

Conservatives and Socialists Vote For Power in Japan Today

By KIM WILLENSON
United Press International
TOKYO (UPI) — Japan's 60 million voters will go to the polls today to decide a parliamentary contest between the Conservatives who run the country and the Socialists who would like to.

So far, that sounds like almost any election in almost any democracy.

And the fact that Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda called the election a full year early, while riding a crest of personal popularity, would have a familiar

ring in any parliamentary system. The big issues are the American alliance and rising prices—neither particularly surprising. Japan's present democratic forms were introduced by the American occupation forces and retained, after the occupiers had left, by a people thoroughly disillusioned with dictatorship.

Stand Alone
But the Japanese essentially are not imitators but adapters. In Japan, democracy is different. For example, the Conserva-

tives are, in fact, the only party that has fielded enough candidates (359) to win at least 234 seats and a simple majority of the 467-seat House.

Their major opposition, the Socialists, put up only 198, hoping to elect 156, the bare third. The middle-riding Democratic Socialists put up 60, hoping to recapture their 1959 strength of 40. The Communists have 118 running, but held only three seats last time around.

Many foreigners and Japanese periodically wonder whether Japan has a democracy at all.

The answer lies in how the term is defined.

If democracy is taken to mean rule by freely elected representatives of the people, the answer is certainly yes.

If democracy means a system in which the electorate wants and has a choice between realistic alternatives presented by a government party and a loyal opposition, the answer can only be "maybe."

One reason is the public apathy and the lack of issues in the present election campaign.

There have been fewer voters than policemen at some campaign rallies. Fifteen policemen are detailed to prevent violence at each rally. At some, only 12 or 13 voters showed up. At others even the candidates failed to appear.

Reason For Elections
Still, the prime minister dissolved a Diet that had a year to run, and called elections. He did it because Japan, in fact, is ruled by a single party, and the internal politics of that party are, in effect, the politics of Japan.

Ikeda's timing for the election was timed not at the Socialists but at factional rivals within his own party. He wanted to show his popularity at the polls before the next party convention.

The Socialists have not held power since a year and a half period during the occupation (April, 1947, to October, 1948) when the anti-war feeling was highest.

Their vote has been rising in recent elections. They picked up 98 seats in prefectural assemblies and a number of key

mayoralities last spring. But they do not draw more than 40 per cent of the total vote.

The most generous projections do not show them attaining 50 per cent until 1968 at the earliest.

Their impotence is reflected in the unseemly brawls they stage in the Diet, ear-splitting mob scenes that are the antithesis of democratic debate.

familiar in many countries. Even though Japan is an industrial nation, a third of its people (34 million) still live on farms or in villages. Added to the natural conservative tendency of agrarian people is the structure of old Japanese society.

Under this system the village must obey the wishes of its head or elder. And the elder, who is in debt to the conservative province chief for patronage, tells his villagers to vote conservative. Anyone who violates the command is out of step with the

rest of the village — and ostracized. Autocratic tradition. The Japanese are only 18 years away from 2600 years of autocratic rule. For many, particularly those educated before the war, the government is an entity separate from them, in which they take no part. Its role is to rule, theirs to obey. To challenge it by voting against it would be unthinkable.

Political funds. Here, the conservatives have an immense advantage. They are both allied with big business and dominant in the government, from top to bottom.

They make excellent use of their opportunities. In 1962 alone they reported officially collections of about 1.6 billion yen — about \$5 million. Unofficially this figure is regarded as only the top of the iceberg.

Political funds are the breath of political survival for the Dietman. Keeping his constituents happy is expensive.

He must send congratulations to the family with a new child, send a wreath to a funeral, attend the dedication of any new building in his constituency.

He must also make substantial donations to public institutions to assure himself a place on the speaker's platform at ceremonies. Often, he must organize a "ko-enkai," or fan club — and this means money for buses and box lunches.

When constituents come to Tokyo, they expect the Dietman to have them out to lunch as a matter of course. He must also appear at their hotel with a bottle of sake and candies for the children.

Finally, but certainly not least important in the voter's mind is the socialist program itself. The far-left Marxist line that the party followed until recently has had little appeal in prosperous postwar Japan.

Seattle Man Is Sentenced by Court

Aaron Cornelius Huisman Jr., 19, of Seattle, Wash., was sentenced to four years in the Oregon State Correctional Institution on charges of burglary not in a dwelling when he appeared in Jackson County Circuit Court Tuesday.

He had pleaded guilty earlier to charges of breaking into a local restaurant and taking \$1,093 in cash and \$97.15 in checks.

Newell Ehrman Clark, 19, of Grand Hotel, Medford, pleaded guilty at his arraignment in Circuit Court to charges of attempting to obtain property by false pretenses. His case was continued for receipt of an FBI report.

HEEL ON FLOORS
WIGAN, England (UPI)—Wigan Technical College governors told girl students Tuesday to either leave their stiletto heels at home or face expulsion. The stilletos, they said, have caused \$2,800 worth of damage to the college's new floors.

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