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Fifty years ago, the Canadian diplomat and noted Japan scholar, Herbert Norman, committed suicide, stepping off the roof of a nine-storey building in downtown Cairo. Canadian ambassador to Egypt at the time, Norman was 47 years old and his death on April 4, 1957 provoked a crisis in Canada-U.S. relations.

Norman's last act came in the wake of accusations made in the U.S. Senate that he was disloyal, a possible communist spy. This was the third round of such charges. On each occasion, RCMP and foreign affairs officials had grilled and cleared Norman of any wrongdoing. Still, the costs were heavy. The first round had prompted his recall from Tokyo in 1950; the second had led to his effective demotion in 1953.

Norman's appointment as ambassador to Egypt in 1956 was the beginning of his comeback and coincided with the outbreak of the Suez Crisis. Exhausted by his part in advocating for a U.N. peacekeeping mission (for which Lester Pearson won the Nobel Peace Prize), Norman was suddenly faced with renewed U.S. charges. He opted to end his life rather than face continued persecution.[1]



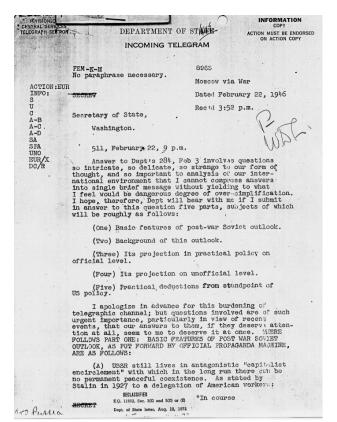
Norman presents his credentials as Canadian Ambassador to Gambel Nasser

Born and raised in Japan, Norman studied classics at Trinity College in the U.K. before pursuing his doctorate in Japanese history at Harvard. At a time when Asian Canadians were excluded from government service in Canada, Norman's exceptional knowledge of Japan and his language skills were rare commodities. Hired by External Affairs in 1939, Norman was posted to the Tokyo embassy in 1940. He returned to Canada in a prisoner swap after Canada declared war on Japan. At war's end, Norman went back to Tokyo to serve on General Douglas MacArthur's staff during the Occupation of Japan. The following year, 1946, he became head of Canada's mission in Tokyo, a position he held until his recall in 1950.

No evidence has ever been found to justify charges of disloyalty.[2] Still, to the extent Norman is a part of public memory at all, it is usually as a suspected spy or victim of McCarthyism. This has tended to overshadow Norman's actual activities both as a historian and a diplomat. Fortunately, new documents written by or about Norman continue to emerge from dusty archives from Ottawa to Tokyo. They not only provide a better sense of Norman, they also reveal much about the Occupation of Japan, and Canada-U.S. collaboration in the making of the American Empire in East Asia.

George Kennan comes to Ottawa

One of the most intriguing new documents is a short memorandum written by George Kennan in May of 1948, upon his return from a field trip to Occupied Japan. Kennan had become the main U.S. spear carrier in the emerging Cold War after writing in February 1946 what later became known as the "long" telegram in which he articulated the necessity of quarantining the Soviet Union, spurning the policy of coexistence that had mainly characterized the wartime and immediate postwar relationship. His views found favor in the highest echelons of the government and military and he was placed in charge of the Policy Planning Staff, a highpowered think tank within the State Department. In reviewing U.S. policy in Japan and the preparations for a peace treaty that were then underway, Kennan aggressively pushed his view that postwar reforms had gone too far, that a peace treaty was premature, and that the Occupation should continue so that Japan's economy could rebuild. These views found their first official articulation in a memorandum to the Secretary of State in October 1947.[3] These preliminary observations prompted Kennan to visit Japan in March 1948.



Kennan's "long telegram"

While in Japan, Kennan met twice with Herbert Norman. Even then it was clear that Kennan was suggesting an important policy shift and hoped to win the support of Canadian policymakers. As Norman reported to Ottawa: "He (Kennan) wished to lay his cards on the table and tell our Government frankly that certain aspects of United States policy had been wrong and to seek a sympathetic hearing of the Government's radical change of United States policy in Japan along lines indicated above."[4] What is new and intriguing is the memorandum Kennan wrote to Secretary of State George Marshall after meeting Norman: "We believe that there is at present a serious divergence of view between the Canadians and ourselves on the subject [of the Occupation and peace treaty], which should be corrected as soon as possible."[5] This recently recovered memo in the U.S. archives reveals that Kennan requested permission to secretly travel to Ottawa to bring External Affairs into line. Both George Marshall, the secretary of state and his

undersecretary, Robert Lovett, approved Kennan's mission.

