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Japanese Perceptions of the Soviet Union : 1960–1985

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Recently, I presented a paper at a conference devoted to Asian perceptions of the Soviet Union. My paper was an attempt to identify Japanese perceptions of the Soviet Union as reflected in public opinion surveys. I was severely criticized. One participant commented that in his country popular perceptions are irrelevant, since the government makes its policy according to its own perceptions without worrying about how people might think about the Soviet Union. I responded to his criticism by saying that in a parliamentary democracy as it exists in Japan there is a definite relationship between popular perceptions and foreign policy. But a more damaging criticism came from an American commentator, who doubted the validity of public opinion polls altogether, citing pollsters' famous blunder of predicting Dewey's victory over Truman in the 1948 presidential election. The public opinion polls in which people are asked whether they like or dislike the Soviet Union cannot be a serious criterion to measure people's real perceptions of the Soviet Union. Analyze what people write about the Soviet Union in scholarly and popular journals rather than rely on responses to such a frivolous question, he argued. I was totally devastated by this criticism that came from a representative of the bastion of democracy, where I assumed that public opinion surveys have been long established as a legitimate method of inquiry.

After this humiliating experience, I pondered about whether my attempt to analyze Japanese perceptions of the Soviet Union based on public opinion surveys had been a total waste of time. Are the figures and numbers indicating what percent of those questioned like or dislike the Soviet Union really irrelevant in understanding the relationship between Japan and the Soviet Union? Are they really an inaccurate yardstick to measure real popular perceptions? Does the seeming unpopularity of the Soviet Union as reflected in these figures and numbers disguise the true perceptions, as Truman won the election against Dewey at the defiance of the opinion polls? Can the policy-makers ignore the result of such opinion polls, and do they really ignore it in actually formulating their policy?

Reflecting upon these questions, I came to the conclusion that these numbers and figures are not totally irrelevant and meaningless, as my critics argued. Although I would not claim that they are the sole indicator of popular perceptions, they are nevertheless an important source of information we can utilize in examining Japanese perceptions of the Soviet Union.

First, although it is difficult to gauge accurately what weight foreign policy issues in general and the problem of the Soviet Union in particular occupy in the outcome of Japanese national elections, opinion polls seem to be a relevant barometer indicating in which direction the public mood is moving. Second, admittedly popular perceptions are not identical with the perceptions of the elite engaged in formulation of foreign policy, but they are not totally unrelated, either. Often popular perceptions can set the parameters of elite perceptions. There would be a serious political risk if policy-makers were to

attempt to go beyond these parameters. Third, an analysis of factors that might have contributed to the changing perceptions of the Soviet Union can help construct hypotheses on the relationship between exogenous factors and popular perceptions of the Soviet Union. In the absence of any other quantifiable evidence, the opinion polls could be a helpful guide to gauge what type of Soviet reactions are likely to provoke resentment or approval among Japanese. Fourth, the negative image of the Soviet Union reflected in these opinion polls would lead us to examine what factors are responsible for such a negative image. The examination of this question will help us to understand more clearly the unique way the relationship between Japan and the Soviet Union has evolved. Those are important questions that deserve serious examination. In other words, opinion polls could serve as an important source, from which we can learn a great deal about Japanese perceptions of the Soviet Union as well as their policy implications. It is silly to worship numbers and figures beyond what they are worth, but it is equally foolhardy to be too skeptical about the usefulness of opinion polls and ignore valuable information from them.

I. Data and Analysis

1. Numbers and Figures

Jiji Tsushinsha has been taking public opinion surveys since 1960. This survey is conducted in the first four days of each month, taking a random sample of approximately 2,000 adult males and females. The return of samples is usually around 1,500. Among the questions asked there are two questions relevant to Japanese perceptions of the Soviet Union: "Name three countries you like most," and "Name three countries you dislike most."²

To some people, they may look like dumb questions, comparable to asking to name three favorite pop singers. The survey does not ask the reasons for their liking and dislike. Therefore, there is no way of knowing why they like or dislike particular countries. But the Jiji surveys are an important source of information describing the changing perceptions of the Soviet Union among Japanese. First, the same questions have been asked every month over the past twenty-five years. This gives us a fairly accurate picture of the general trend of popular preferences with respect to other foreign countries. Second, because of its regularity, the Jiji surveys are different from other irregularly conducted surveys by various newspapers and broadcasting companies. The latter are often conducted when certain particular problems become important controversial issues, and thus tend to color the responses accordingly. Third, the Jiji surveys are useful precisely because of the simplicity of the questions. The countries named by respondents are those countries they chose as important for either positive or negative reasons. Thus, the results of the surveys can serve as a relatively accurate reflection of the respondents' image of foreign countries. Fourth, since the Jiji surveys are taken every month, the annual mean average has the effect of minimizing the margin of errors and monthly fluctuations. On the other hand, it is useful to be able to see how important events influenced popular perceptions by looking at the monthly results.

Figure 1 shows the changes from 1960 through 1985 in percentage of the Soviet Union, the United States, and Republic of China selected by the respondents as the most

favored countries. I will call this figure positive image of respective countries. Figure 2 shows the changes in percentage of the Soviet Union, the United States, and RPC from 1960 through 1985 selected by the respondents as the countries they most disliked. This figure is referred to as the negative image of the respective countries.³

Figure 1. Positive Image of Foreign Countries

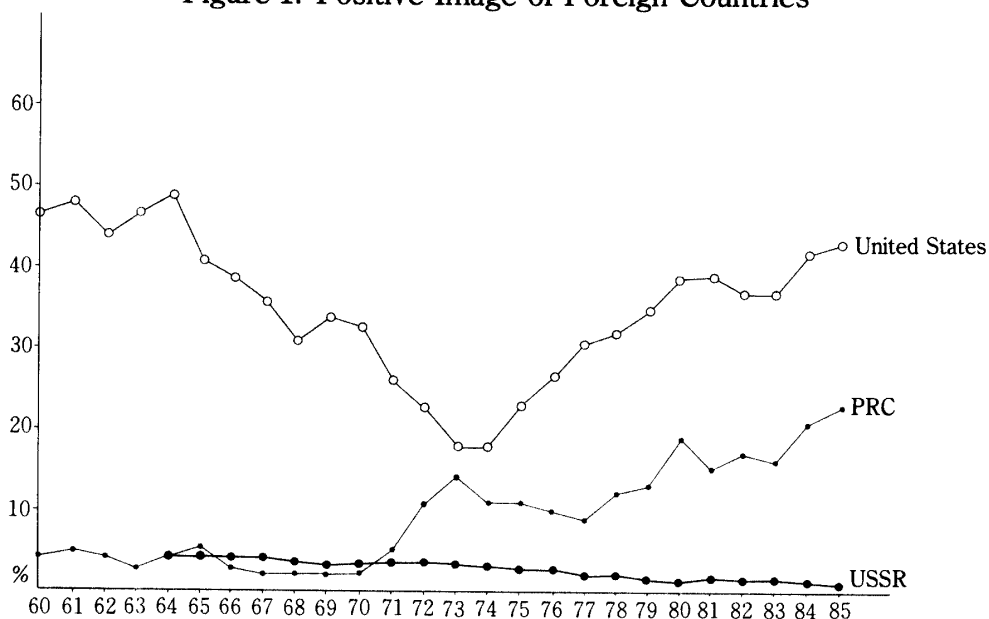
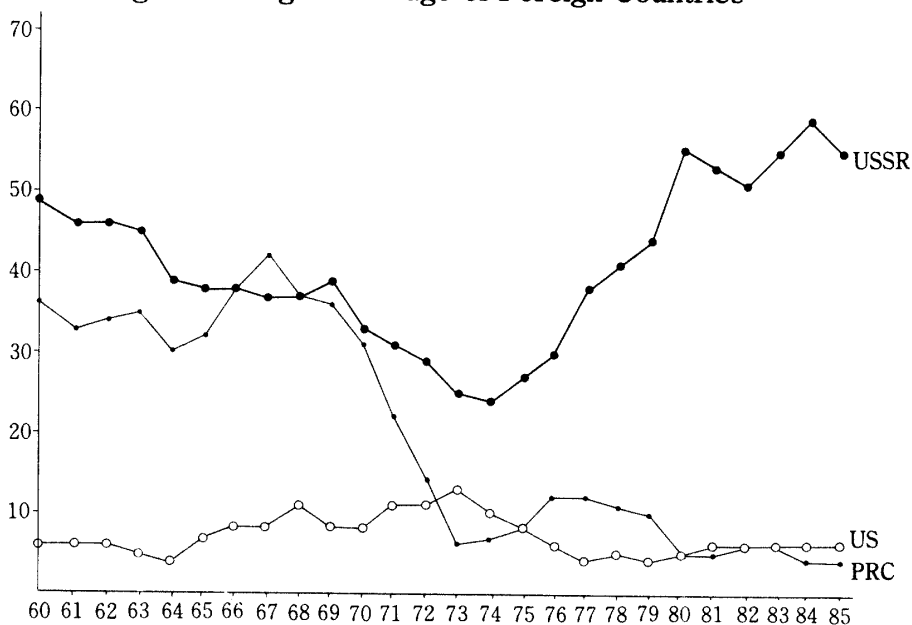


Figure 2. Negative Image of Foreign Countries



The first and foremost characteristic of the positive image of the Soviet Union is its lowness. In the 1960s the popularity of the Soviet Union was around 4%, but after 1977 it dropped to around 1%, and in the 1980s it even declined below 1%, dropping to 0.8% in

1984 and 0.9% in 1985. Thus it is possible to say that the popular image of the Soviet Union shows a gradual declining tendency since 1964. But since the margin of errors for the percentage below 5% with 1,500 samples is $\pm 1.1\%$, statistically speaking the declining tendency may not be as clear-cut. More important, however, is the comparison of the positive image of the Soviet Union with that of the United States and of the PRC. Compared with the popularity of the United States, which experienced the lowest point (18%) in 1973 and 1974, and with that of PRC, which went up over 20% in 1984 and 1985, it becomes obvious that the popularity of the Soviet Union is extremely low among Japanese.

Lowness in the positive image alone does not mean unpopularity. It may simply mean that most Japanese care less about the Soviet Union, just as they are not much concerned about, say, New Zealand or Zimbabwe. But the important fact about the Soviet Union is that the lowness of its positive image is combined with the high percentage of negative image. Figure 2 shows, first, that with the exception of 1967 the unpopularity of the USSR was always higher than that of the United States and PRC, second, that since 1974 the gap between the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and China and the United States, on the other, in unpopularity has greatly widened, and third, that in recent years there has been a huge gap that separates the Soviet Union from the United States and China in unpopularity, with the negative image of the Soviet Union reaching almost 60%, while that of the United States and China remains somewhere between 4 to 6%. Even if the margin of errors is taken into consideration, one can definitely conclude that the negative image of the Soviet Union outweighs those of the United States and China by a wide margin.

In fact, since 1960 the Soviet Union has had the dubious distinction of occupying first place as the most disliked country by Japanese with the exception of 1967. In recent years, North Korea and South Korea have often figured prominently as disliked countries, but the unpopularity of North Korea and South Korea fluctuates somewhere around 30% and 25% respectively. This indicates, therefore, that the Soviet Union in first place as the most disliked country in Japanese perception is really unrivalled.

Unfortunately, we have little data that show Japanese attitudes toward foreign countries before 1960. Only two such surveys are available to me. The first is the Yomiuri public opinion survey conducted in August, 1950. To the question: which of the following country do you like best, 65.7% chose the United States, while only 1.6% indicated the Soviet Union. As for the country they disliked most, 67.9% chose the Soviet Union, 3.9% PRC, and 1.6% United States.⁴ It is interesting to note that during the U. S. occupation U. S. popularity as well as Soviet unpopularity were much higher than any time between 1960 and 1985.

