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A Critical History Of Socialist
Thought In Japan To 1918

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PART II

From The End Of The Russo-Japanese War (1905)

To The Great Rice Riots (1918)

CHAPTER 7.

The Further Development Of Capitalism And The First Flexing
Of The Working Class' Muscles

Capitalism developed forcefully in Japan over the 13 year period which separated the end of the Russo-Japanese War in September 1905 from the weeks of spectacular rioting over the price of rice in August/September 1918. Table 4 demonstrates this further development of capitalism by listing the same economic indicators for 1906-1918 as were presented in Chapter 1 (Table 1) for the period 1880-1905, with the exception of private railway investment. Capital invested in private railways ceased to be a useful economic indicator in the period 1906-1918 since the Japanese government, which up till then had owned only about one third of the existing track, nationalised the railways in 1906. As can be seen from Table 4, over this 13 year period the number of factories more than doubled, as also did the number of joint-stock companies. Banks, on the other hand, became fewer but more powerful, their total paid-up capital of ¥511,521,000 in 1918 being almost double what it had been in 1906. As for the section of the working class in the factories, their numbers passed the 1 million mark in 1916 and had reached more than 1.4 millions in 1918. This latter figure represented a 230 per cent. increase over the 612,177 workers employed in factories in 1906.

The data presented in Table 4 indicate an impressive rate of development of capitalism in Japan, but they need to be seen in perspective. It was not until 1911 that the number of factories using mechanical power for the first time came to outstrip 'factories' relying exclusively on human (or animal) labour power. As late as 1918, there were still 6,759 'factories' (30 per cent. of the total) operating without any form of mechanical power whatsoever. Then again, although the number of factory workers was approaching $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions by 1918, the working class

TABLE 4.

Year	No. of Factories ¹	No. of Power- Equipped ² Factories	No. of Factory ³ Workers	No. of Joint- Stock Companies ⁴	No. of Banks (with paid- ⁵ up capital)
1906	10,361	4656	612,177	4289	1670 (¥256,524,000)
1907	10,938	5207	643,292	4637	1658 (¥286,314,000)
1908	11,390	5617	649,676	4728	1635 (¥295,549,000)
1909	15,426	6723	692,221	4836	1617 (¥311,355,000)
1910	13,523	6731	717,161	5025	1618 (¥315,313,000)
1911	14,228	7756	793,885	5253	1613 (¥327,162,000)
1912	15,119	8710	863,447	5827	1621 (¥369,415,000)
1913	15,811	9403	916,252	6562	1614 (¥391,762,000)
1914	17,062	10,334	853,964	7053	1593 (¥401,201,000)
1915	16,809	10,688	910,799	7200	1440 (¥357,184,000)
1916	19,299	12,612	1,095,301	7500	1424 (¥373,776,000)
1917	20,966	14,310	1,280,964	8474	1395 (¥436,166,000)
1918	22,391	15,632	1,409,196	10,636	1372 (¥511,521,000)

1 Nihon Keizai Tōkei Shū (Collected Statistics Of The Japanese Economy),
Japan Statistical Research Institute, Tōkyō, 1968, p 55.

2 Ibid., p 55.

3 Ibid., p 55.

4 Ibid., p 128.

5 Ibid., p 204.

remained dwarfed by the peasantry. With a population of 54.7 millions in 1918⁶, the labour force in the factories still accounted for only 2.6 per cent. of the population of Japan proper. The overall scale of operations in the factories also remained much the same throughout the period 1906-1918. If the total number of factory workers showed a marked increase, it was in percentage terms only slightly in advance of the increase in the number of factories. Whereas the average factory in Japan in 1906 had a labour force of 59 workers, this figure had advanced only marginally to 63 workers by 1918. In this connection, it is worth pointing out that in the period under consideration here any workshop with 10 or more hands still qualified for inclusion in the statistics as a 'factory'.

