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JCP Central Committee Chair
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What Will the 21st Century Be Like?

An interview with

FUWA Tetsuzo

Japanese Communist Party Central Committee Chair

(Translated by Japan Press Service)

(Part Two)

Can LDP Politics Survive the New Century?

Coldly critical eye on Japan's support for retaliatory war

Sekiguchi: Let us now talk about Japan. Recently, Newsweek magazine (Japanese edition, December 26 issue) carried a feature story entitled, "Time for Dependent Japan to Become 'Independent'." Make no mistake, the article was not about Japan "being independent." As indicated by the subtitle: "By dispatching the Self-Defense Forces abroad, Japan has again exposed its subservience to the United States. Will the day come when Japan overcomes inertia and becomes a respectable country?", the article was apparently appalled by Japan's extremely open submission to the Bush administration. In addition, the author was accompanied by a chronological review of Japan's "50 years fawning on the U.S."

Fuwa: I didn't know that Newsweek magazine carried such a feature story.

Sekiguchi: To curry favor with the Bush administration, Japan furiously cooperated with the U.S. retaliatory war, desperately trying to fly the Hinomaru flag in the Indian Ocean. The point is that such an attitude drew criticism even from the mainstream U.S. media.

Fuwa: Regarding criticism of Japan's cooperation with the retaliatory war, I have been following closely the press comments of South Korea, which are very severe.

The South Korean daily *Joong-Ang Ilbo* stated that Japan's neighboring countries can never just stand by and watch its intention of using the dispatch of SDF at this time as a decisive moment to become a military power. It went on to say: "We must send Japan a clear warning signal that Tokyo's attempt to revise its peace constitution and become a military power will hamper the stability and possible reconciliation in Asia."

Chosun Ilbo stated that the explanation that SDF activities abroad will be in support of military action against terrorism and that they will be outside combat areas "will not help absorb the shock on the sea change allowing the SDF to go abroad to support war. It also said: "Given Koizumi's historical outlook and understanding expressed during his recent Seoul visit, South Korea cannot but express its deep concern because it is the first and largest victim of Japanese militarism."

These comments, which came out in relation to the enactment of the law

allowing Japan to take part in the on-going war, and their criticism was to the point. Some writers further argued for the Japan-South Korea relationship to be reconsidered. All this has come out along with such criticism from the U.S. press that you just mentioned.

Prime Minister Koizumi apparently thought that flying the Japanese flag in this war would help to raise Japan's international status. However, what the Koizumi government has done in support of the war made Japan look more threatening than ever to Asian countries. Even the mainstream U.S. media have become critical of Japan's submission to the United States. Thus, Koizumi only pleased President Bush, and only helped to downgrade Japan's standing in international politics.

LDP politics has reached impasse for final settlement

Fuwa: In a broader perspective, the question will be: "Can LDP politics survive the 21st century?" *Asahi Shimbun* of December 27, 2001 carried a discussion by editorial staff members under the sensational title, "Is he going to be the last LDP premier?" This shows how serious the position of the LDP is.

Shoji: So the Koizumi Cabinet can be compared to the last Tokugawa Shogunate led by Tokugawa Yoshinobu.

Fuwa: I won't predict that the present prime minister will be the last LDP prime minister, but the fact is that LDP politics is boxed up.

Looking back on LDP politics in the 20th Century, I think the revision of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty in 1960 was a major turning point.

The LDP government at that point made the military alliance under the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty a solid framework for foreign and military policies that force Japan into subordination, submission, and loyalty to the United States. Domestically, the revision of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty was followed by a series of policies that serve the best interests of large corporations at the cost of the people under the guise of a "high-rate growth" economic policy and an "income-doubling plan." Despite the many cabinet changes and occasional changes of policies, the main course of LDP politics remains unchanged.

The critical situation facing Japan today is a result of the many years of misgovernment by the LDP. I have just said what the consequences of its foreign and military policies are. Let us now look at issues on the domestic front. Over the last 40 years, the LDP has put into practice a formula which is based on the false notion that helping major corporations prosper is the only way to achieve Japan's development, a formula that forces the people into accepting cold-hearted politics. As a result, Japan has become a country without rules which are commonplace in Europe, rules for safeguarding the people's living standards and rights. Also, Japan's use of tax money is totally upside-down: social services get less than half the money for public works projects. This is where LDP politics now stands. Look at the deepening recession, declines in social services, rampant corporate restructuring in disregard of workers' right to live, the fiscal crisis worsening year after year. These are all products of distorted LDP politics.

Showing the way for Japanese society to turn, the Japanese Communist Party first set out the democratic objective of change in the JCP Program adopted by the JCP 8th Congress in 1961, one year after we waged a historic national struggle against the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty.

The JCP is a political party that aims to achieve socialism and communism as higher stages of social development, but it is important to carry out changes step by step together with the people in accordance to what socialism calls for. This is the basic position we decided to follow when we adopted the JCP Program 40 years ago, setting out the basic objectives. For foreign relations, we call for an end to the Japan-U.S. military alliance and for an independent and neutral Japan. On the domestic front, we demand a change away from the economic policy which gives priority to the interests of large corporations to one of putting the people first. This is what we call democratic change within the framework of capitalism. We have held fast to this policy in our struggle against LDP politics. And in the 1990s, we formulated our policy proposal called "Remaking Japan."

In the course of this struggle, LDP policies have reached an impasse in all fields, diplomatic, military, and economic. This is the root cause of the present crisis facing LDP politics.

We use the people's criteria for judging reform

Fuwa: So, the real way out of the present crisis should only be possible by carrying out a "reform" that will attack the disease of LDP politics: submission to the United States and the best interests of large corporations, and the bullying of the people. Any attempt to change LDP politics must address this problem, without which "reform" will only mean giving a facial treatment. This is what I mean by saying, "Can LDP politics survive the new century?"

Sekiguchi: What would be your evaluation of the Koizumi "reform" if these criteria are used?

