

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND IDEOLOGY

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The purpose of this paper will be to explore some possible relations between social stratification and political ideology. In order to demonstrate this relation we will 1) describe the structure and function of the American class system, and the values attached to the system as a whole and to its parts, (i.e., the particular strata) , 2) briefly compare the structure of class with the political and economic ideologies of Marxism and Fascism, and finally 3) set forth some observations on class in present day Japan. Due to the limitations of space it will be necessary, in some cases, to be overly brief. My purpose in writing this paper, however, necessitates that the breadth of this paper be extremely broad, and not necessarily so deep. It is our interest here to acquaint the Japanese student of social science with some of the more important considerations of the workings of the American class system, and to point out one of the major reasons why the ideologies of Marxism and Fascism, while running rampant throughout the world in the past several decades, has never had a strong appeal in America. Then, too, every serious student of Japan must deal with some aspects of the ramifications of the Occupation, and especially students interested in cultural contact and social change. We strongly believe that all too many present day political observers are placing an excess amount of stress on external factors and their effects on internal political affairs (power politics, tariff barriers, lack of markets for produce, etc.) while appreciating the validity of these positions, we believe it necessa-

ry to consider more closely the internal social structure and the values attached to that structure in any particular nation, when discussing the problem of political ideology and political action.

Since Professor W. L. Warner's pioneering attempts to describe social stratification in America, more than 20 years ago, there has appeared an abundance of literature on this subject in America. Almost all of the literature confirms the fact that there are classes in America, even though many researches may disagree as to the methods to be employed, the number of classes actually present in a given community, etc. In this paper we will employ the findings of Mr. Warner and Associates primarily because we believe that his work has been more exhaustive and methodical, and secondarily, because of our close acquaintance with him and his materials.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE CLASS SYSTEM

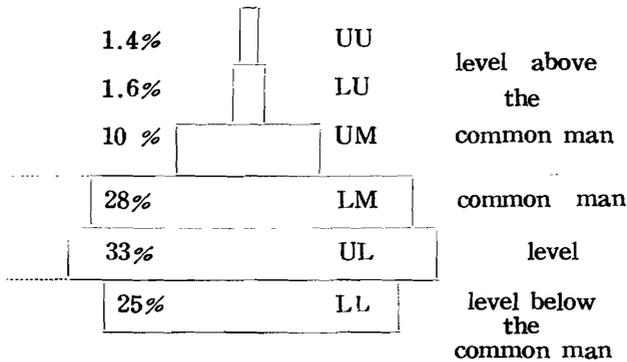
The single most outstanding and characteristic feature of the American class system is that it is an "open" class system. That is to say, it is "open" in the minds of the American people. An "open" class system means that there exists a high degree of mobility potential. In other words an individual can, by manipulating the proper existing mechanisms, raise himself from an individual of low status to an individual of high status. Conversely, he may fall from a high status position to a low one. It is the knowledge or belief of this principle, combined with the Protestant ethic of driving toward "success", that maintains the American class system and the American way of life. The American class system can be defined as a system of well defined

rankings or strata, which places individuals and/or families in positions of superiority or inferiority at any given time. Furthermore, this type of social organization is based upon the principle of "equalitarianism", i.e., every individual has a right or an opportunity to participate within the system, to reap the rewards of success, to take the punishments of failure. At first sight this kind of organization seems like a dilemma, with a hierarchy on the one hand, and equality on the other, but as we will attempt to demonstrate, it is this peculiar combination in complement, which support the basis of American democracy.

Let us look a little closer at some of the more basic and general characteristics of this form of social stratification. In Professor Warner's "Yankee City Series" he has described much of the material he has collected in communities located throughout America. For our purposes it will be only necessary to outline some of the general features of his findings. The class structure that we will describe, is somewhat typical of the older communities in America, i.e., some of the newer communities west of the Mississippi River will not exhibit all the characteristics to be described, since they are newer, and of a slightly different make-up.

The American class system has, generally speaking, 3 large divisions, upper class, middle class and lower class. Sometimes these three larger divisions are further subdivided by adding three more classes to those already mentioned, i.e., upper-upper, lower-upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, upper-lower, and lower-lower. The following diagram, reproduced from Mr. Warner's "American Life" is a general representation of the class structure, and the percentages of people which occupy each

particular rank within the structure. The percentage figures vary somewhat from district to district in the U.S., but these variations are insignificant for our purposes.



