

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO



3 1822 01964 4442

THE
LABOR MOVEMENT
IN JAPAN

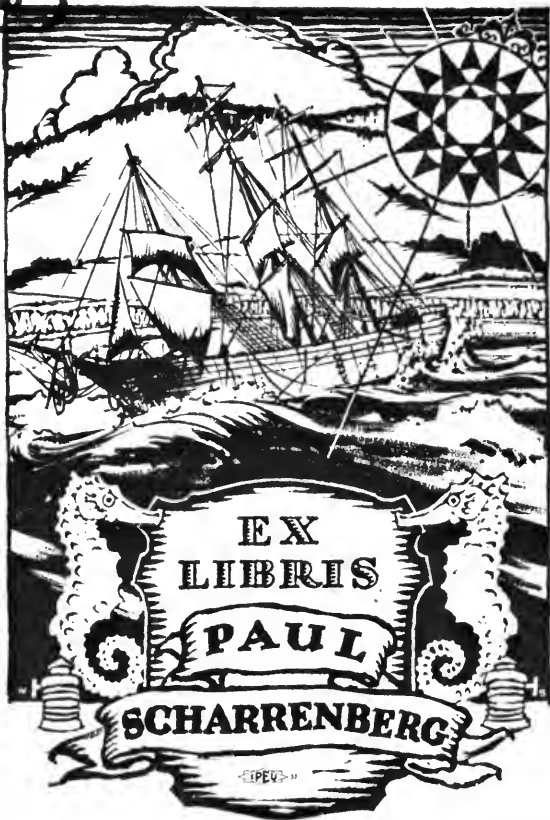
BY
SEN KATAYAMA

社會主義の爲めに

片山潜

California
onal
lity

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO



3 1822 01964 4442

Social Sciences & Humanities Library

University of California, San Diego

Please Note: This item is subject to recall.

Date Due

7/1/96

AUG 20 1996

JUN 14 1999

SEP 13 2002

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation



THE
LABOR MOVEMENT IN JAPAN







社會主義の爲めに
片山潜

FOR THE CAUSE OF SOCIALISM
SEN KATAYAMA

8064

**THE
LABOR MOVEMENT
IN JAPAN**

**BY
SEN KATAYAMA**



**CHICAGO
CHARLES H. KERR & COMPANY
CO-OPERATIVE**

Copyright 1918
BY CHARLES H. KERR & COMPANY

JOHN F. HIGGINS, PRINTER



376-380 WEST MONROE ST

PREFACE.

This little book is the first attempt to give to the English speaking public a history of the labor and socialist movement in Japan. It was originally intended for the Internationalist Socialist Review during the year 1917; so that it is necessarily brief and incomplete in the details of events however interesting; but I tried to present the events and their developments. Bearing this in mind the reader will understand the limits of this book.

Since I wrote this, many things have happened. Our working classes in Japan have lately awakened. This fact is shown by numerous strikes during the last year. These were mainly due to the influence of the Russian revolution by which our people, especially the working classes, were so greatly impressed and interested. They were also due to the rapid growth of Capitalism and its enormous profits on ac-

count of war industry. Almost needless to say that the working classes did not get any reasonable increase in their wages, while the prices of their necessaries were rising by leaps and bounds.

Fearing the effect of these changes the ever stronger autocratic, militaristic government became more and more sensitive and terror stricken, as they viewed the people becoming enthused by the Russian revolution. The government has become lately still more oppressive and autocratic in dealing with the working class movement and socialism, the leaders being effectively bound and gagged. Even the Yu-Ai-Kai, the yellowest labor movement in Japan, supported by philanthropic capitalists like Baron Shibusawa, is controlled by the despots; so that its so-called members, or more accurately subscribers to its organ, are falling away. Nevertheless, this darkest condition strengthens our faith in the coming social revolution in Japan. Never in my time have we so often heard the cry

for another revolution to put down the present bureaucratic government for a better and democratic form of government. The living fact that the Russian revolution was accomplished by the joint action of the workers and the soldiers is the great revelation to the Japanese who are oppressed under militarism and conscription. Above all it has strengthened tacitly a hope for the brighter dawn of the coming social revolution. To counteract and crush this hope and its increase the terrified militaristic government has entered upon its death struggle and is making prodigious efforts, scrupulous and unscrupulous, to root out the socialist propaganda. But there is little doubt that within a few years our faith in the social revolution will be amply rewarded.

I here acknowledge the kindness, help and encouragement given me in writing this document by comrades Mr. and Mrs. S. J. Rutgers, under whose generosity and unbounded hospitality I was able to find

time and opportunities for gathering and preparing for my material. I also acknowledge the kindness of Mrs. Mary E. Marcy who read the manuscript and corrected errors in English.

SEN KATAYAMA.

New York City, July 9, 1918.

CONTENTS

Introduction	11
I. Its Background.....	29
II. A Period of Success.....	47
III. Socialism a Popular Topic.....	69
IV. The Socialist Movement and the Russo-Japanese War.....	85
V. The Socialist Party and Its Ac- tivities	100
VI. Suppression and Revolt of So- cialism in Japan.....	124
VII. The Marxian Socialist Group...	142



INTRODUCTION.

At the moment when reaction is ascendant in Japan, when its Imperialism is aggressively triumphant and its proletariat apparently crushed and silent, at this moment, more than any other, is a book on the Japanese Labor Movement of great value. It is of value in picturing a militant proletariat in action and by emphasizing our international spirit without which Socialism cannot conquer.

This book, appearing at this particular time, is, moreover, a symbol to the world of Socialism and Revolution. It is a symbol of the great role that the Japanese proletariat is destined to play in the days to come; it is even more a symbol of the momentous fact washed upon the shores of Time by the Great War—that Labor, and Labor alone, in spite of momentary collapse and a swerving from its historic mission, is the force that must preserve

civilization from total ruin by creating the new civilization of Socialism.

Japan is to-day dominantly reactionary. It is preparing itself to extend the power and influence of its ruling class. As a capitalist nation, Japan is part and parcel of the general imperialistic interests and ambitions that plunged the world into disaster. And in Japan, as in other imperialistic nations, all classes are reactionary, all classes are eager for the spoils of exploitation, all classes are willing to sell humanity and civilization for the mess of pottage of imperialistic aggrandizement. All classes, that is to say, except the proletariat, which is silent under the oppression of a malevolent tyranny, but which has within itself the latent power and inspiration for great deeds, as is amply proven by Comrade Katayama's sketch of the rise of the Labor and Socialist movement in Japan under the most discouraging conditions.

The Japanese government is increasing its repressive measures against the prole-

tariat. Recently, Comrade T. Sakai was imprisoned for propaganda in favor "of an extension of the suffrage." And in its reactionary sweep, the Japanese government is destroying a peculiar instrument it forged for the deception of the workers—the Yu-Ai-Kai. The Yu-Ai-Kai was a "union" organized under government auspices, including in its membership capitalists, professors and officials of the government, its chief activity being the publication of a paper to deceive the workers. Employers often brutally coerced their workers to join this "union," and it became a means of destroying the legitimate organizations of the proletariat. But now the Imperial government itself is persecuting the Yu-Ai-Kai, against the protests of Baron Shibusawa and other magnates of capital, while the workers are rapidly deserting it entirely. This is significant equally of the stupidity of the government and the awakening of the workers.

I have said that Japan is part and parcel of the general imperialistic forces and ambitions that plunged the world into disaster; and this Imperialism is determinant in the recent history and development of Japan.

The Japanese people emerged definitely into the world of modern production and exchange at a time when Capitalism had developed into a new stage of its existence, —the stage of Imperialism. Normally, the development of Capitalism would have produced a bourgeois, democratic revolution in Japan; but the existence of Imperialism altered the course of events. Imperialism is the negation of democracy; It means, historically, the end of bourgeois democracy and the re-introduction of autocracy under a variety of political forms. In nations which completed their bourgeois democratic revolution, as England and France, imperialism develops a reaction against democracy and establishes the autocracy of imperialistic State Cap-

italism; in nations which had not completed their bourgeois revolution, as Germany, or which never had the beginnings of one, as Japan, Imperialism prevents the appearance of the institutions of bourgeois democracy. The feudal class is not destroyed; it becomes capitalistic and is put into the service of Imperialism; autocracy is not abolished, but bent to the uses of Imperialism. This was precisely the development in Japan, as in Germany. Imperialistic Capitalism was developed on the basis of still prevailing feudal conditions and ideology, a situation excellent for the profitmad ruling class, but simply murderous to the workers and peasants, and disastrous to the rise of democratic ideas and institutions. Instead of comprehensively developing the internal market and its corresponding normal conditions of production, the Japanese ruling class embarked upon a policy of export trade and Imperialism, because it was more profitable, and because the develop-

ment of the internal market would have meant the end of low wages and the appearance of a homogeneous, aggressive proletariat.

The role to which Japan aspires, and conspires for, is that of arbiter of the Far East. Its imperialistic interests dictate the establishment of Japanese hegemony on the Asiatic continent, and particularly in succulently-rich and helpless China. Japan has already promulgated a sort of "Monroe Doctrine," which insists upon priority of interest and consideration for Japan in the Far West, just as the American Monroe Doctrine has been perverted into a similar claim for the United States in Central and South America.

The war has definitely converted Japan into a dominant imperialistic nation. From a debtor nation, Japan has become a creditor nation, with large masses of capital that must be exported for investment. In January, 1918, Finance Minister Shoda in his budget speech said that imports since

the beginning of the war had aggregated 2,623,000,000 yen (a yen is equivalent to almost half a dollar), and exports, 3,799,000,000 yen, the resulting favorable balance of 1,175,000,000 yen being increased by 700,000,000 yen "from other sources." The accumulation of capital from this favorable balance of trade is increasing rapidly as the months go by. Moreover, industry has expanded to gigantic proportions, including the shipping industry. Industry and trade are increasing, not in mathematical, but in geometrical progression. Japanese Capitalism is entrenching itself firmly in all sections of Asia, and particularly in China, where economic and political "penetration" proceed simultaneously. Japan's great need until recently was the import of raw materials, including iron and cotton; the enormous expansion of industry has made this need still more imperative, and it has been supplemented by the urgent need for investment markets to which Japanese Capitalism can export

its surplus capital. All this means a feverish impetus to Imperialism; and the field for Japanese Imperialism is Asia.

It is just at this point that antagonism develops between Japan and the other imperialistic powers in general, between Japan and the United States in particular, an antagonism latent with the threat of war, a war that would ultimately involve all the other great powers to protect their own Imperialism. Economically and financially, the United States is being affected by the war in precisely the same way as Japan, only more so. The Far East, and particularly China, is a great, capitalistically-untapped reservoir; it can do two things indispensable to an imperialistic nation,—provide practically unlimited sources of raw materials and absorb vast amounts of investment capital. This import of raw material and the export of capital are the nerve-centers of Capitalism to-day, and the source of the great antagonisms which may again produce a

catastrophe,—unless the proletariat acts decisively in the performance of its historic mission.

In this situation latent with catastrophe, the workers of the two nations must understand each other, must assist each other, must unite to avert the impending menace.

For the workers of the two nations alone and decisively, in co-operation with the workers of the world, can prevent a conflict. No dependence can be placed upon the words of the representatives of the ruling classes; understandings and agreements are converted into scraps of paper when they clash with dominant imperialistic interests. The proletariat alone can act; and it is the function of the New International now in process of becoming to prepare the revolutionary proletariat to act when the crisis comes, aye, to *prevent the coming* of the crisis.

The fomenting of race prejudice and hatred is exactly what the ruling classes desire. Hatreds of race against race con-

stitute the ideologic dynamo of Imperialism. It is the task of the Socialist to break down these hatreds. And when the American Federation of Labor foments racial hatred against the Japanese, it is betraying the interests of the workers. The Japanese workers in this country are part and parcel of our proletariat; they have proven that they are organizable, that they can fight the industrial oppressors, that they are excellent material for the militant proletarian movement. It is sheer suicide for the American proletariat to indulge in race hatred against the Japanese, or against any other racial element of our people.

The American proletariat, moreover, must understand precisely what are the real forces of labor and progress in Japan. It must not play into the hands of the Imperial government. Some years ago, the Yu-Ai-Kai sent a fraternal delegate to a convention of the American Federation of Labor, a Mr. Susuki, secretary of Baron

Shibusawa. Mr. Susuki was accepted as a bona-fide representative of the Japanese workers, Messrs. Gompers and Scharrenberg solemnly accepting the invitation to go to Japan to "teach" the workers there how to organize. Operabouffe! Many Socialists also made this gross error, in spite of Comrade Katayama's expose in the *New York Call* of the real character of Susuki and his "labor" organization.