Fuwa: Prime Minister Koizumi became prime minister by promising to "change the LDP." "Reform" has since been his only claim to fame. But as a politician, he has no intention or will to change away from the fundamental problem of LDP politics. On the contrary, it would be fair to say that he is the staunchest opponent to far-reaching reform.

That is why Koizumi during his visit to Washington in June last year publicly stated he is by nature pro-American, and after the terrorist attacks he uncritically supported the U.S. war against Afghanistan. His most important "accomplishment" is high commendations from President Bush. No wonder Newsweek magazine ran a feature story on Japan's submission to the United States. For example, no LDP cabinet in the past was so outrageous as the Koizumi Cabinet in dispatching the Self-Defense Forces in violation of the Constitution as Koizumi's.

In handling relations with the rest of Asia, the Koizumi Cabinet blatantly set up two stumbling blocks, calling its historical outlook into question. One is Japan's rejection of South Korean and Chinese requests for changes to be made in

descriptions in Japan's history textbooks, and the other an official visit the prime minister made to Yasukuni Shrine in complete disregard of opposition expressed by the neighboring countries.

Where in all this can you recognize a glimpse of "reform"? All we know about the Koizumi Cabinet is the worst part of LDP foreign policies being exposed one after another.

In domestic policies, too, the Koizumi Cabinet stands out in terms of assaults on people's livelihoods and rights. Its plan for the adverse revision of the national medical insurance system is one typical example. Koizumi is also remembered as the health and welfare minister who carried out an adverse revision under Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro's cabinet. Everyone knows that it caused serious damage to the national economy and the people's livelihood. But he has never reflected on it; on the contrary he is rushing through a further adverse revision of the medical insurance system.

In spite of the economic slowdown and the unemployment rate being increasingly serious, he seems to be indifferent to people's hardships. Many years ago, there was a cabinet minister who came under fire when he said the poor should eat wheat (instead of rice). No one who fails to understand people's hardships has a right to ask the public to endure them.

Pro-business, anti-people policies are worst ever

Fuwa: The Koizumi Cabinet's policies primarily serving the interests of large corporations are the worst ever. "Use the private sector as much as possible" is one of Koizumi's favorite phrases. Criticizing this, economist Konya Fumiko said that we must not forget that the private sector is only interested in making profit" (*Asahi Shimbun*, December 13, 2001). I agree. She went on to say, "Efficiency is not what the government should pursue. ...The government should do things that are indispensable to the people even if they may not pay. The Koizumi government is losing sight of the basics."

Sekiguchi: That's true..

Fuwa: After all, Prime Minister Koizumi's "Give the private sector as much opportunity as possible" means that the "public sector" should not stand in the way of corporate profit-making and that jobs currently undertaken by administrative authorities should be done by the private sector for profit.

His call for changes to be made in the "public sector" is not intended to correct the defects in the administrative authorities; all he wants to do is reform the "public sector" for the benefit of large corporations. This is what his reform is about. For example, his arguments for "privatization of the postal service" is one of serving the best interests of large corporations in complete disregard of the convenience of the general public using the post office. Ms. Konya stated, "If the post offices start operating according to market forces, they will withdraw from unprofitable depopulated areas or islands and will become reluctant to serve smaller accounts."

With its policies serving primarily the interests of major corporations and giving

the general public the cold shoulder, the Koizumi Cabinet is blatant in taking on the worst characteristics of LDP politics.

In dealing with public works projects, the Koizumi Cabinet, which is now facing a serious fiscal crisis, cannot afford to continue to be lavish with them. Although it tries to take various immediate measures, it is reluctant to seek a drastic policy change. In particular, it will be reluctant to review the Fifth Comprehensive National Development Plan (adopted in 1998).

Sekiguchi: The plan includes construction of bridges over straits.

Fuwa: That's right. The plan is to build six bridges, including a second one at Tokyo Bay and the Kanmon Straits, and new ones at Ise Bay, the Kitan Straits, and the Hoyo Straits, making them the pillar of Japan's 21st century public works projects to the benefit of general contractors. The notorious plan to relocate the nation's capital is also part of these projects. The Koizumi Cabinet is unwilling even to reconsider these highly criticized plans.

It only maintains the same attitude as in the past toward controversial public works projects such as the plan to construct Kawabe River Dam in Kumamoto Prefecture and the reclamation of the Isahaya Bay in Nagasaki Prefecture.

All this shows how the Koizumi Cabinet is so blatant that it pushes ahead with the worst kind of policies, foreign and economic, that past LDP governments stopped short of doing. I would say that this is what the Koizumi Cabinet is all about.

Look at the characteristics of LDP politics from larger angles instead of examining present individual issues to see what it is doing to deal with the causes of the LDP-led misgovernment. Has LDP submission to the United States changed? Is it willing to change away from policies that are cold to the people? Has it broken with policies serving the best interests of large corporations? Examining these questions, you will find clearly that the Koizumi Cabinet, far from being one of changing LDP politics, can only be the last gasp of LDP government.

Sekiguchi: Some people take his reckless approaches as an expression of enthusiasm for "reform."

Fuwa: I have known Mr. Koizumi's recklessness since before he became prime minister.

I think you remember a corruption scandal involving welfare businesses about five years ago? An organization leasing bedding and providing meals to hospitals had bribed Health and Welfare Ministry officials. It was revealed that Hashimoto Ryutaro, prime minister at the time, and Koizumi Jun'ichiro, health and welfare minister at the time, received donations from this organization. Both Hashimoto and Koizumi were "Health and Welfare Ministry tribesmen," or politicians representing special interests of health-related businesses. In December 1996, I used my question time on behalf of the JCP in the Diet to point out that in light of political ethics it was a grave matter for politicians who are deeply involved with welfare administration to receive donations from corporations doing business under government contract using welfare expenditures. When I asked for their comment on this particular point, their answer was that they received the donations in

accordance with due legal procedures, but Mr. Koizumi added a flagrant argument. His logic was that everything in our society counts on corporate donations and other forms of cooperation. He cited examples from sports such as baseball, soccer, and golf; music, whether it is classical, popular, or opera; and media such as TV programs and newspapers. He meant to insist that the same is true of politicians saying, "What's wrong with politicians receiving corporate donations?"

