

## UNIFICATION CHURCH AND JAPAN: A HISTORICAL REVIEW

**Elif Sercen NURCAN\* - Mürsel DOĞRUL\*\***

### Abstract

The cult previously known as the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, called the Unification Church (UC), was launched to the forefront of public discussion around the globe following the assassination of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe in July 2022. The cult itself is no stranger to controversy given its history, however, this incident was particularly disruptive as Japan faced a politician's assassination motivated by social problems caused by a Christian religious group along with the revelation of widespread connections between the said group and the ruling political party. This chain of events inflicted a damaging influence on Japan's democracy, an outcome that requires a closer inspection of its roots. To achieve such a goal, this study turns toward factors that allowed the UC to achieve political influence in Japan during the country's pre- and post-World War II political history. In addition, religious groups in Japan, including controversial cults such as Aum Shinrikyo and the UC provide important case studies in public relations and fast development under the title of the "cult controversy". However, many of the previous studies were insufficient regarding their scope, and there was no uniform technique for presenting or assessing the usually brief opinions on the UC's actual overall influence on Japan's democratic system. However, many of the previous studies were limited in scope. Moreover, there were only a few uniform techniques for presenting or assessing views on the core/overall influence of UC on Japan's democratic system. This study aims to expand the limitations of the literature by bridging previous views based on the historical and recent factors. Through qualitative analysis of archival data as well as existing literature, it is found that the rivalries of certain political figures, pre-WWII rivalries rooted in political ideological differences, and Occupation-era policies were factors that allowed UC to take root in Japan. These factors were explored to reveal early perspectives on UC. As a result, it is found that the rapid and deep organization of UC paved the way for political expansion in post-WWII Japan at the expense of potential social problems.

**Keywords:** *Japan, Shinzō Abe, Cult Controversy, Unification Church, Nobusuke Kishi*

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\* Ph.D. Candidate, Meiji University, Tokyo, Japan.

E-mail: elifsercennurcan@gmail.com ORCID: 0000-0002-7104-0283

\*\* Assist. Prof. Dr., Turkish National Defense University (Milli Savunma Üniversitesi), İstanbul.

E-mail: mdogrul@msu.edu.tr ORCID: 0000-0002-0637-843X

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## Öz

### Birleşme Kilisesi ve Japonya: Tarihsel Bir İnceleme

Öncesinde Dünya Barışı ve Birleşmesi için Aile Federasyonu olarak adlandırılan ve Birleşme Kilisesi (UC) olarak bilinen tarikat, Temmuz 2022'de eski Japonya Başbakanı Şinzō Abe'nin öldürülmesinin ardından dünya çapında kamuoyu tartışmalarının ön saflarına taşındı. Tarikat, geçmişi göz önüne alındığında bu tarz tartışmalara yabancı değildir. Ancak bu olay, Japonya'da Hıristiyan bir dini grubun neden olduğu sosyal sorunlar nedeniyle önde gelen siyasi liderin öldürülmesi ve söz konusu grup ile iktidardaki siyasi parti arasındaki yakın bağlantıların ortaya çıkması nedeniyle özellikle yıkıcı olmuştur. Bu olaylar zinciri, Japonya demokrasisi üzerinde olumsuz yönde bir etki yarattı ve Birleşme Kilisesi'nin Japonya'daki köklerinin daha yakından incelenmesinin gerektiğini ortaya koydu. Böylece bu çalışmanın amacı, Birleşme Kilisesi'nin II. Dünya Savaşı öncesi ve sonrası siyasi tarihi boyunca Japonya'da siyasi nüfuz elde etmesine neden olan faktörlere odaklanmaktadır. Ayrıca, Aum Şinrikyo ve Birleşme Kilisesi gibi tartışmalı tarikatlar da dahil olmak üzere Japonya'daki dini gruplar, "kült tartışması" başlığı altında halkla ilişkiler ve oransız büyümeleri noktasında önemli vaka çalışmaları sunmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, önceki çalışmaların çoğu kapsam bakımından sınırlıydı. Ayrıca, UC'nin Japonya'nın demokratik sistemi üzerindeki temel/genel etkisine ilişkin görüşleri sunmak veya değerlendirmek için sadece birkaç tek tip teknik vardı. Bu çalışma, tarihi ve güncel faktörlerden hareketle önceki görüşler arasında bir köprü kurarak literatürün sınırlarını genişletmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Mevcut literatürün yanı sıra arşiv verilerinin nitel analizi yoluyla, belirli siyasi figürlerin, İkinci Dünya Savaşı öncesi siyasi ideolojik farklılıklardan beslenen rekabetlerinin ve İşgal dönemi politikalarının UC'nin Japonya'da kök salmasına yardımcı olan faktörler olduğu saptanmıştır. Bu faktörler, UC'ye dair ilk dönem bakış açılarını ortaya çıkarmak için araştırılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, ortaya çıkabilecek sosyal sorunlar pahasına İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası Japonya'da siyasi genişleme için UC'nin hızlı ve derin bir şekilde organize olmasının önünün açıldığı görülmüştür.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Japonya, Şinzō Abe, Tarikat Tartışması, Birleşme Kilisesi, Nobusuke Kishi

## 1. Introduction

Shinzō Abe - the former as well as the longest-serving Japanese Prime Minister (PM) and one of the key figures of current world politics - was shot while giving an election speech in the city of Nara on July 8, 2022, passing away at the age of 67.<sup>1</sup> Abe served as the PM from 2006 to 2007 and from 2012 to 2020. He was the grandson of Kishi Nobusuke, who had also served as the PM of Japan from 1957 to 1960 and was a controversial figure for being a nationalist and a former Class-A war criminal suspect at the end of World War II.<sup>2</sup>

When taken under police custody, the assassin Tetsuya Yamagami confessed to having planned to kill the UC's current leader, Hak Ja Han who is the founder's widow. Due to the difficulty of reaching her, Yamagami, a gunman with a grudge against UC, directed his focus on Abe as he perceived that the latter had deep ties to the cult, an opinion he confessed to having formed after seeing Abe's delivering a recorded address at an online event sponsored by an affiliated organization named the Universal Peace Foundation (*Tenchū Heiwa Rengō*, UPF). Abe delivered a video talk at a UPF online international conference called "Think Tank 2021: Toward Peaceful Coexistence". The

<sup>1</sup> Nurcan, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Lande, 2017; Liff, 2015; Nakanishi, 2015; Pyle, 2018; Hughes, 2016.

UC considers the UPF to be one of its many "friendly organizations," stating that they are separate organizations that maintain close connections. In regards to his motive for the assassination, Yamagami confessed that he opposed the UC and Abe's support of the group, which led to sparked public attention on Japanese politicians' unofficial affiliations with such communities. Despite the fact that Abe, a Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) politician and the longest-serving post-WWII prime minister in Japan, was the victim of the incident, the public's reaction turned towards the LDP and the party's connection to the UC.