In the western half of the U. S., there is not a strong or important upper-upper class, because the towns and cities are not as yet old enough to have developed this class. Further, in the west there is a very small lower-lower, because this strata is composed mostly of immigrants, who usually settle in the large cities or on the Eastern seaboard. It will be noted in the diagram above that by far the greatest majority of people are located in the upper-lower class and in the lower-middle class, the classes of the Common Man.

Individuals and families fall into these different strata or are socially identified as belonging to one of these groups by reason of 1) economic or financial standing and, 2) social behavior. (Later, when discussing the upper-upper class, we will see that lineage or family is also an important factor in class identification). Neither of these factors alone will assure a person of any particular status, but rather it is the combination of these which are important in the determination of status.

Although it will be impossible for us to go into any lengthy description of human development, or education theory, it is necessary that we make several observations concerning the way children are socialized into the larger, effective community. We might think of each one of these class divisions as separate cultures, with different goals, different values and value-orientations, different methods of child rearing and different goal-stimulants. In these class strata there exist individuals whose ambitions, drives and responses parallel those of the other members of his class, but will differ significantly from individuals in the other classes. Children are taught the rules, mores and values of the class into which they are born. Thus, a child will learn the way of life of the class to which his parents belong. Therefore, in order for an individual to become vertically mobile, i.e., to move up or down, he must unlearn the "culture" of the class into which he was born, and learn the new class "culture" into which he expects to move. He must learn the behavior, values and expectations of the new class. This means, then that there is more to social mobility in America, than the mere accumulation of wealth. There is no doubt, of course, that there is a very high co-relation between wealth and social class, but in reality the social behavior is just as much a criterion of class as is wealth. The two are inseparable.

We will now describe very briefly some of the pertinent and outstanding features of the six classes which we have diagramed above. In the *upper-upper* class we find the landed families, that is, the families who have traditionally been known as the upper class. These people usually have the most wealth, but not always. They are the families of highest prestige in America. You will note the emphasis on family

in this class. This is the only class which emphasizes lineage in the class system. Sometimes there is a sort of endogamy in this class, and sometimes marriages are arranged to suit the families. The social behavior in this class is usually most relaxed, i.e., the individuals of this class feel secure in their present positions in the class system, their only worries being the chance of downward mobility. The *lower-upper* class are popularly called the "new rich". The people in this status group have usually acquired their status within the last generation. Therefore, it is assumed that these people are about the most mobile in the country. They are not yet accepted by the upper-upper, nor are they considered to be upper-upper by the community as a whole, because they do not have the "name", nor are they usually proficient enough to participate in upper-upper circles with regard to their social behavior, even though they may have more wealth than their social superiors. In some cases individuals in the upper class marry with individuals in the lower-upper, in order to supplement their monetary or financial status. The *upper-middle* class consists of individuals well known in the community as leaders in various organizations. These are the solid citizens of the American communities who belong to highly respected organizations. They are usually the civic leaders. The individuals in this strata, like the ones in the lower middle class are sometimes anxious and frustrated, and sometimes exceedingly ambitious in their desire to become mobile, since these two groups together are the most successfully mobile people in America.

In the *lower-middle* and *upper-lower* classes, which we will lump together because of the space limitations, we find the Common Man type. These people are usually small business men, skilled and semi-skilled workers, clerks, tradesmen, etc. These people approach the

closest to the Protestant ethic standard, that is they are usually thrifty, hard working, honest, church going people who belong to many civic organizations, patriotic organizations and fraternal organizations. The great mass of the American people fall into this category. It is this element of the class system which is its defender and progenitor. It is from this class that the teachers come, and it is in this class that the greatest value is placed on individualism, democracy, freedom, etc. In this class, especially, we find early toilet training, early weaning and early independence and responsibility of the children. It is from this class that we will develop the next generation of socially mobile individuals. In the *lower-lower* we find the newly arrived "ethnic" groups, and those individuals and families who are not ambitious enough to live up to the middle class standard of "getting ahead". Usually the immigrants are culturally different from the large mass of Americans, and so they are usually considered inferior, until they learn their role-expectations, at which time they move out of their inferior status and begin their gradual climb up the social hierarchy.

