On the 27th of September, 1945, Emperor Hirohito met for the first time, the man who would arguably become the highest authority in all of Japan between 1945 and 1951 while it was under occupation, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP\textsuperscript{1}) General Douglas MacArthur. The sole photograph of the two from this meeting was widely publicized, and it showed a towering and relaxed General, standing beside the shorter and formal figure of the Emperor – it showed the confident figure of an all too human victorious occupier against that of a defeated man revered as a living god. The General later recalled the meeting, as one in which

\textsuperscript{1} The abbreviation SCAP is versatile. It has been used to refer to both the larger occupation itself, and to General MacArthur specifically. In minimizing any confusion, proper explanations where the contest may be ambiguous will be provided in the footnotes.
he had expected to meet with the sovereign of Japan, a man whose position was precarious in the eyes of the Allies, and feared that he might begin begging for his life. Instead, to his pleasant surprise, the Emperor offered himself to the General as the sole responsible for the crimes of Japan, leading the General to the profound revelation that he “faced the First Gentleman of Japan.” Just as this meeting imparted upon General MacArthur a new understanding of Emperor Hirohito and the Japanese, his own work as the SCAP between 1945 and 1951 was to impart upon the Japanese its own new ways of living and thinking, all of which were of a particular American style. The Occupation was to become the defining period for Japan in the post-war era, by transforming its political and economic structures, and Americanizing the country in the process.

In constructing an analysis of the US Occupation of Japan, and how the Occupation has been influential in the long-term Americanization of Japan through its specific economic and political reforms, one can make use of historical literature divided into four major categories. It is important to note that whilst three of these categories are related to the specific aspects of the central question of this paper, the fourth category is much broader and can be understood in relation to the other three. The first of the specific three categories in approaching the topic of the US Occupation of Japan is the nature and structure of the Occupation itself; the second is constitutional and democratic reform; and the third is zaibatsu busting and land reform, as they will be identified within this paper. The fourth broader category could be described as general historical approaches to the Occupation as part of Japanese history, within the context of the Cold War or the development of modern Japan, which bears implications for the other three.

Going from the broadest to the specific, I will now conduct an analysis of the historical literature used in this particular study.

The first thematic category of historical approaches to the Occupation of Japan, which by itself is not a subsection of this paper, includes scholarship whose scope is so broad, that the discussion led within these sources bring together all aspects of the Occupation. The consensus of these works is that the US Occupation has not been a singularly American or Japanese event in history, but has been influenced by both sides, despite its significance of reshaping Japan. One of the briefer works in this category is the work of Robert Scalapino, which surveys the Occupation and makes the argument that the Occupation has been carried out with the understanding that Japan was to be remade on the American ideal.4 On a different side, the compilation by Grant Goodman includes the works of Robert Ward, Martin Bronfenbrenner, and Edward Norbeck, who collectively argue that the Occupation has been the transformative moment in modern Japanese history by changing political, social and economic structures.5 Another such broad approach work is that of Edwin O. Reischauer, whose discussion is placed within the context of the Cold War, which focuses on constitutionally ensured democratization and economic liberalization through zaibatsu busting and land reform, and making the argument that Japan has been the critical test case for the success of the West to remake and modernize a nation in its own ideal image.6 Writing from an inherently Japanese perspective is the work of Murakami Hyōe in which the most crucial argument with regards to the Occupation is that all the

reforms have been American inventions, with the pointed exception of land reform. Similarly approaching the Occupation as a period in Japanese history but as an outsider, is the work of Marius Jansen, whose argument is that this period was that of Japanese socio-political development under democracy, played out through Occupation reforms and the Japanese interactions with and reactions to these reforms. Taking on a much different approach, Russell Brines focuses on General MacArthur and argues that the Occupation reforms have taken shape after filtering through his person, his personal reform pursuits and economic-political views, and his own handpicked administrative mechanism – essentially equating the Occupation with the General – in the remaking of Japan.

The subject of the nature and structures of the Occupation is an important category of study, and the scholarly discussion has defined the parameters of interaction between the American occupiers and the Japanese occupied, as well as the subsequent changes and reforms awaiting the Japanese. There has furthermore been discussion of the membership of the Occupation forces, and their cooperation with the Japanese. The consensus has been that the work of the Occupation was done in an atmosphere of cohabitation and cooperation of the Occupation authorities with the Japanese in power. In this vein, Hugh Borton has written on the treaty and policy sources of the Occupation administration, arguing that although founded on international terms, the Occupation was an American undertaking with Japanese collaboration.

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Further in this line of approach has been the work of Herbert Passin, who has specifically focused on the policies and models of reform pursued by the Occupation authorities in Japan, argues that the American occupiers assumed that Japan could be remade through demilitarization, democratization, and the transplanting of an American model.\(^\text{11}\) On a different approach, the work of Ralph Braibanti focuses on the nature of occupational administration, and argues that the criteria of “good” occupation administration, as employed by the Americans, were key in securing Japanese cooperation and success of the Occupation.\(^\text{12}\) On a yet different trajectory is Michael Schaller’s work, which by focusing on General MacArthur, argues that while the General has had immense control over policy in Japan, there has also been an interplay between his Occupation administration and their Japanese counterparts.\(^\text{13}\)