The formerly secret 50,000 series of External Affairs documents in Ottawa are now open and allow researchers access to transcripts of the talks with Kennan. On June 1, Kennan and U.S. ambassador Ray Atherton met with top officials from External Affairs for in-depth discussions on the Occupation and the peace treaty. Arthur Menzies, head of the American and Far Eastern Division of External Affairs recorded Kennan's comments: "The United States was apprehensive lest Japan, turned free by a peace The United States was now thinking in terms of prolonging the pre-treaty occupation period."[6] As a result, Kennan told the Canadians: "Their studies were now sufficiently advanced that they wished to have preliminary exchanges of views with the United Kingdom and ourselves."[7] Kennan said that "as a result of their studies they were swinging round to the view that it would probably be unwise to try to get agreement on a peace treaty now."[8]

"Mr. Collins [a Canadian official] asked whether it was really necessary to delay the peace settlement with Japan in order for the United States to continue to furnish financial assistance for the economic rehabilitation of the country. He wondered if the United States could not furnish the same economic assistance and views after a peace treaty through arrangements similar to those arrived at with the European countries in connection with the Marshall Plan. Mr. Kennan had no very satisfactory rationalization to offer."

Proposed reparations to Asian countries was not going to happen, stated Kennan: "The United States would not stand for irresponsible meddling in Japanese industrial recovery through some "frivolous" reparations programme while she was paying out \$500,000,000 a year to get Japan on her feet again."[9] Furthermore, "a good number of the internal reform measures in Japan had gone much too far," stated Kennan who added that it was wrong to try to make the Japanese over "like ourselves." "All we were doing was tearing apart the closely woven fabric of Japanese society. Some of the young officers in G.H.Q.-SCAP were out-doing the Russians in their enthusiasm for uprooting traditional structures"[10] Kennan asserted that the reforms meant that it was possible "for Communists to infiltrate local elected governments and local police forces and for the central government in Tokyo to know nothing

The purge came "under an especially heavy attack from Mr. Kennan," who suggested that this dissatisfied elite might be used by Communists. Challenged by Ralph Collins on this point, however, Kennan clarified that he meant the conservatives would be a source of instability, which the communists could use to their advantage. According to the Canadian record, Arthur Menzies challenged Kennan's suggestion that the deconcentration program should be watered down. In reply Kennan stated that, "while we were worrying about Japanese reforms, we were giving the Russians an opportunity to extend their influence in Japan."[12] Kennan concluded by saying that "as we could not really count on very extensive reforms in the outlook of the Japanese, it would be necessary to maintain certain minimum security controls for quite a time."[13] The exchange of views ended without any clear conclusions but the real significance of Kennan's visit to Ottawa was soon to be felt.

On July 21, British prime minister Clement Attlee wrote a top secret and personal note to Canadian prime minister Mackenzie King, emphasizing the British view that the U.S. administration appeared to "be dominated by what they believe to be the aim of the Soviet Union, viz. to obtain control of Japan as being the only Far Eastern country at present with any real industrial potential."[14] The Truman administration, Attlee suggested, was intent on

3

about it."[11]

an "indefinite prolongation of United States occupation which will enable them to retain the United States strategic position in Japan." Attlee supported the U.S. analysis of Soviet intentions but suggested that the idea of fully restoring Japan's economy was open to "grave objection." The British PM proposed that an early peace treaty was still the best solution and that the U.S. could ensure its position in Japan "by the conclusion simultaneously with Peace Treaty of defence pact between United States and Japan to which other friendly Powers might perhaps accede." Attlee warned: "Indefinite occupation by the United States without a treaty would on the contrary be difficult to defend except on grounds of pure expediency."