The second was a 1957 Chuo Chosasha national survey. This survey (N=2,131) was somewhat different from the Jiji survey. Respondents were asked to name one county they most liked and one country they most disliked. More than half of respondents did not name any countries in either category. In this survey, the percentages of the most favored countries are as follows: the United States (27%), PRC (2%), and the Soviet Union (1%). The percentages of the most disliked countries are: the Soviet Union (31%), PRC (4%), and the United States (4%).⁵ This survey is

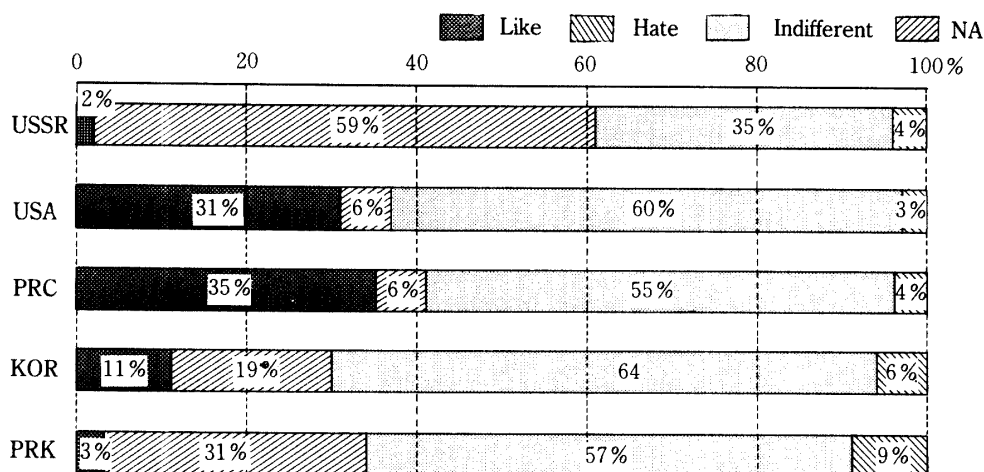
interesting in two respects. First, the unpopular image of the Soviet Union was also confirmed in 1957 after the occupation period was over and one year after Japan and the Soviet Union resumed normal diplomatic relations. Second, when respondents were asked to name the country they most disliked, the percentage of PRC was drastically reduced. This may be an important factor in interpreting Figure 2 based on the Jiji survey, which asked respondents to choose three from the list rather than name one. If respondents in the Jiji surveys had been asked to name one country, the percentage of PRC might have been sharply reduced. In any case, it further accentuates Soviet unpopularity among Japanese.

We can conclude, therefore, that in Japanese popular perception the Soviet Union is an extremely unpopular country. The results of the Jiji surveys cannot be dismissed simply as the answers to frivolous questions. We must ask ourselves what factors have contributed to the negative image of the Soviet Union among Japanese.

2. Supporting Evidence

The results of the Jiji surveys are also supported by other opinion polls that have been taken periodically. The *Asahi Shimbun* survey taken in October, 1984, includes a question: "Do you like or dislike this country?" (See Graph 1.) According to this survey, the percentage indicating a positive image is as follows: PRC (35%), U. S. (31%), South Korea (11%), North Korea (3%), and the Soviet Union (2%). The percentage showing a negative image is: the Soviet Union (59%), North Korea (31%), South Korea (19%), U. S. (31%), and PRC (6%). The difference between the *Asahi* survey and the Jiji survey with regard to a positive image of the United States and China is great and contradictory. (The Jiji survey shows 42% for U. S. positive image and 23% for PRC positive image.) But the positive as well as the negative image of the Soviet Union in both surveys shows remarkable similarity. The positive image of the Soviet Union in the *Asahi* survey (2%) is slightly higher than the Jiji survey (1%), but considering the rounding-off and the margin of errors, this difference is not significant. The negative image in both surveys, on the other hand, shows remarkable similarity at 59%.⁶

Graph 1 : Likes / Dislikes of Countries



Source : *Asahi Shimbun* 3/13/1986 March 13, 1986

Table 1 is the results of the Sorifu [the Office of the Prime Minister] surveys on foreign policy. There is a question of *shitashimi* [good feelings, or affection] towards the Soviet Union. (See Table 1.) The combined total of those who have negative feelings toward the Soviet Union increased from 73% (1978), 77% (1979), 83% (1980) to 84% (1981) and slightly declined to 83% (1982). On the other hand, the combined total of those who have positive feelings decreased from 10% (1978), 12% (1979), 7% (1980) to 7% (1981) and slightly increased to 8% (1982). The great disparity between those who have positive attitudes and those with negative attitudes toward the Soviet Union basically correspond to the results of the positive and negative images of the Jiji surveys.

Table 1. Do You Have Good Feelings toward the USSR?

| | 1979 N = 1,839 | 1980 N = 1,852 | 1981 N = 1,650 | 1982 N = 1,649 | 1983 N = 1,666 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Have good feelings | 3.0% | 1.9% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.3% |
| Relatively speaking, have good feelings | 9.7 | 6.0 | 5.9 | 6.7 | 7.6 |
| Relatively speaking, do not have good feelings | 36.4 | 36.9 | 34.1 | 38.5 | 36.8 |
| Have no good feelings | 41.3 | 47.5 | 50.1 | 44.6 | 45.5 |
| Don't know | 9.6 | 7.7 | 8.6 | 8.9 | 8.8 |

Source: Naikakusoridaijin Kanbo Kohoshitsu, ed., *Zenkoku Yoronshosa no Genkyo*, 1980 (Tokyo, 1980), p. 136, Ibid., 1981 (Tokyo, 1981), p. 115, Ibid., 1982 (Tokyo, 1982), p. 121; Ibid., 1983 (Tokyo, 1983), p. 106; Ibid., 1984 (Tokyo, 1984), p. 105.

It is interesting to compare the Sorifu survey with the recent survey conducted by Hokkaido Shimbun, which asked the same question on attitude toward the Soviet Union, but limited the respondents only to those who lived in Hokkaido. The results of this survey are as follows: those who have good feelings—5.8%, those who, relatively speaking, have good feelings—12.0%, those who, relatively speaking, do not have good feelings—46.8%, those who have no good feelings—31.9%, and don't know—3.5%.⁷ Although this survey was taken two years after the last Sorifu survey available to me, the comparison between the national survey and the Hokkaido survey is interesting because it shows a significant difference in attitude toward the Soviet Union. In the Hokkaido survey, altogether 17.8% of the respondents have a positive attitude in contrast to 8.9% in the national survey, while 78.7% of Hokkaido respondents have a negative attitude, as opposed to 82.3% in the Sorifu survey in 1983. Although a 3.6% difference in negative attitude may not be significant, an 8% difference in positive attitude may indicate that Hokkaidoites have a more positive attitude toward the Soviet Union than the national average.

The conclusions derived from comparison between the positive image of the United States and the negative image of the Soviet Union based on the Jiji surveys can be supported by the Sorifu surveys.

Table 2 is a comparison between Japanese attitudes toward the Soviet Union and those toward the United States as reflected in the Sorifu surveys. It shows, first, that the positive attitudes and the negative attitudes toward the Soviet Union and the United States have an asymmetrical relationship. In other words, when the positive attitudes toward the Soviet Union are low, the positive attitudes toward the United States are high; when the negative attitudes toward the Soviet Union are high, the negative attitudes toward the United States are low. Second, the positive attitudes toward the Soviet Union are lower than the negative attitudes toward the United States, and the negative attitudes toward the Soviet Union are higher than the positive attitudes toward the United States. That means that less people like the Soviet Union than they dislike the United States, and more people dislike the Soviet Union than they like the United States.

Table 2. Image of USSR vs Image of U.S. (Percent)

| | 1979 | | 1980 | | 1981 | | 1982 | | 1983 | |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | USSR | US | USSR | US | USSR | US | USSR | US | USSR | US |
| Positive attitude | 12.7 | 78.0 | 7.9 | 77.2 | 7.2 | 69.4 | 8.0 | 71.4 | 8.9 | 71.9 |
| Negative attitude | 77.7 | 16.8 | 84.4 | 17.7 | 84.2 | 24.2 | 83.1 | 23.6 | 82.3 | 22.6 |

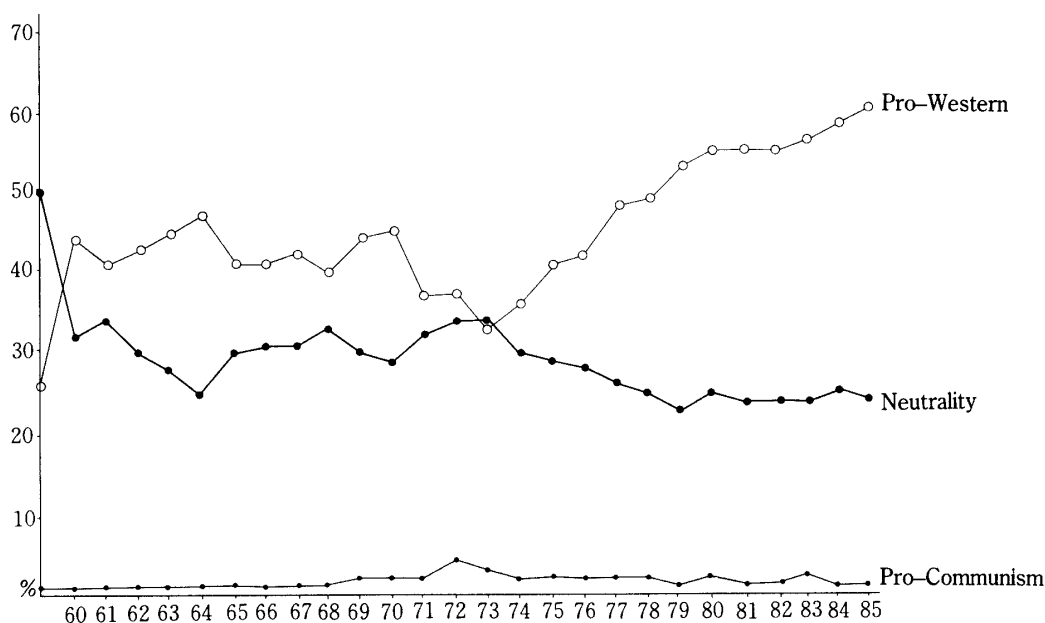
Source: Same as Table 1.

If we take the correlations between U. S. positive image and Soviet negative image in the Sorifu survey by dividing the former by the latter, we obtain the following figures: 1.00 (1979), .91 (1980), .82 (1981), .85 (1982), and .87 (1983). The correlations between Soviet positive image and US negative image are: .76 (1979), .45 (1980), .29 (1981), .34 (1982), and .39 (1983). This means that between 1979 and 1983 the negative Soviet image grew faster than US positive image, while the Soviet positive image did not capture the gains presented by the increase in US negative image. Both correlations also indicate that 1981 was the worst year for the Soviet image.

Another interesting comparison is between the Soviet Union and China. In the 1960s China was one of the countries most disliked, and even during the Cultural Revolution its popularity was lower than the Soviet Union. But in the beginning of the 1970s, as Japan and PRC tried to improve their relationship, its popularity went up sharply. In 1973, one year after Prime Minister Tanaka's visit to Peking, China's popularity reached 14%. This was the year when the U. S. popularity plunged to 18%. Compared with a difference of 45% between U. S. and PRC in 1964, a 4% difference in 1973 was remarkable. The positive image of China, however, has not increased after 1973 as sharply as that of the United States. For the past two years it has surpassed 20%, approximately half of the popularity of the United States.

PRC's negative image is more striking than its positive image. In the early 1960s, China was one of the most disliked countries, but its unpopularity was not as high as the Soviet Union. But in the latter half of the 1960s, when China plunged into the Cultural Revolution, China's unpopularity went up, as the unpopularity of the Soviet Union steadily went down. In 1967, at the height of the Cultural Revolution, China occupied first place in the list of most disliked countries—the only time the Soviet Union vacated its coveted place. But after 1969, China's negative image sharply dropped. In 1973 and 1974, for the first time the United States became more unpopular than China. In recent years, although China's popularity is almost half that of the United States, its unpopularity is almost equal to that of the United States. One can conclude, therefore, that over the past twenty-five years PRC's image has changed dramatically from one of the most disliked countries to one of the most liked countries. This proves that positive and negative images of a country can change over time. Whether the Soviet Union can expect to have a dramatic turnaround in Japanese perceptions comparable to the image of China is an interesting question, which I will address later.

