



Dull Bull/ Philosopher Prime Minister and Intellectuals Looking at the Prime Minister Ohira Policy Research Council

UNO Shigeki, Professor, Institute of Social Science, the University of Tokyo

Introduction

The first Ohira Masayoshi Cabinet was established in December 1978. At the beginning of his policy address to the Diet on 25 January 1979, Prime Minister Ohira made the following statement:

In the more than 30 years that have passed since the end of World War II, Japan has focused single-mindedly on achieving economic affluence, and as a nation we have produced remarkable results. This represents the positive outcome of efforts that have continued for the 100 years since the Meiji period to modernize and model our country after Western nations. (Snip) However, we cannot really say that we have given our full attention to the harmony between man and nature, the balance between freedom and responsibility, and the purpose of life deeply rooted in our spirit. Today, people are quickly beginning to reflect more on these things.

I believe this trend indicates that material civilization itself, based on urbanization and modern rationalism which originally brought about rapid economic growth, has reached its limit. We should accept that the days of modernization are behind us and that we have now entered a post-modern era. This era is one focused on culture, and represents a shift away from an era centered on the economy.



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The shift from modernization to post-modern, and from an economic-oriented era to one of culture. This statement may have sounded a little excessive and abstract to the members of the Diet who heard it, but as explained later in this article, the prime minister was completely serious. This speech directly conveyed Ohira's long-standing awareness and interest in issues, and he quickly moved to establish the Prime Minister Ohira Policy Research Council, which consisted of nine policy study groups. Ohira took charge of identifying the issues to be studied, such as garden cities, solidarity in the Pacific Basin region, and the idea of an era of culture. He also



appointed many of the chairmen in these groups, including Umehao Tadao, Uchida Tadao, and Okita Saburo¹. True to its name, this council was fully organized by Ohira, and it is said that he eagerly took part in the council's affairs and attended discussions held by young and middle-ranking scholars and bureaucrats.

The sudden death of Ohira in 1980 prevented the council from bearing any political fruit. Only three reports were brought to Ohira before he died, and many other reports were hurriedly compiled after his death. Although some of the reports were addressed by Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro, there were major ideological differences between the two individuals, as is discussed later. Sadly, Ohira's efforts with this council ultimately came to naught.

Nevertheless, that does not mean this council held no significance. First of all, this council was rooted in a problem consciousness, perhaps even sense of crisis, that as postwar Japanese society Japan overcame oil crises and neared completion, it would soon reach a critical turning point. Even today, the numerous challenges discussed in these reports have not yet been completely overcome. Japanese society has witnessed a whirlwind of developments in the postwar period. The centralization of power has been readjusted, regional communities have developed, and people now pursue post-materialist values and ways of life. We have also seen the emergence of a new middle class, movements in response to the rise of an information-oriented society, the development of international strategies for the Pacific Basin era, and the burst of a two-decade economic bubble. The discussions of this council provide us with many suggestions for when Japanese society fundamentally re-examines the direction it should take.

Secondly, the case examples of this council are extremely interesting in light of the relationship between politicians and intellectuals. In fact, this council represents a rare instance in modern Japanese political history in which there was such a large-scale and close sense of interaction between people in power and a group of intellectuals². Although Prime Minister Ohira was sometimes referred to as a "dull bull" because of the way he looked and spoke, he was an intelligent politician who read many books and even wrote some of his own. He is also known for holding his own values as a Christian, a fact demonstrated through the lifelong devotion to his Christian faith and the graduate thesis he wrote on the communitarianism of Thomas Aquinas. From a long-term perspective, I believe there is room to reconsider the significance of this kind of interaction between politicians and intellectuals.

Finally, the very personalities of the intellectuals who made up this council are fascinating. While many of the chairmen of the study groups were from the generation born in the Taisho period (1912–1926), many of the organizers and researchers summoned to the council were in their 30s and 40s. The bureaucrat members who later became pivotal players in government agencies are also interesting, but as far as intellectuals are concerned,

¹ Interview with Nagatomi Yuichiro. *Significance of the Ohira Policy Research Council*, "Kyoka Shujitsu" compiled by the Ohira Masayoshi Memorial Foundation, 2000.

