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Dr. M. H. Trevor
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Dear Dr. Trevor:

Up to now, I have had a high regard for Kenneth Hopper. Now that he has given us a chance to correspond, he occupies an even warmer spot in my heart.

I was delighted to receive your July 13th letter. However, you should know that you are not a complete stranger to me. I have, and have appreciated, your "Quality Control in Japan: Technology Transfer and Self Help" article that appeared in POLICY STUDIES of April 1985. Clearly, that paper was the product of careful investigation, persistent ferreting out of information sources, and good thinking. Now, I have the opportunity to convey to you personally a couple of observations - about the article, but more particularly, about the current Japanese/American/British industrial management situation.

First, it seems to be the popular fancy that the industrial applications of statistical quality control (coincidentally, that happens to be the title of my book on the subject) began in Japan in 1951 with the sudden and miraculous appearance of Deming, Juran, Fischbein, Fisher, et al. The fact of the matter is that we in the Civil Communications Section (CCS/GHQ/SCAP), in the six years and seven months that elapsed between Japan's signing of the surrender document and the end of the Occupation, rebuilt the communications industry - literally - from the ground up, installed and trained the new managers, and established the pattern of management philosophy that later implemented, and took advantage of the quality control methodologies that we taught. This period of time is too easily glossed over. Even the Japanese, during my recent visit there, seemed to want to avoid mention or recollection of that truth.

They want to restart history in 1951 and ignore what preceded that date. For example, it is not accurate to say that "Their self help was instrumental in creating the Japanese 'economic miracle'..." They would have you believe it. But,

as Ken Hopper wrote in his paper, the impetus and the foundation for what they have achieved up to now came from the Americans in SCAP. And, in turn, we had learned it from the British in all the years since the Industrial Revolution.

I would point out to you that the people in the Japan Union of Scientists and Engineers, (JUUSE), at the time, did see QC as a "quick fix", a short cut to international standing and industrial competitiveness. That is why I squelched JUUSE in 1946-1948. In my position in CCS, I was focused on building sound company managements, a reliable national production base, and properly engineered products. I would not tolerate any diversion of attention from these basics to the academicians' forays into mathematical (statistics) "phenomena" at that time.

Matsushita was one of the gamut of companies that I started or rehabilitated in the communications industry in that post-World War II period. Karatsu, Kayano, Matsushita (elder and younger) are among the many people I worked with. What I tried to convey to them and the others - and your paper properly reflects this - what is essential in the industrial environment is the quality of management in each of its activities and in the totality of all of its operations. QC is related not merely to product manufacture or to incoming inspection, for example. It is a guiding state of mind, a devotion and dedication. It is a phenomenon, not of statistics, but rather of an integrated system composed of interacting and mutually dependant parts.

Hey, I had better stop here! I am getting carried away and starting to lecture. You might put me up on a soap box on that corner in Hyde Park!

But, there is one more thing that I have to say. There is a cultural difference between the Japanese, and the British and Americans. When I was working there, my Japanese students did take my teachings to heart as a matter of national, family and personal honor - not pride. The Americans, and I guess the English too, are much more pragmatic. In Japan today, management and workers are partners in the company effort. In America, and I guess in Britain too, labor and management are on opposite sides of the equation. Most often the relationship is not partnership, but rather adversarial. My point is, QC is not a miraculous cure for the ills or incompetence of management. Further, my point is, I do not favor importing into the UK or the U. S. the "Japanese style of management". What I do favor is combining the efforts of all the employees of companies into cooperative, coherent, creative forces for the common prosperity. And, I do believe that we, in our countries, have the power, ability and methodology to do that. But, do we have the resolve?

You did not ask for all this drivel. That is what happens

once I get started!

I can empathize with your frustration in trying to continue your research program in the face of dwindling funds. Is there a possibility of joining a management consulting firm, such as Booz, Allen and Hamilton, where you might apply your knowledge and experience to immediate problems?

I would delight in the chance to meet you to carry this exchange further. A few years ago, before I retired from IBM, I traveled frequently to London where we had offices, and to Hursley where we had a laboratory. But now, I have to pay for my own tickets, and that rules out any immediate plans. However, if your interest continues and, if there might be an audience with which we might have a discourse, then maybe the gods will favor us. I will let you know if plans do develop.

In the meantime, please accept my best wishes for your continued success, and my thanks for your letter.

Very truly yours,

Homer M. Sarasohn

cc: Mr. Kenneth Hopper