Sekiguchi: Didn't he mention donations to festivities?

Fuwa: I have so far debated with many politicians whether corporate donations should be banned or not, but I know no politicians who are more defiant than Mr. Koizumi. He is the one who receives corporate money and carries out policies primarily to benefit large corporations without feeling any "responsibility" and in defiance of any criticism.

Apparently, this outrageous attitude runs through the policies he is carrying out in violation of the Constitution and hurt the public.

Sekiguchi: I don't think such reckless politics and indifference to the people's hardships can last long.

Recent remarks by a senior LDP politician

Fuwa: Even within the LDP the validity of LDP politics is being questioned. I recently read remarks by a senior LDP politician on Japan's foreign policy. To my surprise, his view had many points in common with ours.

On the question of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty he stated: A military alliance is only valid when it has a hypothetical enemy. The Japan-U.S. Security Treaty was established with the Soviet Union as its potential enemy. Why does the security treaty continue to be necessary when there is no longer the hypothetical enemy? He insists that the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty should be replaced by a Japan-U.S. Friendship Treaty. He says that if Japan maintains the present Security Treaty as a military alliance treaty, it will have to take on China as a hypothetical enemy.

Regarding Japan's basic stance on foreign relations, he maintains that although the United States is a country Japan must respect, Japan must not be swallowed up by the United States; that Japan in a multipolar international society must not undermine its relations with East Asia; and that Japan-China relations are particularly important and so the two countries must avoid becoming hypothetical adversaries.

I found a wide-ranging agreement between this person and the JCP regarding foreign policy approaches. Although he by no means criticizes Koizumi diplomacy, his was arguing for military and diplomatic approaches which are different from those followed by Prime Minister Koizumi.

In the interview with the *Asahi Shimbun* on terrorism*, I pointed out three flaws in Japan's foreign policy bound by the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty: 1) lack of independent attitude; 2) failure to attach importance to Japan's relations with Asian countries; and 3) dependence on military approaches. The senior politician's

comment has convinced me that, putting aside each other's view on the 20th century, we share a common basis on major issues regarding how Japan's future foreign policy should be.

**The English translation of Fuwa Tetsuzo's "Have Terrorist Attacks Changed the World?" was published in a special issue-December 2001 of Japan Press Weekly.*

I'm not sure how much this politician is aware of the JCP position on foreign affairs. But it is very encouraging that even a senior politician who has long been a key figure in the LDP arrived at a conclusion similar to the JCP view after a serious consideration of Japan in the 21st century. This means that Koizumi politics, which is said to mark the final stage of LDP government, throws into relief the necessity of a real change that we are calling for: a democratic change to benefit the people.

The present political situation is so complicated that there can be sudden gusts of winds or storms which constitute the major background of the sharpening crisis of LDP politics. It will be correct to say that in these circumstances the major issue is a choice between the JCP's proposal for "Remaking Japan," which calls for a democratic change in the interests of the people, and the Koizumi "reform" that further serves the interests of the United States and major corporations.

It is the position from which I hope that the year 2002 will be a beginning of a new era to give life to what the JCP has proposed for democratic change for the last 40 years.

Sekiguchi: It is a demanding task, but a worthwhile challenge.

Post-capitalism Will be Real Issue in the 21st Century

Shoji: Now we go back to the issue of the world in the 21st century. Would you discuss it from a long-term perspective?

In economics, Japan's prolonged recession isn't the only problem; the sign of economic decline in the United States or the Argentine default on its debt payment is also part of contradictions and difficulties facing capitalism globally. Even those who described the demise of the Soviet Union as a "victory of capitalism" are getting increasingly uneasy and doubtful about the future direction of capitalism. What is your comment on this question?

Fuwa: I referred to the "Inchon Declaration" of an international conference which defined the 21st century as an era in which the realization of a "post-capitalist" system will be possible. I think this is a manifestation of those anxieties and questions.

I believe that it stands to reason that there is widespread doubt about capitalism continuing into the 21st century as it has been.

No way out recession and panic

Fuwa: First, the worldwide recession. In the January issue of monthly *Keizai* (Economics) magazine, I started publishing a series of articles on Marx's theory on depression. The title is, "Tracing Marx's path toward establishing the theory on reproduction and depression." When world capitalism underwent a fourth panic (1857-1858), Marx in a newspaper commentary raised the question: Why is this repeated?

By "this," he did not mean depression; he was referring to overexciting speculations, or bubbles. So Marx's question was: Why does the economy repeat bubbles knowing that a bubble is followed by a panic?

This sentence had a fresh impact on me. I thought here lies the core of Marx's theory on depression. His theory on depression was centered around the question why a bubble is repeated, not why a panic occurs. I will use my serial articles in "Keizai" magazine to examine how Marx studied and solved the question.

At the time of the 4th panic, Marx raised the above question in disgust. The prolonged recession facing us is the 19th of the depressions experienced by world capitalism. There are a variety of ways of counting it. It is called a depression or a recession. But roughly speaking, capitalism has gone through 19 panics.

This being an intolerable illness for capitalism, every possible measure has been taken to reform capitalism to avoid depression. The major method in the past was one of using national might as much as possible. At the time of the Depression of 1929-1930, a government-led system was established to prevent a panic, a system called state monopoly capitalism. For years after the end of World War II, the system was successful in easing depression even though it stopped short of completely preventing the impact. So there was a time when "panic-free capitalism" was much discussed as viable.

However, in the 1970s, the system, which was touted as the most effective means of preventing panic, was exhausted. After the bubble economy, the world has been repeatedly hit by exacerbating cataclysms called panic or recession. The problem is that there is no solution being worked out.

What's more, in the present turmoil caused by the bubble economy followed by recession, huge speculative financial groups, including hedge funds, are assaulting particular countries. When a financial crisis broke out in Southeast Asia in the autumn of 1997, quite a few countries in this region were affected and suffered heavy blows.

Today, international democratic control of multinational corporate activities is called for to prevent unregulated speculations. Behind this development is the major question, "Can we continue to allow private companies to do as they like?" This question is connected to the question of post-capitalism or development to socialism. This means that we are in a serious situation.