The second specific thematic category of constitutional reform and democratization in occupied Japan, relates to one of the major areas of reform undertaken by the Occupation, which has been important as a factor in the long-term Americanization of Japan. The discussion under this heading branches out to understanding both the process of constitutional change and adoption, as well as the extension of civil rights and democratic elections. The consensus here in historical literature finds that the Japanese have been introduced to foreign and novel human rights and democracy regimes under their new constitution – with the added idea that they have also risen to the challenge of making these their own. In his two works, Justin Williams argues that there has been a process of democratic tutelage and oversight of the Occupation authorities over the Japanese policymakers and whose interference and changing policies have had

significant impacts on the economic recovery of Japan.\textsuperscript{14} Following a similar path, the work of William Ball focuses on the relations between the Occupation authorities under MacArthur and the Japanese political structures, and argues that there has been immediate connections between the two, under the context of democratization and reform.\textsuperscript{15} In a different vein, the work of Yoshino Okudaira has focused on the provisions and internal make-up of the Japanese constitution, arguing that it has had long-term implications for the development of democracy in Japan by enshrining civil rights, and downplaying the importance of the Emperor in politics.\textsuperscript{16} Further writing on the constitution, the work of Charles Kades traces the processes and the political implications lying behind the drafting and adoption of the Japanese constitution of 1946, making the argument that although the Occupation authorities drafted the constitution, they were also adamant in presenting it as a document of popular Japanese sovereignty.\textsuperscript{17}

The third specific thematic category is that of zaibatsu busting and land reform which have been the two most influential economic reforms undertaken by the Occupation administration in Japan. Work on this subject has explored the reasons, implementation, and socio-political impacts of these reforms, whilst also paying special attention to the success and failure of these reforms, especially with regards to zaibatsu busting. While the historical literature has converged on praise for land reform, in relation to zaibatsu busting the consensus has emerged in a verdict of failure for the Occupation. Jerome Cohen’s work, using a reform and

recovery dichotomy in defining the goals of the Occupation for the future of Japan, has concentrated on exploring the role of economic fact-finding commissions, arguing that these reports were signs and shapers of increasing involvement of the Occupation administration in the economic recovery of Japan.\(^{18}\) The work of de Jasay is presented on a similar dichotomy as is Cohen’s. His work questions whether Japanese political reform and economic recovery are compatible policies for the Occupation to pursue, arguing over the exemplary process of zaibatsu busting that the connections between national affluence and democratization has made the twin aims of reform and recovery incompatible.\(^{19}\) Using a different approach, Paul Bailey questions the American-Japanese interactions during the enactment and carrying out of zaibatsu busting and land reforms, arguing that the early Cold War policy pursuits of the United States has ultimately come to shape, and determine the success and failure of these Occupation reforms.\(^{20}\)

As such, this study will focus on the topic of “Americanizing” impact of the American Occupation of Japan, through its structure and the reforms it has carried out under the tenure of General MacArthur as the SCAP.\(^{21}\) The guiding question here, asks in what ways the political and economic reforms carried out by the Occupation – specifically democratization, the new constitution, land reform, and zaibatsu busting – have been influential in the long-term Americanization of Japan. The argument here, in response to this central question, is that the reforms carried out by the American occupiers have been successful in the long-term Americanization of Japan – despite their varied levels of success, as they have disrupted uniquely Japanese structures with American style concepts. In arguing this point, I will make use

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\(^{21}\) It would not be an overestimation to note here that the Occupation had achieved most of its goals between 1945-51 under General MacArthur, and the final year was largely uneventful. Most scholarship also focuses on this period.
of a range of historical scholarship, personal accounts of Japanese citizens and General MacArthur, as well as relevant American policy documents – all of which shed light upon the formation, functioning, and impact of the Occupation on Japan. I will begin this study with a look into the “American nature” of the Occupation and the SCAP and its General Headquarters (GHQ) that have carried out these reforms. The discussion will then shift to the specific political and economic reforms, which will culminate in a holistic overview – bridging the Occupation to the present – in order to judge the level of Americanization brought upon Japan. It is important to note here, before moving forward with the discussion, that the “Americanization” which is being observed and argued for in this study is not only economic or political. Although the main focus of this paper is on the economic and political aspects of Japan’s Americanization under the Occupation, Japanese culture itself was also being Americanized as it came into contact with American culture, as well as economic and political ideas and structures. Such changes have all fed into one another to create the total result, that is the ultimate Americanization of Japan.

The Job of Occupying Japan

Before I can begin to discuss the reforms of the Occupation in better detail, it is important for us to have a better understanding of the origins and the inner workings and dynamics of the Occupation and the GHQ staff which have carried out the Occupation. After all, the changes brought upon Japanese society through economic and political reform was shaped at the hands of these men working within the structures of the GHQ, guided by key pieces of US policy documents, Allied agreements, and the necessities brought upon by their own attitudes and the structures in place. In looking into the Occupation, I will be focusing on several specific subtopics that are crucial, which all allow for an understanding of not just the founding and the functioning of the Occupation, but also its inherent “Americanness.” I will begin with a
discussion of the legal sources of the Occupation and its aims and scope, which will be followed up by a closer look at the personnel which manned the Occupation and the means and methods of action they used in the line of duty. Finally, I will look into the place General MacArthur has taken within the Occupation, before moving onto our discussions regarding economic and political reforms.