Pearson drafted a reply for Mackenzie King, the contents of which he shared with Kennan, and this became the basis of the Canadian position.[15] The government concluded "that the present United States policy of denying Japan's industrial potential to the Soviet Union is of great importance and should be supported. While we had hoped that it might have been possible to convene a Japanese Peace Conference at an early date we do not think we would be justified in pressing the United States Government unduly to push forward with a conference at this time if they do not think this wise."[16] And that was that. Kennan's efforts had assured Canadian support for the U.S. at a time when Britain and other countries were becoming increasingly nervous about the U.S. extending the Occupation of Japan and delaying the peace treaty. Conservative elites in Japan supported the policy changes envisaged by Kennan and others and hoped to use the continuing Occupation for its own ends.

Canadian acquiescence to Kennan's proposals was not the first time that the Canadian government had lined up behind U.S. policy. Nor was it the first time that Norman had found himself at odds with Occupation policy.

Norman and the General

While serving on MacArthur's staff in the fall of 1945, Norman found out that MacArthur had permitted Konoe Fumimaro, a former prime minister, to begin working on a new constitution for Japan. Konoe had resigned as prime minister just before Pearl Harbor and some considered him a liberal, a member of the so-called 'peace' faction. As a historian of Japan, Norman knew that nothing was further from the truth. In a scathing analysis of Konoe's role in the war, Norman pointed out that Konoe's first cabinet (June 4, 1937 to January 5, 1939) approved the July 1937 invasion of China.[17] He underscored how Konoe had been attracted to corporatist and fascist ideas and his role in developing a specifically Japanese form of authoritarianism. Norman bemoaned the fact that such men were being courted to develop a new constitution while those who had fought the militarist regime were either still in prison or denied access to the corridors of power. Norman's report went to both MacArthur and the U.S. State Department and Konoe was subsequently indicted by the International Military Tribunal as a possible war criminal. Konoe killed himself rather than face the charges.



Konoe Fumimaro

Norman also differed with MacArthur over how to deal with Japan's Emperor. While opposing foreign intervention to depose Hirohito or abolish the monarchy, Norman echoed his Japanese colleagues' views that there should a "rational, scientific history of the Institution."[18] Until such an investigation of the imperial institution was carried out, it would be premature to indict Hirohito as a war criminal. MacArthur, however, arbitrarily short-circuited any investigation of the monarchy and instead facilitated Hirohito's retention of power. This was done at the same time Norman was emphasizing that "The Emperor is the fulcrum of the whole system [of militarism] and it would be an error to regard him as a mere puppet, no matter how weak the personality of the incumbent might be."

Norman later served on the Far Eastern Commission where he again clashed with MacArthur in the spring of 1946. The Commission had been charged with proposing a process for Japan to adopt a new constitution and Norman had lobbied hard for public participation through the convening of a constitutional assembly and implementing a public referendum to approve the constitution. This was pre-empted by MacArthur who issued a draft constitution of his own.



Norman and MacArthur

Softly chastised by Norman and the Far Eastern Commission, MacArthur unleashed a tirade, accusing the Commission of trying to undermine U.S. authority over Japan: "If we lose control of this sphere of influence under this policy of aggressive action, we will not only jeopardize the occupation but hazard the future safety of the United States."[19] Faced with MacArthur's wrath, the Canadian government declined to further challenge the rising American hegemon. As U.S. policymakers invoked anti-communism in their campaign for global influence, the Liberal regime in Ottawa aligned itself closely with Washington, subordinating international obligations to continental ties. On one level Norman appeared to embrace the U.S.-Canadian partnership and adopted the language of the Cold War (pointing out, however, that in Asia the war was a 'hot' war). But on other occasions he contested emerging policies.