Shoji: Speculative groups such as hedge funds profit from destabilizing particular countries' economies or their currencies. The larger the fluctuation is, the greater their profit will be. This means that the people's living conditions of the country

that comes under a concentrated attack by hedge funds will be completely disrupted. I have found that major banks are providing funds for the hedge funds or doing operations similar to those by hedge funds. I believe that this is precisely the reason for many people to be concerned about capitalism continuing to exist as it is because they acutely feel the damage caused by capitalism.

Life-support device of the earth is at risk

Fuwa: Another major issue is environmental destruction. When I prepared my Akahata Festival speech, I studied this issue and realized its great importance.

In the past, pollution or environmental destruction was a local matter, like the air pollution in Yokkaichi City.

Sekiguchi: Contamination of water with organic mercury at Minamata is another example.

Fuwa: The problem common to all these cases is that factories and mines polluted the water and air of localities and harmed their residents. Today, we see not only local pollution cases but also global damages being caused by corporate economic activities.

The earth is a precious planet that has complex conditions for living things to exist. But these conditions did not exist when the earth came into existence. It took 3.5 billion years for life born in the sea to evolve to an intellectual life with brain like us. This was not just a period of the evolution of life; it has been discovered that the period was for remaking the planet into one of creating conditions for lives to be activated. The life-support systems which were completed over three billion years or more include the ozone layer that protects living things on the earth from destructive effects of ultraviolet rays, the composition of atmosphere to prevent global warming and ensure that living things can exist and become active in suitable climates, and the existence of huge seas.

But these life-support systems are being destroyed as a result of economic activities over the last 100 years and in particular the last several decades. This is the real part of the global environmental issue.

It's a question of human kind facing the danger of being denied its future, and the danger is real. If capitalism, by nature, is incapable of coping with this kind of reality, it means that capitalism no longer has the capacity to manage the earth. At that point, I think, we will have to conclude that capitalism is no longer relevant in the 21st century.

Sekiguchi: Your reference to this question at the Akahata Festival drew much attention. Your explanation about the life-support systems was very clear. Many in the audience were particularly impressed by your talk about life-support systems established over three billion years and about capitalism's incapacity to manage the earth.

Marx's terrific insight into contradictions of capitalism

Fuwa: Reading Marx's books again from this viewpoint, I was even more impressed by his terrific insight into the contradictions of capitalism.

Contradictions of capitalism were growing sharper, making social development into a higher stage inevitable. Marx found that the major driving force behind this was the tendency to increase productivity beyond any restrictions, which is inherent in capitalism. The tendency of endless expansion of production conflicts with the small framework based on exploitation and profit-seeking, which will have destructive effects in various fields. This was how Marx understood the contradictions of capitalism.

But the most violent form of capitalist contradictions at that time was depression, so Marx underlined the contradictions between the unlimited development of productive power and the limited purchasing power of the exploited producers -- contradictions between production and consumption, which cause depression. Reading Marx's writings, we also had the tendency to understand this as the expression of such contradictions.

But a more careful reading will help you realize that Marx's way of understanding was not that simple. He certainly put major emphasis on "contradictions between production and consumption," but he tried to look at the contradictions of capitalism in depth in a broader context by defining them as a clash between the tendency to seek unlimited development of production and the narrow framework of placing profits first. This enables you to grasp all destructive effects caused by such a clash; it shows how great the "scientific view" is.

In *Capital*, Marx wrote how harmful production sites, such as factories and mines, are to the health and safety of workers. He stated that capitalism, by wasting humans in extraordinary ways, will prepare the way for a higher form of society. By this ironic denunciation of capitalism, he was pointing out that the fundamental contradictions of capitalism will be destructive to itself.

The destructive effects inherent in the contradictions of capitalism are manifest in the destruction of the global environment on an extraordinary scale. This is a major issue that demands a solution in the 21st century. The destruction of the life-support systems for the earth means the end of humanity.

Capitalism is responsible for North-South problem but incapable of solving it

Fuwa: Turning to global issues, poverty in the so-called Third World, or the north-south problem, remains a serious issue. This issue also calls into question the pluses and minuses of capitalism in general.

The problem began when capitalism, prompted by its nature to develop disregarding any limitations, forcibly dragged all nations and societies onto the path of capitalism.

But this didn't mean that there was a necessity within societies to become

capitalist. Although the greater part of the globe was forced to become capitalist, only a few countries have been able to embark on the capitalist path. An overwhelming majority of the world's countries were dragged into capitalism as colonies. Their resources and labor forces were plundered and their economic structures destroyed by the capitalist suzerains. They were unable to create alternative economic structures that would help development.

After World War II, colonial domination collapsed throughout the world. Many countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America achieved independence, or ended dependence, bringing about an extensive political change toward progress. This served as a political foundation for the development of the nonaligned movement. But, economically, those newly independent countries have been unable to get free from conditions of terrible poverty and hardships. Statistics show that in the last two decades of the 20th century, gross national product per capita kept declining. This has been the general tendency of the "Third World."

But, prescriptions the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have made for those countries trying to overcome their economic crisis are always based on market forces inherent in capitalism. In the end, these prescriptions proved to be ineffective in solving their crises, showing instead the inability of capitalism to deal with the north-south problem.

The situation is complex in each country, but that is the general background of the present poverty of the "Third World." The historical responsibility of capitalism is evident. But capitalism does not have the power to solve those problems. This can be the source of power capable of influencing the world in the 21st century.

Seen from different angles, the 21st century world will be a world that embraces the historical necessity of giving rise to new movements towards socialism.

The JCP's Theory on Socialism Stands Out

Shoji: You referred to the new current toward socialism. How would you see it in the historical context?

Looking back on the current of socialism

Fuwa: Although the idea of socialism and communism is old, scientific socialism or the socialist ideology and movement which we know of, took shape in the mid-19th century. In Japan, a political party standing for socialism came into being in the 20th century, whereas in many of the European countries, such political parties were formed in the second half of the 19th century. Contradictions of capitalism grew so much sharper in Europe; the late 19th century saw a growth of expectations in the socialist movement, that "capitalism was coming to an end" to be replaced by socialism.