Figure 5. Japanese Attitude Toward Political Alignment



What is the relationship between Japanese image of the Soviet Union and Japanese attitude toward political alignment? Figure 5 shows the changing trend in Japanese attitude toward political alignment. It indicates, first, that Japanese sympathy for the Communist camp is so negligibly low. If one were to assume that popular perceptions should be the basis for political decision, then there is little chance that Japan would join the Communist camp. There could be only two possibilities for Japan's political alignment: either to remain in the pro-Western, pro-capitalist camp or to choose neutrality. Japanese sympathy for neutrality experienced three peaks in the post-war period, first in 1953, at the height of the Cold War, second in 1959, during the political upheaval revolved around the revision of the Japan-US Security Treaty, and in 1973, at the

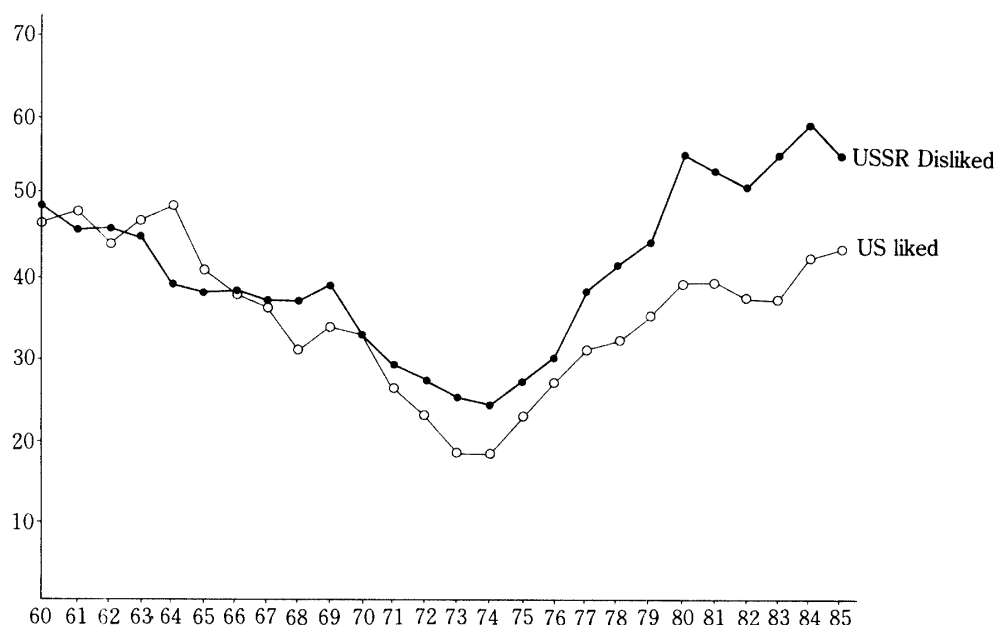
3. Analysis

What does all this mean in terms of Japanese perceptions of the Soviet Union? A statistical analysis might be helpful in making some hypotheses.

The first distinct feature of the negative image of the Soviet Union is that it has two patterns. (See Figure 2.) Figure 2 shows that from 1960 to 1974, it showed a general, steady downward trend, while since 1974 it is characterized by a sharp, constant upward trend. In 1960 the Soviet unpopularity was 49%, that is, half of the respondents listed the Soviet Union as the most disliked country. But it steadily declined with the exception of 1969, and dropped to 24% in 1974, less than half of 1960. However, the negative image of the Soviet Union began climbing up after 1975, even more sharply than it declined in the 1960s and 1970s, reaching almost 60% in recent years. We must ask ourselves, therefore, what factors contributed to the decline and increase in the negative image of the Soviet Union. I will examine this question later.

Second, it is interesting to compare the positive image of the United States and the negative image of the Soviet Union in order to see if there are any correlations between the two. In other words, does the unpopularity of the Soviet Union increase in correspondence to the increase in U. S. popularity? Figure 3 compares the positive image of the United States and the negative image of the Soviet Union. Generally speaking, the two curves show a similar pattern; when the U. S. popularity goes up, the Soviet unpopularity also goes up, and vice versa. One may conclude from this that the U.S. positive image and the Soviet negative image have a mutual corresponding relationship.

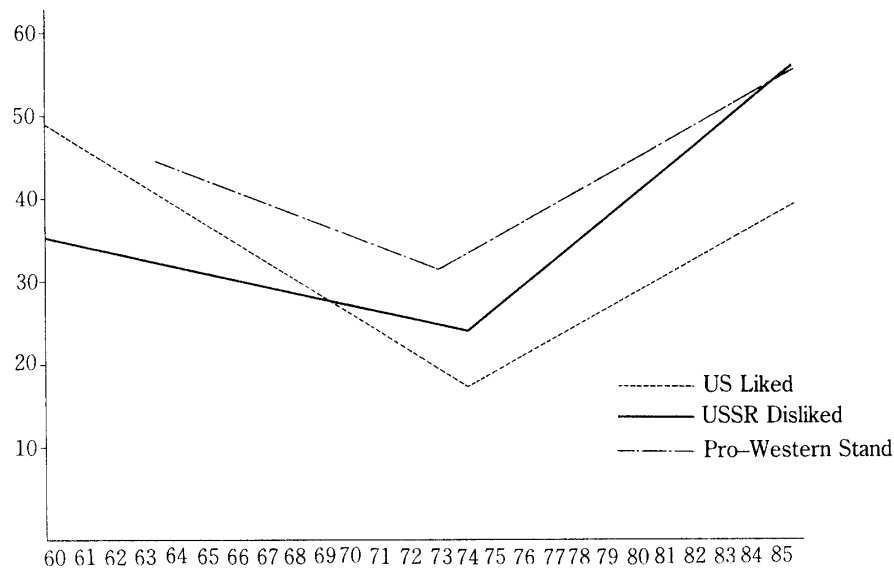
Figure 3. U.S. Liked vs U.S.S.R. Disliked



Close examinations of the data, however, leads us to have some qualifications on this rule. Exceptions to this rule took place in 1961, 1963, 1964, and 1985 when the U. S. popularity went up, and at the same time the Soviet unpopularity went down. The early

1960s were the time of peaceful coexistence, when despite the Cuban missile crisis, the United States and the Soviet Union moved closer to relax international tensions. This spirit culminated in the Tokyo Olympics in 1964. This may explain the exceptions in the early 1960s. The exception of 1985 can be explained simply by the fact that the rise in the negative image of the Soviet Union in the previous year, because of the shock of the KAL incident (about which more will be discussed later) was too sharp to be sustained after the incident.

Figure 4. US Liked/USSR Disliked/Pro-Western Stand



If we apply a statistical manipulation by employing the method of linear regression, we can obtain Figure 4. In Figure 4, the slope for the U. S. positive image is -2.2 (correlations efficient $r = -.9$) from 1960 through 1974. The corresponding figure for the Soviet negative image for the same period is -1.7 ($r = -.97$). For the period from 1974 through 1985, the slope for the U. S. positive image is 2.0 ($r = .97$), while that for the Soviet negative image is 3.2 ($r = .94$). This means that for the first period the negative image of the Soviet Union did not come down as quickly as the decline of the U. S. positive image. In other words, during this period the United States was losing its popularity more quickly than the Soviet Union was removing its negative image among Japanese. For the second period from 1974 through 1985, the Soviet unpopularity was increasing more than one and half times as quickly as the popular image of the United States. Two conclusions can be drawn for this period: first, the Soviet Union became more unpopular, and this unpopularity cannot be explained solely by the gains in U. S. popularity; and second, the United States did not gain popularity to the same degree that the Soviet Union became unpopular.

The linear regression of the negative image of the Soviet Union also makes it possible to compare the slopes for the downward trend and the upward trend. Since the first slope is -1.7 , and the upward slope is 3.2 , the unpopular image of the Soviet Union from 1974 on increased almost twice as much as it declined from 1960 through 1974.

last stage of the war in Vietnam and the aftermath of the Nixon shock. But the neutrality tendency in 1959 proved to be temporary, with public opinion quickly swinging back to a pro-Western stand. The pro-Western stand, which peaked in the year of the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, did not decline markedly throughout the 1960s despite the war in Vietnam, and only in 1973, the neutralist stand became slightly more popular than the pro-Western stand. But the change after 1974 is striking. Since 1974 the gap between neutrality and the pro-Western stand has sharply and steadily widened. At present almost 60% of the respondents express a pro-Western sympathy, while 25% express a neutralist sympathy. This shift in the past decade in favor of the pro-Western stand also coincided with the results of various public opinion polls indicating the growing approval of the Japan-US Security Pact (54% approval in 1980) and the Self-Defense Force (78% approval in 1980).⁸ Japan's neutralist sympathy cannot be ignored, however, since, as Kenichi Nakamura points out, the shift of public opinion has taken place in the form of a sharp increase in the pro-Western stand rather than a decline in the neutralist stand, which maintains a level of around 25% consistently.⁹

Figure 6. U.S.S.R. Disliked vs Pro-Western Attitude

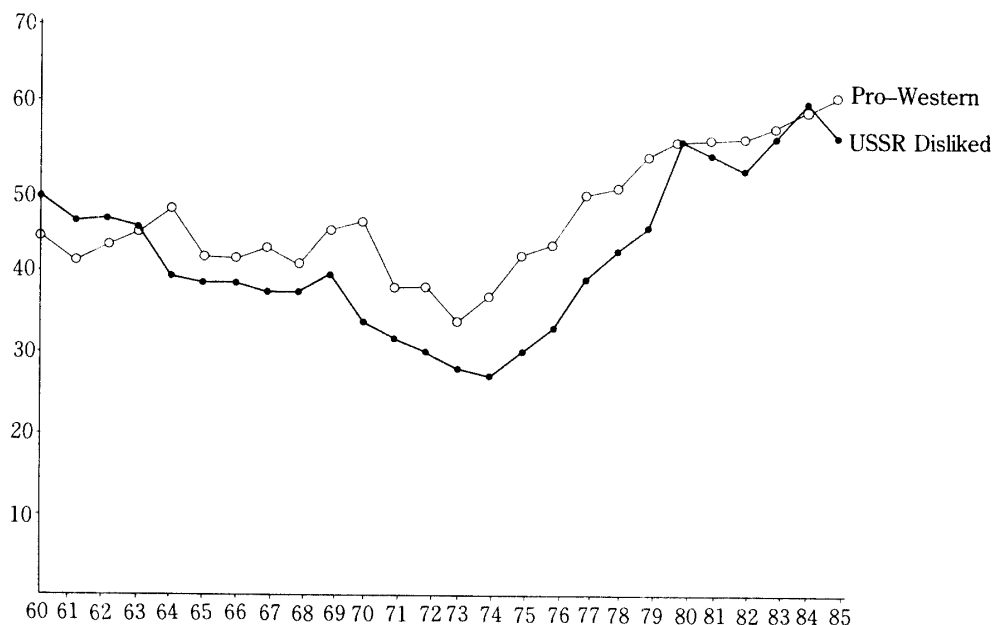


Figure 6 shows the comparison between the negative image of the Soviet Union and the pro-Western attitude. Patterns of both curves show similar trends. It is interesting to point out, however, that although the popularity of the United States was much lower than the Soviet unpopularity, after 1964 pro-Western attitude was higher than the negative image of the Soviet Union (except for 1984). This means that more Japanese favor a pro-Western stand than they dislike the Soviet Union. The linear regression for these data also show an interesting trend. (See Figure 4.) The slope for the pro-Western stand during the period from 1960 to 1974 is -0.6 , but since the correlations efficient (r) is -0.69 , this slope is statistically unreliable. If we take the period from 1964 through 1973, it is -0.9 ($r = -0.7$). If we compare these figures with the slope for the negative

image of the Soviet Union (-1.7) and for the U. S. positive image (-2.2), we may be able to say the following. From 1960 through 1974, despite the sharp decline in U. S. popularity, the pro-Western stand did not decline as sharply as the decline in the Soviet negative image. In other words, although the Soviet Union was removing its negative image during this period, the speed of the erosion of the pro-Western stand was not as quick as the rate of decline of the Soviet negative image.