Yoshida Shigeru, Norman and Australian diplomat McMahon Ball

Nowhere is this more true than in a recently recovered 23-page analysis penned by Norman in 1951. After being exonerated of accusations of disloyalty in the winter of 1950, Norman visited Washington in April the following year. According to one account, this was at the invitation of Hume Wrong, the Canadian ambassador to Washington who wanted Norman to get away from Ottawa on a holiday. In fact, however, Norman was working, taking charge of preparing the Canadian position regarding a peace treaty with Japan. On April 11, US president Harry Truman dismissed Douglas MacArthur as the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers for insubordination related to the Korean War. Contacted by US secretary of state Dean Acheson prior to Truman's announcement, Hume Wrong wired Pearson in Ottawa to let him know of Acheson's communication.[20] Wrong made little comment himself regarding MacArthur's firing but told Pearson that "Herbert Norman remarks that this is a good demonstration to the Japanese of the supremacy of the civil authority in a democracy."[21] MacArthur may have been down but he was not out. Upon his return to Washington immediately after his firing, he was invited to address both houses of Congress on April 19. Norman, as the head of the American and Far Eastern Division, oversaw and participated actively in the preparation of a detailed analysis of this speech, appending a personal assessment gleaned from his relatively extensive contact with MacArthur while in Tokyo. As Norman wrote in the cover letter accompanying the document, the "analysis contains some very frank statements, and perhaps ought in consequence to be given a most limited circulation (if any)."[22] Norman's commentary and the detailed analysis in fact constitute a powerful indictment of both MacArthur and US policy in the Pacific.[23]

Norman thought the speech skilfully devised in that MacArthur cast upon himself "the toga of a Roman statesman".[24] At the same time, however, Norman remarked that MacArthur's view that in Congress were "centered the hopes and aspirations and faith of the entire human race," was somewhat "overpowering for those who do not believe that the United States

Constitution represents the final consummation of all human wisdom." Norman praised the speech for its austerity of language since "most of the General MacArthur's pronunciamentos in Japan were so bestrewn with purple passages and so ponderous in syntax that the resulting Japanese translation, so it was sometimes whispered discretely, was virtually unintelligible."[25] Norman emphasized that MacArthur made no mention of the United Nations and that this was not an oversight: "In private conversation he has commented that the United Nations command was in fact a legal fiction; he was still a United States officer taking his orders from the Joint Chiefs of Staff." Norman pointed out that in his speech, MacArthur said most of his critics were foreign. According to Norman, in "private conversations, General MacArthur has expressed a rather contemptuous opinion of nations whose policies were not always in accordance with the General's views."[26]

Underpinning the speech's political philosophy, stated Norman, was MacArthur's stubbornly held opinion that "Oriental peoples are characterized by a respect bordering on awe for military power."[27] Norman suggested that this view may have led MacArthur to ignore the possibility of Chinese intervention in the Korean war: "That the Chinese would be so rash as to invite his counter-attack, particularly with the tremendous striking power of his air force which he confidently expected he could use in Manchuria in the event of Chinese aggression, must have struck him as going against all preconceived ideas of Oriental behaviour." Norman pointed out, however, that during World War II in Asia, "despite overwhelming superiority in weapons, particularly in the air and naval branch which the Japanese enjoyed, and a number of political defections notwithstanding, the people of China never capitulated to the Japanese. It was observed that the Japanese troops, far from commanding respect and awe, earned the contempt, not to speak of the hatred of the

Chinese."[28]

Norman goes on to point out some of the other historical errors in the speech, noting that MacArthur's view that there was little "war making tendency in China until 50 years ago" was betrayed by the "Taiping rebellion and other savage border wars, bloody rebellions and civil war." MacArthur was also in error when he stated to Congress that Chang tso-lin was the founder of the nationalist movement in China. There was little point in pursuing such errors, stated Norman, except that for "a man who is so passionately concerned with his own place in history it is distressing sometimes to see how rudely he can treat Clio."[29]

Norman also explored MacArthur's military strategy. While recognizing MacArthur's success in his Pacific campaigns, waged "with pre-eminent doggedness and daring", Norman stated that the General's views on strategic problems "suggest a capability short of omniscience." Using confidential sources he suggested that MacArthur opposed a counterinvasion against the Nazis in Europe; that MacArthur's advice to Chiang Kai-shek to make a stand in Mukden during the civil war had proven to be disastrous for the KMT; and that MacArthur's assurance that the troops in Korea would be home before Christmas was overoptimistic. Like any other great commander, MacArthur had made his mistakes and Norman suggested that the general would have greater appeal if, "on a suitable occasion, he admitted to human fallibility."[30] More importantly, however, Norman advised that the review of MacArthur's speech suggested that "at a critical moment such as this his leadership could become disastrous." It would be a serious error, Norman concluded, to regard the speech as "merely the swan song of a great general. It may well be the opening barrage of a formidable political offensive designed to effect far-reaching and even disturbing changes in the Unites States Far Eastern policy."[31]