In the coming great work of reconstruction, the Socialist Party should recognize and emphasize the vital importance of the Japanese-American issue, and make it a central feature of its agitational and educational propaganda. Indeed, this is all the more necessary considering the temporary weakness of the Japanese movement, a weakness due to definite historical circumstances. Why could not the Party make an appropriation to assist our Comrades in Japan? Why not more intimate contact between the two movements? And, surely, the Party could make use of an ap-

appropriation for special propaganda among the Japanese in this country, could avail itself of the services of a Sen Katayama.

* * *

Comrade Sen Katayama is an interesting personality. At sixty years of age, he retains the enthusiasm and idealism of youth; forced to make a living for himself and his daughter, as an ordinary worker, he devotes all his spare time to the Cause to which he has dedicated his life. Katayama is unpretentious and democratic; the fan-fare of heroics makes no appeal to him. He is a worker in the workers' movement, accepting the worker's lot—that is all; but that is *all* a man can do.

It was at the Amsterdam Socialist Congress in 1904 that Katayama participated in a symbolic act. Japan and Russia, the Russian and Japanese autocracy, were at war. The chairman of the Congress was speaking, when Katayama and Plekhanov arose, and in full view of the audience,

shook hands,—symbol of that international proletarian solidarity which will yet prove mightier than cannon and chauvinism.

Sen Katayama was born December 7, 1858, of peasant parentage, and the story of his life is the story of the Japanese labor and Socialist movement. He worked on a farm, studying at home, with only short intervals of school education. In 1882 Katayama went to Tokyo, working in a printing plant ten hours a day at 7 1-2 cents a day; by working overtime, he could earn \$2.50 a month. The ordeal of these days made Katayama a permanent proletarian with the aspirations of the militant proletariat.

For a time, Katayama worked as a janitor in a Chinese university, and studied the Chinese classics in his spare time; then he came to the United States to study—not subsidized by the Imperial government, as so many Japanese students are, but entirely upon his own resources, which consisted of exactly one dollar upon his ar-

rival in California in 1884. Katayama studied English in a Chinese Mission in Alameda, entered John Hopkins Academy at Oakland, from there went to Maryville College, Tennessee, and in 1889 entered Grinnell College, graduating in 1892. Two years at Andover and one year at Yale were spent in the study of social problems. And during all these years Katayama had to work for his living and his tuition, the ordeal of it all preparing him for the activity of a militant rebel.

About this time, Katayama began to study Socialism, starting with Ferdinand Lassalle, who inspired him with a love for the practical work of organization. After a short stay in England studying social problems, Katayama returned to the United States on his way to Japan, where he immediately became active in the developing labor movement, and soon became its central figure. In 1904 he went as a delegate to the Amsterdam Congress, and after a tour of the United States returned

to Japan, to find the movement dominated by *petit bourgeois* intellectuals and persecuted bitterly by the authorities. His activity in a big strike in Tokyo caused his arrest and nine months' imprisonment, which greatly impaired his health; and upon his release, his every move was interfered with, detectives were always with him wherever he went, and he was compelled to leave Japan, again coming to the United States. This persecution was largely due to the intrepid attitude against the war with Russia adopted by the Japanese Socialists.

But in America the Japanese Consuls and detectives, upon instructions from the Imperial government, persecuted Katayama, making his life unpleasant and his organizing work impossible. His friends were intimidated by the Consuls, who possess great power. The Japanese Day Laborers' Union, of which Katayama was an officer, was compelled to denounce him; one of his friends was actually kidnapped,

sent to Japan, and imprisoned for eighteen months. Katayama was compelled to leave California and come to New York, where he has since been publishing a paper in Japanese and English, *The Heimin*.

* * *

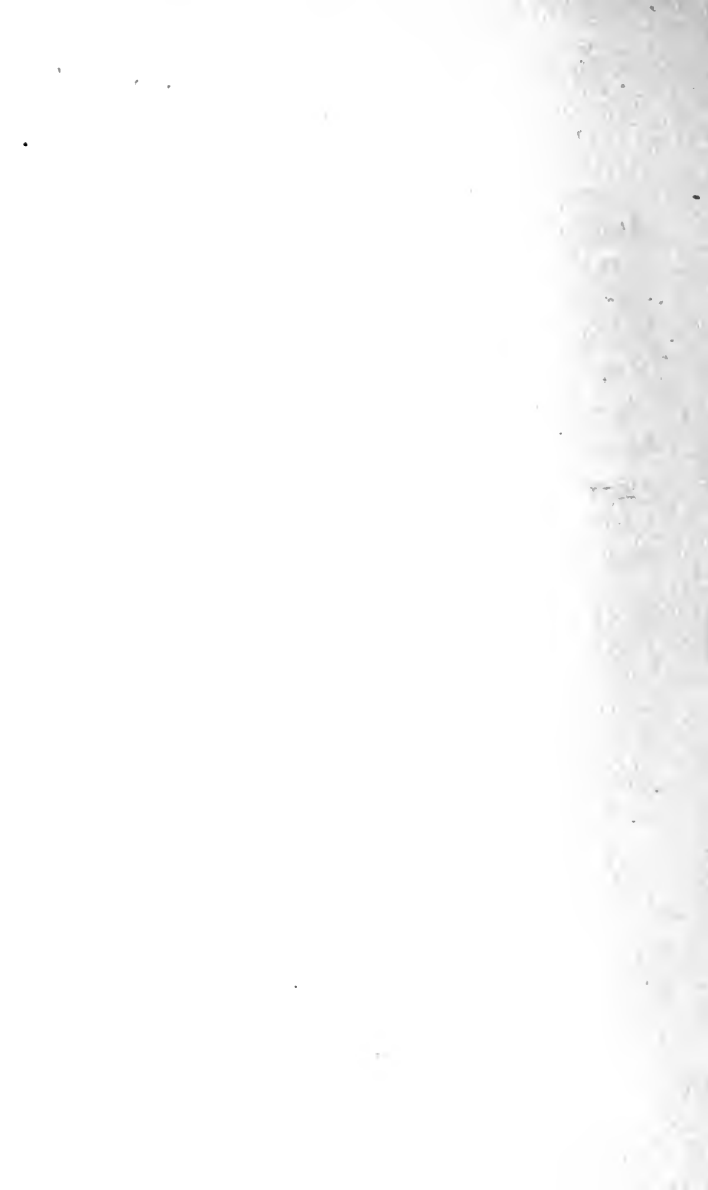
The central characteristics of Katayama's activity and personality are an uncompromising class consciousness and internationalism. He greeted with joy the proletarian revolution in Russia, as did his comrades in Japan; and he is firmly convinced that the revolutionary Socialism of the Bolsheviki must become the basis of the New International. At sixty years of age, Sen Katayama looks to the future, and not to the past—to the immediate future of the Third International, the International of revolutionary Socialism, of the final, unconquerable struggle against Capitalism, initiated by the proletarian revolution in Russia.

History, says Trotzky, is a mighty engine promoting our ideals. And con-

temporary history is preparing the way feverishly and swiftly for our final struggle. In this struggle the international solidarity of the proletariat is an indispensable requirement. May Sen Katayama's book on the Japanese Labor Movement prove a factor in promoting this solidarity! May Sen Katayama's revolutionary conception of Socialism prove a factor in the revolutionary reconstruction of Socialism!

LOUIS C. FRAINA.

New York, July 4, 1918.



THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN JAPAN.

I.

ITS BACKGROUND.

Foreigners who visit Japan often claim that Japan's recent progress, however remarkable, is a superficial one, is skindeep, a mere adoption of western civilization. They say there is no real development and progress, but merely an imitation of the West.

Thus saying, they tried to discredit the present achievements of the Japanese and reached the conclusion that the Japanese are inferior to the western peoples, stimulating in this way the anti-Japanese movement among the white peoples.

To understand the real character and feelings of a present-day Japanese worker, however, it is necessary to know something about his past, the background leading into feudal times. Feudalism in Japan

would be a most interesting study in itself, because Japanese feudalism has a unique history of many centuries ending after the time of the American Civil war. It enjoyed a peaceful life of activities and developments for three centuries. During these years Japan shut herself off from all outside influences and civilizations.

Hers was an independent life and she created a unique and a genuine Japanese civilization. Class lines were drawn quite sharply and distinctly. Farmers, artisans and merchants, each enjoyed life in peaceful development. The study of these classes is illuminating, but our aim is to show that some of the good qualities possessed by the Japanese workers were developed during feudal times. Here we will speak only of the artisan class of that period in order to illustrate that the present working classes have their roots and history in the past however much they may appear to differ from the Japanese working class of to-day.

During the days of Japanese feudalism the artisan class made very good progress. Their products are of great value to the present generations and beautify not only the civilization and life of Japan, but museums and art galleries in the West.

In some of the old crafts, organized into guilds, our artisans have devised ingenious means to protect their interests against the masters and also against outsiders. One of the most interesting guilds is that of the wood sawyers. The Woodsawyers' Guild of Tokyo includes master sawyers, journeymen and apprentices. All the journeymen must serve first as an apprentice, regardless of his skill. Wages were dependent upon and regulated by the prices of rice.

Rice has been, and is still, the chief food of the Japanese. Its price regulated all the other necessities of life in the past. Another requirement of the guild was that each member should pay to his employer a small percentage of his wages, for the

use of the lumber yard. This nominal payment gave him an exclusive right to work in the lumber yard and the owner could not employ any outsider. Thus the sawyers' guild attained a perfect closed shop, in the modern sense; also a wage scale based on the price of rice.

The miners' guild is far more extensive and thoroughgoing in its organization. It was communistic and it included miners of all Japan and of all kinds of mines. After a miner worked for three years the guild issued to him a membership card or scroll and this membership entitled him to seek a job in any mine in the country. And this institution still holds at the present day.

Wherever the miner goes he is treated as a comrade and a guest by the working miners. He may work, if there is work, at any mine, or he may remain in the hope of securing work. If he prefers to try his luck at other places he receives a sufficient allowance from his fellow miners to reach the next mine.

When an old miner quits his job on account of his age, or when a miner is crippled in some accident, he is authorized by the guild to collect from all the miners throughout the country. Each mine is an independent and self-governing unit of the one great guild.

The miner thus authorized in one mine will be allowed by all other mines to collect benefits amounting today to from one to two thousand yen, according to his standing. For this institution still holds at the present day.

During the feudal period our miners had entire underground as their exclusive jurisdiction and their own territories. None but miners might enter there. Besides the miners received the best wages, which is shown by a Japanese idiom—*Kanayama Shotai*—to describe their pay. This phrase means luxurious living or Epicureanism.

The miners called each other "brother." Their mutual relations were most warm and cordial. All the bachelors, or single

men, lived a communistic life. They could travel all over Japan without any difficulty. Of course, they possessed defects and shortcomings, being the products of their own age, but theirs was a strong and well-regulated guild. Each and all miners benefited by it.

But the miners of feudal times were considered, in the eyes of the public, to be the most rough and dangerous members of society. No doubt they were outcasts in the public mind, for the mines were considered a refuge for criminals and outlaws. It is said in Japan that if a man is degraded enough to enter a mine, he is absolutely free from the grip of the law. It is true that in the feudal days there existed neither social intercourse nor sympathy between the miners and the people of Japan. But the miners of the old days were an orderly group.

The stone masons' guild is one of the most highly developed and best regulated of the Japanese labor organizations. They

possessed a technical monopoly and were considered the most trustworthy artisans in the country. They always received the highest wages.

These are only a few examples. Each trade has had its own guild and a history of struggles common to all the working classes of the world. Each protected its own interest to the best of its own ability, but most of them were broken up by the coming industrial system under modern capitalism. Yet we can trace many good features existing today to the old organizations, particularly in the metal industries, in shipbuilding and in factories using the modern machine processes. The best Japanese workers today are the old blacksmiths who forged and wrought swords and plows, or those trained by them.

The very first Japanese factory was started by the feudal government and managed by the English. Those who went to work in the factory were the blacksmiths

of that time. It was so with other industries.

Such is the background of our modern Japanese industry in which over one million factory workers are now employed. Fifty years ago there was no cotton mill in Japan; now there are one hundred and sixty-two cotton spinning factories, with nearly three million spindles and several hundred thousand young girls are working in the mills day and night.

BEGINNING OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT.

The modern labor movement in Japan may be said to have begun in the summer of 1897 after the war with China. For the first time in the history of Japan the industries had been prosperous on account of the war indemnity taken from China. The working class seemed to awaken. The workers were demanding an increase in wages owing to the increased cost of living. Many strikes were reported with varied successes and failures. The modern indus-

trial system was a new experience in Japan so there was no legal restriction upon the labor movement or upon strikes.