² The original nature of the relationship Ohira held with the group of intellectuals dated back to Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato, whom Ohira served (Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru, who appointed Ikeda as Minister of Finance, had always exhibited a preference for intellectuals in his appointments of cabinet members). Prime Minister Sato Eisaku also tried to construct a network of intellectuals, and later Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo had the Ohira Policy Research Council in mind when he organized his own study group. However, the council Ohira formed is especially noteworthy in terms of its size and Ohira's commitment.



the members were selected mainly by three core individuals: Koyama Kenichi, Sato Seizaburo, and Kumon Shunpei³. However, this does not mean there was little variety among the members picked. The actual members heralded from a diverse range of specialties and professions. What kind of intellectuals were on the council? What inspired them to take part? What impact did the council have on their lives? The discussion of Ohira and his council in this article will seek to address these questions.

Political philosophy of Ohira

Ohira was born in 1910⁴. He was five years younger than Fukuda Takeo, who later became his rival for prime minister, and eight years older than Tanaka Kakuei, a man who became one of his closest friends. Ohira referred to himself as “the son of a poor peasant from Sanuki (Kagawa Prefecture).” His family, which was never rich, was reduced to poverty after the death his father when Ohira was young. At one time Ohira even considered abandoning his dream of going to college. He was later awarded a scholarship and ultimately entered the Tokyo University of Commerce (current Hitotsubashi University). The tough economic plight of Ohira’s family set him apart from many of his peers like Yoshida Shigeru and Hatoyama Ichiro, who were brought up in well-to-do families, Kishi Nobusuke, Ikeda Hayato, and Sato Eisaku, who came from wealthy families that ran sake breweries, and Fukuda Takeo, Miki Takeo, and Nakasone Yasuhiro, children of wealthy landowners or prosperous merchant families. One of the reasons Ohira later became friends with Tanaka Kakuei may be because of their similar upbringing.

Ohira made it to the Tokyo University of Commerce the hard way. There he mainly studied the history of economic thought. One of the first teachers he studied under was Assistant Professor Sugimura Kozo. Ohira deeply admired Sugimura, saying, “If there was such a thing as an “Ohira ideology,” (the thinking of Sugimura) would be its foundation.”⁵ Sugimura and his own teacher Soda Kiichiro were scholars who studied in Germany and essentially founded the study of economic philosophy in Japan. Although Sugimura later left the university because of his involvement with the *Hakuhyo jiken* (Blank vote incident), Ohira wrote his graduation thesis under the guidance of Ueda Tatsunosuke, who was also a Quaker. As stated earlier, Ohira’s thesis focused on the communitarianism of Thomas Aquinas. In his paper, Ohira stated that the key to overcoming the negative effects of capitalism could be found within the organizations and groups that existed between individuals and the state. He was influenced by the writings of Richard Tawney, an English economic historian who called for eliminating

³ Aforementioned interview with Nagatomi Yuichiro. At that time, Koyama was a professor at Gakushuin University, and Sato and Kumon were professors at the University of Tokyo.

⁴ Fukunaga Fumio’s *Ohira Masayoshi – ‘Sengo hoshu’ towa nanika (Ohira Masayoshi – The question of postwar conservatism)* (Chukoshinsho, 2008) was used for reference about the life and thinking of Ohira Masayoshi. Even though it is a work of fiction, Tsujii Takashi’s novel *Akaneiro No Sora – Tetsujin seijika Ohira Masayoshi no shogai (Madder red sky – Life of philosopher politician Ohira Masayoshi)* (Bunshun Bunko, 2013) was also used for reference.

⁵ Dialogue with Shiroyama Saburo. *Hitotsubashi iraino waga michi* (The path I’ve walked since Hitotsubashi), Zaiso chizei (Collection of Ohira Masayoshi’s sayings) (compiled by the Ohira Masayoshi Memorial Foundation, 1996).



radical free competition and class conflict, and instead emphasizing the common good and intermediate social groups that connect individuals to society. Ohira would strive to apply these views later on in life.