7



MacArthur and Truman, Wake Island, Oct 15, 1950

The second part of the memorandum, "Detailed Comments on Portions of the Address," analyses 23 specific points over 13 pages.[32] The analysis ranges far and wide, as did MacArthur's speech. The report took issue with MacArthur's belief that Japan had undergone "the greatest reformation recorded in modern history." While not denying that reforms occurred during the Occupation, "reforms imposed by a foreign authority, however, are less than a reformation. Japan accepted a benevolent, democratic dictatorship quietly."[33] But a reformation required the "conscious effort on the part of a whole people". Norman continued: "It is not unfair to test this thesis in its practical administration. The head of the reformed state is the Emperor of twenty-five years, without his white horse but with the same respectful and devoted subjects. His first lieutenant, the Prime Minister, is a bureaucrat of many years' experience who demands almost feudal obedience from his subordinates. His senior military officers have been retired either by death or old age but their junior counterparts are the nucleus of the new National Police Reserve. The financial and industrial tycoons of Imperial Japan have been removed from control of their vast holdings, but their trained managers hold important posts the reorganized companies."[34] "It can be said flatly that there has not been created 'a truly representative government' in Japan. It is more representative in the past but it has resorted "to gerrymandering, cloture of debate, SCAP directives, expulsion of Diet members, bribery and political horse-trading of the most cynical nature." Such problems also exist in other representative governments, so one must be moderate in expectations, the memorandum concluded.

Regarding MacArthur's assertion that the Japanese people rose to the challenge of the Korean War and the resulting confusion in a "magnificent manner", the memorandum asked what else could they do given that Japan was under US control, receiving US aid and seeking an occupation-ending peace treaty in which the US had a predominant voice. What is the connection, asked the memorandum, with the supposed "profoundly beneficial influence" Japan might wield in future? Regarding how the Japanese checked communism, the report states: "The Japan which the Allies fought was quite effective in its control of native communists. However, the blows dealt the Communist Party and its followers in 1950 were delivered by SCAP directives without even the fiction of Japanese Government responsibility. Many prominent Japanese, including the respected and conservative President of Tokyo University, openly expressed their doubts at the restrictions of civil liberties imposed in the interests of crippling an already weak communist movement."[35]

What is the significance of this document? Earlier accounts of Norman's relationship with MacArthur stress the strong rapport that had developed between the two men. No doubt Norman did strive to build a close relationship with MacArthur. But he did so out of duty, as one of his diplomatic responsibilities. In his analysis of MacArthur's speech, however, Norman is not bound by protocol and provides a rather scathing indictment of MacArthur. Some might argue that this was Norman's revenge. Perhaps so. But it was definitely not the work of someone who had been cowed by the attacks against him. Norman was no doubt profoundly affected by his inquisition, but he was also a survivor.

In the face of recent world events, Norman's life can teach us much about what it means to be human in the face of adversity. His death fifty years ago can serve as a reminder of the costs of catering to Empires, and the risks of criticising the powerful.

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Notes

[1] An early account of Norman's life is contained in Charles Taylor, Six Journeys: A Canadian Pattern (Toronto, Anansi Press, 1977). Later accounts of Norman's life in English include Roger Bowen ed., E.H. Norman: His Life and Scholarship (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984) and his landmark biography, Innocence is Not Enough: The Life and Death of Herbert Norman (Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1986). In Japanese, see Nakano Toshiko, H. noman-aru demokuratto no tadotta unmei [H. Norman: The Fate that Befell a Democrat], (Tokyo, Riburopoto, 1990); Kudo Miyoko, Higeki no gaikokan: habato noman no shogai [Tragedy's Diplomat: The Life of Herbert Norman], (Tokyo, Iwanami shoten, 1991). Kato Shuichi and Nakano Toshiko, eds, E.H. Noman: Nihon

senryo no kiroku [E.H. Norman: Reports from Occupied Japan], (Tokyo, Jimbun shoin, 1997)

[2] The most recent exoneration came from a government-contracted study. See Peyton Lyon, "The Loyalties of E. Herbert Norman," (A report for External Affairs and International Trade, March 18, 1990).