Sun Myung Moon (1920-2012), the founder of the UC was a South Korean Christian who established the cult in 1954 after the Korean War. The UC's international expansion greatly benefited from the political climate of the Cold War in the US and Japan, particularly the prevalent anti-communist mindset in the US which favored individuals or groups with similar objectives, regardless of their histories, enabling successful partnerships between the UC and politicians to be formed.<sup>3</sup>

In 1958, the UC expanded to Japan, where it formed connections with political elites. In fact, these connections resulted in Moon collaborating with Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975), and Japanese ultra-rightists Kodama Yoshio (1911-1984) and Sasakawa Ryoichi (1899-1995) to establish the "Asian People's Anti-Communist League" in the early 1960s.<sup>4</sup> The UC's main goals were anti-communism and reuniting the Koreans. The anti-communist sentiment in the US during the 1960s was particularly advantageous for expanding the UC's corporate empire. The UC went on to own a number of properties and businesses at various times, including the New Yorker Hotel, United Press International, New World Communications, the Washington Times, and other newspapers published in English, Korean, and Japanese. The UC was also involved in major infrastructural projects such as the Japan-Korea Tunnel (the International Highway Foundation Project) and the Bering Sea-spanning Japan-Russia linking tunnel. In popular culture, the church's mass weddings, which were large events where hundreds of couples were married in elaborate ceremonies arranged by Moon, gained attention.<sup>5</sup>

Japan faced a similar situation of religious group-related violence with the Tokyo subway sarin gas attack on March 20, 1995, perpetrated by members of the cult called Aum Shinrikyo.<sup>6</sup> Following the incident, the entire cult faced persecution and public scrutiny, as it was the Aum members who had carried out the terrorist attack and other crimes that were uncovered.<sup>7</sup> Although the UC was not directly responsible for Abe's murder, its presence in Japan also came under close investigation. Connections with Abe's own LDP were at the forefront of discussions, even leading to the current PM Fumio Kishida's statement on August 24, 2022 that he had no personal links to the UC after a newspaper claimed that the leader of one of his prefectural support groups had ties to the

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<sup>3</sup> Gerteis, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Fitrakis 2012.

<sup>5</sup> McNeill, 2022, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Doğrul, 2020, p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> Box and McCormack, 2004.

controversial organization.<sup>8</sup> An internal survey of LDP politicians also revealed that a significant number of MPs had previous links to the UC, quickly becoming a major problem for the party.<sup>9</sup> The opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, which has 39 Councillors and 96 Representatives, confirmed on August 25, 2022 in response to a survey that 14 of its own members, including a former leader, had links to church-affiliated organizations.<sup>10</sup> In this way, the UC was found to have widespread political connections.

In addition to the revelation of the UC's political connections, the Japanese political sphere was also divided on the issue of whether a publicly funded funeral should be held for Abe. Some extreme positions emerged during the debate, and in August 2022, the Japanese police informed prosecutors that a 48-year-old man was taken into custody for tweeting, "*Kishida will be next if a state funeral for Abe is implemented*". These tensions brought even more attention to the UC, which attempted to avoid further scrutiny. In response, 3,500 members of the UC gathered in Seoul to protest what they perceived as biased and unfavorable media coverage of their church by Japanese sources.<sup>11</sup> In this context, the events surrounding Abe's assassination are significant because the acceptance of the UC in Japanese political culture has been contentious and there is a growing trend of anti-UC sentiment in Japan. It was clearly stated in his testimony that Tetsuya Yamagami's actual target was the UC's leaders. In this situation, if Yamagami had targeted one of them instead of Abe, the hidden connections between LDP members and the UC may have been less exposed. The hatred of the Church has resulted in the death of one of Japan's most popular prime ministers due to the Church's increasing influence. This article thoroughly examines the UC's historical appraisal and progress as a religious non-governmental organization in Japan at a time when research on the UC's international connections and historical development in Japan has become increasingly important.

Shinzō Abe's assassination sparked a contentious process in Japan that brought the unofficial ties between the LDP members and the UC to the forefront. The influence of the UC on Japanese politics and its position in Japanese religious culture may now be historically examined using an explanatory method. For the limited purpose of better understanding the UC in this paper, archival materials, questionnaires, and current literature were analyzed. The results of this study on the historical development of the church in Japan conclude that the UC's ties with LDP politicians have fueled societal resentment in Japan. According to the findings, the contacts built by LDP members, beginning with Nobusuke Kishi, show a UC that became increasingly prominent in Japanese politics

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<sup>8</sup> Fee, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Japan Times 2022f.

<sup>10</sup> Japan Times 2022b.

<sup>11</sup> Japan Times 2022a.

## **2. Cults and the Unification Church in the Literature**

The interaction of innovative religious groups with their secular host countries has been the focus of several articles<sup>12</sup>, and several important publications are focused on the UC and its leaders.<sup>13</sup> As one of the well-known, the sociological book "*Doomsday Cult*" (1966) by J. Lofland is based on a field study of members of the UC in California and Oregon.<sup>14</sup> It is recognized as one of the most significant and influential studies ever undertaken on the process of religious conversion. F. Sontag investigated the UC by compiling a collection of quotations from several recorded discussions with members of Moon's movement.<sup>15</sup> The book is important to sociologists of religion because it portrays the same group that J. Lofland studied over a decade later in *Doomsday Cult* and provides some interesting raw data. Sontag argues that "*the warmth and genuineness of the individuals*" are what attracts the majority of Moonies to the movement. The warmth may be found in any religious group, so what made the UC unique? The answer provided in Thomas Robbins' article highlighted that many cults offer warmth, but that the UC is unique because it is considered a "*civil religion*."<sup>16</sup> Dean Kelley's thesis on the growth of conservative churches<sup>17</sup> and Reginald W. Bibby's reply article to Kelley on expanded perspectives are both analyzed for their applicability criteria.<sup>18</sup> Some argue that Kelley's hypothesis provides a reasonable explanation for these retention tendencies, but that it is of little use in the Christianization of non-Christians. According to them, if mainstream, church-like denominations did not renew their essential roles, the trend of better conservative church growth would likely continue, affecting only a minority of Canadians and Americans. This research was not only tracked but also used in analyses conducted in the UC's focus areas, allowing readers to get a general idea of how the UC compares with modern Christian organizations

Furthermore, F. Sontag highlighted and added one of the interesting features of the impact of Japanese culture on the UC. The UC's Japanese offshoot was the one that pioneered the concept of communal living. The UC's practice of assigning great importance to a hierarchical family structure and the use of arranged marriages as a related practice is an example of the impact of Confucianism on the Christian religion. Another important point from Sontag's interview with Moon is that he stressed that the UC is not just another denomination but seeks to unify all religions.<sup>19</sup> They promoted a new perspective on proselytizing "*religious freedom*", stating that the right to not believe in a religion is just as important as a religious group's missionary activities. However, over time, Japanese courts have focused on the UC's liabilities to former members and links to prominent individuals in society. Fundraising (including the sale of spiritual

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<sup>12</sup> Melton, 1986; Parsons, 1989; Wiepking, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Taylor, 1978; Barker, 2019.