This brief summary of some of the characteristics of the various class groups in America, though scanty and at times terribly oversimplified, will at least give us a background for our further analysis. To our Japanese reader, this must seem like a very strange type of social arrangement. Why are so many people interested in social mobility? Why is this kind of activity considered important. For the most part the answers to these questions lie in a secularized part of the Christian religion. We will use the term popularized by Max Weber to describe this particular phenomenon, the Protestant ethic. Very briefly, the Protestant ethic places a very large stress on the fact

that if a person works hard, lives a clean, healthy life, is honest and religious, he will become a success. The corollary to this dictum is that if you are not successful, i.e., a failure, then you are not a hard worker, clean & healthy liver, etc. A failure then, is a most despicable person. Naturally, through the years this idea has been transformed into every aspect of American social life. From the time of infancy until the time of death, one is taught and reminded that success is the ultimate good in this life. Then, too, there is another reason for this stress on mobility. Since the society places so much emphasis on success, the rewards for success are very attractive,..... wealth, power and prestige. As Professor Warner has stated, the 'poor boy makes good' and the story of Abraham Lincoln's rise from a log cabin to the White House, and many other stories like these, are "the American Dream". Everyone has the opportunity to become President, every Mother dreams of her son in the White House, and this is the basis of the American productive system. This is the "dream" which transformed America from a wilderness into the greatest material civilization the world has ever known. This "dream" was augmented during the early frontier days, when Europeans came to America and amassed a fortune overnight. Slowly, however, these days of quick riches came to an end, but the "dream" did not end. The "dream" continued and still continues as the basis of the American way of life. When the opportunities for mobility became lessened, when the days of overnight success ended, the Government stepped in and assured the American public that the "dream" was not over, with such legislation as, social security, fair practise laws, child labor laws, etc. Unions were formed to assure the workers that their opportunities for a share in the "dream" would be

safe guarded. In other words, the channels for mobility remained open. It is believed that these channels will remain open indefinitely, since the great middle class members are the strictest adherents to this type of social system, and it is they who control the vote, and therefore the Government. Of course this type of system takes its toll in terms of nervous disorders, disease, and psychological disturbances. Highly success oriented people sometimes become most frustrated when their attempts at mobility are thwarted. In most cases their failures are internalized and serious maladjustments take place. This tendency on the part of individuals to internalize their anxieties, instead of criticizing the system for their failure, seem to be unique in the world today, where there are such rapid turnovers in governments, political systems, etc. The American failure, however, cannot criticize the system, since the whole of his known world, i.e., every aspect of the American social fabric from religion to his early child training, is based on the principle of success and individual initiative, embodied in the Protestant ethic and the American "Dream".

MARXISM, FASCISM AND CLASS

In this section we should like to consider some of the more important functions of the class system in relation to the political ideologies of Marxism and Fascism. In the past twenty years, the world has twice been divided into opposing forces; first, the democracies against the Fascist nations, and now the "free nations" against the communist countries. In both cases the U.S., as well as Britain and France, have maintained a "center" policy. Why is it that Marxism today, and Fascism of yesteryear have had such an insignificant influence on

American political ideology? why, in fact, have these new political doctrines caused such a tremendous negative reaction in America? In order to answer these questions we will have to examine some of the basic tenets of these ideologies in relation to the American class system.

Marx and Engels in their *Communist Manifesto* attempt to trace the history of the "class struggle". They say that "the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes". They go on to state that in earlier epochs of history, there were complicated status hierarchies, such as in the feudal times, and that modern bourgeois society, although springing from this type of arrangement, has not done away with class antagonisms. However, they say, modern bourgeois has greatly simplified the class antagonisms, and they go on with their analysis by predicting the inevitable future.

"Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes, directly facing each other.....Bourgeois and proletariat."

One of the reasons given for this "inevitable" split into two camps is based on the principle that the 'rich will get richer and the poor will get poorer.' "The modern labourer instead of rising with the progress of industry, *sinks deeper and deeper* below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper and pauperism develops more

rapidly than population and wealth……. The bourgeois is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slaves within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him.”