The foundations of the Occupation rested upon several very important documents, one formulated and signed jointly by the Allies, and the others formulated fully at the discretion of the US policymakers. Our focus here will not be in regards to the specific policy provisions of these articles – such as the enshrinement of democratization, or the equitable distribution of land through reform – but in the broad manner in which they envision the nature and tasks of the Occupation. The first of these documents was the Potsdam Declaration, agreed upon on July 26, 1945 by the Americans, British, and the Chinese with the Soviets assenting to it later. The Potsdam Declaration set forth the purpose of the Occupation as the elimination of the power and authority of the prevalent order and systems of Imperial Japan, and the establishment of a new order in which Japan would exist in “peace, security, and justice”, and made the length of the Occupation conditional on the achievement of this order. Through its provisions, the Potsdam Declaration set the stage for the remaking of Japan during the undefined period of its occupation, in line with the ideals of peace, freedom, and democracy which the Allies enshrined in their own war efforts. However, these “ideals” are in themselves such broad categories that their interpretation and the implementation of necessary reforms and policies to translate these abstract ideas into the Japanese reality was by and large left to the occupying force in Japan. When this is thought together with the fact that the occupation was to become an American affair,

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guided by policy from Washington, and personal biases and dispositions of the personnel of the SCAP which were entirely American, it meant that the real-life interpretation and achievement of these ideals was to take an American path.

The second important document that forms the basis of the Occupation of Japan was the United States Initial Post-Defeat Policy Relating to Japan, formulated in August of 1945. The policy called for the remaking of Japan into a state which had a representative and responsible government, which respects the rights of states and fundamental human freedoms of its citizens, and which would never again become a “menace” to the world.\(^{23}\) In several further documents, the US policymakers reiterated the position that the Japanese not only should be kept from becoming a menace to the world yet again, but they were also to be readmitted to the society of nations as a “responsible and peaceful member.”\(^{24}\) Through its own policy, the US solidified the position that the internal dynamics of rule and power in Japan was to be changed in order to create a state which fit the ideals set out by the occupiers. It reaffirmed the Potsdam Declaration, and went beyond by proposing a much more solid vision of the future for Japan and the Japanese, through democracy and as a part of the community of nations which made up the “free” world – in the American sense. Furthermore, the US policy signaled that the Japanese were not to be made into a subordinate and vanquished nation, but instead left open the position for the eventual recovery of Japan, as a state which could be a beneficial part of the “Western” world. This might be seen as an anticipation on the part of the American policymakers, within the context of the


\(^{24}\) State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC), JCS 1380/5; Ibid., SWNCC 150/4; Ibid., SFE Report, SWNCC 150; Ibid., report by Joint Civil Affairs Committee, SWNCC 150. It should be noted that although the last two documents have the same record number, they are in fact different documents.
emergent Cold War, to have a strong Japan in the Far East-Pacific region and within the American bloc, as a valuable future ally.

This new vision being “in the American sense” was neither coincidental to the nature of the Occupation nor was it purposefully brought about by the full agreement of the Allied camp. Instead, the inherently American nature of the Occupation was a byproduct of the nature of the major occupying power in Japan: The United States. A closer look shows us that, it can be seen that despite having its goals initially set out in the Potsdam Declaration – which was a joint Allied venture – the Occupation was anything but an Allied operation. Starting with the Initial Post-Defeat Policy, the US government had set its sights on making the Occupation an “American show”, and having borne the brunt of the fighting on this front they found it obvious that the SCAP\(^{25}\) – and by extension the entire outcome of the Occupation – should be an American one.\(^{26}\) Furthermore, the SCAP himself had been briefed by the policymakers in Washington that “the authority of the Emperor and Japanese Government to rule the state will be subject to you” and that “the supreme allied commander will exercise supreme authority over the domestic and foreign affairs of the Japanese Empire.”\(^{27}\) These developments not only meant that the Occupation of Japan would be an affair left largely to the Americans and that the trajectory of reform and reconstruction carried out in Japan would be influenced by the government in Washington and its own policy requirements. Thus, when the economic and political reforms were carried out, they were to be inspired by those systems, reforms, and ideals familiar to the Americans, rather than any of the other Allies – especially the Soviet Union.

\(^{25}\) Here the abbreviation SCAP is used both in reference to the Occupation itself and General MacArthur.

\(^{26}\) Foreign Relations of the United States, Document 395; Borton, United States Occupation Policies in Japan, 256; Passin, 108; Brines, 46; Ward in American Occupation of Japan: A Retrospective View, 2.

\(^{27}\) State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC). “Drafts of Emperor’s acceptance of Potsdam Proclamation, General Order No. 1, and Directive to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, memorandum to Secretary of state from Secretary of War”; Ibid., SFE Report, SWNCC 150.
Knowing that the Occupation was an American affair, it is then no surprise that the GHQ employed no one but Americans to man its ranks, and that it did so by drawing men from the ranks of the US Army – those in key positions were largely General MacArthur’s trusted men.\textsuperscript{28} However, these men were not experts on Japan, or on civil governance – which was key, as the task at hand forced both these men and General MacArthur to move beyond the military into civilian affairs.\textsuperscript{29} Moreover, the GHQ was structured in parallel to the Japanese government, and although the Americans determined the course of the Occupation, they implemented it with the help of the Japanese personnel left intact after the war, and went by the policy dictate that whatever reform was to be made had to be – or at least appear to be – of Japanese origin.\textsuperscript{30} In effect, the GHQ which carried out the Occupation became an institution which was military in origin but civilian in its actions, and was made to work through the Japanese, in order to remake Japan along the lines set out by policymakers in Washington. It was these men on the ground in Japan, who despite lacking the power to determine policy, had the power to determine how policy was to be carried out, and in effect shaped the content of the reforms that remade Japan. Their misgivings and lack of information regarding Japan and the Japanese, as well as inexperience in the administration of an occupation, allowed these men to project into their pursuits of reform a uniquely American outlook, detached from Japanese realities, that served to fundamentally transform Japan.