<sup>14</sup> Lofland, 1966.

<sup>15</sup> Sontag, 1977.

<sup>16</sup> Robbins, 1981.

<sup>17</sup> Kelley, 1972.

<sup>18</sup> Bibby, 1978.

<sup>19</sup> Sontag, 1977.

products<sup>20</sup>) was regarded as dishonest and illegal, and unlawful missionary activities and fundraising continued without hindrance until recent years. The mission of the church in Japan appears to focus on recruiting members to generate revenue. Japanese church members have built a UC conglomerate to meet Sun Myung Moon's financial demands.

Yoshihide Sakurai's article (2010) focuses on the UC's strategy and views it as a "social problem". When comparing the UC with Aum Shinrikyo, he points out that the majority of Japanese did not perceive Aum's members as "patients" to be treated psychiatrically at the time, and therefore conveniently ignored and overlooked the flaws of New Age and cult movements.<sup>21</sup> Although both Aum and the UC are religious organizations, their founders, missions, organizational characteristics, and political ties are significantly different. Aum was a new organization founded solely on Shoko Asahara's (1978-2018) interpretation of Buddhism. Despite his political connections, Asahara lacked the political leverage to be among the majority of cabinet members and deputy ministers. It was an indigenous structure, as far as is known, with no foreign roots or offshoots.<sup>22</sup> In the end, contemporary Japanese society continues to examine the limitations of "freedom" for religious groups such as Aum and the UC within itself.<sup>23</sup>

The UC has undergone significant changes in its political strategy in Japan since its arrival in 1958. In order to better understand the origins of the UC's involvement in Japan, it is necessary to conduct a historical analysis of the UC's outreach to Japan and its connections with Japanese politics. This includes examining the UC's interactions with various political groups and the motivations behind these interactions.

### **3. Forming of the Liberal Democrat Party and the Unification Church in Japan**

In order to grasp the context of the spread of UC in Japan, it is necessary to examine the political landscape of post-war Japan and the development of the LDP. The LDP was a crucial political party in Japan at this time, and UC's involvement in Japan began shortly after World War II. The LDP's policies and objectives, along with the support of influential interest groups and a prestigious and influential bureaucracy, were instrumental in the establishment of the political system in Japan in 1955. These factors contributed to the dissemination of UC in Japan.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The spiritual sales method (Reikan shōhō) is a malicious business practice of commercial sales at exorbitant prices being accomplished using stories such as the fate of ancestors, the curse of spirits, and bad karma to arouse anxiety. The UC is said to be utilizing the story of bad ancestral karma against the Japanese believers who are told their ancestors have committed sins such as annexing Korea. The believers are instructed to purchase statues, prayer beads, etc. at extremely high prices. Spiritual merchandise sales as a social problem have been brought up in the Japanese National Diet since the 1980s, with a Fukuoka district court case finding the UC management at fault over the sales in 1993. See also; Sakurai 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Sakurai, 2010, s.317-334.

<sup>22</sup> Muir, 1999; Watanabe, 1998.

<sup>23</sup> Kreiner, 2015, pp. 54–55.

<sup>24</sup> Curtis, 1999, p. 39.

### **3.1. Revolutionary Imperialism and Militarism Leading to Political Elite Strength**

Since the Meiji Restoration, Japan underwent modernization and secularization<sup>25</sup> as part of the process of building a modern nation. However, this process also included elements of revolution, and civilian autocrats in Japan pursued imperialistic and militaristic policies while using popular slogans to gain support.<sup>26</sup> In particular, Meiji modernizers were influenced by the Prussian model<sup>27</sup>, and slogans such as "*catch up and surpass the West*" (Oitsuki oikose) and "*rich nation strong army*" (Fukoku kyōhei) motivated Japan's drive towards modernization as a means of national self-defense and survival in a hostile world.<sup>28</sup> This was especially important for nationalists who became more active in the early 20th century. Japan's first National Socialist Party (Kokka Shakaitō) was founded by Christian nationalist journalist Aizan Yamaji (1865-1917) in 1905. The most influential leader of the nationalist movement was Ikki Kita (1883-1937), who combined traditional support for the legitimacy of the emperor and sovereignty (kokutai) with revolutionary ideas for effective management and radical restructuring of the political economy.<sup>29</sup> Kita was also strongly anti-communist and anti-capitalist. His book "*An Outline Plan for the Reorganization of Japan*" (Nihon Kaizō Hōan Taikō) was popular among nationalists and is considered by Masao Maruyama to be the ideological precursor to Japanese fascism.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to revolutionary thinkers, experienced bureaucrats returning from overseas also had ideas about how to run a planned economy. One example of this is Shintarō Ryū's (1900-1967) 1939 best seller "*Reorganization of the Japanese Economy*," which favored a Nazi-style controlled economy (Nippon Keizai no Saihensei).<sup>31</sup> Ikki Kita's "*An Outline of Legislation for the Reconstruction of Japan*" (Nihon Kaizō Hōan Taikō) was widely regarded as the ideological basis for the February Incident in 1936, which had many similarities to Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf."<sup>32</sup> According to Maruyama, Kita's manuscript entailed fascist ideas similar to those which would later fuel Hitler's Nazi Germany. The associations revolving around Kita's book were not simply anti-Bolshevist movements but displayed a truly fascist ideology that combined domestic reforms and international demands.<sup>33</sup>

The Japanese bureaucratic elite, which included individuals from the military, bureaucracy, and business sectors, formed political associations in the lead-up to the war. These groups were not necessarily ideologically driven, but rather served to strengthen the connections within the ruling class and prepare for the rise of fascism in the country

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<sup>25</sup> Küçükyağcı, 2019, p. 49-50.

<sup>26</sup> Dower, 1999, p.203.

<sup>27</sup> McVeigh, 2003, p. 104.

<sup>28</sup> McVeigh, 2003, p. 105.

<sup>29</sup> Kapranov, 2017.

<sup>30</sup> McVeigh, 2003, p. 107; Maruyama, 2012, p. 34.

<sup>31</sup> McVeigh, 2003, p. 108.

<sup>32</sup> Maruyama, 1963, p. 28.