The linear regression for the period from 1974 through 1985 in the pro-Western stand shows a slope of 2.0 ($r=.94$). Therefore, it is possible to state that the rate of increase in pro-Western stand was not as sharp as that of the Soviet negative image during the same period, which was 3.2. This means that the Soviet negative image increased more quickly than the pro-Western stand. From a different angle, one can also say that the degree to which Japanese disliked the Soviet Union was not necessarily directly translated into the pro-Western stand. And yet, the level of the pro-Western stand was always higher than the negative image of the Soviet Union until the end of the period, when both tend to be at an equal level. That means that among Japanese the pro-Western stand was much stronger than the degree to which they disliked the Soviet Union for most of the period under investigation, and that only recently both have shown the tendency to merge into the same level.

II. Causes for Soviet Unpopularity

1. Historical Background

What has caused Japanese to have such an extremely negative image of the Soviet Union? One of the most important causes is historical. Specifically, three factors contributed to Japanese dislike of Russia and the Soviet Union. First, there is a fear of Russia, which dates back to the Tokugawa period—a fear of the military giant in Japan's neighborhood. Particularly, the naval attack led by Khvostov on the island of Etorofu in 1807 shocked the Tokugawa government. This incident made the Tokugawa government aware of the dangerous presence of Russia that threatened Japan's security. In Hayao Shimizu's opinion, the Khvostov incident "had an important imprint on Japanese perceptions of Russia. It was the direct cause for instilling into Japanese the Russian complex, namely the perception that the presence of Russia is inseparably connected with Japan's security."¹⁰

A sense of fear was reinforced by the competition between Japan and Russia for imperialistic expansion in the Far East after the Meiji Restoration. In China as well as in Korea, Japanese interests directly clashed with Russia's more than any other powers'. Russia was a major force behind the three powers' intervention forcing Japan to give up Liaotung Peningula, which Japan had gained after the Sino-Japanese War. The confrontation finally led to the Russo-Japanese War.

Japan's victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War was a turning point in Japanese perceptions of Russia. Fear of Russia, which had predominated Japanese consciousness of Russia up to this point, was replaced by a sense of contempt. It is important to point out, however, that a sense of contempt had existed even before the Russo-Japanese War. Already the first students sent by the Tokugawa government to

Russia complained that there was nothing to learn from Russia, and begged to return to Japan or to be sent to other European countries.¹¹ Japanese had already come to conclude that Russia was a backward country among European powers. Thus, when the Meiji Government embarked upon modernization by emulating Europe, Russia was excluded from the model of emulation.

One of the first Japanese travellers to Russia, Takeaki Enomoto, wrote his travelogue, *Shiberiya Nikki* [*Siberian Diary*] for the purpose of helping to remove a sense of fear from Japanese perceptions of Russia by emphasizing contempt toward Russia. What impressed Enomoto in Russia was poverty, prisoners, and cockroaches.¹² This image of Russia as a country of poverty and oppression became a stereotype of the Russian image that became rooted in Japanese consciousness. After Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War this sense of contempt became a predominant feeling among Japanese.

Nevertheless, it was not merely fear and contempt that prevailed in Japanese perceptions of Russia. Russia soon had a tremendous impact on the cultural development of Japan. Despite the fact that Russia was excluded from the mainstream of academic disciplines, Russian literature began to be translated. According to Tsuguo Togawa, the number of translations of the following authors which appeared from the end of the 19th Century to 1955 were : Tolstoy (1,608), Maupassant (1,573), Lafcadio Hearn (1,128), Chekhov (1,100), Goethe (869), Dostoevsky (757), Poe (522), Gide (519), Gorky (495), Hesse (415), and Turgenev (402).¹³ Amazingly, five out of the eleven most popular authors in Japan were Russian writers. The impact of Russian literature was not merely quantitative. Turgenev's influence on Shimei Futabatei and Tolstoy's influence on Saneatsu Mushakoji were decisive. Dostoevsky's impact was so great that it would be difficult to name major writers who have not written something about this literary giant. The important question is why popularity of Russian literature has not led to popularity of the Soviet Union. I will come to this question later.

Another impact of Russia was felt in social thought and in the revolutionary movement. A sense of contempt toward Russia led some Japanese intellectuals to sympathize with those revolutionaries in Russia who were trying to topple the oppressive regime. Already toward the end of the Meiji period a young, precocious poet, Takuboku Ishikawa, became interested in the Russian populist movement. In the Taisho period, anarchism, particularly the ideas of Kuropotkin influenced Japanese left-wing intellectuals.

Finally, the Russian Revolution encouraged the nascent Japanese revolutionary movement, leading to the establishment of the Japanese Communist Party. But its impact was much greater than the narrow circle of Communists, spreading the ideas of Marxism among young intellectuals. On the whole, during the period of Taisho democracy the image of the Soviet Union was not so negative.

It was during the period of Japanese militarism in the 1930s that Japanese again began to associate the Soviet Union with fear. But this time it was not because of the Soviet military threat, but because of the internal threat of Communism. Under the military regime, all left-wing movements were brutally suppressed, and *aka* (red) was associated with *hikokumin* (traitor), who attempted to subvert the *kokutai* (the fundamental form of the Japanese state). This fear of Communism was the third factor, in addition to fear of

Russia's military power and contempt for Russia's backwardness, that contributed to the negative image of the Soviet Union.

It is important to point out that from the Soviet point of view Japan posed a serious military threat to its security. Japan's Siberian expedition was carried out for the most avaricious imperialistic designs. Japan was the last to withdraw from intervention in the Soviet Union. During the 1930s there was a division within the military between those who advocated the advance to the north and those who insisted on the southern move. Japanese invasion in Manchuria, and the creation of Manchukuo were perceived by the Soviet Union as preparation for invading the Soviet Union. Military actions against the Soviet Union did not remain merely on the drawing board. The Japanese army attacked the Soviet army near Lake Khasan in 1938. In the following year there was a large-scale military clash in Nomonhan that lasted more than three months. In other words, Japanese aggressions under militarism were not merely directed against China and other Asian countries, but also against the Soviet Union. But Japanese sense of guilt associated with military aggressions does not usually extend to the Soviet Union. This is largely because of the role the Soviet Union played in the last stage of World War II in Asia.

2. Collective Memory of World War II

It is difficult to think that historical experience before World War II is a direct determining factor in the extreme unpopularity of the Soviet Union among Japanese. Very few people, possibly only those over eighty-years old, remember the Russo-Japanese War. Communism no longer evokes the image of fear to the extent that it once did in the age of Japanese militarism. In fact, the Communist Party functions as a part of parliamentary politics in present Japan. Even though it is a Communist country, PRC and other East European countries do not provoke such resentment as the Soviet Union. Thus, although historical experience may explain the background for unpopularity of the Soviet Union, we must seek more direct reasons for it.

One of the decisive factors that contributed to the negative image of the Soviet Union is the collective memory of World War II. Generally speaking, Japanese have a sense of responsibility and guilt in their conduct in Asia, particularly in China and Southeast Asia during World War II. According to the opinion poll conducted by Hosoyoron Chosashitsu in 1983, 51.4% of respondents agreed with the statement that fifty years' history of Japan from the Sino-Japanese War through the Pacific War was a history of aggressions against Asian neighbors, although 44.8% believed that the military expansion was a necessary means for Japan's survival.¹⁴ To the question of how Japan is regarded by Asian neighbors, 42.0% answered that Japanese lack a sufficient sense of self-criticism about their past aggression in Asia.¹⁵ It is without reason that the government handled in 1982 and in 1986 with care the textbook issues, which provoked, criticisms from other Asian countries, and that Prime Minister Nakasone found it necessary to fire the minister of education, who made a statement justifying Japan's annexation of Korea.

But with regard to the Soviet Union, Japanese do not feel such a sense of guilt. On the contrary, the Soviet Union is perceived as a *kajibadorobo*, a thief who steals when somebody else's house is on fire—the party who took advantage of Japan's weaknesses at

the end of the Pacific War. There are four specific charges Japanese would level against the Soviet Union. First, the Soviet Union broke the Neutrality Pact, and declared war against Japan, when Japan was attempting to end the war through the mediation of the Soviet Union. Second, the Soviet Union attacked the Japanese in Manchuria, Sakhalin, the Kuriles, and the Northern Islands, which went beyond mere military actions, and was accompanied by plundering, rapes, and murders against the civilians. Third, prisoners of war seized by the Soviet Union at the end of the war, were detained for many years in the forced labor camps in Siberia and Central Asia. Most of them were not returned to Japan until 1948, and some of them languished even longer in the Soviet Gulags. Fourth, the Soviet Union seized what Japanese consider to be a part of the Japan's proper territory. Particularly, the northern territorial issues revolving around the four islands off Hokkaido has been the most contentious issue between Japan and the Soviet Union.

It should be pointed out that behind all these issues there lies a fundamental difference in approaching the problems of World War II between the Japanese and the Soviets. To the Soviet Union, World War II was a war fought on a global scale, and the Asian theater cannot be isolated from the entirety of the military and political acts of World War II. It was a war for the survival of the Soviet Union as well as to guarantee its future security. Its military and diplomatic aims were set to achieve these goals. The process from the Yalta Conference to the breaking of the Neutrality Pact, leading eventually to the occupation of Southern Sakhalin, the Kuriles, and the Northern Islands, was part and parcel of the overall Soviet foreign policy on the global scale. It should be remembered also that this process had the approval of the allies, including the United States, which needed the Soviet participation in the Pacific theater of the war.

Japanese approach to World War II can be characterized as a regional approach as opposed to the global approach taken by the Soviet Union. The Pacific theater was perceived as something independent and detached from the European theater. In fact, one of the pillars of Japanese foreign policy during World War II was to secure neutrality of the Soviet Union. Kenichi Nakamura in his recent essay argues that Japanese maintenance of the Neutrality Pact resulted from political calculations, not from their sense of legality. In his opinion, Japan considered the possibility of declaring war against the Soviet Union despite the Neutrality Pact, when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union. Even though this policy was not carried out, Japan carefully watched the development of the German-Soviet war with the intention of attacking the Soviet Union in the case that the defeat of the Soviet Union became imminent—a policy similar to the Soviet action in August, 1945. Thus, although the Soviet action was a serious violation of international law, Japan could not accuse the Soviet Union on moral grounds.¹⁶ One should not confuse morality with legality, however. It is not the intention, but the action that should be judged in the eyes of the law. It is, of course, nonsense to expect moral rectitude from those who carried out the attack on Pearl Harbor. But the fact remains that it was the Soviet Union, not Japan that violated the Neutrality Pact.

The Soviet violation of the Neutrality Pact was doubly perceived as a stab in the back by the Japanese, particularly when Japan was attempting to seek mediation from the Soviet Union to end the war even after the Potsdam Declaration was issued. It is clear now that the Soviets were interested in keeping Japan in the war long enough for the

Soviet Union to enter it. Otherwise, the Soviet Union could not have grabbed the gains promised in the Far East. Japanese political and military leaders in power who could not see what calculated game the Soviet Union was playing should be blamed for their lack of insight. But when one talks about Japan as a nation, a certain degree of betrayal was justified.

The Soviet participation in the war in Asia was done for territorial gains to secure its Asian borders, not for the purpose of reducing human sufferings to a minimal. Thus, the violation of the Neutrality Pact was inherently connected with the Soviet actions during and immediately after the war. There were innumerable sufferings inflicted by the Soviet soldiers upon the civilians in Manchuria, Sakhalin, the Kuriles, and the Northern Islands, sometimes even after the cease-fire was ordered. Nakamura argues that how to interpret the Soviet atrocities against Japanese depended on what one compares them with. These acts were clearly not gentlemanly, if compared with the American occupation in Japan, but if compared with the brutal Nazi occupation in Western Russia, the Soviet occupation in Manchuria was mild. Furthermore, the Soviet atrocities should be weighed against the Japanese atrocities against Chinese and Koreans. In particular, we must remember that "the areas occupied by the Soviet Union were not Japan's proper territories, but its colonies."¹⁷

It is difficult to describe the Northern Islands and the Kuriles as Japan's colonies in the sense Manchuria and Korea were. But Nakamura's argument that atrocities should be judged comparatively is objectionable. Japanese should be severely criticized for their atrocities against Chinese and Koreans, but this does not mean that because of the treatment against Chinese and Koreans, Japanese should lose any right to protest against Soviet atrocities. Nakamura's argument would have a great difficulty to persuade those Japanese, who personally suffered at the hands of the Soviets either in the occupied territories or in the forced labor camps, to emancipate themselves from the *higaishaishiki* (a sense of being victimized).

