

The Paradox of Japan, the Victim Of Nuclear Attacks:
A History of the Nuclear Disarmament Movement
in Japan, 1954–1963

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Why did Japan's antinuclear movement decline in the early 1960s, despite being the world's largest campaign in the late 1950s? After the catastrophic nuclear test in 1954, the grass-roots campaign for nuclear disarmament developed gradually around the world, which later became one of the forces to end the Cold War in the late 1980s in Europe.

Historians and researchers have only blamed the Communist Party and its members for the failure. In this article, however, I point out that, especially after the Partial Test Ban Treaty reduced the menace of nuclear fallout, the "Anti-Cold War" logic was crucial for the movement, as well as the anti-nuclear and anti-military feeling that Japanese are often said to share.

This paper shows how Japanese society of that period allowed the massive mobilization and the later slowdown at the same time. The leaders of the movement should have shown their own logic to oppose the logic of nuclear deterrence.