<sup>33</sup> Maruyama, 1963p. 34.

after 1936.<sup>34</sup> Shinzō Abe's grandfather, Nobusuke Kishi (1896-1987), was a member of this bureaucratic and political elite at the time. It is important to note that these political associations were not democratic in nature and played a role in the eventual rise of authoritarianism in Japan.

Kishi was originally born into the Satō family but was adopted by his uncle as his heir later on. Kishi entered the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce (MAC) as the top graduate of the Tokyo Imperial University School of Law and was appointed to the General Affairs Agency of Manchukuo in 1936. He then became a part of the reformist technocrats during the wartime regime. After returning from Manchukuo, Kishi was appointed as an administrative vice-minister at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MCI, successor to the MAC) and then served as a minister in the wartime Hideki Tōjō (1884-1948) cabinet. When the war ended, he was arrested and given Class A war criminal status at the Tokyo Tribunals. Imprisoned for a while at the Sugamo Prison together with other war criminals, Kishi was released soon after the tribunals ended. Kishi's postwar career saw his election to the Lower House in 1952 and his becoming the Prime Minister, helping the renewed US-Japan Security Treaty. His bureaucratic past combined with his political career point to an organic linkage between pre-WWII elites and the post-WWII ones.

During the pre-World War II era in Japan, the military, bureaucracy, and senior political leaders formed a coalition with monopoly capital and political parties to create an unstable ruling structure.<sup>35</sup> This structure also included individuals and groups known as "rōnin"<sup>36</sup> who sometimes acted outside of these groups, but in alignment with dominant nationalist thinking. In the period leading up to the Manchurian Incident in 1919, there was a proliferation of fascist-affiliated groups that worked with rōnin associations to combat the left-wing movement.<sup>37</sup> For example, it was found during the February 26 Incident investigation that Mitsui's<sup>38</sup> managing director, Seihin Ikeda (1867-1950) had given money to rightists such as Ikki Kita. Between 1931 and 1936, a trend emerged of the formation of political associations within the ranks of reservists and bureaucrats, including Baron Hiranuma's (1867-1952) "National Foundation Society" and Masaatsu Yasuoka's (1898-1983) "Golden Pheasant Academy" and the "National Prestige Maintenance Association." These groups were not necessarily ideological in nature, but rather served to strengthen lateral connections within the ruling class, and played a significant role in paving the way for the rise of fascism from above after 1936.<sup>39</sup> Even after Japan's defeat in World War II and the subsequent Occupation, these connections persisted and gained further influence due to Occupation policies.

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<sup>34</sup> Maruyama, 1963, pp. 37–38.

<sup>35</sup> Maruyama, 1963, p. 32.

<sup>36</sup> Maruyama defines rōnin as those individuals and groups who carried out nationalistic agenda actions outside of set affiliations, in a manner similar to masterless samurai who served different people at times.

<sup>37</sup> Maruyama, 1963, p. 32; Tansman, 2009.

<sup>38</sup> One of the largest Japanese conglomerates. See also; Doğrul and Korkut, 2022.

<sup>39</sup> Maruyama, 1963, pp. 37–38.



### **3.2. Japanese Bureaucracy's Strengthening Under the GHQ**

The leader of the GHQ<sup>40</sup> General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964) did not travel much in Japan, nor did he talk with more than a couple of Japanese elites while he was in Tokyo.<sup>41</sup> The GHQ was staffed by approximately 1500 people in 1946, growing to 3200 people in 1948. These individuals acted as a form of government that implemented basic political, economic, social, and cultural policies through both official orders and advice or suggestions to Japanese functionaries. The latter practice carries similarities to the “administrative guidance” (*gyōsei shidō*) given by the Japanese bureaucracies in the later periods to shape the economy.<sup>42</sup> GHQ commanded control over education, and mass media, and even created grassroots programs to reach the Japanese population better. The exercise of authority by the GHQ incorporated Japanese functionaries who would not have had such power on their own.<sup>43</sup> MacArthur and his staff had to rely on the Japanese governmental machinery and agencies due to orders and practical considerations, but there was also a strict imposition of the US vision for Japan that Japanese officials had to follow. This reliance on the Japanese governmental machinery and agencies was necessitated by linguistic and technocratic capacity issues that prevented a direct military rule by the GHQ.<sup>44</sup> As a result, Japanese technocratic elites were able to implement GHQ directives and gain influence and authority under the Occupation.

A well-known example of the imposition of the GHQ's vision of Japan can be found in the case of the postwar Constitution. The Constitutional Problems Investigation Committee (*Kenpō Mondai Chōsa-kai*) or also called the “Matsumoto committee” after its chairperson was set up right after the Occupation to address the postwar constitution problem. This committee was made up of Japanese scholars headed by Jōji Matsumoto (1877-1954) who was a commercial law expert professor and had served as a high-ranking official in the South Manchuria Railway Company and in the precursor of the Manchurian Legislation Bureau.<sup>45</sup> The draft prepared by Matsumoto's team was found to be unsuitable by MacArthur and he commanded the chief of GHQ Government Section Courtney Whitney (1897-1969) to prepare a new draft<sup>46</sup> who formed a team to draft the new text in haste. A meeting was held on February 10, 1946, between the Whitney team and the Matsumoto team accompanied by Foreign Minister Shigeru Yoshida where the GHQ's constitutional text was handed to the Japanese side. A modified version of the text was passed in the National Diet on October 7, 1946.<sup>47</sup> The Japanese officials had to follow

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<sup>40</sup> The office of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (Rengō Kokugun Saikō Shirei-kan Sōshirei-bu, SCAP) was also referred to as GHQ (General Headquarters). GHQ was in force until the end of the occupation of Japan, which ended on April 28, 1952, when the Treaty of San Francisco came into effect. See also; SCAP, 1949.

<sup>41</sup> Dower, 1999, p. 204.

<sup>42</sup> Dower, 1999, p. 205.

<sup>43</sup> Dower, 1999, p. 206.

<sup>44</sup> Dower, 1999, pp. 212–13.

<sup>45</sup> Woodall, 2014, p. 87.

<sup>46</sup> Ware, 1983.

<sup>47</sup> Woodall, 2014, pp. 87–92.

the GHQ's will, but certain figures found this process to be empowering for themselves, especially Shigeru Yoshida (1878-1967) who later went on to become the prime minister.