This was shown by the fact that in six months we gained over two thousand members for the Rodo-Kumiai Kiseikai, a labor association organized for the purpose of forming trade unions. A majority of them were iron workers employed in the government's arsenal and the railway workshop at Shimbashi, Tokyo, and at the Yokohama dock and the Yokosuka navy yard.

Labor meetings were well attended and the topics discussed were the *power* of the unions, the strike and boycott, and above all we urged the necessity of organizing the working class. Our work was most pleasant during this period. The men from different factories talked to their fellow workers on the labor movement during meal time. Each week our membership increased. Each successive meeting was held with a larger attendance than be-

fore. Soon the labor meetings were arranged by the workers themselves. Three of us, Takano, a journalist, Sawada, a tailor and I often went to speak at these meetings and we found new speakers among the workers who were able to address these gatherings of their fellow workers.

IRON WORKERS' UNION AND THE LABOR WORLD.

On the 1st of December, 1897, the Iron Workers' Union was organized in Tokyo, with over one thousand members. This was the first trades union in Japan. Its constitution and by-laws were copied from those of the American trades unions. On the same day the first number of the *Labor World* was published, this being the sole organ of the labor movement. I was one of the secretaries of the Iron Workers' Union and editor of the *Labor World*.

This little journal had played a very important part in the Japanese labor move-

ment. It contained one full page of labor news in English for the benefit of the foreign exchanges. The last number appeared December 21, in 1901, making just one hundred issues that had been published. It was enlarged to a daily on January 1, 1902. The tone and spirit of the labor movement at that time can be illustrated by a quotation from the *Labor World*:

“The people are silent. I will be the advocate of this silence. I will speak for the dumb; I will speak for the despairing silent ones; I will interpret their stammerings; I will interpret the grumblings, murmurings, the tumults of the crowds, the complaints, the cries of men who have been so degraded by suffering and ignorance that they have no strength to voice their wrongs. I will be the word of the people. I will be the bleeding mouth from which the gag has been snatched. I will say everything.”

The time for beginning the labor move-

ment was auspicious, as is shown by the government report on strikes from June 20 to November 19, 1897.

Number of strikes.....	29
Number of strikers.....	3,768
Of men	3,584
Of women	184
Largest strike	500
Smallest strike	7
Suppressed by police.....	12
Wages partially increased.....	1
Strikes successful	12
Partially successful	6
Failures	11
Uncertain	2
Strike leaders dismissed.....	28
Longest strike	25 days
Shortest strike	5 hours

BIG RAILWAY STRIKE.

The year 1898 began with a great strike in the Nippon Railway Company, at that time the largest railway company in Japan. Its lines extend from Tokyo to

Amori, a distance of over five hundred miles, forming two large circles. The company employed over ten thousand persons. Engineers and firemen numbered about 1,000. They were harshly dealt with by the company so they were dissatisfied with conditions. The company was ever watchful to prevent any one from organizing for better conditions. It promptly picked out the rebels and sent them to distant stations, often to a poorer climate and an isolated point. This was called "exile."

Between Morioka and Amori on the line there are two locomotive stations which are considered the worst points. At this time there were two or three dozen "exilers" at these stations. Every day they met and discussed the situation. On January, 1898, one of them addressed a letter to firemen and engineers of the entire lines. This letter stated their common grievances and demanded remedies.

The exiled firemen and engineers started to organize secretly, but some one be-

trayed the cause. At this the company immediately dismissed them. But already the letter had accomplished its intended aim and the dismissal of these ringleaders was the signal for a strike, which began on the 24th of February, 1898.

It lasted only a few days. The company complied with all the demands and the strike was a complete success to the workers, who had conducted the strike very skillfully, using a telegraphic code previously arranged. They accomplished the end sought without a leak. Encouraged by the success of this strike the railroad men formed a union and compelled the company to recognize it, establishing the closed shop.

The *Labor World* gives a record of fifteen strikes beside the one occurring on the Nippon Railroad during the year of 1898. In thirteen of these strikes 6,762 persons, including 150 girls, were involved. Besides the railroad workers 1,000 printers, 70 dyers and 65 furniture makers were

organized and sixteen workingmens' co-operative distributive unions were organized, each with its own store.

These were mostly managed by iron workers and railroad workers who were members of the union. One productive, co-operative union was started by iron workers at Tokyo. In a few years the organization grew into a strong union of over a thousand members with about ten thousand yen in funds.

An indirect result of our labor movement so far, we had at least revived and reorganized two old guilds into a modern union, *i. e.*, the ship carpenters' and wood sawyers' union. One had 1,500 members and the other 2,200. Both had conducted a successful strike during the year. The president of the ship carpenters' union, Mr. F. Saito, has joined the labor association and later became a good Socialist. I have often addressed the meetings of the Ship Carpenters' Union.

In the course of a few years all the

unions gained more members than ever before. For instance, the Nippon Railroad Workers' Union accumulated 50,000 yen for a strike fund and 20,000 yen for benefit funds. It published its own monthly organ.

The Iron Workers' Union had enrolled 5,400 members at the end of four years and spent 8,000 yen for the sick and death benefits of members. The I. W. U. bought a house for their headquarters and the *Labor World* was used as the official organ of the union. If we include the unions revived and reorganized from the old guilds, we had at one time nearly twenty thousand union members.

This was before there were legal obstructions to labor organizations and we had a free hand in the labor movement. We were not, however, left much longer free to grow and to build up our movement. We soon felt the pressure of the government, although there were as yet no laws to directly suppress the labor move-

ment. The first movement against us occurred in the spring of 1898 upon the occasion of the Iron Workers' Union Cherry Blossom picnic, when the police authorities prohibited us from marching through the streets of Tokyo and enjoying ourselves at the Uyeno park like other people.

There was another event which we may look upon as an indirect result of the labor movement. The government prepared a factory bill with the intention of introducing it at the coming session of the Imperial Diet. The bill was sent to all the chambers of commerce of the land to get opinions on it. Then the bill was discussed at the meeting of the higher commercial and industrial commissions appointed by the government from a group of prominent persons in the country.

They discussed the bill and finally passed it in almost worthless amended skeleton form. But even in this form of so little use to labor, the bill was not introduced at the next Diet, because of the

opposition of the big capitalists, including Baron Shibusswa, the present patron of the Yu-Ai-Kai Friendly Society; and it was laid on the table many years to come.

At the time of the discussion of the bill the Iron Workers' Union appointed a committee to draw up a note stating its desire for amendments to the bill and the committee was sent to call on the commissioners to urge the passage of the bill in the form suggested in the note. But this too came to nothing on account of capitalist opposition. It shows, however, that the Iron Workers' Union and the labor leaders had an active interest in factory regulations.

These checks, however, did not cause us to lose faith in the labor movement, but we vigorously continued our work for the cause of labor.

II.

A PERIOD OF SUCCESS.

Eighteen months after we had begun the labor movement in Japan our experiences assured us that our prospects were very good. The Iron Workers' Union organized on December 1, 1897, and R. R. Engineers' and Firemens' Union, organized in March, 1898, were in a flourishing condition, both with a growing membership. The year just closed was the most fruitful one for the labor movement in Japan.

Every one connected with the movement had a firm faith in the great future of the working class and all worked with courage and enthusiasm. Two of our leaders settled in Kobe and started a similar movement in that city. One of these was a shoemaker by trade who had been in America for some time. He was a good labor agitator and now worked at Kobe for the movement.

At Tokyo labor meetings were held regularly in various parts of the city and its vicinity. To all came increasing audiences. Subscribers to the *Labor World* were increasing steadily, this being the only organ of the working class that gave any information about the new labor movement abroad. It was, in fact, the sole organ of labor propaganda. It attempted to educate the working class in general. Our working class was then very eager for any new knowledge and they were not slow to act on an idea when they got hold of it.

Propaganda on the subject of co-operatives for half a year or more in public meetings and in the columns of the *Labor World*, resulted in many co-operative distributive stores, organized and conducted by members of different unions.

In July (1898) the *Labor World* published a report on eleven co-operative stores. The total paid up shares of these unions amounted to 7,620 yen, an aggregate monthly business of 7,497 yen and a

total membership of 1,346. One of the eleven stores still exists today at Omiya where a great railway workshop is located.

Five years ago this co-operative union built a large club house with an auditorium which has a seating capacity of over one thousand persons and which is used for theatrical performances. This store has been of great benefit to the people of Omiya as well as to the workers. Although the labor union was crushed a few years later, this co-operative store survived and has been flourishing ever since. On account of the co-operative store, retail prices of foodstuffs and other necessaries have always been cheaper here than in adjoining towns.

But to return to the labor unions. Thus far we had been comparatively free from any government interference in our work except that we could not parade in the streets or hold open air meetings. Occasionally the police attempted to stop a labor meeting, but this did not interfere

with our agitation to any great extent. On the contrary, slight police interference at our meetings gave them an impetus and public sympathy was on our side.

But a strong and utterly unjust discrimination was made against us in January, 1899, when the Iron Workers' Union gave their first anniversary celebration at Uyeno Park. The government suddenly dissolved the meeting, although we possessed a permit issued to us from the park authority, which means from the Imperial household, the park belonging to this administration.

This high-handed suppression was carried out by applying an old law copied from Prussia.

The authorities were attempting to obstruct the growth of the labor movement, but so far there was no actual law to apply to them, so that we carried on a lively work of education and propaganda for several years. Even police interference was utilized to our advantage by the agitators.

To the Japanese workers then a strike means an effective weapon with which to secure their due demands. In fact, in most instances they got what they wanted by striking for it.

Our history of feudalism shows in abundant cases that tenant farmers secured an adjustment of their grievances against their lords or their officers by means of riots. Riots in Japan during feudalism played a very important part for reform and for the progress of the working class. In the same way our workers use strikes today as a direct weapon to better their conditions.

In March of 1899 the plasterers reorganized their old guild into a new union under the leadership of Mr. Sukenobu Ota, who had been an able labor leader in his trade guild for more than half a century. The Plasterers' Union had then 2,600 members.

Beside the Japanese unions already mentioned, such as the ship carpenters,

stone masons, etc., there were others who followed the example of the former unions. The *Labor World*, in an issue of August 1, 1900, printed the following union items:

“The Cargo Boats’ Union has 2,000 sailors as members who work on 500 boats. The owners of boats supply medical and some benefit funds.

“Sangiyo Kumiai is the name of the dockers’ union in the Bay of Tokyo and has a membership of 400.

“There are two unions for men who work in the wharfs with a total membership of 1,800.

“There are two dockers’ unions besides Sangiyo Kumiai, one consisting of workers on ship-board and the other on the wharfs. The former has 3,000 members and the latter 1,000.”

This shows that the labor movement was then well advertised throughout the country and that the workers in every trade felt the need of having their own union.

The Printers' Union of Tokyo attempted to work out its own problems by different tactics than those employed by the iron and railway workers. From its very inception this union advocated the so-called identity of interests of capital and labor. To clearly illustrate its attitude:

The union elected Mr. Soburo Shimada, M. P., as its president, because they considered him a friend of both capital and labor. The Printers' Union adopted this policy in order to accomplish its ends and in fact, they received the ardent support of the professors of the Imperial University of Tokyo. They were even given a splendid feast on the celebration of the founding of the Printers' Union on November 3, 1899, at the Tokyo Y. M. C. A. Hall. This union claimed to have a membership of 2,000.

At this time the university professors and their followers, encouraged by the friendly attitude toward them of the Printers' Union, inaugurated a sort of social

reform movement under the name of Social Reformism. These university men were influenced largely by German ideas. They advocated pure and simple reforms, based on the present capitalist society. With them we held heated discussions at public meetings and also in the pages of the magazines. The majority of the workers sided with the attitude taken by the Iron Workers' Union and the editors of the *Labor World*.

From the beginning of the year 1899, the *Labor World* had been giving a special column in every issue to the discussion of Socialism. Before that time it had, from time to time, reported events in the Socialist movement abroad, but now we thought it time to educate the workers on the aims and principles of Socialism.

In November of the same year there had appeared in Osaka a labor paper called *The Osaka Weekly*. It advocated Socialism outright as the only solution of the labor problems. It was owned and edited

by Mr. Kentaro Oi, the veteran of a prominent liberal movement before 1890, when the liberals were demanding a national constitution and a parliament. But the *Osaka Weekly* failed soon on account of lack of means and support from the workers.

Eighteen hundred and ninety-nine was very prosperous year for our movement. I made two trips to the northeast along the Nippon railway lines, first in the spring and again in the autumn, both in the capacity of secretary of the Iron Workers' Union, with gratifying success. Every branch of the Iron Workers' Union was in the best condition and there was little or no trouble for the labor movement. In Tokyo a Cooks' Union and in Yokohama a Furniture Makers' Union were organized during that year under the direct auspices of the *Labor World* and its editor.

SOCIALISM A POPULAR POLICY OF THE DAY.