The collective memory of World War II is a decisive factor that contributed to the negative image of the Soviet Union. According to the NHK public opinion survey on war experiences conducted in 1980, 55% of respondents answered that they had direct experience with suffering during the war. As for their interests in the Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War, 82% answered that they often or sometimes talked about them, including 76% of those who were born after the war.¹⁸ It is quite plausible that the negative image of the Soviet Union associated with its conduct in the last stage of the Pacific War and immediately afterwards is transmitted from one generation to another through such private talks, publications, and news media.

One may ask: how could the collective memory of the war that happened more than forty years ago serve as a decisive factor determining the unpopularity of the Soviet Union? Two reasons are important. First, since the end of World War II, Japan and most Japanese have little direct contact with the Soviet Union. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that the World War II memory was the first image that is conjured up in the consciousness of most Japanese. Second, and more importantly, there is the northern territorial issue.

3. The Northern Territories

It seems to me that all this resentment felt by Japanese toward the Soviet Union in World War II is expressed in the issue of the northern territories. This issue is an important factor contributing to the negative image of the Soviet Union, because this most contentious issue between Japan and the Soviet Union has been kept alive, reviving the unpleasant memory that would have otherwise diminished.

Table 3 shows the result of the Sorifu survey on whether Japanese think that Japan-USSR relations are good or bad. Those who answered that the relations are not good or not so good were further asked what reasons were contributing to bad

Table 3. Do You Think Japan-USSR Relations Are Good? (Percent)

| | 1979 | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Good | 1.4 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 0.6 |
| So-so | 12.7 | 9.0 | 8.6 | 9.9 | 9.5 |
| Not so good | 42.7 | 42.3 | 42.9 | 43.7 | 43.0 |
| Bad | 26.6 | 32.2 | 33.3 | 28.9 | 32.2 |
| Can't say | 4.1 | 6.2 | 4.8 | 5.3 | 4.9 |
| Don't know | 12.5 | 9.3 | 9.8 | 11.2 | 9.8 |

Source: Same as Table 1.

Table 4. Reasons for Bad Relations between Japan and USSR (Percent)

| | 1979 | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| USSR's refusal to solve northern islands issues | 68.1 | 67.1 | 56.2 | 58.8 | 53.8 |
| Diplomacy based on military force | | 48.8 | 25.1 | 27.1 | 25.4 |
| Military buildup in the Far East is a threat | 17.1 | | | | |
| Communist political system is different from ours | 28.7 | 35.8 | 27.6 | 31.9 | 28.0 |
| Soviet unfriendly behaviors toward Japan | | 24.6 | 23.4 | 19.7 | 18.0 |
| Existence of Japan-US Security Treaty | 16.5 | 13.4 | 14.8 | 13.1 | 13.5 |
| Strong distrustful feelings among Japanese | 24.4 | 27.5 | 25.8 | 27.5 | 25.6 |
| Japan's attempts to establish relations with PRC | 15.7 | 8.7 | 6.4 | 4.2 | |
| Soviet refusal to make concessions in fish negotiations | 64.5 | | | | |

Source: Same as Table 1.

relations. Table 4 shows the distributions of percentage given to various reasons. It indicates that for the past five years the largest percentage of respondents regard the Soviet refusal to make concessions on the northern territorial issues as the most important reasons for bad relations.

It is interesting to compare the Sorifu survey with the most recent poll taken by Hokkaido Shimbun. (See Table 5.) According to the Hokkaido Shimbun poll, 35.6% of those who answered that Japanese-Soviet relations are not good cited the northern territorial issue as the most important reason for bad relations. As in the Sorifu survey, this issue is given the highest percentage among all the reasons listed. However, the percentage is much lower than the national level from 1979 through 1983. This does not mean that Hokkaidoites are less demanding about the northern territorial issue. These results are simply due to the difference in the surveys: while the Sorifu survey was a multiple answer question, the Hokkaido Shimbun poll was a single answer question.

Table 5. Reasons for Bad Relations — Hokkaidoites (Percent)

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Northern territory unsolved | 35.6% |
| Soviet military threat | 11.4 |
| Communist political system | 13.3 |
| Anti-Japanese behaviors | 9.7 |
| US-Japan Security Pact | 8.7 |
| Japanese mistrust of USSR | 15.2 |
| Others | 4.0 |
| Don't know, No answer | 2.1 |

N = 743

Source: *Hokkaido Shimbun*, January 3, 1986

According to Yoshitomo Watanabe, an overwhelming majority of the respondents in public opinion surveys in the past supported the demand to retrocede at least as far as the Southern Kuriles.¹⁹ The recent Hokkaido Shimbun polls indicate also similar results. Table 6 shows the results of the two Hokkaido Shimbun polls taken in 1981 and 1985. According to these surveys, those who felt some kind of territorial demand should be made reached 74.8% in 1981 and 76.7% in 1985, while those who think that no territorial demand was necessary also increased from 11.6% to 14.3%. These increases are not statistically significant to make any conclusions. However, what is significant is that almost three out of four Hokkaidoites still believe that some kind of territorial demand should be made to the Soviet Union. Altogether 59.0% of respondents in 1981 and 55.9% in 1985 thought that Japanese should demand the retrocession of the entire Kuriles. However, those diehards who insisted on no concessions on this demand were only 30.5% in 1981 and 24.5% in 1985, and the majority (44.3% in 1981 and 55.9% in 1985) believed that while Japan should insist on the return of the entire Kuriles, it should concentrate on the return of the northern islands at the moment. Of those who demand the retrocession of the islands, 31.5% in 1981 and 36.8% in 1985 supported the return of the entire four islands, while only 12.8% in 1981 and 15.4% in 1985 would settle for

Habomai and Shikotan, giving up Etorufu and Kunashiri. It is interesting to see a little more than 10% would give up any territorial demand in exchange for fishing rights. This shows the importance of fisheries in Hokkaido. It is also important to note that the Soviet position on the territorial issue had the support of only 0.7% (1981) and 1.2% (1985) of respondents.

Table 6. Demands on Northern Territories—Hokkaido Survey

| | 1981 ⁽¹⁾ | 1985 ⁽²⁾ |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| | N = 709 | N = 743 |
| entire Kuriles | 30.5% | 24.5% |
| entire Kuriles, but 4 islands now | 19.6 | 22.1 |
| entire Kuriles, but 2 islands now | 8.9 | 9.3 |
| 4 islands only | 11.9 | 14.7 |
| 4 islands only, but 2 islands now | 3.5 | 4.3 |
| 2 islands only | 0.4 | 1.8 |
| If fishing rights given, no demand on territory | 10.9 | 13.1 |
| No demand necessary | 0.7 | 1.2 |
| Don't know, No answer | 13.6 | 9.0 |

1. Hokkaido Shimbun Poll, July 22, 23, 1981, *Hokkaido Shimbun*, August 12, 1981.
2. Hokkaido Shimbun Poll, December 1, 2, 1985, *Hokkaido Shimbun*, January 3, 1986.

How can the poll taken in Hokkaido be compared with the nation-wide poll on the northern territories? The Kyodo Tsushinsha poll taken in December 1983, asked people's attitude toward this issue. (See Table 7.) This survey indicates that at the national level as well the demand for the return of the northern territories had wide support. Those who thought that Japan should give up the northern territories as a legitimate World War II settlement were merely 4.7%. The evidence presented above

Table 7. Attitude toward Northern Territory National Survey (Percent)

| | |
|---|-------|
| Government should take stronger stand to demand the return | 38.7% |
| Keep friendly relations while demanding the return | 50.5 |
| Should give up, recognizing settlements as established fact | 4.7 |
| Don't know, No answer | 6.0 |

N = 2,140

Source: Kyodo Tsushinsha Poll, December, 1983, *Zenkoku Yoron Chosa no Genkyo*, 1984, p. 496.

makes it possible to conclude that the demand for retrocession of the northern territories occupied by the Soviet Union has wide support in Japan.

This attitude is in sharp contrast to the Soviet position on the territorial issue. As a matter of state policy, the Soviet Union cannot make a concession on the settlement of World War II, which constitutes one of the most fundamental pillars of Soviet foreign and security policies. Moreover, as the Soviet Union has built up its military power in the Far East, the strategic significance of the Kuriles and the northern islands has correspondingly increased. In addition, these islands are probably the strongest bargaining chips that are available to the Soviet Union in dealing with Japan. In other words, once Moscow gave up the islands, there would be no other important leverage against Japan. For these reasons, I foresee little possibility of the Soviet Union making substantial concessions on the territorial issue. Thus, the Soviet position and the Japanese position will continue to be diametrically opposed on this issue.

The difficulty of solving this issue is also realized by the majority of Japanese. The Kyodo Tsushinsha poll asked whether there would be a possibility of the Soviets' returning the northern territories. Only 20.0% answered positively, while 69.6% answered negatively.²⁰ The 1981 Hokkaido Shimbun poll asked respondents whether they should support the territorial demand as the first priority in Japan-Soviet relations or development of friendly relations in economic and cultural spheres. While 31.5% insisted on the territorial demand, 59% supported development of friendly relations.²¹ The 1985 Hokkaido Shimbun survey also shows an interesting result. To the question of what should be the future of Soviet-Japanese relations, 61.0% of respondents answered that despite the territorial issue, Japan should seek friendly relations with the Soviet Union. This contrasts to 26.1% who answered that the territorial demands should be insisted upon.²² The Kyodo survey quoted above also shows that despite the difficulty in solving the territorial issue, more than half of the respondents answered that Japan should keep friendly relations with the Soviet Union.²³

From the Soviet point of view, this would be the best hope. As long as the Soviet Union continues to occupy the islands as a *fait accompli*, and presents this as a non-negotiable issue, Japanese would have to deal with the Soviet Union without the solution of this problem. The 1981 Hokkaido Shimbun survey indicates an interesting fact. To the question of whether they are interested in the northern territorial issue, 50% of respondents older than 60 years of age, 45% of those in their 50's, 37% those in their 40's, 21% of those in their 30's and only 10% of those in their 20's answered that they were interested in the issue. Even in Hokkaido, where there is the strongest interest in the issue, clearly the younger the generation is, the less interested they become.²⁴ Furthermore, it also indicates that respondents in large cities were less interested in the issue than those in smaller places, with only 25% of respondents in Sapporo showing interest in the issue. The Sorifu surveys also show (see Table 4) that the percentage given to the territorial issue as the reason for bad relations declined by 13% in five years from 1979 to 1983. The results of these surveys seem to indicate that despite the overwhelming national sentiment for the retrocession of the northern territories, the interest in this issue has a gradual tendency of erosion.

The unpublished Sorifu surveys conducted every year from 1983 through 1986 also

confirm that Japanese interest in the northern territorial issues is not high. Less than 15% of respondents in every survey expressed strong interest in the issue ; close to 40% answered that they were somewhat interested ; about 30% said that they were not much interested ; and 8 to 14% answered that they had no interest whatsoever. About 60% of those who answered they were not much interested and those who said they had no interest whatsoever answered that the northern territorial issue had nothing to do with them, and 20% explained that they were not interested because the Soviet Union would never return the islands. To the question of whether they would join the movement demanding the return of the islands, more than 50% answered that they did not want to join ; about 30% would join if there were such opportunities, and only 2 to 3% expressed their willingness to participate actively in such a movement.²⁵

It is safe to conclude from these surveys that Japanese do not like the Soviets taking these islands, that they know that the territorial issue was a major hindrance to improvement of Japanese-Soviet relations, but that they are not interested in actively participating in the movement to demand the return of these islands, and that they believe that other measures to improve the relations between the two countries take the precedence over the territorial issue.