### **3.3. Shigeru Yoshida vs. Ichirō Hatoyama Rivalry**

The first postwar government of the Kijūrō Shidehara (1872 -1951) cabinet resigned on May 22, 1946, and Ichirō Hatoyama (1883-1959) was expected to take over as the leader of the largest political party, the Japan Liberal Party (*Nihon Jiyūtō*). But the GHQ purged Hatoyama due to his former militarism and the career diplomat Shigeru Yoshida took over the prime minister position.<sup>48</sup> The son-in-law of politician Nobuaki Makino, Yoshida's English skills and his arrest by the Special Higher Police also known as the Thought Police (*Tokubetsu Kōtō Keisatsu*, often abbreviated as *Tokkō*) due to opposing the wartime government made him the prime candidate for Occupation-era premiership. He served as a diplomat in Manchuria, Paris Peace Conference, Korea, Italy, and Great Britain. He had three conditions for the GHQ prior to taking over the PM position: No requirement to raise campaign funds, free selection of cabinet ministers, and being able to quit any time he wanted. Yoshida was not a member of parliament in the Liberal Party when he became the PM but was given the leadership post quickly. He presided over the postwar constitution's acceptance in 1947 and served as the PM until 1954.<sup>49</sup>

Drawing on his ties with the US side as well as other indigenous political elites, Yoshida consolidated his authority to the point of being called "one man Yoshida" and was successful in a severe political rivalry with Hatoyama until a corruption scandal in 1954 forced Yoshida to resign. Some of Yoshida's strength can be attributed to his ability to communicate with and perhaps manipulate the GHQ during the Occupation when the Japanese diplomats posted to the Central Liaison Office (*Shūsen Renraku Chūō Jimukyoku*, CLO) which was set up as an external organ of Foreign Ministry and acted as the primary mediatory. CLO's leader was Katsuo Okazaki (1897-1965) who later became a foreign minister under Yoshida and was the recipient of Whitney's "atomic energy" remark at the historic meeting between GHQ's constitution team and the Japanese government. Another CLO member was Jirō Shirasu (1902-1985) who bypassed GHQ Government Service to get conservative cause support from General Charles Willoughby (1892-1965) who was MacArthur's chief of intelligence head and was anti-leftist.<sup>50</sup> Yoshida also made the effort to fast-track ex-bureaucrats and some corporate figures into ministerial posts. Ex-bureaucrats made up 37% of his cabinet since prewar cabinet ministers and senior military officers were ineligible to hold office.<sup>51</sup> His Chief Cabinet Secretary was Shinzō Abe's uncle Eisaku Satō (1901-1975) and one of his justice

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<sup>48</sup> PMs of Japan between 1948-60: Hitoshi Ashida (March 10, 1948 – October 15, 1948), Shigeru Yoshida (October 15, 1948–December 10, 1954), Ichirō Hatoyama (December 10, 1954 – December 23, 1956), Tanzan Ishibashi (December 23, 1956 – January 31, 1957), Nobusuke Kishi (January 31, 1957 – July 19, 1960). Woodall, 2014, pp. 96–98.

<sup>49</sup> Woodall, 2014, pp. 83–83, 96.

<sup>50</sup> Woodall, 2014, pp. 106.

<sup>51</sup> Masland, 1974, p. 575.

ministers was Takeo Ōhashi (1904-1981) who was a former upper official at the Home Ministry who directed “the red purge” in the fourth Yoshida cabinet.<sup>52</sup> Another future PM Hayato Ikeda also served in one of his cabinets.

Yoshida’s rival Ichirō Hatoyama (1883-1959) was the son of a former speaker of the House of Representatives and had held political posts in prewar cabinets. During his stint as the education minister, Hatoyama became famous for forcing a Kyoto Imperial University law professor to resign for holding leftist views. This past history made him undesirable to the GHQ, so he was unable to make a swift return to politics after the war. When Yoshida refused to step aside in 1952, Hatoyama became president of the rival Democratic Party.<sup>53</sup> Hatoyama and his supporters took advantage of the no-confidence motion rights granted by the new constitution to bring Yoshida down in 1948 who had to form a coalition to stay in power. This rivalry between Hatoyama and Yoshida split the right-wing politicians until the formation of the LDP.

### ***3.4. Liberal Democrat Party’s Birth and the Early Post-WWII Japanese Politics***

The anomaly of the LDP consisting of incompatible personalities and policy positions yet remaining in power for most of post-WWII Japanese history is a noted point in literature. Japan’s clientelist structure whereby the LDP-led central government rewards its supporters with patronage played a central role in the opposition parties being unable to compete against the LDP’s resource advantage in elections,<sup>54</sup> a system often called the “1955 System”.

The 1955 System was born from the political party system of the LDP and the perennial opposition and the economy-minded strategy where the LDP did all the governing. Ex-bureaucrat leaders such as Nobusuke Kishi resided over the growing economy. Socialists were briefly included in a coalition government between 1947-1948 although the conservatives dominated the partnerships. In 1955, the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP) was formed out of the union of the Left and Right Socialist Parties. The conservative parties (Liberal and Democratic Parties) followed the same strategy and formed the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). JSP found its support from labor (especially public sector union *Sōhyō*) while the LDP was supported by agriculture, as well as small and large businesses. Until 1994 when LDP lost power for the first time, the JSP was relegated to being the second choice of the voters.<sup>55</sup>

On November 5, 1955, the LDP was born from an alliance between conservative politicians Taketora Ogata (1888-1956), Ichirō Hatoyama (1883-1959), Banboku Ōno (1890-1964), and Bukichi Miki (1884-1956). Ōno and Miki were political enemies as they were members of Hatoyama and Yoshida’s parties respectively, but when the socialist politicians united and the business world refused to make political campaign donations until the conservatives got together, the two leaders put aside their differences.

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<sup>52</sup> Woodall, 2014, pp. 99–100.

<sup>53</sup> Woodall, 2014, p. 98.

<sup>54</sup> Scheiner, 2005.

<sup>55</sup> Scheiner, 2005, p. 37.

As a result, the LDP came to be a group of factions unified for the purpose of a campaign and legislative strategy. Ex-bureaucrat and career politician factions often clashed, and cabinet changes in LDP governments were frequent to appease powerful factions. Some opportunistic LDP leaders got the chance to rectify the perceived flaws of the institutions left by the American military occupiers; starting with singling out Shigeru Yoshida as the principal domestic collaborator.<sup>56</sup>

LDP's anti-Yoshida alliance was led by Ichirō Hatoyama, Bukichi Miki, Ichirō Kōno, Mamoru Shigemitsu, Nobusuke Kishi, and others who were subjected to purges as militarists and ultra-nationalists during the Occupation. These politicians ousted Yoshida in 1954 and installed Hatoyama as the PM. Although successful in getting rid of his political rival and the repatriation of Japanese prisoners of war from the USSR, Ichirō Hatoyama could not get the USSR to return to the occupied islands.<sup>57</sup> Much later, Shinzō Abe achieved similar goals of having some of the North Korean abductees returned, but no significant gain on the Russia-occupied islands.