The year nineteen hundred dawned with

even brighter prospects for the Socialist and labor movement of Japan. The public in general had become very much interested in Socialism and especially in social reform. Count Itagaki, the founder of the liberal movement in Japan and one of the leaders in the revolution of 1866, founded a reform club called the Doki Club, based on Socialist principles. At the cities of Wakayama and Omiya, both industrial cities, a labor club was established for the education and amusement of the workers. Dr. Ukichi Taguchi, M. P., editor and proprietor of the *Tokyo Economist*, who is a recognized leader of the school of "laissez faire" economists, came out as an ardent advocate of the principles of the single tax and severely attacked the landlords.

The rising interest in and the eager discussion of social reforms came at this time as a reaction to capitalist injustices and the utter cruelty of the capitalist classes

toward workingmen and women. To give a few examples:

In June, 1899, at the Hokoku Colliery, Kiushiu, 207 miners were buried alive and permitted to be burned to death in order to save the mining properties. A little later thirty-one young spinning girls were burned to death in a dormitory of the spinning company. After working sixteen hours a day these girls are locked up in the dormitories, to which doors and windows are fastened on the outside to prevent the girls from escaping from their jobs. When the fire broke out at one o'clock in the dormitory where the tragedy occurred, the poor worn-out girls were unable to escape. Those who jumped from the windows were maimed or killed and the others were all burned to death. Again forty workmen were killed on the Nippon R. R. line on account of the utter neglect in supervising the bridge at Howoki.

These and many other disasters occurring in various industries throughout the

country awakened the public into a conscious or unconscious indignation. These joined in protest against capitalist brutalities. Consequently the policy adopted by the *Labor World* were largely approved by the public.

PUBLIC PEACE POLICE LAW.

In the spring session of the Imperial Diet, 1900, a bill was passed and enacted immediately. The law is entitled the Public Peace Police Law. It proved to be the death knell to all phases of the labor movement, because it prevented the working class from organizing themselves into unions. The law practically prohibits the industrial working classes as well as the tenant farmers from agitating in their own interests and against the employers and landlords.

To attempt to enlist others in a movement to raise wages, shorten hours of labor or to lower land rents was declared a crime against the peace and order of

society. And later the law was interpreted to mean that all labor movements were a crime!

In the same session a co-operative law was voted upon. But on account of the Public Peace Police Law the workers were never able to utilize the co-operative law.

The very oppressive features of the Police Law against the working classes caused these classes and their friends to feel an urgent need of obtaining universal suffrage in Japan. With this purpose we organized an Association for Universal Suffrage. Many prominent men came into the association. The Tokyo Barbers' Union and the Nippon R. R. Workers' Union joined. But all the suffrage movement ever achieved was the passage of a Universal Suffrage Bill in the lower house. The bill was killed in the House of Peers.

Meanwhile, we preached Socialism at the workingmen's meetings, perhaps with more zeal and enthusiasm than we showed for trade unionism, and this was alto-

gether a new subject, although at the same time the oppressive measures against the working class adopted by the government gave our cause a great and convincing impetus. These measures impelled us to agitate among these workers for Socialist politics.

There was then more freedom of speech for labor and Socialist politics at public meetings than there was freedom on the subject of trade unions, strikes and the boycott, since the latter were directly concerned with the existing industries of the country. This being the situation we gradually educated the Japanese workers in Socialism for several years. The following was perhaps the first direct result of our propaganda.

The Nippon R. R. Workers' Union, at its annual meeting, held in the city Mito, in March, 1901, voted a resolution proclaiming that Socialism is the only ultimate solution of the labor problems, and in-

structed its executive committee to join the Universal Suffrage movement.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

The clear stand on Socialism taken by the Nippon R. R. Workers' Union in this resolution and many other signs of the times convinced us that our workers were fairly well prepared for political action, so on May 20th, 1901, after deliberation and consultation at the headquarters of the Iron Workers' Union for a few weeks, we formed a Socialist party which we called the Social Democratic Party. At the same time we published a Socialist Manifesto and a Party Platform. The original members of the party were: D. Kotoku, I. Abe, N. Kinoshita, K. Kawakami, K. Nishikawa and myself.

Our Manifesto was printed in four daily papers and in the *Labor World* at Tokyo and in one country daily. The party was suppressed by the government. But for the first time Socialism was widely advertised,

making a very strong impression on the people because of the widespread publicity given our Manifesto in the four big Tokyo dailies. The trials of the editors who published the Manifesto in their respective papers gave the subject still further publicity thruout the country.

With this splendid advertising of Socialism to encourage them, the six members of the suppressed Social Democratic Party turned their energies into a Socialist educational and propaganda campaign with increased vigor and enthusiasm.

We formed a non-political organization, called Shakai Shugi Kyokai (Socialist Association). Under this name we held Socialist meetings, of course, charging admission. Slowly but steadily our members increased and soon these began to take part in the meetings.

At the time that propaganda for a pure and simple trade union movement was more and more severely dealt with by the authorities, our labor politics and Socialist

agitation had comparative freedom and was rather popular among the people. The *Niroku*, a penny daily, published a series of articles on Socialism which lasted for two weeks. The articles were written by Comrade Isowa Abe, one of the founders of the Social Democratic Party.

Even the big bourgeois dailies like the *Jiji*, gave us notices for our Socialist meetings while others mentioned these in their news columns. This apparently friendly attitude of the press in general, tho it may have been based on business motives and a desire for greater circulation, nevertheless helped us much in our propaganda. To give one instance:

With the co-operation of the Iron Workers' Union, whose secretary I was, the said *Niroku*, whose owner and manager was a personal friend of mine, announced in its columns a working men's social meeting, to be held at Mukoshima Park on the 3rd of April, 1901, one of the four Japanese national holidays. To this

meeting some fifty thousand workingmen applied for admission, paying a fee of 20 sen. Six thousand members of the Iron Workers were enlisted. The gathering was announced prohibited by the government, but the Niroku insisted on holding the meeting and, after much discussion, the government consented to permit a meeting of not over five thousand persons. The government claimed that it could not muster over five thousand police and could not, for this reason, permit a larger attendance at the park.

Niroku devised a scheme to meet the situation by announcing that the number admitted would be limited to five thousand—first come first served. Every one of the fifty thousand wanted to be one of the first-comers.

This was an exciting day in the history of the labor movement. Many came to the park the previous evening and remained there all night. When morning came there were already more than the allotted num-

ber present and when the meeting opened there were from thirty to forty thousand people present.

The police force was powerless before the peaceful mass demonstration. The assemblage voted a resolution demanding a factory law, universal suffrage, and made other demands. The meeting was a great success in every way. It seemed that for that day at least the working classes of Japan realized their own power. This meeting was followed by other meetings thruout Japan in the course of a month or so. But the government deemed these dangerous to the country, for never again to this very day has it permitted the holding of vast meetings. It must indeed have felt itself powerless before the mass action of the working class!

Immediately after the suppression of the Social Democratic Party, the *Yorozu*, a popular daily paper in Tokyo, started to organize a party. It was called the Ideal Association (Risodan), a sort of lib-

eral reform club containing a great part of the Socialist program. In the *Yorozu* Comrades Kotoku and Sakai were the principal writers. The public was under the impression that the *Yorozu* would take up the work of the suppressed Social Democratic Party, but after a few years this expectation died out.

When the war with Russia became imminent in the autumn of 1903, the *Yorozu* assumed an extreme jingoistic stand, which caused Comrades Kotoku and Sakai to leave the daily.

The growing interest in the Socialist movement shown by the success of meetings and the increased circulation of the *Labor World*, made us feel the necessity of enlarging the paper and in the summer of 1901, we announced that it would be changed into a daily with the issue of the coming December number, which would be the last of the first one hundred issues which had appeared. The paper had been a bimonthly.

With this end in view we asked the workers to pay one year subscription in advance, ¥ 2.40. Our request met with ready response and we received a large number of subscriptions in advance. After about eight months of preparation, on January 1st, 1902, we sent out the first number of the first Socialist daily paper appearing in Japan.

The free use of the Iron Workers' Headquarters was given us, the second floor being given over to editorial and composing rooms. Our office occupied the first floor front and in the back rooms the paper was printed. The daily was chiefly supported by the working class. Comrades Abe, Kotoku, Kawakami, Kinoshita and many others helped by contributing articles. Financially I was wholly responsible for the paper. It cost just one thousand dollars to get types, machines and other necessary equipment.

The paper came out for just two months. At that time the city newsdeal-

ers (twenty-one) monopolized the entire business of selling and distributing papers and they wanted to charge outrageously high prices for our paper, so that it was utterly impossible for us to place the paper at the door of each subscriber every morning. Moreover, the lack of business experience more than anything else caused us many difficulties in spite of the hearty sympathy and support of the working class, particularly of the Iron Workers' Union.

Besides my own health was broken down on account of overwork and I had to seek a warmer climate than chilly Tokyo to regain it. These circumstances compelled us to give up the daily with great loss to me and to the cause of labor and of Socialism. We thought it best to cease publication at once and to continue the propaganda work in some form in order to renew publication in the near future.

III.

SOCIALISM A POPULAR TOPIC.

The years 1902 and 1903 were the most prosperous period for the combined activities of the labor and socialist movement in Japan. Socialism was then a very popular topic of study and discussion in public. Industrial depressions that followed for many years, after the wild boom that ruled the industrial and commercial world during the sudden influx of a vast amount of war indemnity taken from China, were almost overcome. The long expected prosperity had not yet returned because for some time threatening clouds were hanging over the Hermit Kingdom (Corea), the domination of which had been a constant issue between Russia and Japan for many years since China had been defeated by Japan.

But financial conditions were better than for many years and the industrial

situation was on a firm basis. These and other circumstances favored our labor and socialist agitation among the workers; and the general public was then very eager to listen to and discuss socialism.

During those two years of activity we had made several extensive propaganda tours all over the country. We made trips to the country in groups of two to five comrades and I always was one of them. Expenses were met by admissions and selling of the *Labor World* and socialist books.

After the failure of the socialist daily, the *Labor World* was again published, starting April 3, 1902, in a much improved magazine form and came out fortnightly. Our socialist movement naturally centered around the *Labor World* in the editorial work of which I was assisted by two or three comrades, including Comrade Nishikawa. Besides, Comrades Abe, Kotoku, Kinoshita, Sakai and others contributed articles to the pa-

per on socialism and social questions. Not only that, Comrade Kotoku also wrote a life history of Ferdinand Lassalle for the *Labor World*; Comrade Sakai translated the main part of "Labor" by Emile Zola; Comrade Kotsuka translated "Merrie England", and all of these appeared in the *Labor World* in the course of two years. Moreover, we published a complete review of a book on Millerand's work and Emile Vandervelde's Industrial Revolution.

Socialism and the labor movement become popular. This is shown by the very fact that the editors of the *Labor World* interviewed many prominent persons, statesmen, scholars and business men on the labor questions and on socialism. It is now amusing to look into the columns of the old *Labor World* and to notice how those men, who today are the deadly opponents of socialism, who are condemning socialist activities, at that time approved socialism and gave their

own reasons for it. Some even expressed themselves as being already socialists. We will quote here a few of the interviews that appeared in the *Labor World* in 1902 and 1903.

When I called on him for his opinion on socialism, Marquis Okuma, late Premier, told me that "from olden times the ideals of our statesmen appear to have been a national socialism," and the old Marquis went on to give historical facts. During the Tokugawa rule Japan's own socialism was realized, when Iyeyasu, the first ruler of the Tokugawa Dynasty, prohibited the capitalization of land, fixed the wages of labor by law. Some of the feudal lords, in particular those of Kaga, ordered the landlords within his own province to release land rents for three consecutive periods of ten years each, and finally the tenants acquired their own land when the revolution of 1868 was successful.

At one time the feudal government

abolished the creditors' lawsuits against debtors. We know that occasionally the government ordered the people to cancel all the debts contracted.

Mr. Genichiro Fukuchi, a noted historian and savant, said to the editor of the *Labor World*, "Japan's Kokutai (National Constitution) is really socialism. A person who lives from another's labor is looked upon as a criminal, according to the fundamental national ideas. One who lives from the labor of others is condemned and punished just like a gambler and thief. Labor is the ideal of Japan. Isn't this socialism?"

Prof. Kenzo Wadagaki of the Imperial University said "Japan as a nation is socialistic. The Japanese are of socialistic character." Mr. Rokwa Tokutomi, one of the greatest novelists of modern Japan, wrote a socialistic political novel, *Kuroshio* (Monsoon) that shocked the very foundation of the bureaucratic regime. The book appeared in 1899 and the writer

says to the editor of the *Labor World*: "I believe in socialism and preach it. Today one who says that he does not believe in socialism or is afraid of preaching it is one who cares for his position, seeks his own property, and longs after his own promotion. One who says he can't understand socialism or can't believe it is not a man but is either a fool or insane."