From just these few brief excerpts from the *Manifesto* it should seem obvious why this particular ideology has been, to say the least, unpopular in America. Marx's observation of the modern "bourgeois" state took place in England, for the most part, in a time of very rapid historical change. England was at that time just beginning to adjust her social climate to the new industrial era. His observations of England at that time may have impressed him in such a way as to lead him to believe that the proletariat would ultimately rise and overthrow the bourgeois. However, Marx as a philosopher turned out to be somewhat short sighted. He overlooked two very important elements, which many of his contemporaries did not. The first was the Protestant ethic, with its emphasis on "equality", "fair play", "competition limited by the laws of God" (love thy neighbor, etc) and the second was the *rise* of the Great Middle Class. Marx could only see capitalism as an agent of decline, whereas, in reality, it has been just the opposite in character. The Protestant ethic, with its stress on individualism, and success, on the one hand, and with equality on the other, had two very important functions in the development of the American class system, which dealt the death blow to Marx's prediction of the two class system. In the first place it kept alive the idea that the individual has certain rights and privileges in the eyes of God. This meant that if he were ambitious and hard working, he would naturally

benefit. This kind of conception of the individual was naturally opposed to a feeling of class consciousness which would be necessary for any revolution of the masses. Secondly, the Protestant ethic, and the values attached to it, greatly influenced the many social reforms, which were necessary to keep the "proletariate" at such an economic and social level as to assure him an equal chance to effectively participate in the American "dream". In short, Marx based his theories on the guess that inevitably a two class system would evolve, and furthermore, that this two class system would be characterized by a steady decline of the labourer into a state of pauperism. Marx's theoretical solution to this depressing state of affairs was to eliminate class distinctions altogether. As we have attempted to point out in the first part of this paper, the American class system is supported by the very existence of hierarchy. Without this type of stratification all incentive, all the goals and values of American life would be worthless. The American "dream" is mobility and movement, not a status quo, nor a social organization based upon the *equal status* principle of Marxism. Equality, yes, but *equality of opportunity* to participate in a dynamic social system.

In Marxism, as in the democracy of the American class system, the emphasis is on the individual. These are two different attempts to solve the problem of how best to serve the needs and desires of the individual. But when we turn to the political theory of Fascism, we are facing a somewhat different, though related problem. The question asked in Fascist theory is not how we can best serve the individual with our political system, but rather how can the individual best serve the State or the political system? The basis of fascism is that the majority are incapable of knowing and acting in a way which is best

for them and the State. Individuals, so the theory goes, are abstractions, in and of themselves. That is, they are abstractions if we abstract them from the larger society. Therefore, the natural state of our species is in society, thus the society is the greatest good, and it is the duty of the individual to subjugate himself to the greater good. That which is good for society is decided by "the enlightened few responsables" as Hitler states in *Mein Kampf*. He goes on to explain in a later chapter that even the "few" are not to make decisions, but that "becomes the exclusive prerogative of the responsible President". Thus the word "society" is transformed into "state" and Benito Mussolini says in *My Autobiography*, "Over all conflicts of human and legitimate interests, there is the authority of the Government; the Government alone is in the right position to see things from the point of view of the general welfare. This Government is not at the disposition of this man or that man; it is over everybody, because it takes to itself not only the juridical conscience of the nation in the present, but also all that that nation represents in the future."

In order to supplement such a political theory, it has seemed necessary to appeal to something larger than the individual, or the State. In Germany Hitler talked about the importance of maintaining the purity of the "Aryan Race"; Mussolini repeatedly stated that his efforts were to restore respectability to the Italian nation, which was the nation upon which all our modern civilizations rest. In Japan too, the rallying point was around "race", "emperor" and "land". In every case we see an appeal based on the conception of racial or national superiority. A necessary economic presupposition of fascism, of course, is that the State will have control over the means of production and

distribution of goods. The school system and the means of communication, such as the press and radio, must also be controlled by the state, since criticism of the state would be detrimental to the efficient operation of the State, and these media of communication and education are valuable means for the dispersal of the doctrine of intense nationalism, by which the theory of fascism is maintained.