After graduating from the Tokyo University of Commerce, Ohira entered the Ministry of Finance. After entering the ministry, he founded a book society in which he is said to have read works such as *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* by Karl Marx, *Finance Capital* by Rudolf Hilferding, Ernst Wagemann's *Economic Rhythm: A Theory of Business Cycles*, Yamada Moritaro's *Nihon shihonshugi bunseki (An analysis of Japanese capitalism)*, and *A Treatise on Money* by John Maynard Keynes. Ohira came to take a basic position that leaned towards modified capitalism and social corporatism, standing between capitalism and communism and between the laissez-faire doctrine and the principle of class conflict.

Later in life, Ohira referred to his own intellectual thought as an “elliptical philosophy.” Signs that this thought was already established appeared when he was the director of the Yokohama Tax Office. There he is quoted as making the following statement: “There are two centers in public administration, just like an ellipse. Public administration functions best when balance, characterized by a sense of tension, is maintained between these two centers.”⁶ The examples he cited were “control and freedom” in a war-time economy and “public taxation power and taxpayers” in the realm of tax affairs. He opposed the idea of an imbalance that allowed for one to become stronger and overwhelm the other. He presented this idea on New Year's Day, 1938. Interestingly, the critic Hanada Kiyoteru published *Daen genso (Elliptical illusion)* in 1943.

Ohira echoed a similar sentiment forty years later. He cited the words of Tanabe Hajime, a philosopher whose books he read often during the war, who stated: “Time consists of only the present. The past and future are forces that act on the present, but it is only the present that exists.” Ohira interpreted Tanabe's ideas to mean that “abstracting the past leads to revolution, and abstracting the future creates a reaction.” He also made the following claim. “I believe that healthy conservatism strives to strike a tense balance between the future and the past. That's my interpretation of conservatism.”⁷

Incidentally, Ohira lamented that the conflict between conservatives and reformists in Japan simply reflected the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. He stated that the important thing was for both parties to seek a common denominator and build effective arguments on that base.⁸ Ohira described the common denominator in this case as a “mindset to cautiously and patiently search for room for improvement, no matter how great or small, by frankly acknowledging Japan's international political stance and the physical living conditions of Japanese people as they are.” The ideal form of politics in the eyes of Ohira was an “ellipse” that maintains a tense balance, with conservatives and reformists sharing a “common denominator.” This ideal is similar to that of the English philosopher David Hume. Hume argued the Whigs and the Tories maintained a tense relationship, while sharing a love of freedom and the idea of maintaining the monarchy. Hume claimed that this relationship eventually gave rise to the two-party system. Ohira's own ideas echoed the mature English political thought represented by Hume.

⁶ *Sugao no daigishi (Barefaced Diet members)* by Ohira Masayoshi

⁷ *Kyohan zuiso hoshu No tetsugaku (Thoughts at the foot of a bridge, conservative philosophy)* from Ohira Masayoshi, *Zaiso chizei – Collection of Ohira Masayoshi's sayings* (compiled by the Ohira Masayoshi Memorial Foundation, 1996).

⁸ Aforementioned *Sugao no daigishi*, (Nijisseikisha, 1956).



Historical background of the Policy Research Council

The fact that Ohira—a practicing Christian born into a family that was far from wealthy—became a politician and later climbed to the very top of the political world is one of the truly remarkable stories of modern Japanese political history. As stated earlier, the vast majority of politicians in modern Japan until up time were initially from the samurai class and later wealthy families and merchants. That Ohira, who also had no connection with any of the imperial universities, became prime minister is in a certain sense a miracle. This miracle was the product of his connection with Ikeda Hayato. Ohira was expected to remain part of one of the minor factions in the Ministry of Finance. However, after he became friends with the likes of Ikeda Hayato, he took central stage as Minister and ultimately pursued a career as a politician. As a result, Ohira enjoyed success as a politician who was part of the conservative mainstream in postwar Japan that sought to establish a lightly armed economic state. This was the vision that Ohira inherited from Ikeda, which had been passed on to him from Yoshida.