Prof. Inazo Nitobe of the Imperial University, when he was interviewed by the writer in the summer of 1902, said that he was a good socialist and proceeded to declare that after the trusts, the so-called social democracy of Marx will be established in the sphere of economy. "Socialists shall then rule the world so that the greatest number of human beings will enjoy a happy life. I became a socialist while I was in America three years and ever since my belief in socialism has been growing stronger. The ideal of humanity is in socialism."

This firm believer in socialism and a

socialist future in 1902 was Prof, Inazo Nitobe, the noted author of "Bushido." The same professor lately has been faithfully serving the bureaucracy and is attacking socialism and socialists as being detrimental to the interests of the country. Some of his old pupils were influenced by Prof. Nitobe to give up socialism. One of these is Mr. K. Nishikawa, who was one of the founders of the social democratic party. It might look as if these men had expressed mere phrases to the editors of the *Labor World*, but the printed pages of the *Labor World* will attest the fact that socialists were not outcast then and socialism was not prohibited in Japan at that period as it is now.

For the time the progress of the socialist movement went on very smoothly and we had not only the sympathy of prominent persons, who approved socialism and its movement, but also we gained a very strong and prominent socialist in

Mr. Fumio Yano. In the summer of 1902 Mr. Fumio Yano declared himself a socialist and gave us many lectures on socialism. He went with us several times during this period for socialist propaganda. Mr. Yano was an old liberal statesman and an influential agitator for the constitutional government in the eighties. But he left the liberal party because the party became too corrupt.

In 1882 Mr. Yano wrote a book about a group of youths who brought about the Theban Hegemony. This book served the cause of the liberal movement in Japan. Half a million copies were sold and he became a well known writer and thinker. Now this author came out as a socialist and went with us in the common cause for socialism. Mr. Yano was not only in the active propaganda work, but he wrote a book called "New Society". It is largely original and is well written, working out the problems of modern socialism thoroughly. He took the best

there was of Utopian socialism and elaborated on the way to convert Japan into a socialist state. He showed the most skill in picturing the transition stage from the present capitalist state to a socialist state, adjusted admirably every phase of society and international relations under socialism. These two problems the author considered his own contribution to the literature of Utopian socialism as represented by More and Bellamy.

The *New Society* at once became very popular in the country. Several hundred thousands of copies were sold in a few months.

The *Labor World* records our socialist activities in 1902, beginning with April 3rd. We held sixty-seven public meetings in 1903, one hundred and eighty-two altogether, in nineteen months—182 meetings. Besides those meetings there must have been many meetings held by other comrades in the country.

During this period we made several propaganda tours into the country. In the summer of 1902 three of us went to the northeast along the Nippon railroad for fifteen days to hold thirteen meetings in twelve cities scattered in over a distance of 500 miles. In January, 1903, two of us made a trip to western cities, traveling over 400 miles and held meetings at Kiyoto, Osaka, Kobe, Hiroshima and Kure. In the summer of the same year from July 4th to September 5th, three and part of the time four of us made an extensive trip to Shikoku, Kushiu Islands, covering eleven provinces and twenty-one cities in which we held twenty-six meetings. Many short trips were made from time to time. The propoganda was self-supporting and the *Labor World* got a very good advertisement from them.

As to the organized work of our socialist movement, we were prohibited from organizing politically, so the socialist association was our only organization.

It had a few branches in the principal cities. Our work, therefore, was necessarily limited to education and propaganda. But in the sphere of the working classes we had a very strong influence, especially among colliery workers. In Ubari, Hokkaido, we had a very good organization. There were, however, only a few socialists who were the moving spirits of the organization.

Miners of Japan have been historically considered the toughest kind of workers, so they really could defy the public peace police law. Our agitators could more readily gain access to them than to other factory, railway or iron workers. This is a reason why we were able to organize the miners in Asio copper mines during the late Russo-Japan war. Our miners live in congested barracks like rows of sheds, which are built by the mining company. They make a little community of their own, know each other and when working underground they can talk to

each other freely on whatever subject they choose. So two socialist comrades, Minami and Tsuruoka, were able to organize the miners at Asio copper mines as late as 1904-7, which organization, however, was crushed out of existence with the great riots in February, 1907.

Although we had no political organization, being deprived of that right two years before, yet we could manage to organize the socialists of the country in socialist association and we held the first national socialist conference at Osaka on the 5th and 6th of April, 1903. Besides the sittings of the conference at Osaka Y. M. C. A. hall, we had two big public meetings in the Municipal Assembly hall, the largest hall in the whole city. Both meetings were well attended and made a very good impression on the audience about the aims of socialism. The conference passed by unanimous votes the following resolutions:

1. We, the socialists of Japan, shall

exert ourselves in the effort to reconstruct human society on the basis of socialism.

2. We must endeavor to realize socialism in Japan.

3. To reach the ultimate goal of socialism it is necessary to have a united action of socialists of all the countries.

Ten thousand leaflets of a brief socialist manifesto were distributed during the conference at the gates of the national exposition then held in the city.

During the year 1903, two or three events marked the course of the socialist movement in Japan for coming years. One was the attitude of Japanese socialists toward war, which was then threatening in the far east between Russia and Japan over the domination of Korea. We took a firm stand against war and especially against the war with Russia. The first great socialist anti-war meeting was held at Y. M. C. A. hall, Tokyo, on the 8th of October, 1903. In spite of a strong

opposition from jingo parties, the meeting was a great success. This meeting proved to be the very first declaration of Japanese socialists against the coming war and its spirit and the tone of the speeches were prophetic of the great strength of the socialist struggle and fight against the war also during the war.

The next event is the entering into active socialist propaganda work by two comrades—Kotoku and Sakai, who gave up their editorial positions in the *Yorozu*, and devoted their entire time to the cause of socialism. This decisive moment came to them through two causes, first the popular daily, *Yorozu*, in the columns of which they had taught socialism for several years with the full approval and sympathy of the proprietor Kuroiwa, became ultra-jingoistic and a conflict resulted between the proprietor and the two comrades. Of course the latter had to leave the daily. The entering of these two comrades into the active socialist work

was destined to shape largely the course of the Japanese socialist movement in the future.

In November, I made a short trip to Hokkaido, passing through the northeast province and visited Ubari colliery where we had a miners' union under socialist leaders. This was my last labor propaganda work in that year, for I left in December for the United States on my way to attend the coming International Socialist Congress at Amsterdam, Holland, the following August, 1904.

Our socialist movement so far preached socialism more exclusively among the working class and our meetings were largely attended by workers and supported by them. I have been always in touch with the workers of the country, because I had served as a secretary to the iron workers' union since its organization in 1897, up to that time, 1903, and had been making an occasional trip to the different branches. My personal acquaintance with

many workers and their families brought me many pleasant experiences and also support for the socialist movement long after the union died and they were no longer members of it. This being the case, our socialist movement never lost sight of the labor cause and of the interest of the working classes, who are naturally inclined to work out problems in practice, which as a rule is a rather slow process. Consequently, I never went to extremes in views or in tactics, but our movement was not dominated by intellectualism.

IV.

THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT AND THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR.

In spite of the stern suppression by the government of our political organization, Japanese socialists now fought against war for two years. The anti-war propaganda began on the 8th of October, 1903, when the hegemony over Corea was a burning question between Russia and Japan. Our leaders in this difficult task were, of course, Comrades Kotoku and Sakai, who sacrificed their position on account of their socialist views on the war.

In November, 1903, the comrades in question started a socialist weekly called 'The Heimin' at Tokyo, making it an organ of the fight against the war. From the start Comrades Kotoku and Sakai frankly and expressly declared that they intended to make the weekly Heimin a means to support themselves and an en-

deavor to support many others in the future. The Heimin was a propaganda paper and at the same time a socialist business enterprise, a combination attempted for the first time in Japan. It was also our socialist organ.

In editing the weekly the said two comrades were aided by other comrades like I. Abe, N. Kinoshita, I. Kato, J. Saji. Later Nishikawa, Ishikawa and a few others joined in the work. I, too, contributed articles from abroad.

Around the weekly Heimin, comrades who were in active propaganda gathered together, holding public meetings from time to time in cities and in the country. They also started to study socialism seriously in meetings every week at the headquarters of the Heimin. Soon several ladies joined in the work, and meetings for socialist women were held once a month, separately, because ladies are prohibited from attending any political meeting. By this time the government ruled that so-

cialists could not hold a meeting without police permission, because they considered the socialist movement a political movement. Nevertheless, they did not allow us to form openly a socialist party. There were then many women enlisted in the ranks of socialism.

When the Russo-Japanese war broke out our comrades redoubled their energy to fight for an early peace. On the 20th of March, 1904, the Japanese socialists, at their meeting assembled in Tokyo, voted to send a greeting of mutual comradeship to the Russian comrades. Here we quote a few lines which will show its spirit and tone:

“Dear Comrades: Your government and our government have been plunged into fighting at last in order to satisfy their imperialistic desires, but to the socialists of both countries there is no barrier of race, territory or nationality. We are all comrades, brothers and sisters, and have no reason to fight each other. Your

enemy is not the Japanese people but our militarism and so-called patriotism. Nor is our enemy the Russian people, but your militarism and so-called patriotism. Patriotism and militarism are our common enemies; nay, all socialists in the world look upon them as common enemies. We socialists must fight a brave battle against them. Here is the best and most important opportunity for us now. We believe you will not let this opportunity pass. We, too, will try our best. But permit us to say a few words more. We are neither nihilists nor terrorists, but we are social Democrats. We object absolutely to using military force in our fighting. We have to fight by peaceful means, by reason and speech.

“Dear Comrades! When you suffer under the oppression of your government and the pursuit of cruel detectives, please remember that there are thousands of comrades in a distant land, who are pray-

ing for your health and success with the deepest sympathy!"

To the above there was a reply from Russian comrades appearing in the *Iskra* :*

"This manifesto is a document of historic significance. If we Russian Social Democrats know only too well with what difficulties we are confronted in time of war, when the whole machinery of government is working to the utmost to excite patriotism—difficulties which we meet at every step, notwithstanding the utter unpopularity of the present hazardous career of the despairing absolutism—we must bear in mind that far more difficult and embarrassing is the position of our Japanese comrades, who, at the moment when national feeling was at its highest pitch, extended their hands to us.

*" 'Iskra,' at that time was edited by Lenine, so this comment on the Japanese greeting to the Russian Socialists must have been written by Lenine himself," said Comrade Frederick Rosin who took a part in the revolution of 1905 with Lenine and was exiled to Siberia for life. From there he escaped to America. Comrade Rosin just left here for Russia by way of Norway to join the revolutionary work in Russia. (August, 1917.)

“Amid the jingoistic chorus of both countries, their voice sounds as a herald from that better world, which, though it exists today only in the mind of the class-conscious proletariat, will become a reality tomorrow. We do not know when that ‘tomorrow’ will come. But we, the Social Democrats the world over, are all working to bring it nearer and nearer. We are digging a grave for the miserable today—the present social order. We are organizing the forces which will finally bury it.

“Force against force, violence against violence! And in saying this we speak neither as nihilists nor as terrorists. But in the present instance this question is of secondary importance. What is important for us is the feeling of solidarity, which the Japanese comrades have expressed in their message to us. We send them a hearty greeting. Down with militarism! Hail to the international social democracy.”

The weekly Heimin was a well edited paper, full of interesting social information on socialist activities at home and abroad. Socialism was presented in such a way that the student class were influenced by it and, in fact, many students joined the socialist movement, awakened by comrades, many of whom were accustomed to travel through the country to sell socialist books and get subscriptions to the Heimin. There were many branches now throughout the country. A branch office of the weekly Heimin was opened by Comrade Morichika at the City of Osaka.

Gradually the government began to adopt very drastic measures against socialists, beginning with May, 1904. The government's charges against socialists were two: 1. The anti-war speeches will kill patriotism. 2. Socialist propaganda tries to break up the system of caste, and leads often to criticism of the Imperial Household. Thereafter the police dissolved every socialist meeting, but the

comrades held as many as they could, for they got an increased audience at each successive meeting on account of police interference.

At the regular meeting of the Socialist Association in June, 1904, by a unanimous vote of members, it was decided to address an open letter to the comrades in Europe and America; and also to present the anti-war resolution to the coming international socialist congress, at Amsterdam the following August.

In the course of a few months the weekly *Heimin*, besides its regular issues, published many books. The most popular and largest circulated book among them was "Fire Pillar", a novel by Comrade Kinoshita. This book was sold in over ten editions in a few months and made a far greater propaganda than that of Mr. Yano's *Shinshakai*. It dealt with socialism and socialists of the present day. It is an "Iron Heel" of the Japanese socialist literature.