Turning back to the problem of fascism and class, we can readily see that the two would be highly incompatible. In the class system, as we have continually stated, the emphasis is on the individual, not the state. Whenever the state tries to get control of any part of the industry of America, a million cries are heard all over the nation that the individual liberties are being trampled upon. Even when, for the apparent good of the middle classes, the Government tries to step in, they are rebuked by these very same classes. Why? Because even the lowly want the system to go on operating as usual, so that they may have their chances in it. Then, too, Americans are only negatively impressed by any doctrine of racial superiority, since Americans consider themselves somewhat superior, because they have incorporated peoples of every race and creed in the world. One could hardly expect an American to believe in any theories of racial deterioration because of mixed breeding. It seems to be the mistaken impression of many people in Japan, and, I imagine in Russia and her satellites also, that big capitalists control America. So often does one hear about Wall street and the rich bankers and brokers. But in fact, these capitalists do not control America. They may control the capital and the industry, but they do not control America. America is controlled by the people

in the Great Middle Class, as you see from the diagram on a preceding page. This large majority in the middle classes controls the government which is the instrument of the people, unlike the fascist state we have just described where the people are the instrument of the State.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON CLASS IN JAPAN

Now at this point, and in the light of the above discussions, it would seem fruitful to turn our attentions to Japan, because of her unique position in the world today. Unique because 10 years ago Japan was under a fascist form of government, and because since then, an American form of social system, with many of the attendant institutions, has been enforced under the Occupation. Then, too, we have seen attempts of late, and we can suppose that they will continue, on the part of Communist China and the U. S. S. R to woo Japan, with the hope of winning her over to their side of the present world conflict. The question we will ask is 'What are the future prospects of Japan?' We will not seek to answer this question directly, since this would be assuming too much at this time, but rather, we will merely attempt to point out some important considerations, observations and trends which seem to have manifested themselves since the end of the Occupation. We will leave any conclusions that may be drawn from this discussion entirely up to the reader.

In the first place let us state at this point that we feel that the Occupation was an honest attempt on the part of its administrators to rehabilitate Japan, socially and economically, as quickly as possible, so that she could again take her place in the family of nations. Little

was known about Japan or the Japanese people in the early days of the Occupation, and, regardless of the amount of research done by the various research divisions of SCAP into the various facets of Japanese social and economic life, value systems, cultural heritage, etc., it must be admitted that the Occupation was based upon the American ideal of what was "good". In other words, the underlying presupposition of the Occupation was that Japan should be democratized, American style, with emphasis on individualism, equality and representative government. True, some rather dubious things of the old Japanese culture, such as the Emperor, were maintained, but on the whole the "democratic" presuppositions could be clearly seen in almost every phase of the Occupation. As was probably expected almost every institution imposed under the Occupation is now undergoing, or will in the future undergo, some changes in order to make the whole system of institutions coherent and understandable in terms of Japanese needs, and values. It must also be understood that many changes will come about merely due to the changing external environment in which Japan finds herself. The occupation left in its wake the "shell" of American democracy, i.e., void of much meaningful content. It is believed that the Occupation administration was well aware of the futility of attempting to educate, indoctrinate if you will, the Japanese people toward the values, goals and ambitions, in the mold of the American counterpart. It was impossible for them to think that they could seriously effect that part of a nation's life which is the result of thousands of years of historical development. It is believed that this was well understood by the Occupation, but that the best they thought they could do was implant the machinery for a working democracy, and then hope for the

best. Let us briefly discuss Japan in terms of some of the fundamental ideas of the American class system. We feel that this is a completely justified mode of reasoning, that is, comparing Japan and America in terms of class, since the efforts of the Occupation were primarily directed towards imposing American institutions on Japan. In the first place, individualism, which is basic to the functioning of the American type "open" class system, is singularly lacking in Japan. Because the Japanese people had for so many years been educated toward the principle of Statism, the realism of the development of individualism has been the area of least change since the beginning of the Occupation. Especially among the so called "intellectuals", farmers and labourers is this lack of individualism apparent. Also missing from the necessary psychological framework of an American type class system is ambition in terms of mobility, a well defined class system with explicit mechanisms for mobility, "success" as defined in the protestant ethic and a fervent belief in a political and economic system based on social stratification and economic and social inequality. We also noted, when describing class in America that there was a de-emphasis of the family. The family, that is to say, was subordinated to the individual in terms of mobility. An individual, irregardless of his family of orientation, was relatively free in terms of mobility. In Japan the family is still, by far, the most important single institution. Because the family is interwoven with almost every aspect of the social life, and because it is supported by highly sanctioned moral obligations, it has been the area which has most successfully resisted change. The family, too, as the center of the Japanese social system, stands in opposition to the emergence of a truly "open" class system, since it does not enhance mobility, either upward or downward. In this respect the