In 1971, Ohira assumed leadership of the Kochikai, which was considered to be the true line of postwar conservatives. It was in the last phase of the Sato administration. At that time, conservative politics in Japan was facing a major turning point. People continued to leave rural areas and move to the cities in the midst of high economic growth. This trend hurt the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which enjoyed a strong election base in rural areas, and caused them to lose votes. In his essay *Hoshu seito no bijon (Vision of conservative political parties)* (1963), Ishida Hirohide warned that the structural change of the Japanese society posed a dilemma for the LDP. In the years that followed, the LDP strengthened its efforts to reform the party and modernize it.

How did Ohira respond to these developments? Various guidelines were hammered out at that time, including the streamlining of the party organization, the elimination of factions, and the introduction of the single-seat constituency system. However, Ohira's thinking slightly deviated from that of the guidelines.⁹ He believed there were limits to modernization focusing on economic growth that aimed to catch up with Western powers. By a strange coincidence, the Club of Rome published its report "Limits to Growth" in 1972. This report, which emphasized the finite nature of the earth resources and warned against tragic consequences of population increase and environmental destruction, had a tremendous impact. Ohira had been arguing since the late 1960s that the traditional model of economic modernization which sought to emulate developed countries had reached its limit. It was at this time that he began to seriously consider the next stage following modernization driven by economic growth. The oil crisis that began in 1973 seemed to perfectly validate his vision.

Ohira gradually came to position his stance as "the post-modern age of culture." There is no doubt that behind part of the reason for him adapting his stance was due to his rivalry with Fukuda Takeo, who sought to become prime minister. In the eyes of Ohira, the position of the Fukuda faction seemed to be a return to "pre-modern times," exemplified by its hawkish diplomacy, enthusiasm for self-reliant defense, and desire to revise the Constitution. In response, Ohira supported the idea of a lightly armed economic state that had been upheld since the time of Yoshida Shigeru. He tried to seize the initiative with conservative factions by further shifting the

⁹ *Jiminto Seiji no Henyo (Transformation of LDP politics)* by Nakakita Koji (NHK Books, 2014) was referenced for details about the different waves of reform inside the LDP during this period.



direction of this idea away from an age dominated by economics to one of culture. Ohira was also enthusiastic about the decentralization of authority. Rather than create conflict between cities and rural communities, Ohira sought to bring them together. Although this idea later led to the garden city initiative, it was born out of an awareness of Fukuda's position, which stressed the role of the central government.

As these events moved forward, Ohira began to make contact with intellectuals. The first opportunity was the policy study groups Ohira established with the three persons mentioned earlier: Koyama Kenichi, Sato Seizaburo, and Kumon Shunpei. These three intellectuals had already conducted activities in the past under the name "Group 84," with the Institute for Social Engineering sponsored by Ushio Jiro, the president of Ushio Inc., as the base of their activities. In particular, the article "*Nihon no jisatsu*" (Japan's suicide) published by Bungeishunju in 1974 had great repercussions. It is said that the publication of this article marked the start of their connection with Doko Toshio, who was then the chairman of the Keidanren.¹⁰ Nagatomi Yuichiro, the organizer of policy study groups among the secretaries from the Ministry of Finance, Morita Hajime, the husband of Ohira's daughter, and the three individuals mentioned previously formed the original model of the Prime Minister Ohira Policy Research Council that would be created later. This group formulated a plan for a new administration for Ohira, who ran for the Secretary-General of the LDP. The plan they created included policies for "general security strategies," the "vibrant development of the private economy," a "Japanese-style of a family-oriented welfare society," and "decentralization with garden cities as the core."¹¹

Why did Ohira and the intellectuals choose to align together? There was no doubt that Ohira desired to "become prime minister after making it clear what policies he wanted to implement"¹² before the LDP Secretary-General election. For him, one particularly urgent issue was solidifying a "conservative philosophy" he could rely on in the face of opposition from other LDP factions. Likewise, Ohira and the intellectuals shared common theoretical and philosophical ideas. Nakakita Koji, a political scientist, coined a special phrase for this: "Japanese-style pluralism." Nakakita described the discussions with individuals such as Koyama, Sato, and Kumon who participated in this group or Murakami Yasusuke¹³, the peers of Sato and Kumon at the College of Arts and Science of the University of Tokyo, who did not join as follows: "Their criticism of the modern centralized government and individualism was based on the recognition that the era of modernization which seeks to play catch-up had ended. They proposed a new version of traditional Japanese collectivism, one that had been labeled as feudalistic by modernists who sought to model Japan after Western countries, while re-evaluating it and using various policy measures to reinforce it."¹⁴ There is no doubt that this idea struck a chord with the thinking of Ohira,