In the issue of August 27th, the weekly Heimin published a translation of Count Leo Tolstoi's essay on the Russo-Japan War, published in the London Times in June 27th, 1904. This gave an exalted tone to the weekly and much agitation. Our comrades were still more encouraged in the anti-war movement by a letter to the Heimin from Count Tolstoi.

To celebrate the first anniversary of the founding of the weekly Heimin, the Japanese comrades decided to translate and publish in the anniversary number the Communist Manifesto. The translation appeared on the 13th of November. It was a joint translation by Comrades Kōtoku and Sakai.

The issue that printed the Communist Manifesto was suppressed by the government. But the paper was already distributed among subscribers so we had accomplished our aim.

The year 1904 closed with two public accusations pending for trial. The one

was against an editorial—"To the Grammar School Teachers", and the other against the "Communist Manifesto". During the year socialist propaganda was carried on with a great vigor and enthusiasm in spite of stern censorship and many oppressive measures against socialists. This is shown by the following statistics published in the Heimin:

Leaflets for the socialist propaganda distributed during the year numbered 39,000. The Heimin Library published 8 books and sold altogether 15,700 copies. The weekly Heimin sold 200,000 copies during the year. Socialist organizations established in 11 cities and in 10 towns. There were 8 public accusations against socialists. During the year 120 socialist meetings were held, of these 13 were women's socialist meetings. There were then scores of women comrades who took active part in the movement.

Our comrades had learned how to utilize legal trials in the court for our propa-

ganda from Lassalle and others. The charge against Kotoku and Nishikawa was tried and carried to the highest court and finally they were punished, but it took fourteen weeks and three trials. We could propagate socialism in the court. What was said on trial either in accusation or defense in the court could be printed without molestation. But afterward trials of socialists were mostly carried on in closed court and socialists were never allowed to come out of prison on bond. As the result of the trial, Comrade Kotoku got five months with a fine of 50 yen and Nishikawa seven months and 50 yen fine, and the printing presses were also confiscated, the charge being for acts in opposition to the Imperial constitution, and finally the weekly Heimin was entirely suppressed. The "Chokugen" (straight word) was published to take the place of the Heimin.

The January revolution in the Russian capital gave a thrilling interest and im-

petus to the Japanese comrades and they attempted to preach socialism among Russian captives in Japan, whose number increased with the fall of Port Arthur. The Weekly from time to time informed Russian captives about the revolutions in Russia and endeavored to distribute socialist literature among them sent from Europe and America.

On May 16th, 1905, socialists of Tokyo put up a candidate at a big election for the Imperial Diet. Comrade Kinoshita, who ran several years ago at Mayebashi City as a socialist candidate, ran again. After a very lively socialist campaign, he got 32 votes. There were 16,000 voters in the city of 1,800,000 population.

During this war period the socialist movement became more and more intellectual and at the same time international on account of drastic oppressive measures used against socialists by the military government, so that the weekly "Chokugen" filled its columns more and more

with socialist news from abroad, Japanese news being suppressed. Comrade Kaneko had contributed every week from America and I also acted as a sort of exchange medium between comrades at home and abroad as I resided at that time in this country.

The "Chokugen" published a translation of "Merrie England". The Weekly has always been well edited with literary skill and accomplishment.

Socialist meetings were held at various parts of cities and in the country. Meetings to study socialism, social gatherings of comrades, debating clubs and public meetings were held each week throughout the country. But, sad to say, owing to the lack of experience and also to the fact that socialists were deprived of the right to organize a party, socialists could not mass the forces scattered all over the country into one socialist organization, while the war ministry of Prince Katsura ever tightened its oppressive grip on the necks

of socialists. New socialist books were often suppressed and the weekly "Chokugen" met with occasional confiscations. Frequent trials and imprisonment of editors weakened the ranks. Financially the weekly had to meet its deficit by contributions from comrades. With these and many other difficulties, there came a great blow to the weekly. It was altogether suspended on account of great riots that were started on the 5th of September, 1905, in the City of Tokyo, when martial law was declared; for a few days the capital was completely in the hands of mobs. This disturbance was attributed to the dissatisfaction of the people with the peace terms concluded at Portsmouth, but in reality it was a general dissatisfaction of the people against the Katsura Ministry, which had been lying to the people about diplomatic affairs, at the same time suppressing the freedom of the people.

The weekly "Chokugen" was suspended without giving any reason as a result of

the riots. Our comrades were grouped together round this weekly and largely depended upon the income of sales of the paper and books. The number of these comrades had lately increased while the income did not grow because many law suits and frequent suppressions of the weekly and books made it ever more difficult to support the movement. So they decided to break up the group entirely.

This period of the socialist movement ended with a popular uprising in the cities and the country and contained a good promise for new activities in the near future. On the whole we consider that the socialists made a splendid and glorious fight against the war and for the peace!

V.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND ITS ACTIVITIES.

War against the Russo-Japanese war was fought by socialists with increasing vigor and determination. It was a splendid fight throughout against our jingoists.

The keynote of the battle of the Japanese Socialists was noble and strong and was inspired by Count Tolstoi in his message in the London Times that rang through the world. But our comrades spent all of their energy and force on this anti-war movement and lost temporarily many agitators, who are now serving their terms in prison. Financially the "Chokugen" had suffered greatly on account of constant suppressions and persecutions by the government censor. The final blow was struck by the entire suppression at the time of the great riots in Tokyo, Sept. 5th, 1905. Martial law was declared to

put down this popular uprising. This suppression was the direct cause of discontinuance of the "Chokugen" and also the dissolution of the Heimin Sha, the socialist organization, in which our comrades grouped together to work for the cause of socialism, with the chief object of publishing the Heimin and afterward the "Chokugen" and socialist books.

Soon after this suppression of the paper, Comrade Kotoku left Japan partly to regain his lost health in America and partly to organize Japanese socialists in this country. I was still in America at that time and at home many comrades were on trial for the cause. Moreover, since the entrance of Comrades Kotoku and Sakai into the active socialist movement in November, 1903, it had become more and more intellectual and radical in its views, accepting the straight Marxian socialist theory. This being the case a large number of students joined the movement. This was largely due to the fact

that these two comrades and those who joined afterward were well versed in Japanese literature with a fair knowledge of English; so they presented socialism in such a way as to attract the attention and interest of the student classes. There were many intellectual socialists, all able writers and many good speakers. At the end of the Russo-Japan war it became a more difficult problem how they could support themselves than how to continue the active propaganda work. They were all good workers, who can edit a socialist paper or any other paper. But they could not get a position on any capitalist paper on account of their views. The supporters and more particularly the subscribers of the socialist papers were mostly students or country youths, who were still under parental support. There was no strong support from real workers, as was the case with my paper, the Labor World.

This regrettable weakness combined with the above difficulties in the situation

of the socialist intellectuals is shown by the fact that when the Heimin Sha was broken up, Comrades who were connected with the Heimin started three different socialist papers—The Hikari (Light), the Shinkigen (New Era) and The Home magazine. There was one other paper called The Fire Whip, published by other Comrades. The Hikari was edited by Nishikawa and Yamaguchi, and was supported by almost all the comrades by contribution of articles. Of course each paper had its own editors, with a group of outside supporters. By the time that the inner difficulties and the problems of grouping the intellectuals were somewhat adjusted by the above mentioned publications the public situation in general, had changed for the better. This change was brought about chiefly by the fall of the Katsura's War Ministry and the formation of a new ministry by Marquis Saionji. Soon we found out that we could form a party. This we did by found-

ing a new socialist party and sending a note to the Minister of the Interior, who did not suppress it. Other comrades tried this also with the same result. On the 24th of February, 1906, comrades came together at Dr. Kato's office in Shimbashi, Tokyo, and duly formed the Socialist Party. I was back in Japan at this time and took my part in the formation of the party.

The police department told city editors that there were some twenty-five thousand socialists in the country. We can not rely on this for the government might have reported more socialists in order to get an appropriation for suppressing them. But undoubtedly there was then quite a large number of socialists all over the country. In our movement the party organization had been rather neglected and besides the government measure against organization had been in force. In fact, our comrades since the beginning of the late war with Russia did somewhat purposely avoid the

rigid party organization because the Socialist Association which was not legally a political party would have been suppressed had it come out openly as a socialist party. Moreover according to the laws of Japan, women and persons under twenty-one are prohibited from organizing or joining any political party and attending any political meeting. This, of course, was a great drawback to us because in the Socialist party, a large majority of comrades have been young men, especially students who would be excluded from a formal political party. But on the other hand with a socialist party we can canvas the scattered socialist forces into one solid organization, and work more efficiently than without such a party.

The first work of the Socialist Party was to call mass meetings on 11th and 15th of March, 1906. The meetings were to protest against raising the carfare in Tokyo from three sen to five sen and both were to be held at the Hibiya Park. The

first meeting failed on account of heavy rains. The second was a great success with fine weather. There were over ten thousand people. Many socialists made stirring speeches and the citizens of Tokyo, especially those present, were made acquainted with the socialists.

After the meeting was over the excited crowds, indignant over the greedy street-car company, attacked the cars and offices of the company. This made the demonstration still more effective. As a result the government did not give permission to raise the fare, and the citizens kept the three sen through-fare for the whole city. That was a most encouraging start for the Party. It was the first victory for the red flag in Japan. In this agitation we distributed some twenty thousand little pamphlets written by me and many of them were sold. A number of meetings were held all over the city. In this way we created a strong public opinion against raising the fare.

With this good beginning the Socialist Party made very good progress; members increased ten-fold in a few months and many branches were formed throughout the country. Soon there were twelve, which number increased to fifteen. These were organized under the following names—Dawn, Yokohama; Flame, Hitachi; A. B. C. Club, Okayama; Tea Talk Club, Hiroshima; Heimin Club, Nimiya; Yokohama; Kobe; Yokosuka; Kagoshima; Hakodate; Socialist Association; Kushi-moto; and other places under different names. During this period comrade Kōtoku was in San Francisco and was working among the Japanese there. His articles and reports on the progress of the Socialist movements in America gave a great impetus to comrades at home.

In the Hikari, issued on the 25th of October, 1906, there appeared an announcement to the effect that there would be formed a company which would soon publish a socialist daily. This announcement

was made under the following names:—Kotoku, Sakai, Ischikawa, Nishikawa and Takeuchi as the original promoters. These five promoters, share-holders, (\$50 a share) editorial and business members of the Daily Heimin and employees were to constitute the company—the Heimin Sha. The promoters would have full power in their democratic management, and the shareholders were to get a full report on the business and would have the right to ask questions or speak on all matters concerning the work.

In the same issue the Hikari said that they had already bought a house and an entire printing outfit, types and machines, and the first issue of the Daily Heimin was announced for the 15th of January, 1907. The last number of the New Era appeared in November and that of Hikari in December. The last issue of the Hikari gives full details of the company; twenty-one members participated in the Daily and there were twenty-eight share-holders.

With a preparation of little over two months, our comrades gave to the world a well edited socialist daily; its news items, editorials and contributed articles were all full of interest and instruction. Enthusiasm, forcefulness and radicalism dominated the whole paper. Its circulation was increasing daily. But often extreme radicalism and the outspoken manner of expressing things brought a severe censorship against the daily which made the articles still more vigorous, as for instance, in "Kick Your Mother and Father." This, however, crippled a steady growth of the daily paper while its suppression, the accusations, trials, fines and imprisonment of editors weakened the fighting power and finally the daily was altogether suppressed by the government, never to revive, after a brief existence of only seventy-five issues, January 15th to March 14th, 1907.

But it made a very good impression on

the public and our comrades realized once more the power of the press.

During the month of February, 1907, two things happened that must be remembered in order to understand the real situation of the socialist movement in Japan at this turn and the period immediately succeeding. One was a great riot occurring at the Asio copper mines. The riot was started on the 14th of February and continued for three days and was only put down by calling out the national troops. This was the first experience of this kind in the history of Japan's labor movement. The riot spread over all the mines and destroyed a great part of the mining properties that were easily accessible to rioters. The loss was estimated at two million dollars. The authorities arrested over 200 miners and labor leaders.

The labor movement at the Asio copper mines was started in December, 1903, by Comrade Nagaoka, a personal friend of mine and a well-known miner of long

standing, a strike leader at the Kosaka copper mines in the eighties and a labor agitator for several years at Yubari Collieries. He went to the Asio copper mines and worked as a common miner, but soon he was known to fellow miners as their leader. He had to quit his work and published a little paper called, "Friend of the Miners". He also published many songs of his own composition and sung to the miners and sold them, with the paper, to support the movement. At one time he became a street vender so as to be in constant touch with miners. Thus he gradually organized miners at Asio under the name of Shisei-Kai, a Society of Sincere Persons. Shisei-Kai has grown in few years into quite a strong union with a membership of some four thousand miners. In 1905 another comrade Minami, the co-agitator of Nagaoka at the Yubari, came to Asio and joined in his work.

