

SECTION 4

2006 HSC - Modern History

Exemplary Sample

Question 17b

Question 17 - Conflict in the Pacific

(d) (6)

The aims of the Allied powers during the Allied Occupation of Japan from 1945 to 1951 can be seen as existing in two distinct blocs. As Boyle (*Pacific War*) asserts, during the first period; 'reformist élan prevailed'. The original motivations followed the 'three D's; Disarmament, Demilitarisation, and Democratisation' (*Edward J Drea*). As tensions in Korea grew, and worries about the USSR's influence in Asia fermented - a second set of aims developed and became pre-eminent. This second set of aims was primarily concerned with providing America with a pro-capitalist accord in the area. Any evaluation of the aims of the Allied powers must consider both how the occupation met the original rationale, and how it changed to fit the needs of the later period. Through this analysis, it can be seen that the Allied Occupation was almost invariably successful at both initiating reform, and pragmatically evolving these reforms to match new aims.

It is instructive to understand that by 1946, Allied aims in the occupation were almost totally synonymous with American aims. Although the occupation continued to be regulated under the aegis of the Allied Powers, America had almost unilateral control over the aims and happenings of the occupation. As Borthwick (*Pacific Century*) asserts; 'the Tokyo Control Council became little more than an echo chamber of US, and eventually, MacArthur's demands'. Thus, the extent to which the occupation was successful can be seen in how closely it paralleled developments in US foreign policy.

The initial and most pressing aim of disarmament and demilitarisation was achieved successfully and quickly. Scap General Order No. 1 ordered the complete stand down of all Japanese armed forces within the Pacific - contrary to popular representation, this was followed promptly and without aggression. Takemae Eiji (*Inside GHQ, 1999*) asserts that the Japanese population (surprisingly to some) accepted non-belligerency with enthusiasm. The establishment of the ad hoc War Crimes Tribunal was aimed at immediately purging militarists and known aggressors from inside the Japanese bureaucracy. 920 people were executed as a result. The Operation BLACKLIST provisions also identified known militarists within the political structure, in excess of 400 000 officials were identified, and many removed of their position. Thus, the most obvious aim of the occupation was almost unequivocally achieved successfully.

In 1949, the vague idealistic motivation of purging militarism from the ranks of Japanese society was replaced by a more pragmatic motivation to consolidate Japanese defensive power to act as a buffer against the spread of international communism. The 'Self Defence Force' circumvented constitutional limitations imposed just years before and re-established a Japanese military presence. This achievement of the new aim was less successful - and met with reluctance by a

Japanese population that had eagerly renounced war. Progressive elements of both American and Japanese politics resisted the change - but Truman, MacArthur and the emasculated Japanese diet acquiesced to the new demands of American security interests. The 'Self Defence Force' was established, and the new aims of the occupation were achieved successfully.

More complicated than the aim to remove Japan's means of making war, was the question of how the occupation should cope with Japan's will to do so. It embarked on a series of cultural revolutions aimed at undermining the hitherto pervasive Japanese ideological hegemony. As Ronald Spector states; the occupation was concerned with destroying the sentiment that 'the sun goddess had created Japan to rule all'. Bushido and Samurai references in popular culture were proscribed. Hirohito's New Years Eve address of 1946 renounced his divinity unconditionally - Borthwick (*Pacific Century*) describes this initiative as 'a defining change for Japan the state, and Japan the culture'. Occidental pedagogical techniques were introduced to attack the patriotism that had consumed the youth. Ultra-nationalist organisations like the Black Dragon Society were closed. Shintoism was proscribed as official Japanese religion. The occupation attempted to remove all traces of the ideological demagoguery (both nationalist and expansionist) that had largely precipitated war - and was largely successful at doing so.

Again, as the aims of the occupation changed, the processes of reform changed. When the threat of progressive leftist sentiment within Japan was judged more dangerous than nationalist or militarist sentiment - the emphasis on proscribing nationalist feelings was removed. Instead, the occupation revived parts of Japanese culture to combat the new Marxist threat. Nationalism was now exhorted in an attempt to combat Russian or socialist sympathies. Within the ideological sphere - the aims (both original and revisionist) were met with a high degree of success.

The freeing up of Japanese civil society, the re-establishment of civil and political rights, and the promotion political freedom was enthusiastically pursued by MacArthur and the GHQ. The Communist Party of Japan was again legitimised under direct order of the GHQ, and Scap Index 93 demanded the release of all political prisoners (including known social revolutionaries and Marxists). This was not to do with MacArthur's underlying leftist or progressive sympathies. Instead, it was because of MacArthur's firm belief in the inherent virtues of the liberal democracy. Despite objections in the American conservative ranks - one senator likened the reforms to 'drinking boiling water' - they were quickly and effectively achieved - and by 1947 Japan had been transformed from an single party dictatorship, to a incipient, but functioning, multi-party democracy.

The achievement of the aims of social reform was largely due to the Constitution planned, promoted and ratified by the occupation. Within this new constitution contained some of the more progressive statements about human rights seen in any

national legislation. Article 13 proscribed discrimination on the grounds of race or gender (The US would have to wait almost 30 years for analogous legal protections). The social aims of MacArthur and the occupation were unequivocally achieved through these new legal reforms.

The economic changes the occupation brought to Japan were as noticeable as any in the political or social sphere. Originally, the aims of economic reform were to undermine the concentrated industrial (and consequently political) weight of a small and select group of Japanese bourgeois capitalists. Industrial reform involved the destruction of the traditional *Zaibatsu* through legislative provisions such as the Anti-Monopoly Law 1946 and the Decentralisation Law 1946. The reforms to industrial structure were implemented with the aim of providing a more equitable distribution of economic power - and combating the *Zaibatsu* conglomerates that had hitherto held considerable political sway. In the bucolic sector, the occupation was mainly motivated by a desire to implement land reform. Takamae Eiji (*Inside GHQ*) asserts; 'the near total elimination of tenant farming was... by far MacArthurs most successful amendment'. Atomisation of land ownership and restructuring of agrarian infrastructure was effectively and successfully achieved.

The changing aims of US foreign policy again influenced the aims and achievements of the occupation. MacArthur now saw re-energising the top end of the Japanese economy as a crucial step in 'immunising the state against the communist bug' (HP Wilmott). In this way, the occupation (in a more clandestine manner than other 'reverse course' initiatives - presumably to prevent the odour of hypocrisy) legitimised the existence of the *Zaibatsu*. Truman directed American imports toward the groups in order to stimulate large-scale economic growth. Although subtle, the 'reverse course' measure proved as successful at fulfilling Allied aims as the original initiatives.

Though the aims of the Allied powers were fluid, and unilaterally aligned with the pragmatic foreign policy of the United States - they were consistently and effectively met by the occupation's reforms. The original ambitions were quickly established, if short lived. The 'Reverse Course' aims, while epitomising American self-interest and pragmatism, were met with an equal degree of success.