Engels lived longer than Marx and continued to be active through the 1890s. In the last decade of the 19th century, he was eagerly waiting for the victory of

socialism. Records show that he expected that a socialist party would come to power in Germany in the early 20th century, to be followed by France and Great Britain.

But capitalism was not dying. Although contradictions of capitalism were deepening, these contradictions served as springboards for the development of a new era, an era of monopoly capitalism and imperialism. With productive power advancing more tremendously than anyone had predicted before, capitalism succeeded in putting the entire world under its direct control.

This historical period of major development also sharpened the contradictions of capitalism throughout the world, provoking two world wars. This was unheard of and gave rise to a revolution toward achieving socialism in a number of countries. However, the revolution did not take place for various reasons. In my view, the major reason was that capitalism was not running out of steam. I think that this is a significant point in discussing the situation of that era.

The Soviet Union was the first country to embark on the path to socialism. However, in the era of Stalin who came into power after Lenin's death it degenerated into a country that turned its back on socialism, pursuing despotism and hegemony, which have nothing in common with socialism. The Soviet Union collapsed towards the close of the 20th century, along with the Eastern European countries which were under Soviet influence. At that time, it was fashionable to describe the breakup of the Soviet Union as the "collapse of communism." But, as we analyzed it in detail at that time, it was nothing but the fall of the Stalinist despotic regime, a system that completely reneged on the cause of socialism.

When we try to understand what the 20th century meant to the effort to build a socialist system, we need to pay special attention to the existence of countries like China and Vietnam striving to build socialism in their own way. These countries began to seek to build socialism in very difficult situations. Before their revolutions, they had been colonized by or dependent on other countries and economically very underdeveloped. In the case of Vietnam, for 30 years after the end of the WWII, it had to wage war in defense, first against France and then against the U.S. This added to the already existing difficulty.

Both China and Vietnam are learning lessons from the collapse of the Soviet Union in order find an original path of combining the market economy with socialism as their way to advance socialism. Their quest for socialism through the market economy under the condition that they are far behind other countries in terms of economic development represents literally a "new challenge" the world has never seen. Although their future development may involve many unknown factors, it may be certain that this current will have a significant impact on the world in the 21st century.

In addition to this, we are convinced that in the 21st century, a new movement towards socialism will gather momentum in the developed capitalist countries. We have envisioned this in a JCP statement issued following the breakup of the Soviet Union, and we also stressed this at the 22nd Congress in 2000. I think that the 21st century will see this happen.

Shoji: Regarding the JCP's Congress, the JCP on that occasion presented a

design for socialism based on an overall evaluation of the 20th century. I think that it can be called a theory of socialism for the 21st century. Could you explain its major elements?

The point is how to see the Soviet society that collapsed

Fuwa: In discussing socialism, we specifically put forward three points. First, the recognition that the Soviet-type political and economic systems had nothing in common with socialism. Second, the position that socialism should affirm and develop all valuable achievements of the capitalist era. Third, the objective is to overcome the profit-first principle and to eradicate exploitation. We have set out these three points to be considered when we envision the 21st century.

Let me begin with the first point. In discussing socialism in the 21st century, it is very important to definitely reject, even at the level of perception, any political and economic systems that claimed to be socialist but repressive in reality that existed and collapsed in the Soviet Union. On this point, it seems that a lot of ambiguities remain in the world's movements.

In November last year, an international symposium on socialism was held in Beijing. From Japan, Tashiro Tadatoshi of the Institute of Social Science took part and presented a report entitled "Social Progress and Socialism the JCP Calls for." The text of the report was published in the February issue of the JCP monthly magazine *Zen'ei* (Vanguard). Tashiro told me that the question of the Soviet Union was one of the major issues under discussion.

In his report, Tashiro first took up the question of "how to view Soviet society." He explained that the JCP characterizes it as a "repressive society that has nothing in common with socialism" and gave the reason for the characterization in detail. He told me that participants showed great interest in his report, and some were in favor of it and others against.

Certainly, none of the international representatives in their reports called for a Soviet-type society, but many tended to put the Soviet society in a favorable light knowing that it had problems. Many still believe that it was indeed a socialist society although it had many defects. But the Soviet Union not only asserted hegemony in carrying out oppression of and interference in other countries it maintained a terribly repressive society. This is the fact that has widely been known after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Given that the emancipation of humankind is the major objective of socialism, if one wants to affirm that the Soviet Union was a socialist country, one must be able to explain how such a repressive society can be called a socialist society. Such an attempt would necessarily undermine the core idea of socialism: the emancipation of humankind.

Some people assert that the Soviet Union, despite all these problems, was a socialist society on the grounds that the means of production was owned by the state, arguing that it had a socialist-type of economic system. But is it appropriate to say that a society is socialist because the state is in control of the economy? Is the state ownership of the means of production the most important economic property of socialism? No, this is a major theoretical mistake.

The goal of socialism, which scientific socialism aims for, is not to allow the State to play the key role in the economy. In *Capital*, Marx discusses socialist/communist society on a number of occasions, but nowhere in it did he describe such a society as a society in which the state is the key player. When he discussed what a socialist or communist society would be, he always stated that "associated producers" will play the key role in the economy. Producers, or workers who are directly engaged in production, will join forces to take hold of the means of production and control production. This is how Marx described the fundamental mechanism of socialist or communist society.

To manage the economy, the State-led apparatus reigned over society and barked orders at producers, even exploiting them with lashes. If Marx heard people say this is "socialism at any rate," he would scream in indignation, saying, "I'll have nothing to do with such 'socialism.'"

At the JCP 20th Congress in 1994, when we examined how to view the Soviet society, we took issue with the view that it was a socialist society because it carried out "nationalization" and "collectivization." We pointed out that "nationalization" and "collectivization" as practiced in the Soviet Union were not forms of emancipation of the people but that they served as economic foundations for despotism and bureaucracies oppressing the people.

