tsurumi was painfully aware of the significance of the struggle and felt that it had grave implications for the future of both protest and the nation. In interviews with Kuno Osamu in 1970 he compared the Zenkyōtō students to the prewar students of the *Shinjinkai* who had relinquished their ideological ideals and embraced the Emperor System during the Pacific War in an act of *tenkō*, or ideological conversion.<sup>94</sup> Tsurumi pointed to the passion of the student movement, the sense of solidarity that had been generated within sects and within the university, and the unresponsive nature of the movement to the concerns of the wider society, as signs that the students had lost touch with the protest agenda that was generated through the 1960s.<sup>95</sup> He believed that on

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<sup>92</sup> A.D Moses, 'The state and the student movement in West Germany,' (pp. 139-151) & Gunter Minnerup, 'Germany 1968 and 1989: The marginalised intelligensia against the Cold War,' in Gerard DeGroot, (ed.) *Student Protest: The Sixties and After*, Longman, UK, 1998, pp. 201-217.

<sup>93</sup> Maruyama Masao, *Jikonai Taiwa – 3 Satsu no Nōto kara*, 212-213.

<sup>94</sup> Tsurumi Shunsuke and Kuno Osamu, 'Atarashi jinmin sensen o mitomete,' *Shisō no Kagaku*, September 1970, 106.

<sup>95</sup> Kuno Osamu pointed out in recent interviews with Takabatake Michitoshi that the student leaders were like pop stars and that charismatic leadership drove the political commitment of the students. Kuno Osamu (interview) by Takabatake Michitoshi, 'Interi, gakusei ga tōsō o rīdo,' in *Ekonomisuto*, March 14, 1995, 83-84.

leaving the universities, on returning to the comfort of middle class Japan, they would relinquish their commitment to radical politics and in the process relinquish a commitment to a truly modern Japan.

Oda Makoto maintained a more optimistic approach to student activism than Tsurumi but he was, nevertheless, concerned that the university struggles were compensation for the fact that wider social reform and democratization of society would not occur.<sup>96</sup> The chastisement of university professors had apparently blinded students to the wider social ills, to the real enemy, and to the ideals that he had been striving to define and defend throughout the 1960s. In the essays 'Return to the Self' and 'Return to anti-war activism' he lamented the fact that the issue of Vietnam and Ampo were being lost within sect rivalry, party politics and the splintering of the once dynamic cultures of protest.<sup>97</sup> Oda challenged the expression 'suffocating on peace' which he indicated had emerged as a popular expression among young people, and implored students to focus again on the political issues of the day and to relocate activism in the present; to relocate protest and resistance in modern Japan.<sup>98</sup> Oda believed that Japanese people were deceiving themselves about their place in the world and their responsibility. The students seemed unable to draw a connection between their own plight and privilege, and the war in Vietnam. He implored students to locate their struggle in the context of modern politics and society, to identify themselves within the contradictions of the modern nation rather than blindly deconstructing the significance and relevance of the nation, the university and the self.<sup>99</sup> For Oda, the nation meant too much, and the greatest form of 'self deception' was not ideology, but the notion of transcendence.

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<sup>96</sup> Hidaka Rokurō also expressed optimism but urged students to stay focused on concrete issues. Hidaka Rokurō, 'Gakusei, rōdōsha, shimin no honryū suru jōkyō,' *Asahi Jānaru*, January 12, 1969, pp. 54-61.

<sup>97</sup> 'Jibun ni tachikaeru' (*Sekai*, March 1969), in *Betonamu ni Heiwa o! Shimin Rengō, Shiryō: 'Beheiren' Undō*, Vol. 2, pp. 9-18.

<sup>98</sup> Oda Makoto, 'Futatabi Betonamu hansen o,' *Sekai*, December 1968, pp. 195-200.

<sup>99</sup> Oda Makoto, "'Mijuku" to "hatsumei" – hitobito wa ugoku 68-nen kara 69-nen e,' *Asahi Jānaru*, January 5, 1969, pp. 17-22.

## Conclusion

In recent publications Yoshikawa Yūichi has indicated that *shimin* activists were not able to completely define the political agenda of the students or curtail the faction fighting and recriminations. He indicates that despite its relentless activism and limited success, the project of ‘unified action’ fell short of its goals.<sup>100</sup> Beheiren had grappled with the tension between marrying competing ideas and ideals, and the integrity of peaceful *shimin* activism. They were endeavouring to traverse two generations of protest, bringing the postwar *Ampo* generation into touch with the next generation of student activists. In this context, the reaction of activists in 1969 is insightful. It tells us where protest was coming from and where it was going; what was being lost and what was being discovered. After reaching a peak in the eight-faction alliance the student movement splintered into tens of almost unrecognizable parts. Modern Japan as a space defined within protest and resistance had shown so much promise in 1968-69, but it seemed to have turned in on itself and rapidly disintegrated by the end of 1970. While the university re-established itself protest and resistance were being dismantled.

The students' activism (*gakusei undō*) of 1968-69 sought to redefine the character of Japan's democracy and political identity through the notion of *struggle*. Their activism denotes the centrality of protest to conceptions of democracy in the 1960s and marked an effort to further the conceptual and practical development of political activism and agency. The struggle of students was part of the enactment of a democratic Japan, while also shifting the character of its enactment – shifting the boundaries of democracy's performance. The distinguishing feature of the Zenkyōtō agenda was the sense of antipathy to the existing institutions and ideas that governed Japanese society. Unlike previous conceptions of protest – such as the ideas emanating from within citizens' activism and the residents movements discussed in previous chapters – the students were ultimately driven by a sense of

disillusionment. They held little confidence in the possibility of an active civil society determining the political and social space of postwar Japan.

The apparent dislocation of protest from the modern nation in the 1968-69 university struggle was the ultimate irony of the period. It was ironic because relinquishing control over the nation, dislocating themselves from the politics of the present, saw students open up a space for an essentialized, primordial Japan that existed regardless of temporal political machinations. Yoshimoto Takaaki had prefigured this notion of an essentialized people earlier in the 1960s and saw the students as pure exponents of it. Zenkyōtō activists did not necessarily subscribe to this nationalist sense of Japaneseness, but by taking protest out of its carefully constructed location within the national culture, and the national political arena of the 1960s, they opened up a space for a new conception of national identity.

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<sup>100</sup> Yoshikawa Yūichi (ed.), *Hansen Heiwa no Shisō to Undō – Komentāru Sengo 50 nen*, Shakai Hyōronsha, Tokyo, 1995, 125-126.