The Conditions Of The Workers

The general character of the working class in Japan during the years 1906-1918 remained fundamentally unaltered from the earlier period extending up to 1905. Most workers maintained close ties with families living in the countryside and Table 5 makes clear that in the factories female workers constantly outnumbered male workers right through to 1918 (and beyond). Each year tens of thousands of young peasant girls were recruited as relatively short-term contract labourers for the textile mills and it was this phenomenon which accounted for women constituting a majority of the workforce in the factories taken as a whole. If one takes the median year of the period 1906-1918 (ie 1912) one finds that the 8,119 spinning and weaving mills then operating in Japan represented 53.7 per cent. of all factories and that the 513,187 (mainly female) workers they employed constituted 59.4 per cent. of the entire workforce

6 Ibid., p 6.

TABLE 5.⁷

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Factory Workers</u>	<u>No. of Women</u>	<u>No. of Men</u>
1906	612,177	369,233	242,944
1907	643,292	385,936	257,356
1908	649,676	400,925	248,751
1909	692,221	451,357	240,864
1910	717,161	442,574	274,587
1911	793,885	476,497	317,388
1912	863,447	515,217	348,230
1913	916,252	540,656	375,596
1914	853,964	535,297	318,667
1915	910,799	559,823	350,976
1916	1,095,301	636,669	458,632
1917	1,280,964	713,120	567,844
1918	1,409,196	763,081	646,115

7 Nihon Keizai Tōkei Shū (Collected Statistics Of The Japanese Economy), Japan Statistical Research Institute, Tōkyō, 1968, p 55.

found in all factories.⁸ The mill girls mostly came from the poorest strata of the peasantry and were recruited by company agents (usually ex-policemen or petty officials) who often acted in league with local teachers so that the girls could be signed up while still at school. The girls themselves had no say in their fate. It was their parents who were approached by the company agents and who signed away several years of their daughters' lives for often derisory sums of money. Such wages as the girls earned were frequently either paid directly to their parents or else held by the company until their contract terms had been worked, the girls receiving only a pittance as pocket money.

Conditions in the workplaces were little short of hell. A factory act was passed by the diet in 1911 and its provisions eventually came into force 5 years later in 1916, towards the end of the period dealt with in this section. A number of studies of working conditions were subsequently published but, if the factory act had brought any substantial benefits to the working class (which is, in fact, doubtful), this merely underlined the even more appalling conditions which workers must have endured prior to 1916. Félicien Challaye wrote in his Le Mouvement Ouvrier Au Japon, published in 1921, that workers toiled on average for twelve hours per day but that cases of "fourteen, sixteen, seventeen hours" were known.⁹ In the spring of 1919 Yamakawa Kikue "visited a large (silk) filature at Nagoya, employing more than 700 girls, where work began at 5 a.m. and ended at 7.30 p.m." Furthermore, the superintendent informed her that "during the busiest season work was carried on in 18 hour shifts."¹⁰ Félicien Challaye also gave details of rest periods

8 The figures for the number of spinning and weaving mills operating in Japan in 1912 and the number of workers they employed are derived from Meiji Taishō Sangyō Hattatsu Shi (History Of Industrial Development In The Meiji And Taisho Eras), Takahashi Kamekichi, Tōkyō, 1966, pp 555-556. My percentages are slightly different to Takahashi's, since I believe that he somewhat underestimates both the total number of factories in Japan in 1912 and the total number of factory workers.

9 Le Mouvement Ouvrier Au Japon, Félicien Challaye, Paris, 1921, p 38.

10 'Woman In Modern Japan', Kikuye Yamakawa, Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) Vol. V, No. 2, March 1922, p 15 (English columns).

during working hours:

In a twelve hour day, there are eleven hours of actual work and at most an hour of rest.... Sometimes there is only half an hour at noon. One knitting manufacturer in Tokyo allows only a quarter of an hour at noon.

11

Challaye confirmed the observations of Saitō Kashirō, who had visited a factory in mid-summer where young girl workers of less than 12 years of age were working drenched in sweat in a temperature of 111°F.¹² Conditions as harsh as this were the rule rather than the exception, even with a workforce so young. An American missionary wrote in 1920 that she had inspected a silk spinning mill "and saw some little girls about 10 years of age, swiftly twirling off the slender threads from the cocoons and catching them on the spindles. From 6 in the morning until 5 at night, with all windows closed to keep the room moist and hot, they work...."¹³

Child labour was rampant. Challaye discovered that

In certain spinning mills in Osaka more than 20 per cent. of the workers are between ten and fifteen years of age. The children of miners work down in the mine along with their father. In the match workshops, parents bring their youngest children along with them and set them to work.