However, the very act of working through the Japanese and the attention paid to enacting reforms that were based on American ideals but were meant to appear to be Japanese introduced

\textsuperscript{29} Braibanti, 157-158; Bronfenbrenner in \textit{American Occupation of Japan: A Retrospective View}, 12; Reischauer, 207; Brines, 76-77; Jansen, 695; Passin, 118.
\textsuperscript{30} Borton, \textit{United States Occupation Policies in Japan}, 253; Williams, \textit{Completing Japan’s Political Orientation}, 1455; Passin, 109; Jansen, 679; Bailey, 30; Brines, 62-63; SWNCC, \textit{SFE Report}, SWNCC 150.
a unique tension to the Occupation. On the one side, the Occupation was most definitely an American affair and – as in the case of reforms which were of the utmost priority like the constitution – the Americans threatened to and pushed through reform measures that would have the greatest impact in replacing Japanese structures with American inspired ones. On the other side, it appeared that the Americans encouraged Japanese solutions and hybridization of Japan rather than straightforward Americanization. This tension was never entirely resolved during the Occupation because it was ingrained into the very working methods and structures of it. However, it can be found that when an impasse was reached, specifically in the case of the economic and political reforms being discussed in this study, the tendency to Americanize triumphed over the tendency to hybridize.

Presiding over this structure, was the figure of General MacArthur, who came to embody the Occupation, and the US presence in Japan. Without question, the General, with the official title *Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers*, was a figure that held unquestioned supreme authority over every aspect of Japanese state and society. General MacArthur was to remain in this position as long as the Occupation remained in force, and remained as the SCAP between 1945 and 1951, only one year shy of the entire length of the Occupation. The position of power held by the SCAP meant that the application of the policies formulated back in Washington rested, first and foremost, on the vision of the General for the future of Japan, and his own – American – conceptions and biases towards the achievement of the goals of the Occupation.

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31 Ball, 3; Jansen, 681; MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 280; Schaller, 22; Scalapino, 105; Hyōe, 197.
General MacArthur stood above and beyond the Japanese, and portrayed himself as a man with a mission, and it was obvious to both the Japanese and the Americans that this mission was the remaking of Japan. More than that, as Brines describes it, during the ceremonies aboard the USS Missouri, where the Japanese signed the Instrument of Surrender, the General made an impression on the Japanese delegation, whom were “staring with ill-concealed surprise at this conqueror who had entered their pompous empire wearing his work clothes.” In this way, the General distanced himself from the image of a victorious general which basked in his own splendor, but instead showed himself to the Japanese as a man out in Japan to do yet another job, given to him in the line of duty. The scale and the desired outcome of his mission was definitely much different from the usual of the General, but he showed ease at fitting into his task even from the outset. As such, in the way he interacted with the Japanese he ruled over, General MacArthur did not resort to tactics of menacing or awing the Japanese into change and

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32 Jansen, 681; Bailey, 29; Schaller, 23; Brines, 59.
33 Brines, 54. The General would retain this attire throughout his tenure as the SCAP, which constantly reminded the Japanese of his position and reinforced his image. The relevant photo on this page shows General MacArthur emerging from the GHQ building – his uniform is very much the same one he has worn on the deck of USS Missouri on September 2, 1945, and has not changed for the duration of the Occupation. Unfortunately, the photo itself is not dated.
cooperation through pomp or power but rather through the simple assertion that he was there for a job, to occupy and to reform. Towards his own men, at the GHQ, General MacArthur also projected an image of himself as the man who had thought through everything regarding the Occupation, and its policies – despite the fact that these were given the him from Washington D.C.\textsuperscript{34} Thus, in more ways than one, the policies of the Occupation and the manner in which they were carried out was identified with the General, and the ensuing reforms left their marks on Japan, because the SCAP gave his fullest commitment to carrying out these reforms and did so in a way that was uniquely his own.

Finally, in the imagination of the Americans, both in Japan and at home in the US, the Occupation was a grand experiment, which was to reform the Japanese state fundamentally, whilst keeping it intact and working through it.\textsuperscript{35} More importantly, as Reischauer later came to define it, the experiment in Japan was “a primary battlefield in the cold war [\textit{sic}]” and that the “success or failure of that experiment would inevitably have a great ideological impact on the billion odd people of Asia.”\textsuperscript{36} The change in the direction of Japan, along a line of development and through a set of ideas uniquely American was set up as an example towards the rest of Asia, and most pointedly for the decolonizing nations which the US wanted to gain as allies, rather than lose them to the communists. As the Americans brought down the Japanese communists, and established a democratic regime based on free markets and free trade in Japan which flourished, it would in turn serve as a reminder for the rest of Asia that to follow the US and to Americanize held the promise of wealth, peace, and prosperity. Thus, the inherently American

\begin{footnotes}
\item[34] Schaller, 24; MacArthur, \textit{Reminiscences}, 282-283.
\item[36] Reischauer, 224.
\end{footnotes}
nature of these reforms, and the long-term Americanization of Japan through these reforms, what
came to matter in the Occupation was not to remake Japan. Instead, what became the most


crucial thing about the Occupation was its success in reforming Japan along American ideals: as


capitalist free-market economy, with representative and responsible government based on


popular sovereignty.