¹⁰ *Bunka no jidai heno senkensei (Foresight in the age of culture)* by Kumon Shunpei, *Kyoka Shujitsu* compiled by the Ohira Masayoshi Memorial Foundation, 2000

¹¹ *Compounding Power to Politics – Ohira Masayoshi's Decision to Run in the LDP Secretary-General Election* (November 1978), *Eien no ima (Eternal present)* compiled by the Ohira Masayoshi Memories Publication Society, (Kajima Institute Publishing, 1980).

¹² Aforementioned interview with Nagatomi Yuichiro.

¹³ According to Kumon, Murakami was actively involved in the Miki Cabinet and declined to cooperate with Ohira because he did not feel it was good to be involved in the cabinet of the two prime ministers. Aforementioned book by Kumon.

¹⁴ Nakakita, *Jiminto Seiji no Henyo (Transformation of LDP politics)*, p.95.



who had maintained the need for intermediate groups between the state and individuals since the time he wrote his graduation thesis.

Significance of the Policy Research Council

Ohira organized the Policy Research Council immediately after he became prime minister. The council was composed of nine groups, whose members were mainly comprised of younger individuals in their 30s and 40s. This was one of the instructions of Ohira, who intended to select those who would play an active role in the twenty-first century. In the end, a total of 130 scholars and cultural figures and 89 bureaucrats took part in the groups.

The study areas and leaders of the nine groups are as follows: (1) The age of culture (Chairman: Yamamoto Shichihei, Organizer: Yamazaki Masakazu, Asari Keita), (2) Garden city initiative (Chairman: Umesao Tadao, Organizer: Koyama Kenichi, Yamazaki Masakazu), (3) Family base improvement (Chairman: Ito Zenichi, Organizer: Koyama Kenichi, Shimizu Hayao), (4) Pacific Basin Cooperation (Chairman: Okita Saburo, Organizer: Sato Seizaburo), (5) General security (Chairman: Inoki Masamichi, Organizer: Iida Tsuneo, Kosaka Masataka), (6) External economic policy (Chairman: Uchida Tadao, Organizer: None), (7) Economic management in the age of culture (Chairman: Tachi Ryuichiro, Organizer: Kumon Shunpei, Royama Shoichi), (8) Historical progress of science and technology (Chairman: Sassa Manabu, Organizer: Ishii Takemochi, Kobayashi Noboru) and (9) Life and interests in a pluralistic society (Chairman: Hayashi Chikio, Organizer: Akuto Hiroshi, Sato Seizaburo)

As stated earlier, the motivating factor for establishing this council was a problem consciousness that believed postwar Japanese society had reached a critical turning point. The basic tone of the groups was set by concepts such as overcoming of economic-centrism, the pursuit of non-materialistic values, and the reevaluation of the traditions of a Japanese society that did not seek to catch up. They hammered out objectives rooted in these concepts, such as “garden cities,” “Pacific Basin Cooperation,” and “the age of culture.” They also coined key words such as “the new middle class” and “soft-power.”

The reports I believe deserve special attention are those of the following three groups: “the age of culture,” “garden cities,” and “economic management in the age of culture.” The problem consciousness of the “age of culture” group focused on the modernization of Japan after the Meiji period. They made the following statement in their report: “What we observed within modernization was a sense of inferiority to the outside world and a dogmatic sense of superiority, the flip side of this inferiority. In this case, we must now strike a balance between a mature economy with a high level of culture and real cultural policies. The keys to this are the energy to create culture in the private sector, local culture, and international exchange. The government should stand on the side and support these initiatives indirectly.”

The “garden cities” group criticized the centralization of power that had been ongoing since the Meiji period, and called for a shift to a balanced multipolar system within Japanese society. Naturally, this did not entail a return to self-enclosed localism in the past. Rather, there was a need for a new open localism that safeguarded the human desire to move and the freedom of choice. Working in line with this concept, the group discussed the construction of transportation and information networks that connected rural areas and cities while respecting the autonomy and diversity of local communities, the cultivation of a sense of “home town” in cities by enhancing



public spaces, and the creation of diverse local industries to realize the coexistence of cities and rural areas and avoid conflict.