The JSP was the head of the opposition during the renewal of the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1960 which was very unpopular with the general population. Prime minister at the time, Nobusuke Kishi employed strong-handed parliamentary tactics to ram the renewal through the National Diet. This renewal was accompanied by Anpō Protests due to which Kishi had to step down. However, the opposition JSP did not obtain an electoral victory as the LDP Prime Minister Ikeda<sup>58</sup> successfully turned the public attention towards economic growth and his "Income Doubling Plan". Economic growth allowed the LDP to draw in wide and continued support. Despite the electoral victories over the opposition, LDP never received most of the votes in the House of Representatives elections after 1963.

### ***3.5. Nobusuke Kishi's Legacy in the LDP***

The rival groups in the 1955 system were at odds over the Japan-US Mutual Security Treaty (*Nichibei Anzen Hoshō Jōyaku*, often abbreviated as *Anpō*) which was agreed upon by the Yoshida government in 1951. Progressives were not in the thought of the US stationing its troops in Japan. Conservatives believed it perpetuated Japan's dependence on the US for security. So, the Kishi cabinet's primary mission was the revision of Anpō. Kishi was aware of the risk but took countermeasures such as the Police Duties Law in 1959 to enhance the government's capacity to curb protests.<sup>59</sup> This law created controversy, so it was shelved, and ministers quit. To hang onto the party presidency, Kishi made a pact with other faction bosses to resign once the Anpō was revised. The ratification went ahead and demonstrators surrounded the Diet. On May 19, 1960, the JSP MPs sat on the Diet corridor floor to prevent the House Speaker from entering and thus finalizing the ratification. Once called in, the police forcefully removed

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<sup>56</sup> Woodall, 2014, pp. 115–17.

<sup>57</sup> Woodall, 2014, p. 119.

<sup>58</sup> *Britannica* 2022, p. 106.

<sup>59</sup> Sissons, 1959, pp. 36-37.

the MPS. These were part of Kishi's steamroller style of leadership tactics (*koyukō saiketsu*).<sup>60</sup> Student protesters against Anpō revision clashed with police, even leading to the emergency rescue of the White House Press Secretary who was trying to arrange the US president's visit. The ratified treaty went into effect on June 23 and Kishi resigned as promised. The right-wing activists were not happy with Kishi's endorsement of progressive Ikeda as the next leader, a decision which led to Kishi being stabbed by a right-wing group member on July 14, 1960. Soon after Kishi, his progressive rival JSP Chairman Inejirō Asanuma was also stabbed by another right-wing group member, but unlike Kishi, Asanuma lost his life.<sup>61</sup>

#### **4. Easing the Unification Church's Path: Role of the Political Thoughts and Institutions**

##### **4.1. Anti-Communist Sentiment**

Before WWII, the Japanese political sphere had furlled towards the rise of nationalism and fascism, leading to the country's alliance with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in the war. Japanese fascism had shared the ideology of its Italian and German counterparts in such matters as the tendency to glorify military build-up and war, a strong emphasis on racial myths and the national essence, and a struggle against Marxism.<sup>62</sup> It was this last point that benefited from the anti-communist sentiment of the Western Bloc in the post-WWII era.

The immediate post-WWII anti-communist stance and various anxieties surrounding the Japanese government compelled the GHQ who had to administer occupied Japan to develop new strategies. GHQ dissolved Japan's Home Ministry in December 1947 since it was viewed as one of the state organs which culminated the militaristic pre-war regime.<sup>63</sup> However, fears surrounding potential uprisings led to the investigative and policing capabilities of the Home Ministry's Public Security Police (*Keibi Kōan Keisatsu*) to be transferred to the Legal Affairs Agency Special Examination Bureau (*Hōmuchō Tokubetsu Shinsakyoku*) under the newly founded Public Security Intelligence Agency (*Kōan Chōsachō*). In the end, the Agency came to employ not only ex-Home Ministry bureaucrats but also those from military and wartime Foreign Ministry backgrounds.<sup>64</sup> There was a recognition of the necessity to adhere to the US wishes, so the Agency speedily translated and distributed Sherman Kent's "Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy" as one of its educational materials.<sup>65</sup> In addition, the Agency handled the interrogations of the Japanese repatriates who were returned by the USSR to control potential communist spy activity. Head of the GHQ's intelligence activities and

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<sup>60</sup> *Britannica* 2022, p. 130.

<sup>61</sup> NHK "Shakaitō Asanuma Iin-chō Shisatsu Jiken (Assassination of Socialist Party Chairman Asanuma)"

<sup>62</sup> Maruyama, 1963, p. 40; Jellinek, 1929; Takeuchi, 1967.

<sup>63</sup> Umemoto, 2011, p. 147.

<sup>64</sup> Kotani, 2022, pp. 23-24.

<sup>65</sup> Kotani, 2022, p. 23.

an open Francisco Franco supporter, Charles Andrew Willoughby cooperated with the ex-Imperial Japanese military intelligence officers such as Shiro Hattori, Seizō Arasue, and others for the common purpose of battling the communist threat within Japan.<sup>66</sup>

#### 4.2. Changing Attitudes Towards Christianity

During the 19th century, Japan's persecution of Christianity and the implementation of the sakoku policy resulted in a small, predominantly Catholic Christian population concentrated in the Nagasaki region. While the official attitude towards Christianity became more lenient following the Meiji Restoration, the ruling elites remained cautious in their acceptance of the religion. They recognized that in order to modernize and keep pace with Western civilization, they needed to adopt certain aspects of it, but they also sought to protect their own power and preserve their traditional system. As a result, they chose to adopt Western material civilization while limiting the influence of undesirable political elements such as Christianity and liberal democracy.<sup>67</sup> However, it was difficult to separate the material civilization of the West from the modern spirit that had fostered it. Some progressive members of the ruling class were able to mitigate the spread of European power by adopting an "*Eastern morality, Western arts (technology)*"<sup>68</sup> approach as proposed by Shōzan Sakuma. This attitude made it difficult for Christianity to gain political acceptance until the end of World War II. On the other hand, after the First World War, the Japanese ruling elite demonstrated greater tolerance towards Islam in line with their imperial ambitions.<sup>69</sup> After this elite class was punished by the US following the war, it is possible that the tolerance of Christian religious institutions in Asia by the GHQ that opposed communism contributed to the spread of the UC in Japan.