Political Americanization: Democratization and Constitutional Reform

For the policymakers in Washington, one can argue that the Imperial Japanese political
structures have always been seen as the source of Japanese aggression, and their destruction was


a paramount goal of the Allied war effort against Japan – after all, they enemy was the Japanese


State. However, the reform of these structures and the question of how to handle the Emperor as


a separate political entity did not enter the list of problems in the Far East, recognized by


Washington, until late 1945.\textsuperscript{37} Until then, the earlier policy papers had only mentioned


“democratization” vis-à-vis “demilitarization” of Japan, and not as a significant concern on its


own.\textsuperscript{38} From then on, policy informed the SCAP to undertake several political changes and


reforms in Japan, in line with the aim of creating a responsible and democratic Japan.


Included as reforms within policy was the need to have the Japanese abolish militarism


and realize the merits of democratic development, immediate abrogation off all restrictions on


individual rights and liberties, the strengthening of democratic tendencies and free elections at


the earliest possible date.\textsuperscript{39} Such reforms would mean radical changes in the political structures


of Imperial Japan, introducing much greater civilian freedom and democratization in Japan,


\textsuperscript{37} State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, \textit{SWNCC 16/8}; Ibid., \textit{SWNCC 16/10}.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., \textit{SWNCC 16/2}; Ibid., \textit{SWNCC 16/3}; Ibid., \textit{SWNCC 16/6}.

\textsuperscript{39} State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, \textit{JCS 1380/5}; Ibid., \textit{SFE report, SWNCC 150}; Ibid., \textit{Joint Civil Affairs
Committee, SWNCC 150}; Ibid., \textit{SWNCC 150/4}; Far Eastern Commission, \textit{FEC-031/19}. 

much like the political structures of the US. Crucially, the policymakers included as part of policy that the SCAP was not responsible to impose any form of government on Japan, which did not have the freely expressed support of the people, and that the Japanese were to be gradually allowed to take control of the reform process.\(^{40}\) This meant that the American policymakers were willing to let the Japanese take over their own fate, once the reforms were internalized by the public. However, such a stance also came with the caveat that the Americans would not be willing to allow a political swing to the left, or allow for non-democratic forms of government which might have given the Soviet Union greater influence on Japan.

As mentioned before, the SCAP had already been directed and dedicated to the remaking of the Japanese political structures, and the key step in this transformation was the creation of a new constitution for Japan. The initial step taken for this reform measure was the instruction of the Japanese themselves, to come up with their own revised version of the constitution for deliberation.\(^{41}\) However, as Kades and MacArthur himself put it, the Japanese turned over a draft constitution, to the dismay of the SCAP, which did not include any fundamental changes, which was then promptly rejected and replaced by a draft made by the GHQ, prepared at the frantic pace of a week.\(^{42}\) This new constitution carried over many of the overtones enshrined in “Euro-American/Western” constitutions and polities, regarded as the basis of a free and democratic society.\(^{43}\) This process in itself makes clear several points regarding the methods and nature of political reformation undertaken in Japan. The initial recourse to the Japanese in the remaking of their constitution showcases the desire of the SCAP in ensuring that these were – to borrow from


\(^{41}\) Kades, 218; MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 299-300; Schaller, 41.

\(^{42}\) Kades, 222-223, 226; Jansen, 683; Bailey, 42; MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 300; Schaller, 41.

\(^{43}\) Scalapino, 108; Kades, 227; MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 301; Schaller, 42.
Braibanti – “rice roots” changes in democratizing Japan.\textsuperscript{44} Democracy and the freedoms it entailed were not to become outside impositions on Japan which would be discarded the moment the Occupation ended. Rather, these things were meant to be brought before the Japanese, by the Japanese, and then made into an integral part of Japan and the Japanese – thus the SCAP was willing to let the Japanese have the first try at reforming the constitution. Conversely, the rejection of the Japanese draft by the SCAP, and the preparation of a new one by the GHQ was the assertion of the commitment to the democratization of Japan, which the occupiers were determined to push fully into the fabric of Japanese society and politics. The introduction of structures and processes familiar to the West was only indicative of the Americanizing nature of this constitution, as it sought to bring the best structures known to the occupiers to Japan – which were largely American, and partly European.

The new constitution was embraced by the Japanese government, after the GHQ delivered the ultimatum of going directly to the people, and the constitution was passed by the Japanese Diet, after it had been reviewed, debated, and amended over a period of nine months, and passed the Far Eastern Commission’s requirements for fundamental contents and promulgation of it.\textsuperscript{45} By 1947, only a year after the new constitution had come into force, and elections were held, authorities in Japan, and especially General MacArthur made the claim that the democratization of Japan was complete.\textsuperscript{46} The occupiers were able to claim such a victory because, despite the intransigence on the side of the Japanese which they had to break through, they were able to have the new democratic constitution of Japan promulgated, with clear consent

\textsuperscript{44} Braibanti, 155.
\textsuperscript{45} Kades, 229, 241; Bailey, 42; MacArthur, Reminiscences, 301; Schaller, 42; Far Eastern Commission, FEC-031/1; Ibid., FEC-031/7; Ibid., FEC-031/19.
\textsuperscript{46} Williams, American Democratization Policy, 185-186.
on the part of the people. Furthermore, they had achieved the basic political aims set out both by American policy and the Far Eastern Commission for the political democratization of Japan.