The “economic management in the age of culture” group first analyzed the institutional and psychological factors that made the high economic growth of Japan possible. Rather than emphasize the role played by administrative guidance, which was often the case, the group’s report emphasized the principle of competition within the private sector. They also argued that supplying funds through financial institutions was easier because the government was small. Of special note is the role of Japanese-style organizations they described in their report. These organizations stressed solidarity and competition over promotion inside a company based on a long-term stable employment and the seniority system, as well as flexible organizations and decision-making based on human relationships and the “rhizome” structure. At the same time, the group also indicated that these kinds of Japanese-style organizations were encountering difficulties. It is interesting to note that the group introduced a “new middle-class” free from the ideas of production-centrism and company-centrism that supported high economic growth.

The distinctive feature shared by these groups is that while they were critical of creating a larger welfare state and spoke about simple and efficient government, they emphasized the roles of the private sector and local communities. Compared to the neoliberalism that later emerged, the groups tended to focus heavily on the role of culture, and their reports devoted pages to relationships that connect individuals and the way organizations are managed. In general, the characteristic of these reports that stands out is the use of expressions such as an “individual way of life,” “the quality of life,” “connection between people, local communities, and the environment, and the mutual dependence and softening of networks.” Although the groups were generally optimistic, their problem consciousness and sense of crisis towards the historical turning point Japan faced are also clear.

What came of these intellectuals?

As stated before, the sudden death of Ohira prevented the reports of the Policy Research Council from having any real political impact. However, some of them caught the attention of Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro. In addition, Koyama, Sato, and Kumon played an important role as the think-tank of the prime minister in driving the Second Provisional Commission for Administrative Reform and administrative reforms. Still, there are those who claim that there is a clear difference between the time of Ohira and that of Nakasone. For example, Otake Hideo, a political scientist, argues that those who led the administrative reforms of the Nakasone government were economists and business leaders such as Kato Hiroshi and Sando Yoichi. He also claims that their reforms were characterized by economic liberalism. In contrast, the brains behind Ohira included many cultural figures, and it is said the groups held their own ideas that deviated from the principle of competition.¹⁵ At the same time, there are some who lay stress on the continuity of the members of the groups under Ohira and Nakasone such as scholars like Nakakita, who as mentioned rejected large government and emphasized the self-help of individuals and the mutual help of families, local communities, and the workplace.¹⁶

¹⁵ *Jiyushugiteki Kaikaku No Jidai (The age of liberalistic reforms)* by Otake Hideo, (Chuokoronsha) 1994.

¹⁶ Nakakita, *Jiminto Seiji No Henyo (Transformation of LDP politics)*, p121.



There is little doubt that part of the thinking of Koyama and others viewed the role of government in a limited way, and therefore shares a connection with neoliberalism. However, it is also true that this thinking is backed by an emphasis on diverse intermediate groups existing between the state and individuals, and interest in culture and the way people live. In the end, we can say that the intellectuals gathered around Ohira developed their own problem consciousness within their examination of Japan's modernization and the nature of its unique organizations, and an interest in the cultural transformation that pushes modern society forward.

This problem consciousness was more popular in intellectual circles than political circles in the 1980s. *Bunmei toshitenno ieshakai (Family society as a culture)* (Chuokoronsha, 1979) shed new light on the distinctiveness of Japanese-style company organizations, and activated studies about the historical features of Japan. Yamazaki Masakazu's *Yawarakai kojinsuugi no tanjo (Birth of flexible individualism)* (Chuokoronsha, 1984) focused on the new individualism in consumer society, and paved the way to analysis of the grand cultural transformation modern Japan rushed into.