14

As in the earlier period extending up to 1905, the mill workers were normally housed in company dormitories. On average the space allotted to each worker was one mat* and generally one set of bedding was issued to every two workers, who would use it alternately on the day

* In the traditional Japanese house the floor is covered by tatami matting, each mat being cut to a standard size of 1.655 square metres.

11 Challaye, op. cit., p 39.

12 Ibid., p 49.

13 The missionary was Miss C. E. Allen, writing in Life And Labor in December 1920. She is quoted in 'Woman In Modern Japan', Kikuye Yamakawa, Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) Vol. V, No. 2, March 1922, p 16 (English columns).

14 Challaye, op. cit., p 51.

and night shifts. "In Nagano prefecture, a centre of the silk industry, the factory inspectors found in 1916 that of 114 larger filatures, only 4 provided one set of bedding per person."¹⁵ The food served to dormitory workers was invariably inadequate as well. One of the most careful investigations into the conditions of the workers was that conducted for the Japanese Home Office by a Dr. Ishiwara, whose findings were referred to by both Yamakawa Kikue and Félicien Challaye. Dr. Ishiwara looked into the effects of workers working alternate weeks on the day and night shifts (as was customary in the mills, for example) and found that "one who worked 7 consecutive nights lost on an average 1.7 pounds while one who worked 7 consecutive days gained, on an average, one pound. The workers who alternated day and night work (were) thus subjected to a steady loss of weight. Young girls in these factories stop growing and offer scant resistance to disease (sic)."¹⁶ Dr. Ishiwara discovered that about 200,000 girls were recruited annually from the countryside to work in the factories, approximately 80,000 returning home each year. "Of the 80,000 who return, 50,000 are ill, 15,000 seriously so, and at least 5,000 of them die annually from consumption."¹⁷ Table 6 compares the national averages for women with the death rates among different age groups of female former factory workers who had returned to their villages, and provides a harrowing insight into the murderous conditions imposed on workers as they laboured in the factories.

In view of these statistics, it is hardly surprising to find that few girls could endure more than 2 consecutive years working in the mills¹⁸,

15 'Woman In Modern Japan', Kikuye Yamakawa, Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) Vol. V, No. 4, April 1922, p 17 (English columns).

16 'Woman In Modern Japan', Kikuye Yamakawa, Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) Vol. V, No. 2, March 1922, p 16 (English columns).

17 'Woman In Modern Japan', Kikuye Yamakawa, Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) Vol. V, No. 4, April 1922, p 18 (English columns).

18 'Woman In Modern Japan', Kikuye Yamakawa, Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) Vol. V, No. 2, March 1922, p 16 (English columns).

TABLE 6.¹⁹

Age	Annual National Death Rate Per 1000 Women	Annual Death Rate Among Female Ex-Factory Workers Per 1000
Below 12	4.36	28.8
12-14	4.39	23.2
14-16	5.00	25.6
16-20	6.85	39.0
20-25	9.17	30.2
Above 25	10.12	26.1

19 'Woman In Modern Japan', Kikuye Yamakawa, Shakaishugi Kenkyū
(The Study Of Socialism) Vol. V, No. 4, April 1922, p 18
(English columns).

nor to discover that they were normally confined under lock and key even during their 'time off' in order to prevent them from running away. As was noted in Chapter 1, the mill girls' youth and inexperience - together with their virtual isolation from outside contacts - generally prevented them from offering any effective resistance to the employers.²⁰ And on the rare occasions when they did take action and attempt to improve their conditions, the state could be relied upon to react with heavy-handed oppression. The socialist newspaper Hikari (Light) reported in October 1906 on the struggle of the workers of the Fuji cotton spinning company in Shizuoka prefecture for higher wages and shorter working hours.²¹ A mass meeting attended by more than 2,000 was organised in support of the Fuji workers' demands, but inevitably it was ordered to break up by the police. This was a typical example of the manner in which the 'chian keisatsu hō' ('police peace preservation law'), which remained on the statute books throughout the period 1906-1918, was routinely enforced by the authorities. Coupled with the repressive activities of the state, the capitalists also mounted a sustained ideological offensive against the working class. Even while they intoned about the "harmony" of capital and labour, they still insisted that the relationship between employer and employee was on a par with that between "lord and retainer". As Matsukata Kōjirō (president of the Kawasaki shipbuilding yard) put it in 1914:

20 Ōkōchi Kazuo in his Reimeiki No Nihon Rōdō Undō (The Labour Movement In Japan In The Dawn Period, Tōkyō, 1973, p 213) says that the textile industry was almost untouched by labour disputes, as was its predominantly female workforce by attempts to organise workers into trade unions.