Looking closer the constitution on one hand, its internal make-up, as Okudaira points out, reflected the priorities of the Occupation, when it set out to remake the Japanese polity along the lines set out in policy.\(^47\) Thus, the first chapter was concerned with the position of the Emperor – who was paradoxically no longer with an empire – as defining his position as head of state was crucial both to the Japanese and the Americans.\(^48\) This clause was followed by Article 9 which renounces war, and only then did the constitution move into the rights and freedoms of the people, which was followed up by the legislative and judicial bodies of the state.\(^49\) On the other side, the new constitution radically changed the landscape of Japanese politics. The Emperor was stripped of all sovereign powers and divinity, and was reduced to a figurehead who depended primarily on the Cabinet, and to a lesser extent the Diet, to fulfill his duties.\(^50\) Instead, the Japanese people were elevated to the position of sovereign, as they were to elect the members of both houses of the Japanese Diet, to which only civilians could be elected, and the Cabinet formed from the lower house would rule by popular consent.\(^51\) Furthermore, separation of powers was achieved, which gave the judiciary a greater degree of freedom and impartiality, whilst the people were given much wider freedoms and protections under the constitution.\(^52\)

Furthermore, the Article 9 which we have mentioned above – which is today perhaps the one

\(^{47}\) Okudaira, 2.

\(^{48}\) Constitution of Japan, 3 November 1946, www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/constitution.html

\(^{49}\) Ibid.

\(^{50}\) Constitution of Japan; Okudaira, 18, 20; Ball, 7; Bailey, 42; MacArthur, Reminiscences, 301; Schaller, 42; Reischauer, 214-215; Hyōe, 202; Brines, 185.

\(^{51}\) Constitution of Japan; Okudaira, 22; Kades, 236, 239-240; Jansen, 684; Bailey, 42; MacArthur, Reminiscences, 301; Schaller, 42; Reischauer, 216-218; Brines, 186.

\(^{52}\) Constitution of Japan; Okudaira 24-25; Ball, 7; Bailey, 42-43; MacArthur, Reminiscences, 301-302; Reischauer, 218-219; Hyōe, 202; Brines, 186-187; Norbeck in A Retrospective View, 30.
article of the Japanese constitution that is so widely known in the world – relinquished the sovereign right to engage in aggressive conflicts and wars, retaining only the most basic right to self-defense.

*Economic Americanization: Zaibatsu Busting and Land Reform*

From early 1945, the American policymakers in Washington had come to recognize that the Occupation of Japan would have to become involved with the financial, commercial, and industrial sectors of the Japanese economy, and carry out a land reform program. Yet, it was not until August 1945, that the policymakers in Washington recognized the need to address the “control of organization of industry” in Japan, by the inclusion of which there was implicit recognition that the Japanese zaibatsu, as the predominant economic organizational structure known to the West as the source of Japanese aggression, was to face the Occupation as well. However, it can be seen that by the time of the Occupation itself, the policymakers in Washington had readied themselves to carry out land tenure reform, as well as a campaign to break up the zaibatsu – both of which were policies with social and economic implications for Japan.

Policy with regards to the economic reforms in Japan directed the SCAP towards measures to demilitarize the Japanese economy, to encourage the creation of an economic structure in Japan compatible with peace and democracy – which meant a free market – and to achieve a wider distribution of income and ownership in the means of production. As such, Japan was to properly adopt what was seen as the cornerstone of American economic success

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53 State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, SWNCC 16; Ibid., SWNCC 16/2; Ibid., SWNCC 16/3.
54 Ibid., SWNCC 16/6; Ibid., SWNCC 302/2; Jansen, 686; Schaller, 31; Brines, 129-130; Reischauer, 221.
55 State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, SWNCC 52/5; Ibid., SFE report, SWNCC 150; Ibid., SWNCC 150/4; Ibid., SWNCC 302/2.
and society: a New Deal type of free but proctored capitalism. Occupation policy also directed the SCAP to take direct action in achieving these results, but it did not hold the SCAP or the Allies responsible for the economic rehabilitation of Japan. The aim was to leave in Japan, a nation which had by its own product, not only politically reformed but also economically recovered to become an integral member of the peaceful society of nations.

However, the failure of the Japanese to restore the economy on their own, coupled with the facts that there was a need to lift the burden from American taxpayers and that an emergent Cold War made Japan a valuable ally, necessitated a change in policy by the turn of the decade in 1950. On the one side, the American taxpayers could not be expected to prop up the economy of a country such as Japan, without producing a political crisis back home along with an increasing economic burden by the year which would have further unsettled the American people. On the other side, Japan could not be expected to become the showcase example of the success of the American and Americanizing way of development to Asia had it been left to suffer the economic problems, such as hyperinflation and unemployment, which plagued its’ economy. Further still, with the outbreak of the Korean War, the importance of Japan as a base for action in Asia, as a producer of military goods, and as a possible fighting partner became obvious to Washington, and the immediately recognized fact was that these could not be achieved without a strong economy in Japan. In explaining this shift in policy, De Jasay has suggested that the reason for such a change was the realization that political reform and economic recovery in Japan was mutually exclusive, and in the end the SCAP shifted its emphasis quickly onto

56 State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, SWNCC 52/5; Ibid., SWNCC 150/4; United States National Security Council, NSC Document 13/3; Cohen, 137; Bronfenbrenner in A Retrospective View, 15.
57 Cohen, 137; Bronfenbrenner in A Retrospective View, 15; Bailey, 36, 52, 55; Williams, American Democratization Policy, 186-187; Reischauer, 225; Scalapino, 109.
economic recovery.\textsuperscript{58} The logic here being that to encourage economic development and a capitalism of the American kind was a trade-off where the US gave up on fully democratizing Japan along American lines of democracy. Regardless of the reason, the occupiers were to become much more involved with the economic makeup of the Japanese state, than they had initially intended to – which increased the impact they left on Japan.

