



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on August 12, 2013

Communism Now Big in Japan; Still Little in Virtue

Will the grinding poverty and initiative killing of collectivism soon wear the label “Made in Japan”? Such a prospect is likely a ways off, but it could become a reality if Yoshiko Kira has her way. Kira is one of a slew of Japanese Communist Party (JCP) candidates who won office in her nation’s July elections, which saw the JCP increase its presence in the House of Councilors from 6 to 11 seats — enough representation to propose legislation.



In point of fact, the JCP won more votes in the major metropolises of Tokyo and Osaka than all but Japan’s ruling Liberal Democratic Party, and the JCP has been on the rise for some time. As the *Telegraph*’s Danielle Demetriou [wrote](#) in 2008, “New [JCP] recruits are signing up at the rate of 1,000 a month, swelling its ranks to more than 415,000. Meanwhile a classic proletarian novel is at the top of the best-seller lists, and communist-themed ‘manga’ comics are enjoying soaring success.”

It isn’t just the Land of the Rising Sickle, either. Sales of *The Communist Manifesto* (the best-selling book in history next to the Bible) and *Das Kapital* have soared since the 2008 financial crisis. Karl Marx was [voted](#) “favorite philosopher” by BBC radio listeners, beating out contenders such as Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, and Thomas Aquinas. And in an irony akin to having Marx’s picture on a Bible tract, his image is the one most often chosen by customers of Germany’s Sparkasse Chemnitz Bank — for their credit cards.

But it is in Japan where economic malaise is perhaps providing communism with its most fertile modern ground. Why? As Demetriou also wrote: “A wave of discontent among its younger workers is fuelling a change in the nation’s political landscape: communism is suddenly back in fashion. What many young Japanese view as an erosion of their economic security and employment rights, combined with years of political stagnation, are propelling droves of them into the arms of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP).”

And communism’s dark past seems no deterrent. As the *Guardian*’s Stuart Jeffries [wrote](#) last year in “Why Marxism is on the rise again,” “I ask Jaswinder Blackwell-Pal, a 22 year-old English and drama student at Goldsmiths College, London, who has just finished her BA course in English and Drama, why she considers Marxist thought still relevant. ‘The point is that younger people weren’t around when Thatcher was in power or when Marxism was associated with the Soviet Union,’ she says. ‘We tend to see it more as a way of understanding what we’re going through now.’... For younger people, it [Marxism] is untainted by association with Stalinist gulags.”

Moreover, while communism may now be old school, the JCP has made good use of new tools. With the July elections being the first in Japan to allow Internet campaigning, the party appealed to the young through the use of [online](#) cartoon “mascots.”

And many critics would say this is just an example of appealing to tech savvy but history handicapped, low-information voters. They point out that Nazism could also be “untainted” if academia, the media, and popular culture had whitewashed its crimes. As *Commentary*’s Seth Mandel [wrote](#), “An often-



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debated subject, especially among scholars on the right, is the discrepancy between the considered history of the crimes of Communism and those of Nazism. Both were totalitarian and evil, but there are far more victims of Communism than Nazi fascism — yet we shun one completely but make some room for the influence and ideas of the other; European governments outlaw one but not the other.”

For sure, while Nazis are relegated to our civilization’s dark corners, communists are given a place at the table of debate. Barack Obama’s former communication director Anita Dunn called Mao Tse-tung one of her two “favorite philosophers,” and former administration green-jobs “czar” Van Jones has self-identified as a communist. And is this a surprise, ask critics, given how communist crimes have been whitewashed by the media? As CNSNews.com [wrote](#) in 2009 reporting on a study on this very subject:

“Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, some journalists suggested communism was truly popular among the people it enslaved,” said [lead study author Rich] Noyes. “After the liberation of Eastern Europe, many journalists argued that the move to capitalism just made things worse, and even with the obvious failure of communism in Europe and Asia, journalists have even recently saluted the virtues of life in Castro’s Cuba.”...

For example, then-“CBS Evening News” anchor Dan Rather reported on June 17, 1987, “Despite what many Americans think, most Soviets do not yearn for capitalism or Western-style democracy.”

New York Times journalist Ferdinand Protzman reported on May 15, 1989: “East Germany is the Communist world’s vaunted economic success story, hailed as proof that hard work, discipline and thrift can translate Karl Marx’s theories into reality.”

Andy Rooney of “60 Minutes” wrote in the *New York Times* on June 26, 1989 that “Communism got to be a terrible word here in the United States, but our attitude toward it may have been unfair. Communism got in with a bad crowd when it was young and never had a fair chance.”

Al Neuharth, founder of *USA Today*, wrote on Feb. 9, 1990 that “most Soviets don’t want to dump it [communism], just improve upon it.”

And this media cover-up began almost at the very inception of communist regimes. It is now well known, for instance, that *New York Times* Moscow correspondent Walter Duranty became a de facto [propagandist](#) for Joseph Stalin in the 1930s.

And what exactly is being whitewashed? Combating what he calls moderns’ “amnesia” with respect to communism, columnist Jonah Goldberg [writes](#), “It’s worth remembering how evil Communist governments really were. Stalin murdered more people than Hitler. The hammer-and-sickle’s stack of bones towers high above the swastika’s. ‘The Black Book of Communism,’ a scholarly accounting of communism’s crimes, counts about 94 million murdered by the supposed champions of the common man (20 million for the Soviets alone), and some say that number is too low.”

And China, North Korea, and the rest of Marx’s children add to that number every day.

George Santayana’s saying, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,” is well known. But just as profound is his preceding line, “When experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual.” Let us hope that infantile ignorance doesn’t again beget killing-field savagery.

Photo of Japanese Communist Party Chairman Kazuo Shii giving a speech in Japan



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