I do not mean to overemphasize, but it is clear that the intellectuals who made up the Policy Research Council of Ohira did not come from the same academic and ideological schools of thought. At the same time, the discussions held within this council did not establish a common intellectual direction. There appeared to be a considerable gap between Koyama, Sato, and Kumon on the one hand, and Yamazaki Masakazu and Kosaka Masataka on the other hand. This does not simply stem from differences between Tokyo and Kansai. According to Yamazaki¹⁷, it was Kasuya Kazuki, an editor of Chuokoronsha at that time, who made a connection between him, Kosaka, Nagai Yonosuke, and Hagiwara Nobutoshi. This group is said to have maintained a salon-like connection even though they lived far from each other, with Nagai in Hokkaido and Hagiwara in Tokyo. Yamazaki first become involved in politics when the Sato Eisaku administration was in power. Surprisingly, Prime Minister Sato enjoyed exchanges with young intellectuals, and tried to connect them through Kusuda Minoru, a journalist turned secretary. This group was entrusted to Fukuda Takeo instead of Tanaka Kakuei, and as a result Yamazaki and Kosaka are said to have felt awkward when they were first invited to the Ohira Policy Research Council. In addition to having different backgrounds, there were also differences such as the issue of having left-wing experience and understanding the culture of pre-modern Japan. In that sense, we can say that the Ohira Policy Research Council brought together a wide variety of intellectuals.

What significance did the exchanges between Ohira and intellectuals hold? There is no doubt that Ohira's contact with the intellectuals held important implications for Ohira, helping him to deepen his own conservative philosophy. Ohira was a former top-level bureaucrat from the Ministry of Finance and a member of the Kochikai. He was good at economics, so he had very little need to rely upon intellectuals for his economic policies. What he sought was insight about economic philosophy, and answers to questions of how to better distribute wealth in society and realize social equality. He tried to answer this question by examining the roles intermediate groups and local communities existing between the state and individual should take, as well as the nature of relationships between the economy and culture. By interacting with the intellectuals, Ohira was finally able to shape the philosophy that had dwelled in his mind since he was a student. The conservative philosophy born out of this interaction with intellectuals has become an extremely unique ideological and policy heritage among postwar

¹⁷ Interview with Yamazaki Masakazu on June 2, 2014.



conservatives, or in a more limited sense, various conservative factions within the LDP. I desire to watch future developments unfold and see what significance this heritage will hold for Japan in the twenty-first century.

What meaning did the Policy Research Council have for the intellectuals? It is difficult to summarize the group of intellectuals from completely different schools of thought. However, looking at their studies and books over the years, we can find there was something for them to gain through their political connection with Ohira. If we consider the first generation of postwar intellectuals to be those who made a fresh start after Japan's defeat and re-examined the modernization of Japanese society, then the intellectuals involved with the Ohira Policy Research Council form a distinct second generation separate from the first. Although we must wait for another opportunity for more detailed examinations, these intellectuals re-evaluated Japanese traditions in contrast to western modernization, and continued to question the potential forms of politics, economics, culture and learning, based on the assumption of the transformation of modern society through forces such as individualization and multiculturalization. Their intellectual activities continued to exert a strong influence on Japanese society after the death of Ohira in 1980. During this period, a major shift clearly took place in the intellectual world of Japan. I believe the Ohira Policy Research Council served as one of the focal points in this shift.

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Note: "Nihon no jisatsu" (Japan's suicide) and related articles are available on the following sites. "Nihon no jisatsu": <http://www.japanpolicyforum.jp/en/archives/politics/pt20120529162917.html>, "The situation is growing worse": <http://www.japanpolicyforum.jp/en/archives/politics/pt20120528160620.html>, "Countering panem et circenses in the 21st century—for the reemergence of quality intellect": <http://www.japanpolicyforum.jp/en/archives/politics/pt20120527161618.html>

Uno Shigeki

Professor, Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo

Born in 1967. Earned his doctorate at the University of Tokyo Graduate School of Law and Politics. Assumed current post after serving as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Law, Politics & Economics at Chiba University. His special areas of study are the history of French political thought and the history of political science. His books include *Seiji tetsugaku e* (Introduction to political philosophy) (University of Tokyo Press), *Tocqueville – byodo to fubyodo no rironka* (Tocqueville – Theorist of equality and inequality) (Kodansha Sensho Métier, Suntory Prize for Social Science and Humanities) and "Watashi" jidai no demokurashi (Democracy in the age of me-ism) (Iwanami Shinsho).