As pointed out previously, the American policymakers saw the zaibatsu as one of the sources of Japanese aggression in the world, as they pushed for profits and resources to maximize their own gains, at the expense of others in the Asia-Pacific region. Furthermore, because of the way in which the zaibatsu were structured and operated, they were incompatible with the free market economics being brought upon Japan by the Occupation.\textsuperscript{59} Thus, the American imagination could equate the zaibatsu with the large monopoly trusts such as Standard Oil and US Steel, which were already seen as menaces to the free market at home, and were fought against through legislation – which was only to be repeated in Japan.

The zaibatsu busting process began in a much similar fashion to the constitutional reform process: with weak and ineffective reform proposals brought before the SCAP, and a great amount of Japanese intransigence on acting against the zaibatsu.\textsuperscript{60} Once again, the changes the Americans wished to see in the undoing of the Japanese menace, and in setting the stage for a reformed Japan were met by a less than enthusiastic Japanese audience. However, such proposals were quickly dropped, and Japanese reluctance was pushed aside for a much stricter policy aimed at not only breaking up the zaibatsu but also at redistributing the stock of these

\textsuperscript{58} De Jasay, 61, 63.
\textsuperscript{59} Encyclopaedia Britannica – The Zaibatsu were financial cliques, usually centered around one family, and with businesses in a multitude of key economic sectors of Japan. These sectors ranged from banking to mining, to textiles to trade. The four main zaibatsu – some of which exist today in name – were Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Yasuda.
\textsuperscript{60} Jansen, 687; Bailey, 35; Schaller, 34; Brines, 137.
broken up companies to the general public. The SCAP had used his authority to act directly in these matters, and made the push for the passing of the necessary reform bills and measures in the face of pressured from Washington, and unwillingness from Tokyo. As a result, “83 companies, including the four major zaibatsu” were fully broken down and dissolved as economic units. Going beyond simple structural change, much of the men in charge of the zaibatsu during the war were purged, in an attempt to break the power of these families over the control of these broken down enterprises and by extension over the Japanese economy. The purge of these economic structures and their leaders thus allowed for the introduction of a much more American free market economic system, and the redistribution of their ownership and control meant that a new – and ostensibly American approved – leadership was placed in charge.

On the other hand, although the land reform program did also go through a cycle of SCAP broadening, and radicalization – as well as a push to get it accepted on the terms of the SCAP – as Hyōe reveals, it was perhaps the sole reform measure on which the Japanese were already at work, before the Americans had asked for it. The countryside was seen as a place of misery for the poor farmers, whom were exploited by the landlords who preempted reform before the Occupation, and had formed the backbone of ultranationalist support for the Imperial Japan and her military. Thus to breakdown the cycle of poverty, and minority ownership in the countryside, land reform was seen as a way to foster less aggressive and more democratic tendencies throughout Japan, by making every farmer the owner of his own land and controller of his fate. Similar to the zaibatsu busting efforts, land was bought from the – largely absentee –

61 Ball, 9; Jansen, 686-687; Bailey, 36-37; Schaller 40-41; Brines, 131.
62 Williams, American Democratization Policy, 192; Jansen, 688; Bailey, 38.
63 De Jasay, 65; Reischauer, 221; Bailey, 37; Brines, 131.
64 Hyōe, 202-203; Ball, 9-10; Passin, 113; Jansen, 682; Bailey, 46; Schaller, 43.
65 Passin, 113, 116; Jansen, 682; Bailey, 47; Schaller, 43; Brines, 217-218.
landlords, at prices which were at times seen as mere pittances or “confiscation fees” and was opened to purchase to the farmers themselves. In this manner about 38 percent of the arable land in Japan was redistributed, and land ownership in rice paddies rose to 88.9 percent. Thus, in Japan, the land reform managed to create a new class of rural landowners – and small capitalists – creating a situation in which each man became the master of his livelihood and destiny, in magnificent replay of the American Dream on Japanese soil.

Legacy of the Occupation: Nippon or Japan?

Some have understood the Americanization of Japan from the perspective of changes in

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66 Ball, 9; Norbeck in A Retrospective View, 29; Schaller, 43; Brines, 222.
the Japanese culture itself, which as I have already discussed, was intimately linked to the overall process of economic and political Americanization. One such window into the Americanizing impact of the Occupation is the character of Babysan, Miss Baby, who can be seen as a personification of Japan during the Occupation through the eyes of an American soldier, drawn by Bill Hume – first during the Occupation as a series and later as a book in 1953 – which portrays a Japan at a civilizational crossroads. What is significant about the character is that it shows Japan as a young lady, dressed in the latest American fashion, engaged with the American culture, fraternalizing with American soldiers, and is mused upon as being similar to the American “girl back home.”

Thus, one can be enticed, using this fanciful image created by a soldier to argue that the Occupation has been a successful one, and that it has Americanized Japan at a very fundamental level. Certainly, for many other observers of the Occupation whom were looking at its economic and political reform programs, it was a success because at the more fundamental level its reforms were successful, both at the time and in the long-run, and it achieved the aims of Allied and American policy for the recreation of Japan.