"It is true that there was 'nationalization' and 'collectivization' in form, but it did not mean the transfer of the ownership of the means of production into the hands of the people. On the contrary, this contributed to building the basis, or the economic foundation, of an autocratic and bureaucratic system in which Stalin and other leaders had all the economic power, with the people excluded" (*Report on Amendments to the JCP Program*).

This is how we rejected the argument recognizing the Soviet society as "socialist at any rate." This decision continues to be important today. If we allow for the view that a repressive society like the one that existed in the Soviet Union was a variant of "socialism," we will not be qualified to discuss an attractive socialism in the 21st century. The position we adopted at the JCP 20th Congress concerning the Soviet Union is therefore very significant at present.

Shoji: The JCP was able to arrive at that conclusion because it has maintained sovereign independence rejecting the hegemony of the Soviet Union under any condition.

Legacy of capitalist era: democracy and freedom

Fuwa: The second point is that we have maintained the position of developing all valuable legacies from the capitalist era. We have made this clear since many years ago. This is not something that we hastily invented after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The "Manifesto on Freedom and Democracy," adopted at the JCP 13th Extraordinary Congress in 1976, was a synthesis of the position I have stated. This "Manifesto" sets out in concrete terms what we will take over and develop in each area of our social life. At the same time, we expounded on how firmly this

document stands on the essential position of scientific socialism, showing in detail the theoretical grounds for this.

We can clearly say that this position has been tested through JCP activities in the last quarter century and is now the JCP's blood and flesh.

In what the former Soviet Union called "Marxism-Leninism," the succession of legacies meant the material aspect of productive power.

Sekiguchi: Yes, indeed.

Fuwa: But that is no more than one aspect of the matter. Regarding valuable legacies, we believe that questions of individuals, in particular those concerning democracy and freedom, are important. Democracy and freedom have developed in the capitalist era, but they did not grow automatically out of the capitalist economy. Most of the democratic rights and freedoms have been achieved through people's struggles at the grassroots level.

This question reminds us of a page of history that needs a thorough theoretical examination.

I spent four years (from 1997-2001) studying on the theme "Lenin and 'Capital'" and came across the question of inheriting democracy. Lenin was in exile in Switzerland during World War I and wrote many articles based on an in-depth study of democracy. These writings were based on the very audacious idea that socialism should positively take over democratic gains from the capitalist period and develop them fully. The ideas he developed remain very relevant to our time.

However, after the October Revolution in 1917, the view that bourgeois democracy or democracy under the capitalist regime is antagonistic to socialism came to the fore, and the continuation and development of democracy receded. Certainly, this tendency partly reflected the international political situation of that time. At the time, the interventionist war was launched against Russia by bourgeois democracies such as Great Britain, France, and the United States, and there was rampant savage political repression that led to the murder of Rosa Luxemburg in the newly established republic of Germany that had won democracy. More importantly, Lenin's "The State and Revolution," which was written on the eve of the October Revolution, established the theoretical position that democracy of the capitalist era was completely different in nature from the democracy to be established after the socialist revolution and therefore incompatible with each other. His theory was further developed in an extreme form during adversity created by the interventionist war. It meant a considerable setback for both the theory and practice of socialism regarding democracy.

Later, Lenin began an effort to correct errors that had been made in domestic and foreign policies during the period of the interventionist war, making innumerable important studies that are still relevant today. In volume 7 of my "Lenin and 'Capital,'" I attempted to trace Lenin's efforts. I found that Lenin mainly dealt with political and practical changes without advancing to a theoretical synthesis before he died.

This is the history of the question of democratic heritage. On this particular

question, I believe that the position of continually developing the past democratic gains, which Lenin advocated before 1917, was right. I expounded on my view on "The State and Revolution" in a New Year interview with *Akahata* two years ago. As I indicated then, one of the keys to understanding the problem is to acknowledge that the error made in "The State and Revolution" played a negative role in the rejection of democratic gains being inherited and developed.

I would like to emphasize again that our position to continually develop all valuable legacies of capitalism, including the gains in democracy and freedom, has been established on a solid foundation that is part of the history of the theory of scientific socialism.

How to describe the new society which overcomes the profit-first principle?

Shoji: The third point is overcoming the profit-first principle as a positive goal of socialism.

Fuwa: Overcoming the profit-first principle expresses what socialism is about in easy terms to understand.

Socialism will transfer the means of production from capitalists, whose first and foremost motive is a pursuit of profits, to society, or what Marx might describe as "associated producers," or the "socialization of the means of production."

I think that the significance of this concept comprises two pillars.

One is the abolition of exploitation, which is to change the position of producers from one of employees to one of main players in the economy and production.

The other pillar is a change in the economic system from production for private profits of individuals or businesses to production for the benefit of society as a whole by putting production under social control.

These two pillars constitute the essence of socialism.

Regarding the first point, those who celebrate capitalism used to underline that a sea change is taking place in capitalism. They said that exploitation and poverty are in the past, and that we live in a society that promises wealth to the people.

Sekiguchi: Yes, they did indeed.

Fuwa: But everyone knows that there is no substance to their explanation when many people in Japan have hardships arising from cuts in social services and increasing job losses.

I think that in terms of absolute economic power, Japan has the capability to maintain basic living standards for everyone.

Earlier, I referred to an international comparison of economic power. Let me cite some figures to show how different Japan is from the rest of Asia. In 1999, the

average gross national product per head of all Asian countries except Japan was approximately 810 dollars, but in Japan it was 32,030 dollars. This does not mean that the latter is 40 times greater, after all, because the purchasing power of the national currency differs from country to country. But roughly speaking, Japan's economic power is more than 30 times that of the rest of Asia.

That indicates that Japan's society has enough power to produce that amount of wealth. It really has produced wealth in the past. If its economic power is properly used for the benefit of society, living standards can be maintained for all people. In the present system, economic power is not used that way. As a result, poverty is threatening people's lives, and the social gap between rich and poor persists. Moreover, a change of the wind in politics may threaten the safety net for beneficiaries of such social services as health care, employment, and pension. What's more, wealth is being squandered in outrageous ways.