For example, despite the strict censure by the GHQ against mentioning nuclear bombs in Japanese media and press, there were two books published during the Occupation about the atomic bombings of Japan. These books were "Leaving These Children" (*Kono Ko wo Nokoshite*) published in 1948, and "The Bells of Nagasaki" (*Nagasaki no Kane*) published in 1949 which were written by a Christian doctor named Takashi Nagai (1908-1951).<sup>70</sup> Nagai's work on nuclear destruction and the future redemption of Japan was allowed by the GHQ censors, perhaps due to his unique stance as a doctor, a native Nagasaki resident, and a member of the pre-Meiji Catholic Christian community. His works brought famous people such as Helen Keller, the Pope<sup>71</sup>, and Emperor Hirohito (reign: 1926-1989) to visit him before his death from radiation sickness.<sup>72</sup> In this way, Christianity started to be seen in a more positive light, especially from the political elites' perspective, and especially for those with pre-WWII nationalist

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<sup>66</sup> Kotani, 2022, pp. 16-17.

<sup>67</sup> Maruyama, 2012, pp. 57-58.

<sup>68</sup> Maruyama, 2012, pp. 57-58.

<sup>69</sup> Esenbel et al.; Dündar, 2006; Esenbel, 2007.

<sup>70</sup> Diehl, 2018.

<sup>71</sup> Saeki, 2014.

<sup>72</sup> Dower, 1999, pp. 196-98.

backgrounds since nationalist logic in Japan held the down-to-earth precept, “It’s always best to be on the winning side.”<sup>73</sup>

The change in perceptions regarding Christianity was sped up when Tetsu Katayama (July 28, 1887 – May 30, 1978) and Hitoshi Ashida (November 15, 1887 – June 20, 1959) formed a coalition government between 1946-1947. Katayama was the head of the JSP (*Nihon Shakaitō*) and the three-way coalition included the JSP, Democratic Party (*Minshutō*, DP), and the National Cooperative Party (*Kokumin Kyōdōtō*, NCP). Katayama’s Presbyterian Christian background was praised by General Douglas MacArthur as a sign of religious freedom in Japan. Ashida was a diplomat who had resigned in protest of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, becoming a politician later on. Ashiyama’s DP managed to stay in power for only eight months in 1948 before Shigeru Yoshida returned to power.<sup>74</sup> Despite the short life of the Katayama-Ashida coalition, having a Christian prime minister who was openly supported by the US arguably improved the usability of Christianity as a political tool for the next leaders who would hail from the LDP.

#### **4.3. “Spiritual Sales” and Election Restrictions**

Despite the UC dogma’s discrimination against Japanese people which entails “bad ancestral karma” and “Japan being the Eve country which led Korea - the Adam country - astride”, there are two institutional factors that helped the group gather immense amounts of funds in Japan. The practice of uncontrolled spiritual sales and the strict restrictions on election campaigns are those factors that facilitated the cult’s reach to grow into social problem levels.

In 1971, the UC started preaching that Korea was the “Adam Nation” and Japan the “Eve Nation”.<sup>75</sup> Following this line of thought, Japan had supposedly betrayed Korea by invasion and had to atone for her sins. This point was used to pressure the Japanese followers of the cult to donate immense amounts to erase the “negative ancestral karma,” a tactic called “spiritual sales”. The spiritual sales method (*reikan shōhō*) is defined as a malicious business practice of commercial sales at exorbitant prices being accomplished using stories such as the fate of ancestors, the curse of spirits, and bad karma to arouse anxiety.<sup>76</sup> The UC is said to be utilizing the story of negative ancestral karma against the Japanese believers who are told their ancestors have committed sins by annexing Korea and waging war, a situation upon which Hiroshi Yamaguchi, a lawyer with the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales, comments that “*Rather than being a religious body, it is, in effect, more of a for-profit business organization*”.<sup>77</sup> The believers are then instructed to purchase statues, prayer beads, etc. from the cult at extremely high

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<sup>73</sup> Maruyama, 1963, pp. 17–18.

<sup>74</sup> Woodall, 2014, pp. 96–98.

<sup>75</sup> McGill, 2022.

<sup>76</sup> The definition of “Reikan Shōhō [Spiritual Sales Method]” is given by the Tokyo Metropolitan Office (2016).

<sup>77</sup> Nikkan Sports 2022.

prices. Spiritual sales as a social problem have been brought up in the Japanese National Diet since the 1980s, with a Fukuoka district court case finding the UC management at fault over the sales in 1993.<sup>78</sup> Despite the recognition of the problem at hand, the necessary legislative and executive oversight to provide solutions to those who have been targeted by spiritual sales was largely missing. Consumer Affairs Minister Tarō Kōno led the first meeting of a panel on malicious spiritual sales on August 30, 2022.<sup>79</sup>

Political campaigning for elections in Japan is subject to strict rules and regulations based on the Public Officials Election Act (POEL) whose violation may result in monetary punishments or imprisonment.<sup>80</sup> Politicians who are found to have violated the restrictions even at a minuscule level have had to resign their posts in the past including ministers Yuko Obuchi and Midori Matsushima in 2014.<sup>81</sup> These restrictions include having to mostly rely on volunteers for election campaigning, a short period of allowed activity, limitation to only one campaign center and campaign car per candidate, etc. The UC believers who come to candidates' aid as volunteer workers during election campaigning have been acknowledged as "very useful" by a politician's secretary.<sup>82</sup> According to an online survey carried out by Asahi Shimbun, 2,989 politicians from prefectural and national levels of government admitted to donating to the UC, participating in events held by the UC, and/or using UC-related volunteers for political campaigning, etc.<sup>83</sup> Based on a similar survey carried out within the LDP, Secretary-General Toshimitsu Motegi made it public that 179 of the party's lawmakers said they had some connections with the UC in a similar manner.<sup>84</sup>

#### ***4.4. LDP's Long Standing Connection to the UC***

The intimate links that the UC has maintained with three generations of the Abe family, including Abe's grandfather, Nobusuke Kishi, Abe's father, the politician Shintarō Abe (1924-1991), and Shinzō Abe himself.<sup>85</sup> The UC first established a presence in Japan in 1959, and in 1964 it was granted official status as a religious institution.<sup>86</sup> Kishi allowed the UC to use the location where he had his official residence as a PM and attended the meetings of the cult as well as the anti-communist organization known as the "International Federation for Victory over Communism" (*Kokusai Shōkyō Rengō*, IFVOC) which was affiliated with the Church.<sup>87</sup> In the late 1960s, when the left-wing movement was at its height, Kishi and his LDP party had the same purpose as the UC.

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<sup>78</sup> *Courts in Japan* 2003.

<sup>79</sup> *Japan Times* 2022c.

<sup>80</sup> Usaki, 1990, p. 134.

<sup>81</sup> Hayes, 2014.

<sup>82</sup> *Nikkei* 2022.

<sup>83</sup> *Asahi Shimbun* 2022.

<sup>84</sup> *Nikkei Asia* 2022.

<sup>85</sup> Nurcan, 2022.

<sup>86</sup> Sakurai, 2004, p. 214.

<sup>87</sup> *Jiji* 2022; Kosuke, 2022.