This is another reason why I do not see any change in Soviet policy on this issue. Why should they rush to give away the strong card in their hands, when they know that the longer they wait, the less interested and less emotional the Japanese will become on the islands ? Yet, the price they have to pay in the short run is that they must expect the continuation of the chilling relations, as long as this issue exists like a "*meno ueno tankobu*" (a big lump above the eyes) between the two countries.

4. Difference in the Political Regime

Another important reason explaining the negative image of the Soviet Union among Japanese is that many Japanese consider the Soviet political system different from theirs. The sorifu survey indicates (see Table 4) that approximately 30% of those who thought relations between the Soviet Union and Japan were not good listed the difference in the political system as one of the reasons for bad relations. It is interesting to point out that with the exception of 1980 "difference in political system" was consistently higher than "diplomacy based on military force." The 1985 Hokkaido Shimbun poll (Table 5) also indicates the same result, although the percentage in the Hokkaido survey is much lower than the Sorifu survey, because the Hokkaido survey asked the respondents to choose one factor, while the Sorifu survey allowed a multiple choice. Finally, the 1981 Hokkaido Shimbun survey indicates that the largest percentage of those who were not interested in the Soviet Union answered that it was because of the differences in the political systems. (See Table 11.)

It seems to me, however, that the Japanese aversion to the Soviet political system does not necessarily mean that Japanese do not like any country which adopts the Communist system. The change in the image of PRC explained above proves that the Communist system in some countries is not a hindrance to positive image among Japanese. No public opinion polls indicating Japanese perceptions of East European countries are available to me. But considering the coverage given to Poland in

Table 8. Impression of Nature of the Soviet Union (MA)

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Big military power | 77.2% |
| Big peaceful state | 2.1 |
| Industrially advanced state | 5.7 |
| Backward agrarian state | 7.8 |
| Dictatorship | 57.3 |
| Democratic state | 3.3 |
| Workers' state | 12.0 |
| Bureaucratic state | 17.1 |
| Don't know, No answer | 6.3 |

Source: Kyodo Tsushinsha Poll, December 1983, N = 2,140, in *Zenkoku Yoronchosa no Genkyo*, 1984, pp. 495-496.

Table 9. Characteristics of the Soviets (MA)

| | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Good-natured | 9.3% |
| Nasty | 20.7 |
| Shifty (<i>zurui</i>) | 44.7 |
| Trustworthy | 7.2 |
| Acts with violence | 29.8 |
| Charitable | 2.8 |
| Cheerful (<i>akarui</i>) | 4.4 |
| Depressing (<i>kurai</i>) | 45.1 |
| Don't know, No answer | 14.8 |

Source: Same as Table 8, p. 496.

Table 10. How Do You Feel About the Soviet Union?

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Easy to get to know | 2.4% |
| Difficult to get to know | 30.2 |
| Peace-loving country | 11.1 |
| Militant | 5.4 |
| Reliable | 1.0 |
| Shifty (<i>zurui</i>) | 25.0 |
| Democratic | 1.7 |
| Bureaucratic | 7.2 |
| Others, No Answer | 16.0 |

Source: *Hokkaido Shimbun*, August 6, 1981.

Table 11. Why Are You Not Interested in USSR? (MA) *

| | |
|--|-------|
| Different political system | 31.1% |
| Dark, closed country | 26.3 |
| Little to learn from in art and culture | 1.9 |
| Little to learn from in science and technology | 1.0 |
| Distrust in Soviet foreign policy | 19.1 |
| Little attraction for trade | 2.9 |
| For no reason | 31.1 |
| Others | 9.6 |

Source: *Hokkaido Shimbun*, January 3, 1986.

*This question was asked only to those who answered that they were not interested in the Soviet Union, which was 28.2% of 743 respondents.

newspapers and popular journals in the heyday of Solidarity, and the popularity of Hungarian movies in recent years, I should suspect that the image of East European countries among Japanese would not be as bad as that of the Soviet Union. If so, what many Japanese perceive as differences in the political systems must be rooted in a uniquely Soviet system, and not necessarily all Communist systems.

What specific features of the Soviet system are likely to provoke resentment among Japanese? From Table 8, 9, 10, and 11, we learn that the image of the Soviet Union most commonly held by Japanese are: big military power, dictatorship, bureaucratic state, nasty, shifty (*zurui*), propensity for violence, and depressing and dark (*kurai*). If we ignore characteristics not pertinent to the political system, a depressing, dictatorial, bureaucratic state is the common image. It appears, therefore, that such features in the Soviet system as political repression, lack of freedom, censorship, and secretism could be great factors determining the Japanese image of the Soviet political system.

5. Lack of Appeal

The unpopularity of the Soviet Union may be caused not merely by historical factors and political differences, but also simply by the lack of appeal the Soviet Union has for Japanese.

As I mentioned earlier, Russian culture once had profound influence on Japanese. Until about two decades ago, one could not be called truly intellectual unless one had a thorough knowledge of Russian literature. But interest in Russian literature does not necessarily lead to affection toward the Soviet Union. In fact, the contrary might be true. Although it is not quantified data, Hayao Shimizu points out that especially among Russian specialists there is a strong dislike of the Soviet Union.²⁶ Random samples of the Jiji surveys indicate (Table 13) that the higher the respondents' educational level is, the higher the percentage of dislike toward the Soviet Union becomes. This result also corresponds to the polls taken among university students. The more knowledge of the Soviet Union students had, the higher the percentage of those who disliked the Soviet Union.²⁷ The results of these surveys also coincide with my empirical

observation that those exchange students and scholars, who had considerable sympathy toward the Soviet Union, are often disillusioned and come to dislike it when they live in the country for an extended period of time. Thus, it is possible to say that it is not the lack of information and knowledge, but the nature of the Soviet state and society that have led many Japanese to dislike the Soviet Union.

Table 12. What Age Groups Dislike the Soviet Union?

| age | Year | 1981 ¹ | 1983 ² | 1986 ³ |
|---------------|------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 20s | | 53.9% | 72.5% | 62.3% |
| 30s | | 53.3 | 68.2 | 62.5 |
| 40s | | 48.0 | 68.6 | 57.3 |
| 50s | | 54.3 | 68.1 | 53.9 |
| 60s and above | | 48.1 | 63.8 | 53.2 |

1. Jiji survey, April, 1981, *Jiji Yoronchosa Tokuhō*, May 1, 1981, Table 23.
2. Jiji survey, September, 1983, *Ibid.*, October 1, 1983, Table 23.
3. Jiji survey, May 1986, *Ibid.*, June, 1986, Table 23.

Table 13. Those Who Dislike USSR and Educational Level

| Level of Education | Year | 1981 | 1983 | 1986 |
|-----------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Below Junior High | | 43.4% | 60.7% | 47.8% |
| High School Graduates | | 54.9 | 71.8 | 61.8 |
| College Graduates | | 60.0 | 72.2 | 66.3 |

Source: Same as Table 12.

Another problem is that Russian literature once considered to be one of the most important prerequisites for knowledge has fallen victim to the new wave of anti-intellectualism in the post-1970s generation. Regrettably more students graduate from universities without having read a page of *War and Peace*, *Crime and Punishment*, and *Brothers Karamazov*. Even worse, among those who have read none of these classics there is neither shame nor awareness that their knowledge is deficient.

Instead of literature, philosophy, art, and cinema, which once used to appeal to the young generation growing up in post-war Japan, it is rock music, fashion, comic books, fancy cars that capture the fascination of today's youths. Table 12 shows the breakdown of distribution among various age groups who answered that they disliked the Soviet Union in the random samples of the Jiji surveys. (See Table 12.) In all these surveys the Soviet Union is more unpopular among the younger generation than the older.

The Soviet Union simply does not have anything to offer in the world of pop culture. Even beyond youth culture, such Western things as MacDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Disneyland, Christian Dior, Gucci bags, and even Tampons flood Japanese daily life. Against this colossal influence of Western culture (and subculture) in Japan, the Soviet Union is totally powerless in making its influence felt.

In the late 1950s and in the early 1960s Soviet folk songs became popular among Japanese. This popularity was associated with the "*utagoe*" movement (singing movement), which was aimed by the Communist Party to recapture through songs and dancing the popular support that it had lost when it advocated the tactics of armed uprising. Russian folk songs, which appeared to Japanese sentimentality, were introduced then, and various coffee shops, where customers sang Russian folk songs in chorus, appeared in major cities. However, the popularity of Russian folk songs waned as quickly as any fad in pop music, and former "*utagoe*" coffee shops are now converted into "*karaoke*" bars.

The lack of appeal does not necessarily mean the absence of appeal. In fact, many Japanese find certain aspects of Soviet culture quite appealing. The nationwide Kyodo survey in 1983 asked the respondents whether they were interested in Soviet art and culture; 40.4% answered: Yes, and 54.1%: No. Of those who answered yes, 59.0% were interested in ballet, 39.4% in sport, 31.1% in music, 22.3% in literature, 19.4% in the circus, 9.0% in theater, 8.0% in movies, and 6.8% in paintings.²⁸ This survey shows that if the Soviet Union wants to improve its image, cultural exchange may be one of the most effective ways. Yet, it would be difficult to capture the imagination of a wide segment of Japanese youths with these rather traditional genres of culture.

6. Military Threat

All these reasons mentioned above—historical reasons, the collective memory of World War II, the northern territorial issues, differences in the political system, and the lack of appeal—are not sufficient to explain the basic trend of the negative image of the Soviet Union expressed in Figure 2. Why did the negative image show a declining tendency from 1964 to 1974, and why did it suddenly rise sharply after 1974?

The decline in the negative image can be attributed to Japanese acceptance of the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence, the Tokyo Olympics, and the indirect gain resulting from the unpopularity of the War in Vietnam and the Cultural Revolution. The Soviet negative image experienced the lowest point when Prime Minister Tanaka made an official visit to Moscow. But after that, it began climbing up again, more sharply than it went down before 1974.

It is important to recognize, as Nakamura points out, that the negative image of the Soviet Union did not suddenly rise when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan.²⁹ What caused this rise? Despite the optimism in 1973–1974, the Soviet government began to issue strong statements rejecting the return of the northern islands in 1975 and 1976. The expectations unrealistically raised for an early solution to the northern territorial issue in 1973 were shattered by these statements, and led to bitter disappointment among Japanese. Japanese-Soviet relations were further worsened by the MiG 25 incident, in which a Soviet fighter pilot in a MiG 25 defected to Hakodate in 1976. Furthermore, in

1976 a 200 seamile limit was internationally recognized as territorial water, and the high-handed way the Soviets negotiated with the Japanese in the subsequent fishery negotiations greatly contributed to Japanese resentment. The monthly breakdowns of the Jiji opinion polls indicate a sharp change in Japanese perceptions of the Soviet Union during the fishery negotiations. The negative image of the Soviet Union in 1977 was 30.3% in January and 32.4% in February, before the fishery negotiations began, but after the fishery negotiations in June it rose to 41.5% in June, 39.5% in July, 38.5% in August, and 41.0% in September.³⁰ In other words, there was about a 10% difference in the negative image of the Soviet Union before and after fishery negotiations.

After the fishery negotiations, the negative image of the Soviet Union fluctuated around 40%. But in May and June, 1978, it again sharply rose to 44.6% and 44.9%.³¹ This rise can be attributed to the mounting intimidation by the Soviet government against Japan's move to conclude a peace treaty with PRC. After the conclusion of the peace treaty with PRC in August 1978, the negative image of the Soviet Union moderately dropped to about 40% again, but when the news of deployment of Soviet forces in the northern islands was reported, it rose to around 45% in February, March, and April of 1979.³²

But the most important events that contributed to the sudden surge of the Soviet negative image were the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the KAL incident. Toward the end of 1979 the negative image was increasing to 46.0% in October, 46.4% in November, and 45.6% in December. But after the invasion of Afghanistan, it rose to 50.2%, for the first time passing 50% since the inception of the Jiji survey. It rose steadily throughout the year, registering a staggering 58.9% in November, 1980, indicating that not only Afghanistan but also the Polish crisis contributed to the surge of Soviet unpopularity.³³ Since 1981 the negative rate somewhat declined until August 1983, when it dropped below 50%. But the KAL incident had an electrifying impact on Soviet unpopularity. In September, it drastically rose to 68.2%, in October 66.9%, and in November 61.2%, going beyond the 60% mark for three consecutive months.³⁴ This was unprecedented. As Nakamura points out, it is important to note that the rate of unpopularity of the Soviet Union since 1974 has a distinct characteristic of staying high, once it goes up, without coming down to the previous level.