It was arranged to hold the annual meeting of the Shisei-Kai on the 10th of

February, 1906, and to take a vote on the demands of the miners, who were working under the most deplorable conditions. But on the 4th of February about one hundred miners came to a collision with a number of bosses over their wages. To this movement several hundred miners joined and it developed into a riot. It spread like wild-fire in other parts of the same mines. At first leaders of the Shisei-Kai endeavored hard to pacify the excited miners and partially succeeded, but when riots broke out in other parts, the police stepped in suddenly and arrested the leaders of the Shisei-Kai together with the rioters—in total over 200. When the miners, who had kept away from the actual scenes of the riots, heard about the arrest of comrades Minami and Nayaoka, they became angry at the injustice of the authorities and went to destroy the properties.

It was supposed that the Mining Company purposely instigated some of the miners to come to a conflict with the bosses

in order to find a pretext to arrest the leaders of the Shisei-Kai and destroy the Shisei-Kai itself. But subsequent investigations and trials brought to light that the rioters were neither instigated by the agitators nor by the company but that the riots were spontaneous uprisings of miners who were outrageously ill-treated and brutally exploited by the mine-owners. After three months the leaders were released. But at the time of the riots, the trouble was attributed to the influence of Socialists and the Daily Heimin, by the press and authorities. As the result the Shisei-Kai was entirely suppressed and all its properties were confiscated by the government. The mining company hunted out the members and dismissed them. After the riots there remained in Asio, no union and no agitator.

The second important event of the month was the first anniversary meeting of the socialist party held at Tokyo on February 17th. The most heated discus-

sions were carried on over the question of tactics of the Party. The Executive Committee after many meetings, drafted a change of constitution and a compromising resolution on tactics. The change in the Constitution suggested was to strike out the clause—"we advocate socialism within the law." The resolution contained the following points:

A radical and fundamental change of the existing society; universal suffrage; anti-militarism and anti-religion. Besides, two opposing resolutions were proposed by opposing leaders. The one by Comrade Kotoku on Direct Action, striking out Universal Suffrage, and the other by Comrade Tazoye on the policy of Parliamentarism. After several hours of discussion both opposing resolutions were defeated and the compromising resolution was carried by the majority. This, however, decided the fate of the Socialist Party for long years to come. The tone and thought of the speeches made and the resolution

adopted in the meeting of the Socialist Party, left no doubt in the minds of the authorities that it was an extremely revolutionary and radical one, although the resolution was considered to be a compromise between two extremes. The government thereupon suppressed the Socialist Party and never allowed it to be revived up to the present day.

The Daily Heimin, which printed the speeches of Kotoku and Tazoye, and the resolution, was prosecuted on a charge of treason to the Imperial Constitution. As I foresaw that this misfortune might happen if we went too far in our tactics, I had persuaded my fellow comrades in drafting the constitution of the Socialist Party in February, 1906, to insert a clause —“We advocate socialism within the limit of the Law.” My contention was that in Japan a law-abiding socialist could most forcibly and ably advocate socialism. Our workers were not educated in the tactics of the labor movement and therefore

should go slow in order to lead and educate them. Unfortunately I was absent after June of that year and arrived at Yokohama two days after the Socialist Party meeting. Ever since Comrade Kotoku had returned from America the previous June, he had been preaching direct action and general strikes, minimizing political action. His influence now became a conflicting factor in the socialist movement. Editorials of the daily Heimin were dominated by Comrade Kotoku's influence but there were many comrades who advocated political action, including Comrade Sakai, who still holds to Parliamentarism. Younger persons, especially students, inclined toward radicalism. This conflict, however, unfortunately, did not have full chance to crystalize through the columns of the Heimin as the paper was suppressed. The fight between the two wings was left to future organs yet to be born.

FIGHT OVER SOCIALIST TACTICS

For some time I watched the work of

my comrades in the Daily Heimin, only contributing articles from time to time. I was sorry to see this movement become more and more radical and extreme and finally go down in pieces. There was no socialist paper for two months, from the middle of March to the first of June, 1908. The heated excitement and the final death of the Daily Heimin was something very tragical. Some twenty or more comrades, among whom were a few with families, lost their living with the sudden end of the paper. I was present in the last meeting at the editorial room of the Daily Heimin and was called upon to speak. I do not remember what I said but I know that I actually wept before those comrades whose situation was worse than mine!

In a few weeks many comrades secured some employment, but many are still struggling with extreme difficulties. The problems were very complicated and difficult to solve. For everybody seemed dissatisfied with his own condition, and many

blamed others for the management of the late Daily; so there was felt a necessity to solve the conflict and get rid of some among them. The same problems were again confronted as those faced at the time of the dissolution of the Heimin in September, 1905. The only difference was in the socialist tactics, in the public attitude and in the government policy toward socialists. This made it still harder for intellectual socialists to get on in the world.

After these difficulties there appeared two socialist papers, one in Tokyo published by Comrade Nishikawa and myself with two other comrades, and another at Osaka by Comrade Morichika. The one was called Shaksi Shimbun (Socialist News) the other Osaka Heimin. The former represented Parliamentarism and the latter Direct Action. There were soon also two socialist bodies in Tokyo, one was called Doshikai and the other Kinyokai; the first is represented by Comrades Nishi-

kawa and myself and the latter by Comrades Kotoku, Sakai, Doshikai and Kin-yokai. Each had the support of a group of Comrades.

The Socialist News was chiefly edited by Comrade Nishikawa, who worked with me during the years 1901—1903. He was now considered to be one of the principal figures in the socialist movement and carried on discussions on socialist tactics with his former colleagues, Kotoku and Sakai, whose articles were appearing in the Osaka Heimin regularly. Although I was solely responsible for the financing of the paper I was not a match in writing and discussing theoretical matters with these intellectuals. I can write and speak to the working class and interpret their thoughts and actions. My thoughts and sympathies are with the workers and not with intellectuals.

Although I advocate Universal Suffrage as the best means of educating the working classes and as a peaceful method for the

development of the socialist movement in Japan, I have also belief in the direct action of workers and in general strikes as the best means of strengthening the position of the workers against the capitalist classes.

BESSI COPPER MINE STRIKES

On the 4th of June, 1907, about two hundred miners came into conflict with the companies' officers. This trouble was caused by dismissal of their leaders who had called a meeting in which the miners voted to ask the company to raise the wages 30 per cent and to present some other demands. They were roughly dealt with by the bosses. At this the miners, very indignant, at once got hold of the munition store and started to destroy every building but the school, hospital and miners' dwellings. Soon the rioters increased to six hundred and went to the work of destruction in other parts of the mines. This continued for three days. There were at one time over fifteen thou-

sand miners rioting. They got control of the mines. The police forces proved to be powerless before them. The Company, or really a private owner, complied with all the demands of the miners, but at the same time asked the Government to put down the riot by national troops which the government did. Miners were until then most brutally exploited. When they raided the munition store they found many pistols and rifles. In fact the miners often were forced to work at the point of rifle or pistol. Every officer carried a pistol in his pocket since the wages were reduced the year before. As the result of the riots many went to prison but the riots exposed the awfulness of the exploitation of labor in the Bessi Copper Mines.

SOCIALIST LECTURE COURSES

Although discussions on socialist tactics had been going on through the respective organs of the two wings, both parties kept their temper calm and agreed to have a joint lecture course. It was arranged to

hold from the 1st to the 10th of August, 1907, at the Hall of the Universalists in Tokyo. Topics and lecturers were as follows:

Socialist Ethics—Kotoku.

History of Socialism.—Tazoye.

Origin of Society—Sakai.

Economics of Socialism—Yamakawa.

Story of Strikes—Nishikawa.

History of Labor Union Movement
—Katayama.

In their respective lecture each expressed freely his own views on tactics. In some cases diametrically opposed and conflicting views were presented by lecturers from both wings. Naturally a bitter feeling of animosity and partisan spirit developed into a sort of antagonism, but it did not come to a clash. The conflict was expressed later by each wing in its own paper, and soon personal animosity and bitterness broke loose. There were really two parties attacking each other. Comrades in the rank and file did not share

the feelings of either and had very little interest in the differences of tactics. They lingered between the two for a while but soon dwindled away as the conflicts of their leaders became stronger and more personal. In the meantime the leaders in both parties utterly neglected the real cause of socialism and forgot about the interests of the working class.

VI.

SUPPRESSION AND REVOLT OF SOCIALISTS IN JAPAN.

As in Europe we had conflicts and divisions over the question of socialist tactics in Japan. For some time, we had practically two socialist groups:—Marxians and direct actionists. I belong to the former, although I never repudiated direct action and general strikes. I voted in favor of the general strike at Amsterdam. But I tried to keep a calm attitude in this matter at that time. I thought it best for the socialist movement in Japan to assume a firm stand on the principles and tactics as decided in the Socialist Congress at Amsterdam. Because our working classes are not so advanced in thought and in practice and even are not yet organized. Amidst brutal oppression of the government, I have been preaching Marxian principles for the past ten years and some

of our workers now understand socialism fairly well. But I thought it too radical and hasty for our workers to change our tactics by giving up our political program. It would give a better pretext to the government to suppress our movement.

We have had a fairly good result in our propaganda work in this country. During the autumn and winter of 1906-7 we made several lecturing tours into the cities and towns, sold many socialist books and "the Socialist News", our socialist organ around which we grouped ourselves and worked together for the cause. But I made at this time a serious blunder, being persuaded by co-worker Comrade Nishikawa to take his personal friend, Akaba, into our group. Mr. Akaba proved to be an anarchist. As he was a personal friend of Comrade Nishikawa, the latter always sided with Mr. Akaba. This caused a constant friction and dispute among us on the matter of policy which eventually ended in complete rupture; Comrades Nishikawa

and Akaba on the one side and Comrades Tazoye and myself on the other. For a short period there were two, "Socialist News" in Tokyo; the one belonged to us and the other to them. But this soon discontinued, and afterwards Comrade Nishikawa went to prison for an old offense. When he came out of prison in 1911, he was no longer a Socialist. To the surprise of many Mr. Nishikawa denounced socialism and repudiated entirely his past work in his book called "Confession".

Soon after the rupture with Nishikawa, we lost our best fighter in Comrade Tazoye, who had studied in America and was the chief champion of the parliamentary tactics. He fought first with Kotoku on tactics and then with Nishikawa. He was no doubt a victim of these conflicts. His death caused a deep impression on the minds of comrades throughout the country.

In spite of many obstacles and much oppression from the Government we carried

on our work. There were then only a few branches, Tanoura, Shizuoka, Mikura Mura and Tokyo. Three of us chiefly engaged in the propaganda work,—Comrades Tateo Suzuki, Fujita and myself. Comrade Fujita's socialist career is very interesting. He started as a newsboy in the streets of Tokyo. Soon he became a leader among the newsboys. There were some five to six hundred. Every newsboy recognized young Fujita as his leader. This gave him an inestimable value and advantage in later years. He is a born mob leader. When he plans a big demonstration or mass meeting he schemes quietly all by himself, but when he acts, his former fellow newsboys and their successors help him to succeed. He could distribute leaflets, say ten thousand, in an hour or two, through several hundred newsboys, before the police could get hold of them and stop it. Demonstrations that were successful in recent years were all planned and executed by this young Fujita. He had little

or no education, but habitual reading of editorials of newspapers made him later a fairly good writer. But to become an agitator he had to work hard. First he wrote a speech on Universal Suffrage with great pains and difficulties, after a hard study of several months. With this one speech he went with me everywhere.

In later years he made an extensive tour throughout the country with the same one speech, of course, with largely increased material, so that he could hold his audience from one to two hours. In this way he escaped the government censor. During 1908-1910 Comrade Fujita worked with me. Our chief audiences consisted of workingmen. I spoke mostly on the material finance and on economic subjects, always interpreted in the light of Socialism. We could not mention words such as labor strikes, labor organizations, boycott and socialism or revolution. But we expressed revolutionary socialist thought in a round-about fashion. By

such means as these we carried on our propaganda work for about three years. Our group, at first three, increased to five: —Fujita, already mentioned, Sasai, laundry worker; Ikeda, book-peddler; Kobayashi, ex-street-car conductor, and myself. We were in constant touch with the workers, and attempted to organize them, but always frustrated by the authorities. Our work received a great blow at a strike where three of us were arrested, including myself, on the charge of strike-inciting the arrest occurring in January, 1912. But before I tell the story of this strike, we better go back a few years to tell of the activities of our radical comrades.