Since then, as seen with Abe's return to office as prime minister in 2012, it is evident that the relationships and his connection with UC had deepened.<sup>88</sup>

Despite professing universal, democratic, and secular values, and the fact that Article 20 of the Japanese Constitution states that *"the state and its organs shall refrain from religious education and any other religious activity,"* religious cults tolerated or encouraged by the LDP did build widespread connections within the political sphere. In addition, perhaps due to the history of collaboration with Komeito, the LDP rejected Article 20-related complaints. Shinzō Abe's rise also saw the LDP acquire a more pro-UC stance and more openly Nippon Kaigi-supporting viewpoints.<sup>89</sup> Boasting many members from among LDP politicians, Nippon Kaigi is an organization which aims to return Japan back to its prewar status with an official military and conservative social values.<sup>90</sup> This can be arguably linked to the longstanding connection between the Kishi-Abe family politicians of the LDP and the UC.

According to Masao Maruyama, Class A war crime suspects like Nobusuke Kishi were *"... far from being the prime movers, can rather be regarded as pathetic robots, manipulated by outlaws (some big and some small, some belonging to the government and some outside) on whom they looked down from the height of their positions."*<sup>91</sup> Coming from an opposite viewpoint but stating a similar opinion, Shinzō Abe clearly states that there is a misunderstanding about A-Class war criminals as he considers those who underwent the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal as being judged by concepts that were made up after the war and that the classification has no relation to the crimes committed, only that the criminals happened to be in a position of authority. He also mentions that among the A-Class war criminals, there were people who later became politicians and even ministers, pointing at his grandparent's success. His opinion is that these criminals could not be found guilty by domestic laws and that the citizens of Japan have a general agreement on the issue.<sup>92</sup> However, there is a certain level of internalization of his grandfather's legacy as he also recounts feeling like the only person who could argue in support despite not knowing too much about it, even feeling "required to do so".<sup>93</sup> In this way, Shinzō Abe can be argued to have carried on the legacy of associating with the UC due to the normalization of doing so by other predecessor LDP politicians.

## **5. Findings and Result**

For a long time, Japan has provided illuminating examples of international relations and political science. According to modernization theories, underdevelopment

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<sup>88</sup> McNeill, 2022, p. 21.

<sup>89</sup> McNeill, 2022, p. 5.

<sup>90</sup> See also: Sugano, 2016.

<sup>91</sup> Maruyama, 2012, p. 95.

<sup>92</sup> Abe, 2022, pp. 73–74.

<sup>93</sup> Shinzō Abe recounts the memory of a high school teacher arguing for getting rid of the Anpō in class and him feeling like the only person who could argue the opposite despite not knowing too much about it, even feeling required to do so. See; Abe, 2022.

is the root cause of problems such as terrorism.<sup>94</sup> Yet, a recently formed terrorist organization Aum existed in Japan inside the framework of “New Religions” (*shin shūkyō*) at a period when its economy was growing the quickest and becoming the world's second-largest. When Aum was unable to obtain a role in the cabinet or parliament in the 1990s, it resorted to violence. In the 1990s, the Aum case took up most of the attention on the cult issue, so the media, police, and academics besides a few people did not pay enough attention to the growing UC's missionary and fund-raising work, which has been going on for more than fifty years.<sup>95</sup> Questioning what the UC<sup>96</sup> can do now that its relations with the ruling party, the LDP, have been severed will result in a series of preventative measures for the experienced Japanese democracy.

Despite the fact that religious organizations such as UC have become stronger in Japan, Japan used a provision of the Religious Corporation Law (*Shūkyō Dantai Hō*) that allows it to question a religious organization for the first time in October 2022.<sup>97</sup> Regardless of the primary tactics, such as voluntary activities, and wedding ceremonies, the consequence of brainwashing and mind control is causing extreme insecurity in the public spaces of contemporary Japan. As proven by the ties of LDP members to UC in contemporary Japanese society, it is reasonable to assume that the mission strategy of particular groups sowed the seeds of antagonism between religion and society and that the adversarial social structure exacerbated the conflict.

According to Parsons, innovative religious organizations must find a balance between society's secular and traditional ties in order to be embraced.<sup>98</sup> It appears that the UC has neither decisively violated nor rejected the normal social customs of Japanese culture, but has instead conformed to and validated them. Nonetheless, its secretive links with the LDP have made it the target of criticism that may be regarded as a top-level touch to the Japanese governing party.

Bromley based his theory on the idea that cult-watch groups and government agencies could make a conflict between a religion and a society worse and lead to a "dramatic denouement."<sup>99</sup> In the end, religious groups either want to be in power or in the ruling authority of the government, therefore current government agencies focus on deciphering that group. Religious groups and government institutions are distinguished by this conflict and polarization. If it is crossed, the stronger side will emerge. If religious institutions and the state structure engage in concert with the same goal, then the focus is on infractions of the law. When structures other than the state's official organs are in close proximity to the state's core power, corruption and non-transparent relationships shine out. The existence of these hidden relationships will be revealed after a series of conflicts with the current political leadership or the emergence of unexpected political crises, such

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<sup>94</sup> Zafirovski and Rodeheaver, 2013.

<sup>95</sup> Sakurai, 2010, p. 319.

<sup>96</sup> *Japan Times* 2022d; Takahara, 2022.

<sup>97</sup> *Nikkei* 2022; Also see; Sumimoto, 2000.

<sup>98</sup> Parsons, 1989, p. 225.

<sup>99</sup> Bromley, 2002; Sakurai, 2010, p. 319.

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as the assassination of Abe.

As a result, Abe's grandfather Kishi's stabbing by an ultra-right-wing activist after the Anpō revision in 1960 described in an equation (major dissatisfaction with the new US-Japan Security Treaty + Ikeda being seen as too progressive = Double dissatisfaction) can be similar to Abe's shooting by right-wing Tetsuya Yamagami (family issues + Abe's perceived cooperation with anti-Japanese Korean group = Double dissatisfaction). Japanese self-nationalism has at times manifested an aversion to relations with the US or Christian institutions. This signals that the elite ultranationalist tradition, such as Ikki Kita in the post-Meiji period, continues in essence partially. Today, the fast-moving anti-UC process within the LDP has shown that the Church is artificial and unacceptable in Japan. The UC has gone beyond damaging the Japanese social and political systems and has even begun to threaten democratic and constitutional processes. Today, the ideological absence of the Communist threat and the lack of public support suggest that the UC will likely face a major loss of political influence in Japan, even perhaps leading to its closure. During this process, the key factors which helped the cult to spread will also undergo their own transformation which can be expected to have profound effects on Japan's history.

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*Elif Sercen NURCAN - Mürsel DOĞRUL*

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