One can see that both perspectives are intimately linked. As Japan became more Americanized, because it adopted the same ways and structures of politics and economics, the way of life of the people also became more Americanized as the people could participate in public life more freely and actively than before. Thus, as the political reforms gave people larger freedoms and representation, and the economic reforms opened the way for public participation and greater possibility for the distribution of wealth, Japan changed and became more American so as to be able to accommodate these changes. As such, Babysan did become a representation of

69 Passin, 124; Schaller, 47; The Big Picture – Japan: Our Far East Partner.
not just the cultural changes in Japan, but also the “zeitgeist” of the Occupation because she came to embody a Japan that was American. However, as I shall now bring together my own discussion for an overview of the success of the Occupation in remaking and Americanizing Japan, I shall focus on the economic and the political reforms, as I have throughout this paper.

Economically, the zaibatsu were broken down, never to return as an organizational structure in the Japanese economy, and this definitive breakdown was important in ensuring that Japan could be remade in the postwar era, as a free market economy.⁷⁰ There would no longer be in the structures of the Japanese economy those companies which could control huge key sectors and monopolize production towards its own benefit, and all would essentially be free to take part in the economy. Furthermore, there would no longer be a threat to Asia and the World, prompted by the greed of these zaibatsu – whose search for profit and resources was seen as a catalyst for war – as the Japanese economic structures were opened to the people and to the World. However, the keiretsu emerged in the decades after the Occupation, bringing together former zaibatsu companies, and new zaibatsu like business groups through the use of common banking mechanisms or subcontracting structures.⁷¹ Financially linked conglomerates – or rather “corporate families” – reemerged as the dominant business formations of Japan, however they never achieved the same power as the zaibatsu and remained as free actors within the globalizing capitalist structures. Concurrent with these developments, the Japanese adopted and innovated upon American business practices, only to sell back to the world its own systems and experiences as the “Japanese type of management” as the newest competitor in the market.⁷²

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⁷⁰ Scalapino, 108; Williams, American Democratization Policy, 192; MacArthur, Reminiscences, 308; Schaller, 38.
⁷² Passin, 124; Scalapino, 110.
such, the legacy of the Occupation in the remaking of the Japanese economy has been mixed. On the one hand, the economic structures of Japan have not developed in a way similar to the American model, and still favored greater cartelization. On the other hand, the Japanese had sufficiently internalized the lessons from the Americanizing effects of the Occupation as their economy flourished under the free market – to become the second largest economy behind the US until 2010 – and their management models became sought after commodities.

In passing, it must be noted that the land reform has never been called into question with regards to its success in democratizing the land distribution in Japan. As such, there is nothing we can do but to accept this reform as a success on behalf of the Occupation itself. It broke down the powers of the landlords – an entrenched oligarchic group – and replaced it with a new class of petty capitalists in the Japanese countryside. Because it gave the people an individualism, in the sense that they now became self-controlling economic units, in charge of their own incomes and expenses, and as the owners of their own means of production and sustenance, it can be seen that this reform brought the ideal of American living to Japan. In as much as it did so, the land reform did Americanize the Japanese society, by making it more capitalistic and individualistic.

Regarding the Japanese track record under the constitution and the enhanced rights and freedoms that were given to the people, it can be argued that the Occupation has had *enduring* success, as the constitution and the rights of the people remain intact.73 Despite the occasional rustling with regard to the amendment of Article 9, in order to allow the Japanese to have a standing army, there has not even been calls to have the constitution amended in any major way.

73 Passin, 125; Norbeck in A Retrospective View, 30; The Big Picture – Japan: Our Far East Partner; Otake, Victor, and Douglas G. Haring. "Japan Looks Back on the Occupation." Far Eastern Survey 22, no. 3 (1953): 26-32. doi:10.2307/3024127. pp. 26, 29, 30-32. In this final source, which is a collection of edited speeches by the Japanese on the impact of the Occupation, it can be seen that for the Japanese, the single most important reform of the Occupation has been in democratizing Japan through the new constitution.
Furthermore, the rights and freedoms enjoyed by the Japanese have not been threatened or abrogated by the government, which itself was democratized fundamentally. Sovereignty has been shifted to the people, to use in free and fair elections and representative government which functions with oversight from an independent judiciary and legislature has been established. The royal institution has been defanged, and the chance of arbitrary rule has been minimized. Thus, the Americans have succeeded in reshaping the Japanese society, fashioning it after their own in terms of its democratic competency and involvement, and the rights and freedoms afforded to persons – essentially recreating the American Republic abroad, within the framework of Japan.

**In Conclusion – Japan, United States, and Occupation**

Looking back on what we have found in this study, we can assert with certainty – looking at the political and economic markers we have chosen here – that here has been a significant amount of long-term Americanization in Japan. This Americanization that has been the result of the Occupation, has been due not only to changes in the economic and political structures of Japan, but to changes in the very fabric of the Japanese society all of them have been transformed to more closely resemble the American model of a democratic and free market capitalist society. Moreover, knowing the larger trends of contemporary history, it might even be argued that the Japanese not only Americanized but they followed the advice of General Macarthur and have combined the best of their own with best of the Americans, and in turn have flourished.\(^7^4\) The Japanese nation has become one which is considered today to be an integral part of the “free and democratic world”, whose economy is watched by many across the globe as a key market and source for innovation in technology and management. Although not on the

\(^7^4\) MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 283.
level of Hollywood, Japanese cultural goods are making their way across the globe whether in
the format of pop-media *manga* and *anime*, or as movies and television series which exalt the
samurai or explore the war in Japan, or as literary works being translated into global languages.
The source of this success, although inherently Japanese in nature yet undeniably based upon the
American model, is found in the period of the Occupation and the reforms carried out by it,
which has kickstarted the wave of Americanization – and hybridization – in Japan, which as a
process still endures in the Japan of today.
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