[3] Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan), October 14, 1947, (FRUS 1948) pp. 536-537 and "[Annex] Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan), October 14, 1947 (Foreign Relations of the United States 1948, hereafter FRUS), pp. 537-543.

[4] Norman to Pearson, No. 100, March 22, 1948, Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), Record Group 25 (External Affairs), Vol. 4729, 50061-40, pt. 1, p. 3.

[5] US National Archives, Occupation of Japan, Part 2: US and Allied Policy, 1945-1952, 3-H-21
[6] Arthur Menzies, "United States Policy for Japan," June 3, 1948 (LAC, RG 25, Vol. 4730, File 50061-40 (part 1), p. 1

- [7] Ibid., p. 1
- [8] Ibid., p. 4
- [9] Ibid., p 6.
- [10] Ibid. p. 6-7
- [11] Ibid., p. 7
- [12] Ibid., p. 8
- [13] Ibid., p. 9

[14] Personal Message for Mr. Mackenzie King from Mr. Attlee, July 21, 1948 (LAC, RG 25, Vol. 4730, File 50061-40 (part 1), p. 1.

[15] Pearson wrote Norman Robertson on August 4 explaining that Mackenzie King was preoccupied with the Liberal convention but that Robertson might share with British authorities the content of the draft reply. He also told Robertson that they had shared their views with Kennan and that the matter was basically closed. See Cypher No. 1245, Robertson from Pearson, August 4, 1948 (LAC, RG 25, Vol. 4730, File 50061-40 (part 1).

[16] Personal Message for Mr. Attlee from Mr. Mackenzie King, July 23, 1948 (LAC, RG 25, Vol. 4730, File 50061-40 (part 4)).

[17] E.H. Norman, "Memorandum", 5

November 1945, contained in Okubo Genji ed., Historical and Political Writings [MSS] by Herbert Norman (Tokyo, 1978), Special Collections, Main Library, University of British Columbia.

[18] For details see John Price, "E. H. Norman, Canada and Japan's Postwar Constitution," Pacific Affairs, vol. 74, no. 3 (Fall, 2001), pp. 383-405.

[19] As cited in "Mr. Max W. Bishop, of the Office of the Political Adviser in Japan, to the Secretary of State," Tokyo, April 15, 1946, FRUS 1946 Vol. VIII, pp. 202–205. This citation is from pp. 204–205.

[20] Hume Wrong, Wrong to Pearson, WA-1394, 11 April, 1951, (LAC, RG 25, Vol. 6031, File 50293-40 pt. 1.2).

[21] Ibid., p. 2.

[22] E.H. Norman, "Memorandum for the Under-Secretary," 25 April, 1951, (LAC, RG 25, Vol. 6031, File 50293-40, pt. 1.2).

[23] My view that this was mainly Norman's work is affirmed in a handwritten note on another memorandum on MacArthur's speech written by the former Canadian ambassador to China, T.C. Davis. The note under Norman's name as one of the recipients of the TC Davis memorandum states: "(we might send T.C.D. a copy of your analysis of McAs speech) Mr Mackay". T.C. Davis to A.D.P. Heeney, 24 April 1951, (LAC, RG 25, Vol. 6031, File 50293-40, pt. 1.2), p.1.

[24] E.H. Norman, "A Consideration of General MacArthur's address to Congress (April 19)," 24 April, 1951 (LAC, RG 25, Vol. 6031, File 50293-40, pt. 1-2), p. 1.

-]25] Ibid., p. 1.
- [26] Ibid., p. 3.
- [27] Ibid., p. 3.
- [28] Ibid., p. 3.
- [29] Ibid., p. 4-5.
- [30] Ibid., p. 6.
- [31] Ibid., p. 7.

[32] E.H. Norman, "A Consideration of General MacArthur's Address to Congress (April 19)", 24 April, 1951 (LAC, RG 25, Vol. 6031, File 50293-40, pt. 1.2.)

- [33] Ibid., p. 5.
- [34] Ibid., p. 6.
- [35] Ibid., p. 7.