If the present system is changed and employees as producers become the main players of the economy and production, and if the economic power and its achievements are used to secure people's livelihoods, the same economic basis should be able to make a difference in improving people's living conditions.

The other pillar is the need to change the objective of production from one of earning private profits to one of serving the interests of society.

In his criticism of capitalist economy, Marx used a wise phrase to the effect that under capitalism "social reason always asserts itself only *post festum*." "Social reason" is a term that has philosophical implications meaning a social wisdom that treats things reasonably (Marx also refers to this as "associated wisdom"). So by this term he meant to say that in capitalist society, only after an explosion of contradictions and a catastrophe do capitalists realize the reason and deplore and regret the catastrophe. This is how he criticized capitalism. There is a similar Japanese saying, "*Ato no matsuri*" ("You came the day after the fair").

In *Capital*, Marx emphasized the superiority of communist society by contrasting socialist or communist society with the situation of capitalist society. He says that communist society uses social wisdom from the outset to carry out a rational management of production and the economy.

We now know that we are in an era in which the future of our society will be increasingly in jeopardy unless "social reason" takes the initiative. At the present historical stage, capitalism can no longer control the huge world economy, as is clear from major problems, including the protracted recession, the degeneration of the global environment, and the north-south problem. In order to break through the present situation, it is necessary to move forward to a new, more advanced society in which "social reason" – sometimes called "associated reason" by Marx – plays its role preemptively. That is socialism.

We advocate the phased development of society, instead of trying to jump into an ideal society; we will seek to achieve progress step by step in a steadfast manner toward a progressive change hand in hand with the people. I think the global conditions of the 21st century make it a vital task for us to shape the basic ideas about the future development of our society.

Marx opposed drawing up blueprint for communism

Shoji: I understand that Marx discussed issues of socialism and communism in detail Capital?

Fuwa: While Marx was alive, Engels contributed a writing to introduce Marx to a German publication, describing *Capital* as "*Marx's chief work, which expounds on the foundations of his economic and socialist conceptions and the main features of his criticism of existing society, the capitalist mode of production and its consequences.*" Engels thus characterized *Capital* not only as Marx's presentation of an economic outlook but as a writing that stated the foundations of his socialist outlook. Marx in *Capital* dealt with questions of socialism and communism from a variety of angles.

As a matter of fact, here is another point that I want to draw attention to. In *Capital*, Marx demonstrated that the historical method to get out of the contradictions of the present capitalist society lies in advances towards socialism and communism, and thus showed in rough sketch the future course of social development. But he never tried to draw a blueprint for a future society. In other words, he stopped short of doing anything that would tie the hands of future generations. I think this is very important.

Later, when a young theorist came up with an ambitious plan to sketch a transition process to communist society, Engels wrote a letter reminding him that such an attempt was impossible because every new trust causes them to change while the vantage points never remain the same from one decade to the next. (Engels to Conrad Schmidt, July 1, 1891).

This attitude of Marx and Engels was very rational and wise as scientific socialists. Engels thus pointed out that a new trust would change conditions. The social changes that have taken place since the 19th century era of Marx and Engels is far greater than the emergence of a new trust. At that time power was mainly generated by steam engines and electric power was just making a debut. In present-day capitalist society, the IT revolution is a burning issue. Naturally, social control of production today is very different from the 19th century in terms of form, method, and practice. Marx and Engels did not try to draw a blueprint applicable to any time or any place by treating the social conditions of their time as something fixed. They were very critical of any "socialist" trying to do such a thing.

This viewpoint of Marx and Engels is very important today as we expect a major tide of socialism in the 21st century. In this century various countries may embark on the road toward socialism. As for the path to a new society and the form of a new society they may seek to establish, each country should attempt that in a creative manner using wisdom and making the best efforts, based on their own national experience and history. I hope that the 21st century turns out to be an era in which a variety of efforts converge into a new stream developing a new phase of human history.

JCP's quest for democratic revolution arouses great interest

Shoji: So the JCP firmly maintains a socialist future in its perspective, but as you stated earlier, it stands for the phased development of Japanese society and

stresses that what the present state of Japan calls for is democratic change but not socialism. I think this thesis is significant as an internationally pioneering position. How would you describe the meaning of this direction in the present-day context?

Fuwa: It certainly is one of the points that draws international attention. It is the point which Mr. Tashiro discussed in detail in his report to the international symposium in Beijing.

When the JCP was discussing its program, which was adopted in 1961, I participated in a discussion in a JCP branch, not in the JCP Central Committee. At the time, most communist parties in the world took it for granted that the revolution in highly developed capitalist countries should aim for socialism. A call for democratic change (instead of a socialist revolution) in a country like Japan was treated as aberrant. Under such circumstances, the JCP adopted a democratic revolution line after making an accurate analysis of the reality in Japan using a "scientific vision," which was historic.

By democratic revolution, we mean establishing democracy firmly in politics, the economy, and social life as well as achieving true national independence, instead of immediately aiming at socialism to abolish capitalism. In other words, it literally is "democratic reform within the framework of capitalism."

Internationally, at a time when capitalism is in a deepening critical situation, there are various efforts being made to explore ways to get out of the crisis. That was what the symposium in Beijing was about. Indeed, it is not a question that can be solved by replacing capitalism in crisis with socialism. In order to move forwards to a majority-based reform, we may have to grope. This is why the JCP's proposal for a democratic revolution or democratic reform draws public attention.

I stated before that the issue in Japan's politics is the choice between two plans: one that will "remake Japan" in the people's interests and the other proposed in Prime Minister Koizumi's "reform" plan that is in the best interests of the United States and large corporations. We should note that the more than 40 years of JCP-LDP confrontation since the JCP adopted its Program has proved the practical significance of the JCP's proposal for democratic change.

The remark of a senior politician of the LDP, which I quoted earlier, shows that anyone who earnestly seeks to change the serious state of affairs in Japan's foreign relations would inevitably stand for a position similar to our plan for "remaking Japan."

Sekiguchi: That's true indeed.