The impact of the Afghan invasion and the KAL incident was also visible in the positive image of the Soviet Union as well. In December, 1979, the positive image of the Soviet Union was 1.4%, but after the Afghan invasion, it dropped to 1.1% in January, 0.5% in February, 0.9% in March and 0.5% in August and September, 1980. The drop after the KAL incident was even sharper. In August 1983 the positive rate recovered to 1.3%, but after the KAL incident, it dropped to 0.2% in September, 0.5% in October, 0.4% in November, and 0.6% in December, 1983. The positive rate of 0.2% was the all time low for the Soviet Union.³⁵

If we follow the monthly breakdown closely, then we learn that the negative image of the Soviet Union corresponded rather sensitively to specific Soviet behaviors. This is borne out by other opinion polls such as the Sorifu surveys (Table 4) and the Hokkaido Shimbun survey (Table 5), which show that many respondents cite Soviet unfriendly behaviors to Japan and diplomacy based on military force as reasons for bad relations

between Japan and the Soviet Union.

As Nakamura states, the rise in the negative image of the Soviet Union cannot be explained solely by its military threat. Other unfriendly behaviors such as I mentioned above certainly contributed to it. Nevertheless, I dispute Nakamura's major thesis that "the Soviet threat" was not a major contributing factor, but merely a subsidiary element in the rise in the unpopularity of the Soviet Union.³⁶ In fact, I would argue that the feelings of Soviet military threat were the central factor.

Table 14 shows that those who felt threat to Japanese security increased from 43.7% in 1979 to 54% in 1981 in the Yomiuri surveys. The largest percentage of those who felt threat considered that the Soviet Union could be the source of threat. (See Table 15.) It is curious, however, that the percentage of those who identified the Soviet Union as a potential threat decreased from 78.9% in 1979 (which was taken before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan) to 68.6% in 1981. This increase was caused not by Japanese threat perception, but by technicalities in the survey. In the 1979 survey the potential threat countries were already listed in the poll, while in the 1981 survey the respondents had to identify the countries they felt were a threat.³⁷

The increasing degree with which more Japanese feel that the Soviet Union is a military threat to Japanese security is also demonstrated by the Hokkaido Shimbun surveys. (See Table 16.) According to these surveys, those who felt that the Soviet Union was a military threat increased from 55.2% in 1981, to 72.4% in 1983, and 80.2% in 1985. Correspondingly, those who did not feel threat decreased from 36.4% in 1981, to

Table 14. Do You Feel Threat to Japanese Security?

| | 1979 ¹ | 1980 ² | 1981 ³ |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Feel very much | 8.7% | 6.4% | 28.0% |
| Feel to some extent | 35.0 | 48.1 | 32.2 |
| Do not feel much | 39.0 | } 26.0 | 21.3 |
| Do not feel at all | 7.2 | | |
| No answer | 10.0 | 19.5 | 18.5 |
| Number of Samples | 2,260 | 2,110 | 2,394 |

¹*Yomiuri Shimbun*, June 4, 1979.

²*Yomiuri Shimbun*, September 14, 1981.

³Sorifu survey on the Self-Defense Force, December 1981. *Zenkoku Yoronchosa no Genkyo*, 1982, p. 176. The question asked in this survey is different from the Yomiuri surveys. The question of the 1979 Yomiuri survey was: Do you feel lately any threat to Japan's security? The 1981 Yomiuri survey asked the question: Do you think that there will be a possibility of any military attack on Japan in the near future? The question in the Sorifu Sorifu survey was: Do you feel that there might be a danger that Japan might be involved in war, considering the current international situation?

Table 15. Which Country Is Threat to Japanese Security?

| | 1978 ¹ | 1979 ² | 1981 ³ |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| USSR | 52.7% | 78.9% | 68.6% |
| USA | 10.8 | 20.6 | 6.2 |
| North Korea | 8.6 | 12.1 | 3.0 |
| PRC | 10.5 | 16.9 | 1.7 |
| South Korea | 4.8 | 7.4 | 1.4 |
| Others | 11.1 ⁴ | | 4.2 |
| No Answer | 25.0 | | 22.3 |

¹*Yomiuri Shimbun*, April 17, 1978.

²*Yomiuri Shimbun*, June 4, 1979. Only those who answered there was threat to Japanese security.

³*Yomiuri Shimbun*, September 14, 1981. Only those who answered there was threat to Japanese security

⁴Includes those who answered there was no military threat.

Table 16. Do You Feel Military Threat from USSR?

| | 1981 ¹ | 1983 ² | 1985 ³ |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Feel threat | 55.2% | 72.5% | 80.2% ⁴ |
| Do not feel threat | 36.4 | 16.8 | 16.0 ⁵ |
| Dont' know/NA | 8.4 | 10.7 | 3.8 |

¹*Hokkaido Shimbun*, August 6, 1981.

²*Zenkoku Yoronchosa no Genkyo*, 1984, p. 496.

³*Hokkaido Shimbun*, January 3, 1986.

⁴Combined total of "Feel very much," (35.4%) and "Feel to some extent," (44.8%) extent.

⁵Combined total of "Should not consider it seriously" (14.4%) and "there is no threat" (1.6%).

16.8% in 1983, and 16.0% in 1985. It is also important to point out that this perception of Soviet threat is shared by the majority of respondents regardless of their party affiliations. In the 1981 Yomiuri survey more than 70% of the supporters of LDP, Komeito, Democratic-Socialist Party, New Liberal Club, and 65% of the Socialist Party supporters, and even 59% of the supporters of the Communist Party felt a threat of military attack from the Soviet Union.³⁸ In the latest Hokkaido Shimbun survey about two thirds of the LDP supporters, around 60% of the SDP supporters, and 61% of the JCP supporters felt a Soviet military threat, while the Socialist supporters were divided almost evenly between those who felt threat and those who did not.³⁹ It should also be pointed out that only 1.6% of respondents in the latest Hokkaido Shimbun survey answered that

there was no military threat from the Soviet Union.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that most of Japanese are experiencing a sense of crisis resulting from the Soviet threat. Among those who felt threat, more people answered that they felt threat to some extent than they felt a strong threat. Considering that most of public opinion surveys on Japanese defense posture indicate that a majority of Japanese feel that the present level of defense posture is adequate, one can conclude that although an increasing number of Japanese feel that the Soviet Union would pose a military threat to Japanese security, the present level of threat is not sufficient to change drastically Japan's defense policy and defense allocations of national budget.⁴⁰

7. Lack of Lobbying Group

The information about the correlations between Soviet military threat and respondents' party affiliations is indicative of the lack of support groups that bat for the Soviet Union. Among the Communist Party supporters almost 61% felt a Soviet military threat in the latest Hokkaido Shimbun survey, while the Socialist Party supporters were evenly divided. In the nationwide Yomiuri survey in 1981 also, almost 60% of the Communist Party supporters felt that the Soviet Union was a military threat. Immediately after the war, the Japanese Communist Party was closely affiliated with the Soviet Union to the extent that the party suffered a serious split when the policy of the leadership was criticized by the Cominform. The de-Stalinization and the Sino-Soviet split, however, shook up the party. Ever since 1964 the JCP has taken a critical stand toward the Soviet Union. Even on the issue of the northern territories, the JCP's stand is more radical than any other parties, demanding the return of the entire Kuriles (on the condition that Japan abrogate the Japan-US Security Pact.) With the JCP's defection from Moscow, the Soviet Union lost an important vehicle through which it could mount an effective propaganda activities.

The JCP's defection had other important negative results in terms of expanding the Soviet influence in Japan. It split all front organizations including the Japan-Soviet Friendship Associations.⁴¹ The JCP's defection meant that these friendship associations split between those who maintained friendly relations with the Soviet Union and those who kept loyalty with the JCP. It also deprived those friendship associations of the effective instrument of organization and mobilization supplied by the JCP.

There is an organization called Association for Trade with the Soviet Union and East European Countries [*Soren Too Boeki Kyokai—Sotobo*], which is an organization subsidized by various corporations which have trade ties with the Soviet Union and East European countries. To the extent that the Soviet Union's interests coincide with that of the Sotobo—expansion of economic relations between the two countries—it could be useful for promoting a good image of the Soviet Union, but this chance is limited, particularly because the ailing Soviet economy does not have much to offer to Japanese businessmen.

There are some influential people among politicians, businessmen, and other public figures who have a pipeline with policy-makers of various levels in the Soviet Union. But their number is small, and their influence limited. The Soviet Union cannot rely on those

of handful men and a small number of Soviet admirers who happened by chance to feel attracted to the Soviet Union.

8. Are Popular Perceptions Manipulated ?

Usually Soviet commentators attribute the negative image of the Soviet Union to the manipulations of public opinion by reactionary forces in Japan which do not want to see the improvement of Japanese-Soviet relations. They argue that such issues as the northern territorial dispute, the collective memory of World War II, and the military threat in the Far East were issues artificially concocted by these reactionary groups to instill a bad image of the Soviet Union into Japanese and to prevent friendly relations between the two countries from developing.

To what extent do these public opinion surveys reflect the true Japanese perceptions of the Soviet Union, and to what extent are these perceptions manipulated by various political groups to influence public opinion ?

In the first place, popular perceptions are not formed in a vacuum. People's opinions are influenced by information available to them. Even in the Soviet Union, where the flow of information is strictly controlled, people form their opinions not merely on the basis of the official propaganda, but also on the basis of other available information. In Japan there is an overflow of information in the mass media. According to the NHK survey, 51% of people rely mostly on television, 42% on newspapers, and 6% on radio to learn what is going on in the world.⁴²

The mass media in Japan is not simply a propaganda piece controlled by one group. For instance, Asahi, Mainichi, and Hokkaido Shimbun tend to be more liberal, often advocating a neutralist position, while Yomiuri and Sankei tend to be more conservative. It is difficult to manipulate all these papers, media, and publications to influence public opinion in a certain direction.

It is no secret that certain groups are using various methods to promote anti-Soviet feelings among Japanese, and that many writers write anti-Soviet articles. Around 1979–1980, for instance, many books and articles predicting the possibility of a Soviet invasion in Hokkaido became popular.⁴³ But it would be a very difficult question to determine to what extent popular perceptions were influenced by these publications, and to what extent these publications themselves were a reflection of the change in popular perceptions. After all, in commercial Japan, few publishers would publish books with little commercial value. It is also true that those people who reject the notion of “the Soviet threat” are provided with equal opportunities to propagete their views. In a place like Japan, where the marketplace of opinions is determined by the relationship between supply and demand, what opinions are sold well might be a good barometer of the shift of public opinion.

Moreover, there is no evidence that the majority of Japanese accepted the notion of the “Soviet threat” as presented by the alarmists. As Table 7 shows, a large percentage of the Kyodo poll respondents answered that they would prefer to maintain good relations with the Soviet Union, although they insist on the return of the northern territories.

This proves that no matter what motives they try to use to influence public opinion, only those opinions that touch the responding chord among Japanese can be effective. If

the Soviet Union is extremely unpopular among Japanese, it is not because of the propaganda efforts by those people who try to prevent improvement of Japan-Soviet relations, but because the Soviet conduct and behaviors in the past as well as at present do not inspire much confidence and affection among Japanese. Unless the Soviet Union changes its ways of approaching Japan, it will remain unpopular among Japanese.