DIRECT ACTIONISTS

The direct actionists or radical socialists were now grouped around the *Osaka Heimin*, published in the city of Osaka, and the Kinyo Kai, their organization, a rival to the Doshikai of the Marxian group. The Kinyo Kai (Friday Society

because they met regularly on Friday) was organized in the summer of 1907 in Tokyo by Kotoku, Yamakawa, and Sakai. The last-named comrade is to this day a good Marxian socialist. These comrades, either through the columns of the *Heimin*, or at the meetings of the Kinyo Kai, fought a most splendid fight for their ideals against the brutal oppression of the government. Their meetings constantly were interfered with by the police authorities. At one of the meetings almost all of those present were arrested, only because they did not obey the orders of the police to break up the meeting. The *Osaka Heimin* carried on war against capitalists in that city and often their issues were suppressed on account of its radical views. Comrade Morichika, the editor of the *Heimin*, went to prison several times on account of the press law.

The comrades using the pages of the *Heimin* conducted a "penny boat" strike with success. The city of Osaka has very

narrow streets, but wide canals. In fact, it is a city of canals and rivers, so the "penny boats" take the place of street cars. Osaka is the most conservative city in Japan, as consequence Comrade Morichika had indeed a very hard fight to keep up the *Heimin*. Although he was financially supported by the owners of the Kokkei News (a humorous paper), and editorially by the comrades of Kinyo Kai, he had to give up the *Heimin* after one year.

He narrates the hard experiences which led to his failure in the Kumamoto Review, published in Kumamoto by radical comrades in that city, and was quite active during the year 1908-9. In spite of substantial aid from friends, he and his wife had been weak and ill, and after a year's fight had to give up the *Heimin* and stop their activities entirely. He soon retired to his native province and settled there to till a piece of land, which he soon converted into a beautiful vineyard. His home was there when he was arrested and

was murdered with Comrade Kotoku in 1911.

THE RED FLAG RIOT

Our radical comrades are accustomed to call this the Red Flag Riot. No doubt it marks the beginning of an epoch of brutal oppression of socialists by the government and the socialists' revolt against the authorities. On the 22nd of June, 1908, a joint meeting of Kinyokai and Dishikai—Marxians and Direct Actionists—was held at Kinki Kan, Tokyo. The meeting was called in honor of Comrade Yamaguchi, who had just come out of prison. At the close of the meeting the comrades of Kinyo Kai hoisted red flags in the street and sang a revolutionary song (The Chain of Wealth). Suddenly about fifty policemen appeared on the scene and attempted to take away the flags and finally fourteen comrades were arrested. They were tried and ten comrades were sent to prison for from one year to two and one-half years. The whole affair—arrests, trials, and pun-

ishments—was most unjust; rather barbarous through and through.

Comrade Sakai did not take part in the skirmish; he was not even on the scene, and yet he was condemned to prison for two years. The sole reason for his condemnation was the supposition of the judge that “he must have been the leader.”

The press of the country wildly attacked our comrades as the worst enemies of society. This wholesale condemnation by the newspapers gave the government still a better pretext to suppress all the socialists, irrespective of their views. After the trial, the government became insanely sensitive and began to put the strictest guard over every known leader of socialists. Detectives and policemen hounded them day and night. Comrade Kotoku was weak in health, but his house was guarded by four policemen, two in front and two in the rear of the house. Everyone who visited him was forced to give

his name, and then this person was also followed by a detective.

Japan has no law which permits the arrest of a good citizen without some reason or suspicion. But the government wanted to arrest all socialists known to the authorities, especially on occasions when the Emperor or the Crown Prince went out. Then the government sent a policeman or two to each known socialist and told him that if he went out he would be arrested. Or if he was already out, he was arrested at the nearest police station and detained for any length of time. This was done by applying an old law made to arrest a known pickpocket at a fair or festival until the end of the festivity. Socialists are thus often arrested after the manner of pickpockets. In this way the government interferes with even peaceful actions of socialists. I have often met with this treatment. At one time there were two policemen always after me; one at the

back of my house and the other opposite my house as a janitor in the school.

With few exceptions the radical comrades were in prison now, but the oppressive and brutal measures, intimidations, and interferences with the life of socialists naturally caused anger and indignation. It was in this period that much underground literature on revolutionary ideas was printed and distributed. Many comrades were caught and imprisoned, as a rule for five years.

THE SO-CALLED ANARCHIST TRIALS

Secret activities of radical socialists and severe suppression of the same by the government caused more and more desperate tactics on both sides. Just at this time the ever brutal government officials got up the blackest scheme to destroy the entire socialist movement in the bud. With such a determination the cruel and cunning bureaucrats worked strenuously and untiringly, calling on every possible

resource and all possible knowledge and powers at their command. At last they fabricated and instituted the world-famous anarchist trial, which condemned Kotoku and twenty-three comrades as traitors and murdered him with eleven others.

In order to frame up the trials, they went to arrest one comrade after another, commencing in May, 1910, on some supposed crime, or no crime at all. Once arrested, he was kept entirely isolated. All the preliminary investigations and trials were carried on in absolute secrecy; every means was used to convict him at any cost. Then, when the final trial came, those lawyers who defended the accused looked into the papers under solemn oath to keep them in strictest secrecy, under severe punishment if they were brought to light, and so they were tried in the highest and last court with closed doors.

We know only the verdict against twenty-four comrades, given on the 19th of January, 1911. The verdict rendered on

that day against our comrades is a most elaborate piece of legal phraseology, well worded and most adroitly patching up numerous disconnected and conglomerated data taken from conversation and letters and what-not, true or false, extending over many years and supposed to have taken place in different parts of the country at different times. By such tedious and painstaking means the preconceived notions in the minds of a few influential bureaucrats were worked out skillfully and arrived at the desired conclusion. To get what was desired by the authorities, they seem to have freely manufactured evidences given by policemen. In Japan the evidence given by policemen is always final against those statements made by witnesses or defendants. Their words or confessions do not count at all.

The framed-up anarchist verdict painted every one of the twenty-four as an awful terrorist of the extremest type. Each one was part of a great conspiracy to commit

awful crimes. If we believe all those eloquent verdicts and speeches of the presiding Judge, there is nothing to say at all. But why did the government keep the entire trial secret? Why is it that even today any criticism of the trial is lese majesty? Why did the government hasten to murder those so-called anarchist convicts. Usually even the worst murderer is allowed to spend at least sixty days in prison after his final conviction by the highest court of the Empire.

Now, these comrades were tried, mind you, in secret in the first and in the final court, from whose verdict there is no way to make appeal. And when condemned to death, they were strangled to death right after the verdict was given, only three full days being allowed them instead of the usual sixty or more days. Even their remains were not yielded to their relatives. Why did they hasten in this particular case? We do not yet know the exact reasons. But I know that the court used false

telegrams freely in order to compel the accused to confess. Moreover, from Kotoku's letter, written in prison and smuggled out, we know that he and the others were subjected to the severest cross-examinations day after day and night after night without cessation, often standing twelve to fourteen hours at a stretch. Many cunning devices and traps were laid for them in an attempt to saddle them with the highest crimes. Each one, after long hours of cross-examination, when worn down almost to unconsciousness, had a prepared confession read to him by the prosecutor, which was of course written by the prosecutor himself to suit his aim and incriminate the defendant.

I know this from my own experience with the very same prosecutor who convicted Kotoku and the others. They investigated me four long days and nights to compel me to confess to the effect that I was an anarchist. The very confession might have brought upon me the same fate

that descended on Comrade Kotoku. I realize clearly, from the logic and arguments they used against me, that those comrades, less educated in debates, and therefore, not finding out previously what the prosecutors were driving at, were inveigled into such verbal traps.

Although the Japanese government gave full assurance to the comrades in foreign countries who protested against the unjust murder of Kotoku and the others that Japan is not persecuting socialists at all, those hung being all active anarchists, the foreign comrades were deliberately deceived in this. In fact the government went on persecuting socialists and suppressing socialist literature. All books on socialism were confiscated and all the public libraries were ordered to withdraw socialist books and papers. Even moderate papers like ours were severely censored and a few months after the said trial it was practically suppressed by the authorities.

A guard of the court who attended the Kotoku trial from beginning to end became insane at Kotoku's execution. This guard served twenty years in the same court and had an absolute confidence in the judges, but in this case he said it was utterly unjust to hang the accused. This little incident shows that the trial was not fair at all. In fact, the severity of the punishment of Kotoku and others caused a change of the public attitude toward socialists; as the dealings of the government with socialists were regarded as too severe and as the ill-treatment and oppression of the authorities caused the comrades to adopt extreme tactics.

VII.

THE MARXIAN SOCIALIST GROUP

ITS ACTIVITY IN THE GREAT STREET CAR STRIKE IN TOKYO

Meanwhile Marxian socialist groups had been carrying on quiet propaganda work among the working class. It consisted solely in holding meetings, but we used meetings to interpret social and political facts and events in the light of socialism. We always got a good audience, mostly of the working people. This sort of propaganda was carried on until the end of the year 1911, when there was a great street car strike. We held many meetings during the months of October, November and December in the city of Tokyo and discussed to a great extent the labor problems in connection with the employes of the Tokyo Street Car company.

The strike was the climax of our movement.

It was started on the 31st of December, 1911, and lasted until the 4th of the next January. It involved six thousand engineers and conductors. The city of two millions was without a single street car running in those busiest days in the entire year to accommodate the business and social life of the people. The entire city was tied up and everybody, except perhaps working men, felt a great inconvenience and suffered very much. Strikers conducted themselves with precision and firmness, temporarily organizing themselves to deal with the employer. They got what they were after, and squeezed out of the pockets of the old Street Car company one hundred thousand dollars as a bonus. This was the greatest sort of victory for labor.

Those who were in close touch with the strikers were more than pleased with the result. As soon as the strike was settled

the authorities arrested one after another of the strike leaders; in all, sixty persons. On the 15th of January, 1912, five of us were arrested and brought to the Tokyo local court and were examined and sent to prison on the charge of inciting workers to strike. Later three of us were tried and condemned to prison and we remained in prison for nine months. This was a blow to our movement. Although Comrade Fujita has continued the work, it has never recovered its former vigor and strength.

Now our socialists are still undergoing severe treatment by the brutal government. They occasionally revolt or attempt to throw off the pressure of the barbarous bureaucrats. The Red Flag Riot and the Anarchist Trials were the results of sufferings. Under the influence of oppressions, the comrades more and more forgot the past conflicts among themselves and divisions on tactics. A better understanding was brought about by the street car

strike in which those comrades who were considered moderate and tame, caused by their agitation a great strike that shocked bourgeois society. There is only one group of socialists now and all are trying to work for the same cause.

PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE LABOR AND
SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

The Red Flag affair of 1908 made socialists the most unpopular creatures with the public, and this unpopularity gave the authorities a good pretext for suppressing the socialist movement. Then the court brought about the Anarchist Trials and the condemnation of our comrades caused the nation to doubt the wisdom of dealing in such a fashion and voices were heard objecting to this as "too harsh." But when the Street Car strike occurred Tokyo people felt extreme inconvenience because it was the busiest time of the year. As socialists were proved in court to be strike leaders, the people said that socialists

were not only terrorists who intend to overturn society in some future time, but also inciters of peaceful workers to mutiny. So now every evil deed is attributed to socialists, and socialists are not very popular people in Japan.

A robber at Yamanashi prison committed suicide because he was insulted by his mate. The insult was in being called a socialist. A Tokyo daily, commenting on the case, points out that the robber convict in prison considers himself above a socialist, feels himself insulted because he was called by that title! Socialists are the most hated and despised people in Japan, as well as in this country among Japanese. Last autumn a daily (Japanese) at Seattle printed a statement that Mr. M. Furuya, a prominent Japanese merchant in that city, was an accomplice of F. Ota, a socialist illegally deported by the Japanese Consul there. This bit of a lie caused that gentleman to lose deposits from his bank amounting to some hundred

and sixty thousand dollars. The Japanese settlers thought it unsafe to deposit their money in a Socialist's bank, so they took out their money in a few days. It shows how our government fostered hatred against socialists.

Will this state of affairs continue long?

I for one do not think it will continue much longer. There is, of course, no denying that of late our bureaucracy is growing more and more reactionary. It monopolizes the army and the navy and is taxing the people to the limit for the increase of armaments. This is not encouraging, but we have the consolation of looking into our history. Japan's history shows that her progress in the past was always made by means of revolutions. The coming revolution will be the proletarian revolution. The workers will throw off the capitalist yoke by a new revolution of the masses against their exploiters.







University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.

ILL: 605639
(OFFLINE)

RETURNED

OCT 01 2001

SEP 21 2004

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 670 066 0

Univ
S
I