Fuwa: The thing is that the JCP policies for reform are being proved to be valuable in the course of political developments.

The JCP is a political party with a grand outlook of reform that meets the needs of the 21st century. We are the party that looks ahead with a broad perspective and a "scientific view." This enables the JCP to propose a bold reform plan that addresses the immediate needs of the people in the actual political processes. I want to emphasize that this precisely is the real value of the JCP.

Building on Eighty Years of Struggle

Sekiguchi: This year marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Japanese Communist Party. Just remember that an irresponsible changing of alignments was repeated in 2001 among political parties last year, and we cannot but feel the importance of the JCP's existence. Before concluding this interview, we would like you to comment briefly on the JCP's 80-year history.

Raison d'etre was tested in the 20th century

Fuwa: The greater part of the JCP's history of 80 years was in the 20th century. In this sense, I think that the last century was a period in which the significance of the JCP's existence was confirmed by historical events.

JCP led the struggle for peace and democracy

Fuwa: The Japanese Communist Party was founded before World War II, when Japan was under the rule of the absolutist emperor when wars of aggression and despotic politics were rampant. Since its inception, the JCP has opposed wars of aggression and carried out indomitable struggles for the cause of peace, people's sovereignty, women's equality, democracy, and better living conditions for the people. In prewar Japan, no political party but the JCP fought for a peaceful, democratic, and free country. The presence and activities of the JCP marked a glorious page of history in 20th century Japan as a party that played a pioneer role in the struggle to establish peace and democracy in postwar Japan.

This being its history, the JCP could find itself in an honorable position in history as the only political party to consistently advocate the principle that "people are the sovereign" when the establishment of a new constitution was the order of the day.

JCP plucked up courage to call for 'national independence' when the country was under foreign occupation

Fuwa: After the war, Japan experienced several periods. From 1945 until the coming into force of the "Peace Treaty with Japan" in 1952, Japan for the first time in history was under total occupation. The period of foreign occupation is likely to be dismissed as a half a century old episode, but in a sense it was a period when the suppression of citizens' freedom was even harsher than in the prewar dark days. At the time, no one was allowed to speak against the will of the U.S. occupation forces, which enforced strict censorship. Any expressions that were not favorable to the occupation forces were deleted from magazines or any other publications. Before the war's end, readers could recognize words or phrases that were censored because they would be replaced with xxx letters. In contrast, the occupation forces would order any censored texts to be reset in type so that they would look as if they had not been censored at all.

In these circumstances, the JCP held its 6th Congress and adopted calls for the

"strict implementation of the Potsdam Declaration" and "national independence." The JCP not only proposed that "people's sovereignty" be constitutionally established, but showed the courage to put forward "national independence" in defiance of foreign occupation. This was how the JCP demonstrated its real value as a party that firmly stands for justice.

Sovereign independence is the greatest lesson drawn from the bitter experience with the '1950 Problem'

Fuwa: In 1951, when the San Francisco Peace Treaty was concluded, the JCP was in the midst of a very unhappy event called the "1950 Problem." It involved an anomalous party split, but the major issue was the Stalin-led foreign interference by the Soviet Union and China. The greatest lesson the JCP learned from this unhappy experience was how important it is for the party to maintain a position of sovereign independence to reject any foreign interference. Since the JCP began preparations for its 7th Congress in the late 1950s, it has maintained this position in all its theory and activities.

I think this experience continues to be very significant as we discuss what might the 21st century be like. In the 1960s, the JCP suffered flagrant interference from the Soviet Union and China's Mao Zedong group, but we defeated both by mobilizing the whole party to the struggle to defend sovereign independence. Looking back on the struggle we led since the 1960s against foreign interference, I think that one of the most important points to make is that it was a struggle to defend the idea of socialism for the future.

Sekiguchi: Could you further elaborate?

Fuwa: In August 1964, we wrote a long letter to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union protesting against interference in the JCP. In the letter, we said that CPSU interference in the JCP was bad and unworthy of a party in a country that advocates socialism. Also, every time the harm of Soviet hegemony emerged, as with the invasion of Czechoslovakia or Afghanistan, the JCP denounced the Soviet Union for betraying the great cause of socialism based on reason. Throughout this struggle, the JCP tried hard to defend the great cause and ideal of socialism from the evils of hegemony.

I have referred to the JCP's theory on socialism. I think that the JCP has established its position on socialism and has been qualified to discuss it in the course of our struggle against Soviet and other foreign interference which we denounced as a betrayal of the great cause of socialism.

We established the new course for Japanese society in the JCP Program

Fuwa: Last but not least, I would like to point out that the greatest achievement of the JCP in the 20th century is the establishment of the JCP Program, which has served as the basis for the decades of our struggle since the 1960s. And we have entered the new century with the same JCP Program.

The programmatic line of the JCP has been tested throughout the 40 years of struggle against LDP politics. We are engaging in various activities based on the demands of the people. Our activities to protect the public interest, defend national sovereignty, independence, democracy, and peace, and improve the living standards of the people are all based on the JCP's programmatic line. The JCP Program Policy does not only serve as the JCP national leadership's policy-making efforts, it provides basic directions to party branches and JCP members of local assemblies in their activities in defense of the people's interests.

Look at Japan's political world. Various political parties exist, but none except the JCP shows an alternative to LDP politics in a comprehensive manner. This clearly brings out the value of the JCP Program.

There are numerous examples that show the role and achievement of the JCP in the 20th century. But what I have just sketched may suffice to show the relevance of the role the JCP has played so far.

We will work to open up a new road for Japan in this century

Fuwa: In the 21st century, we will seek to build more on what we achieved in the 20th century. We will continue our work to open up a new road for Japan and achieve success. "Establish a democratic coalition government in the early part of the 21st century" is the slogan we adopted as we entered the new century. Since last year, we have carried out the "United Efforts to Increase JCP Membership and Akahata Readership," the aim being to build a JCP strong enough to achieve this goal. We will work hard this year to create a major surge that will contribute to making further progress in the struggle to reach this objective.

Sekiguchi and Shoji: Thank you very much.

(E n d)