9. Are Popular Perceptions Based on Accurate Information?

Another important question in Japanese perceptions of the Soviet Union is to what extent they are based on accurate information. Table 11 shows that 31.1% of those who answered that they were not interested in the Soviet Union in the 1985 Hokkaido Shimbun poll stated that there was no reason for their lack of interest. This response occupied the highest percentage together with "differences in political system." Furthermore, in the question asking what they thought of characteristics of the Soviets in the Kyodo poll, many cited such characters as nasty [*hitoga warui*], depressing, and shifty [*zurui*]. Those characteristics may be those identified with the Soviet state, but are not applicable to what are generally perceived as Russian characteristics nor to my own empirical experience.

These observations may lead one to conclude that the overwhelmingly negative image of the Soviet Union may have resulted simply from the lack of knowledge of that country.

According to the information published by the Immigration Office, only 16,000 Japanese went to the Soviet Union in 1985, of which only 9,600 were tourists. The number of Japanese who went to the Soviet Union represent about 1% of those who went to the United States (1,590,000), and roughly 10% of Japanese who went to France (150,000), Britain (106,000), Thailand (106,000), and the Phillipines (139,000), 7% of those to China (228,000) and 4% of those to South Korea (438,000). This number is comparable to those who went to Greece, Spain, Brazil, and New Caledonia. Even more significant is the smallness of those who went to the Soviet Union for study and scientific and academic research. Only 172 Japanese went to the Soviet Union for these purposes, compared to 2,143 to China, 889 to Taiwan, 282 to Iran, 1,019 to South Korea, 341 to the Phillipines, 196 to Singapore, 311 to Thailand, 310 to Austria, 1,896 to France, 1,945 to West Germany, 512 to Italy, 376 to Switzerland, 2,409 to Britain, 916 to Canada, 225 to Mexico, 18,002 to the United States, and 712 to Austraria.⁴⁴ These figures clearly demonstrate that despite its geographical proximity, the Soviet Union is a country that exists far away in Japanese consciousness. The Cultural Agreement, which was concluded in May 1986, might be a step forward to correct this miserable situation. And yet, as I have already stated, more knowledge and information may not contribute to the improvement of the Soviet image.

It is a curious fact, however, that despite the geographical proximity and its political importance, Japanese have very little knowledge of this giant neighbor. Surprisingly, no universities and colleges in Japan have a coherent Russian/Soviet studies program. Systematic knowledge of the Soviet Union has not been integrated into any university curriculum.⁴⁵ It is not the task of Russian/Soviet specialists to improve or damage the image of the Soviet Union. But it is their duty to contribute to the increase of

accurate information to the public so that popular perceptions would be based on better knowledge of the Soviet Union.

III. Conclusions

Various public opinion surveys indicate that the Soviet Union is unique in its unpopularity in Japanese perceptions. Although it was successful in lowering its negative image to some extent from 1960 to 1973, its unpopularity has gone up sharply since then. There are various reasons for its negative image. The historical background going back to the Tokugawa and the Meiji periods explains the sense of fear and contempt that came to prevail in the Japanese consciousness of Russia and the Soviet Union. The collective memory of World War II reinforced Japanese resentment to the Soviet Union. The diametrically opposed interpretation of the Pacific Theater of World War II and its settlements has made it inevitable for the two countries to have major differences in improving the relations. Of all pending issues, the northern territorial dispute is the most contentious one that has little possibility of immediate solution.

Other reasons such as the unappealing political regime, the lack of appeal, and the absence of lobbying group may account for the negative image of the Soviet Union. But the most important factor contributing to the latest sharp increase in unpopularity must be sought in the Soviets' own external behavior, particularly in its military buildup. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, military buildup in the Far East, including the deployment of a division in the northern islands, and the shooting-down of the KAL passenger plane all contributed to the precipitous rise in the negative image of the Soviet Union.

Perceptions of a foreign country can change, as the image of PRC has changed dramatically. But given the complex multiple causes that profoundly affect Japanese perceptions of the Soviet Union, it seems extremely difficult for the Soviet Union to capture the hearts of the majority of Japanese. It will take more than changing the diplomatic style from a grim faced Belorussian to a smiling, debonair Georgian. Nor will the reported change in the reorganization of the Foreign Ministry be sufficient, although it might be designed to give a more prominent place to Japan in its foreign policy.⁴⁶ In order to improve substantially the Soviet image in Japan, it will take a fundamental change in the *substance* of its policy toward Japan, not merely in *style* and *organization*.

In the parliamentary democracy as it exists in Japan popular perceptions set the parameters of policy. I assume, therefore, that Japanese foreign policy toward the Soviet Union will continue along the present course : to maintain correct relationship, and to attempt at marginal improvement under a generally chilling atmosphere.

It is important to remember, however, that the negative image of the Soviet Union cannot be directly translated into the positive image of the United States. It is true that a majority of Japanese now prefer to stay in the pro-Western camp. But the rate of increase in the pro-Western camp is not as sharp as the rate of increase of the negative image of the Soviet Union. This may be related to the growing sense of nationalism among Japanese.⁴⁷

It will be interesting to compare Japanese perceptions of the Soviet Union with those in other countries. Such comparisons will be helpful in examining differences that exist among various countries in their approach to the Soviet Union. Particularly important is

the policy implication of such perceptions. Although no data on American perceptions of the Soviet Union are available to me, I would assume that the negative image of the Soviet Union is predominant in the United States as well. Nevertheless, the roots of unpopularity of the Soviet Union are quite different in the United States from in Japan. From extreme unpopularity of the Soviet Union in Japan, therefore, the U. S. government cannot conclude that Japanese basically share the same view of the Soviet Union, and impose its views on Japan.

I would not claim that public opinion polls are the sole yardstick to measure Japanese perceptions of the Soviet Union. It should be supplemented by an analysis of publications, as my critic pointed out in Hawaii, and other available sources. But I hope my analysis presented here will contribute to further discussions.

Notes

- 1 Public opinion surveys on Japanese perceptions of the Soviet Union are not fully analyzed by specialists. Two important articles which attempted to examine Japanese perceptions as reflected in public opinion surveys are : Yoshitomo Watanabe, "Soren o meguru yoron no doko," *Soren Too Gakkai Nenpo*, 11 (1982), 10-29; Kenichi Nakamura, "Soren kyoiron karano dakkyaku," *Sekai*, No. 4, 1985, pp. 56-73. I owe a great debt to these articles for ideas as well as sources.
- 2 The Jiji survey uses two-step random sampling, and selects 2,000 samples from 34 places: ten large cities, 88 middle-sized cities, and 36 smaller cities and villages. Respondents are both male and female adults over twenty years of age. The method of the survey is a personal interview by an investigator. The rate of return varies from month to month, but usually it is around 1,500.
- 3 These figures are taken from NHK Hosoyoron Chosashitsu, ed., *Zusetsu Sengo Yoronshi*, second edition (Tokyo: NHK, 1982), and supplemented from Jijiyoron Chosa Tokuhō, which is published on the first day of every month by Jiji News Agency.
- 4 *Yomiuri Shimbun*, August 15, 1950. See also Watanabe, "Soren o meguru yoron no doko," p. 20.
- 5 D. H. Mendel, *Nihon-Yoron to Gaiko*, tr. by Kikuo Nakamura, Tan Horie (Tokyo: Jiji Tsushinsya, 1963), p. 77.
- 6 *Asahi Shimbun*, March 13, 1986.
- 7 *Hokkaido Shimbun*, January 3, 1986.
- 8 *Zusetsu sengo yoronshi*, p. 162. Similar results are reported in various opinion polls. See, for instance, *Asahi Shimbun*, November 1, 1978; *Asahi Shimbun*, March 5, 1979; *Yomiuri Shimbun*, June 30, 1980; *Zenkoku yoronshosa no genkyo*, 1981, pp. 529-530; *Ibid.*, 1982, pp. 173-177; Toyoko Akiyama, "Nihonjin no heiwakan," *Hosokenkyu to Chosa*, 33, No. 4 (1983), 5-9; Watanabe, "Soren o meguru yoron no doko," pp. 13-14.
- 9 Nakamura, "Soren kyoiron karano dakkyaku," p. 69.
- 10 Hayao Shimizu, *Nihonjin no Roshia Konpurekkusu* (Tokyo: Chukoshinsho, 1984), p. 179.
- 11 Hayao Shimizu, *Nihonjin wa naze sorenga kiraika* (Tokyo: Yamateshobo, 1979), pp. 129-136.
- 12 *Ibid.*, pp. 146-148.
- 13 Tsuguo Togawa, "Slavistika v Iaponii: istoriia, razvitie, segodniashnee sostoianie,"

- Obozrenie*, No. 8 (1984), p. 28.
- 14 Michihiro Wakatani, "Kokuminwa kakono rekishio domiteiruka," *Hosokenkyu to chosa*, 33, No. 5 (1983), 55.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 62.
- 16 Nakamura, "Sorenkyoiron karano dakkyaku," pp. 62–63.
- 17 *Ibid.*, pp. 61–62.
- 18 *NHK Yoronchosa Shiryoshu : Shiryo to Bunseki*, 1983 (Tokyo : NHK, 1983), pp. 52–53.
- 19 Watanabe, "Soren o meguru yoron no doko," pp. 17–18.
- 20 *Zenkoku Yoronchosa no Genkyo*, 1984, p. 496.
- 21 *Hokkaido Shimbun*, August 12, 1981.
- 22 *Hokkaido Shimbun*, January 3, 1986.
- 23 *Zenkoku Yoronchosa no Genkyo*, 1984, p. 496.
- 24 *Hokkaido Shimbun*, August 12, 1981.
- 25 Unpublished Sorifu survey, *Hopporyodomondai ni kansuru yoronchosa*, a mimeographed report, pp. 3–5.
- 26 Hayao Shimizu, *Nihonjin wa naze Soren ga kiraika*, pp. 16–21.
- 27 Hiromi Teratani, "Nihon-Soren daigakusei ishiki no chosa," *Seiron*, February, 1978, p. 160.
- 28 *Zenkoku Yoronchosa no Genkyo*, 1984, p. 496.
- 29 Nakamura, "Soren Kyoiron karano dakkyaku," p. 59.
- 30 See *Jiji Yoronchosa Tokuhō*, January 1, February 1, June 1, July 1, August 1, September 1, 1977.
- 31 *Ibid.*, May 1, June 1, 1978.
- 32 *Ibid.*, August 1, September 1, October 1, December 1, 1978, February 1, March 1, April 1, 1979.
- 33 *Ibid.*, November 1, December 1, 1979, from January to November, 1983.
- 34 *Ibid.*, September 1, October 1, November 1, 1983.
- 35 *Ibid.*, December 1, 1979 ; January 1, February 1, March 1, April 1, September 1, 1980, August 1, 1983, September 1, October 1, November 1, and December 1, 1983.
- 36 Nakamura, "Soren kyoiron karano dakkyaku," pp. 58–59, 70–71.
- 37 *Yomiuri Shimbun*, September 14, 1981.
- 38 *Ibid.*
- 39 *Hokkaido Shimbun*, June 3, 1986.
- 40 Akiyama, "Nihonjin no heiwan," p. 6.
- 41 Hirotake Koyama, *Sengo Nihonkyosantoshi* (Tokyo : Hogashoten, 1969), p. 390.
- 42 *NHK Yoronchosa Shiryoshu : Shiryo to Bunseki*, 3 (Tokyo : NHK, 1983), 100.
- 43 On this question, see an interesting, but controversial serial essays written by Kiyofuku Chuma in *Asahi Shimbun*, in February and March, 1986.
- 44 Homudaijin Kanboshihohosei Chosabu, ed., *Dai 24 Shutsunyukoku Kanri Tokei Nenpo, Showa 60 nenban* (Tokyo : Okurasho insatsukyoku, 1985), pp. 132–137.
- 45 Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, "Soviet Studies in Japan : History, Problems, and Prospects," Charles E. Morrison and Pushpa Thambipillai, ed., *Soviet Studies in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Honolulu : East-West Center, 1986), pp. 15–45.
- 46 *Asahi Shimbun*, June 20, 1986 ; *Hokkaido Shimbun*, June 20, 1986.
- 47 See Akiyama, "Nihonjin no heiwan," pp. 9–11.