21 According to an article 'Korosaretsutsu Aru Dōhō' ('Our Brothers And Sisters Who Are Being Murdered') by Arahata Kanson, the workers at Fuji were working a 12 hour day from 6.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., with a one hour rest period. Wages varied between ¥0.24-0.40 per day for men and ¥0.14-0.30 per day for women. (Hikari - Light - No. 24, 15 October 1906, p 6. See also the English-language article 'A Big Meeting Of Workingmen (sic)' in Hikari No. 23, 5 October 1906, p 1.)

.... he who pays wages is allowed to assume something of the mental attitude of the lord - not in a despotic but in a protectoral sense - toward those who receive them.

22

With this as the prevalent ideology, it was small wonder that the only trade union federation which was tolerated by the authorities was the friendly society Yuaikai (Friendship Society), which was formed by Suzuki Bunji and others in 1912. The Yuaikai owed its survival as much to the fact that its "policy was to recommend conciliation between labour and capital whenever disputes occurred" as it did to having "scholars, social reformers and capitalists" on its executive council.²³

Strikes And Insurrections

However severe the repression practised by the state, and however mystifying the ideology which working men and women were fed, groups of workers were nonetheless periodically forced into confrontations both with their employers and with the forces of the state. Often it was sheer desperation which drove workers to demand an improvement in their conditions, but frequently they were met with a blank refusal on the part of the employers to so much as negotiate. All too often, the employers' response was a swift recourse to police violence and, with all usual forms of trade union activity barred to the workers, there was a tendency for struggles which started as simple strikes to escalate into ferocious insurrections.

Table 7 gives the annual figures for the number of labour disputes which occurred between 1906-1918 and for the number of workers involved in those disputes. Compared to the earliest period for which figures are available (1897-1905*), when there were on average 18 disputes each

* See Chapter 1, Table 3.

22 Japan To America, Naoichi Masaoka (ed.), New York and London, 1914, p 105.

23 'Rōdō Undō No Fukkōki' ('The Period When The Labour Movement Was Revived'), Arahata Kanson. Collected in Arahata Kanson Chosaku Shū (Collected Works Of Arahata Kanson), Tōkyō, 1976, Vol. II, p 15.

TABLE 7.²⁴

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Labour Disputes</u>	<u>No. of Workers Involved</u>
1906	13	2037
1907	57	9855
1908	13	822
1909	11	310
1910	10	2937
1911	22	2100
1912	49	5736
1913	47	5242
1914	50	7904
1915	64	7852
1916	108	8413
1917	398	57,309
1918	417	66,457

24 Nihon Keizai Tōkei Shū (Collected Statistics Of The Japanese Economy), Japan Statistical Research Institute, Tōkyō, 1968, p 296.

year, the annual average for the period 1906-1918 was 97 disputes. This indicates a definite heightening of working class militancy, but it has to be stressed that averages can be highly deceptive. During the period 1906-1918 there was an enormous variation in the incidence of labour disputes. For the whole of 1910 there were no more than 10 disputes recorded throughout the entire country, whereas by 1918 the number had risen to 417. Similarly, the numbers of workers involved in disputes varied immensely too, from a mere 310 in 1909 to 66,457 in 1918. If one expresses these figures as percentages of the total numbers of factory workers, one finds that in 1909 it was a microscopic 0.04 per cent. of the total workforce in all factories which took part in labour disputes (far below the lowest percentage registered for the period 1897-1905 - 0.17 per cent. in 1904), whereas in 1918 it was 4.7 per cent. (a significant increase on the 1.5 per cent. scored in 1898). As for the number of workers participating in the average dispute, this decreased from 171 for the years 1897-1905 to 141 during 1906-1918. Even during the peak years of 1917/1918, when tens of thousands of workers came out on strike for higher wages, the 'typical' dispute involved no more than 152 individuals. Low though such a figure was, however, it was more than twice the size of the workforce in the average factory and hence suggests that - as in the earlier period extending up to 1905 - the majority of labour disputes must have taken place in the larger capitalist enterprises.