Japanese emphasis on lineage and family can be compared to the American upper-upper class, the area in the American class system where there is the least change. Especially in the traditional type of Japanese marriage arrangement, is mobility restricted. This list of potential obstacles to the development of an American type class system which would be consistent with the institutional reforms of the Occupation could be extended indefinitely, but it is believed that we have mentioned enough examples to demonstrate the kind of problems Japan faces with American "machinery" and Japanese "workmen". In order to completely and effectively enculturate a society, it is necessary, not only to transform the frameworks of the various institutions, but also the bodies of those institutions; the values, in this case, which support the class system. The American institution was imposed, but the American "dream" was not.

A basic presupposition of this paper, which has appeared several times throughout, but which has never been substantially supported, is that political ideology and social stratification are highly interdependent. This is not by any means a new or original idea. Marx says the same thing, as do many others. However, it is believed that in Japan we have somewhat of a control situation, probably as good a control as one can expect to get at such a highly broad and abstract level. What happens to a society that has many of the "democratic" institutions and "democratic" terminology (i.e., "equality"), but lacks a social stratification like the one we have been describing, and its necessary value components? In Japan, as we have attempted to point out, the necessary social stratification upon which to set Japanese democracy is sadly lacking. Let us briefly list some of the recent trends and developments

in Japan. The Occupation, armed with the idea that "equality" was in and of itself a good thing, did away with primogeniture. In a land which is so small and which is already so cut up with small farms, the division of property in terms of the principles of "equality" might well be disastrous to the Occupational Land Reform Program. Large land owners are beginning to buy up smaller farm lands, because individuals are finding it difficult to make a living on small areas of land which have been divided equally. Then, too, many younger sons, who in the past left the already overcrowded farmlands for jobs in industry, have now the incentive to stay on the land, with the hope of making a living from farming. In a country where the farming methods are already inefficient, this does not seem like much of an improvement. Thus we see the seeds for the reappearance of the prewar landlords. The same kind of trend might be noted in industry. The Government forced upon the nation, whether good or bad, an austerity program. This program had the effect of forcing out of business many small businessmen, and it also gave rationale to the reforming of the wartime Zaibatsu. The Japanese Treasury, with the help of American aid programs has the power of subsidizing certain industries, and giving the all important Government contracts to some of the larger industries, and thus, we have the seeds of the reformation of the Fascist type economic system. In the field of education, it is felt, at least by many educators, that the Government is restricting freedom of speech and thought by the passage of two education bills, which are designed to curb the political activities of teachers. It is interesting in this respect to quote from Mussolini's *My Autobiography* when he was discussing the formation of his Fascist Italian State. He

says, "We had to crowd out from the intermediate schools the negative and supercilious elements. We were determined to infuse into the public schools those broad humanistic currents in which our history and our traditions are so rich. Finally, it was indispensable to impose a new discipline in education.....a discipline to which everyone must submit, the teachers themselves, first of all." Recently, in Japan, there has been talk of establishing Government supported "Public Opinion Information Services", special committees to censor radio and the newspapers. Here we see the origins of the destruction of the institutions of the Occupation. We have the symptoms of the formation of a class of "elites" who control the wealth and the Government, and who believe that they alone have the insight to know what should be good for the people. In Mussolini's words, "the government alone is in the right position to see things from the point of view of the general welfare." It is hardly plausible to believe that a highly developed middle class, with its intense hatred for government control, and its individualism would allow this trend to continue. However, in Japan the middle class is slowly being eradicated, and the trend is seemingly in the direction of establishing, again, the Government or the State, and its subjects, the Japanese people. Just as Marxism has little appeal in America, so it has little appeal, at the present time, in Japan. Marxism requires, according to Marx, a feeling of individual importance and a feeling of class consciousness. Both are lacking in Japan. Should the present trend toward centralization of power continue in Japan, and should, in the future, the Japanese develop a true feeling of individualism, then it is felt that the "proletarians", and they will be "proletarians" in every sense of the word, will rise to the

challenge. However, it is hoped that this observation of ours is only an illusion, and that a real stratification will develop, along lines compatible with the Japanese value system, which will off-set any "illusions" other investigators might get in the future.