When strikes did erupt they were not usually among the worst paid and most severely oppressed sections of the working class, such as the mill girls. On the contrary, to take the wave of strikes which followed the Russo-Japanese War as an example, a large proportion of strikes occurred among the stratum of relatively highly paid male workers in heavy industry and military production, who were in a better position

to fight back against their employers than were many other workers.²⁵ During the Russo-Japanese War the capitalists had been quick to impose a more gruelling intensity of labour on the working class, appealing to the workers' patriotism as they did so. In time, groups of workers came to react against this increased exploitation, as they did against a situation where prices were rising and their wages were lagging behind.²⁶ They also resisted the increase in unemployment which the downturn in the economy following the war brought with it. Hikari (Light) estimated in December 1905 that there would soon be 800,000 unemployed in Japan.²⁷ Many of these were demobilised soldiers, but Hikari also added:

.... the laborers in.... the Military Arsenal(s) and other industries which had been prospering during the war time, are now being rapidly dismissed.

28

This reference to lay-offs in the armaments industries was borne out by later events, for the next 18 months saw a succession of strikes in the Tōkyō, Kure and Ōsaka arsenals, the Ishikawajima and Mitsubishi shipyards, and many other establishments. One such dispute was that at the Ōminato naval repair yard in Aomori in the north of Japan, where the entire workforce walked out in January 1906 demanding a wage rise. This strike collapsed in the face of the combined threats of the military police, the civil police and the local authorities. The Ishikawajima shipyard strike ran from 5-7 February 1906 and again was over a demand

25 Ōkōchi Kazuo has made the point that the fact that disputes should have been concentrated in arsenals, shipyards, government controlled factories, and mines was a by-product of Japanese military expansion. (Reimeiki No Nihon Rōdō Undō - The Labour Movement In Japan In The Dawn Period, Ōkōchi Kazuo, Tōkyō, 1973, p 214.)

26 In August 1907 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) claimed that, over the previous 5 years, wages in Tōkyō had increased by 9 per cent. while food prices were up 28 per cent., clothing 33 per cent. and rent 40 per cent. (Shakai Shimbun No. 12, 18 August 1907, p 1 - English column.)

27 Hikari (Light) No. 2, 5 December 1905, p 7 (English column). The Japanese columns were less precise in their estimates, talking in terms of 700,000-800,000 (p 4).

28 Ibid., p 7.

for wage rises. 750 workers were involved but they too were defeated by police intervention and by the lack of any strike funds. A year later 500 woodworkers employed in the Mitsubishi shipyard in Nagasaki downed tools from 16-20 February 1907. Once more, they were demanding wage rises, but in this case they were also resisting attempts to lengthen their hours of work. Although supported by 8000 other workers, their demands were met yet again by the combined intervention of both the civil and the military police.

A clear sign that people were prepared to vent their frustrations in acts of violence directed at symbols of state power came on 5 September 1905. The police tried to ban an anti-government meeting which was organised in Hibiya Park in Tōkyō ostensibly for the ultra-nationalist purpose of protesting against the supposedly over-lenient terms of the peace treaty concluded between Russia and Japan. The attempts by the police to suppress this meeting merely served to incense the crowds which had assembled and mass violence ensued. Police buildings and trams were burned, and newspaper offices and the house of the Minister of Home Affairs were attacked. Martial law was declared and during several days of disturbances there were thousands of arrests, thousands more injured, and 17 deaths.²⁹ It is difficult to judge the extent to which these clashes were expressions of specifically working class dissatisfaction with the status quo but Ludovic Naudeau, a European eye-witness who was in Tōkyō at the time of the September riots, believed that:

.... the rioters, who set fire to 40 trams in the streets of Tokyo and for a while menaced the houses of the millionaires and of several corrupt politicians, were less exasperated patriots than they were malcontents, unemployed workers, and the poor spoiling for a fight.

30

29 Radical Nationalist In Japan: Kita Ikki 1883-1937, George M. Wilson, Cambridge, Mass., 1969, pp 17-18.

30 Challaye, op. cit., p 67.

Writing many years later, Sakai Toshihiko also took the view that:

This incident was, in fact, the first demonstration of resistance in which the Japanese proletariat ("musan kaikyū" - literally, "propertyless class"), which had been cheated, inflamed and used by the ruling class during the war, manifested to the world that it was starting to become class conscious. It also surely set a precedent for the various similar demonstrations which were to come later.

31

Open to doubt though these interpretations of the September 1905 riots might be, the next couple of years provided ample evidence that - in the absence of any legally permitted methods of struggle - workers were prepared to resort to violent direct action in order to press their demands. The strike at the Kure naval arsenal in south-west Japan in August 1906 showed signs of erupting into violence but on this occasion the police managed to contain matters by arresting 24 of what the authorities always choose to call 'ringleaders'. Things went a stage further during the dispute at the Ōsaka military arsenal in December 1906 when 500 workers vented their anger by attacking company officials, even killing one of them. Again the police intervened and more supposed 'ringleaders' were arrested. Without a doubt, however, the prime examples of working class pugnacity in the years immediately following the Russo-Japanese War were the insurrections which occurred among mineworkers. Not only were the miners incensed by the bitter exploitation they suffered, but they brought to the labour disputes in which they became embroiled certain highly characteristic advantages. As with miners everywhere, the conditions under which they lived and worked in Japan engendered a high degree of solidarity, and the nature of their work gave them a familiarity with explosives. The results were a series

31 Nihon Shakaishugi Undō Shōshi (A Short History Of The Socialist Movement In Japan), Sakai Toshihiko, Shakaishugi (Socialism) No. 8, 1 July 1921, p 36.

of disturbances which shocked the employers, which filled official Japan with dread - and which struck sparks of hope in the hearts of some of the socialists.

For some time before trouble broke out at the Ashio copper mine on 4 February 1907, the socialists had been following events there with a certain amount of attention.³² Ashio was an important mine situated approximately 100 kilometres to the north of Tōkyō and this was a period in which copper played a by no means negligible role in the economy of Japan. It is easy to forget nowadays that in the late Meiji era Japan was one of the world's foremost exporters of copper³³, so that any interruption of production at a large mine such as Ashio was bound to be seen by the state as a major threat. It is also important to note that the Ashio copper mine was owned by the powerful Furukawa family and that Hara Kei - the Minister of Home Affairs in 1907 - had intimate links with Furukawa's mining interests.³⁴ Whatever the background to the dispute, however, the outcome was that the miners of Ashio spontaneously took up arms and the extent of the violence which ensued must have surprised even many of those involved in it. The electricity supply was cut and telephones put out of action. Company officials were attacked and company buildings blown up and set on fire. The head manager of the mine was dragged from his hiding place under the floor of his official residence and given a severe beating by the miners with their pickaxes. Company warehouses were occupied and the police force which was dispatched to the mine to quell the rioting

32 See, for example, the report on the 'Ashio Dōzan Rōdō Ka' ('The Song Of Labour At The Ashio Copper Mine') in Hikari (Light) No. 25, 25 October 1906, p 5.

33 The copper mining and refining industry "continued to expand up to 1914, when Japan ranked as the second largest copper exporter in the world." (A Short Economic History Of Modern Japan, G. C. Allen, London, 1972, p 81.)

34 'A Great Disturbance In Ashio Copper Mine', Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 20, 9 February 1907, p 3 (English column).

was no match for the miners, who had armed themselves with improvised bombs. Several hundred miners made a sortie out of the mine to attack a nearby police station. The insurrection was only finally put down when on 7 February 1907 three companies of troops from the Takasaki infantry regiment were ordered into action against the miners. Hundreds of miners were arrested³⁵ and when company officials were eventually able to calculate the damage they found that 116 buildings had been destroyed.³⁶

Hard on the heels of Ashio came other disturbances at the Horonai coal mine on the northern island of Hokkaidō in April 1907, at the Besshi copper mine on the southern island of Shikoku in June 1907 and at the Ikuno silver mine near to Ōsaka in July 1907. The most spectacular of these was the Besshi dispute, where the workers' demands for wage rises, a bonus system and compensation for accidents were all met by outright rejection.³⁷ The Besshi mine was owned by the giant Sumitomo company and, enraged at the company's intransigence, the miners used dynamite to destroy the power plant and telephone exchange and set fire to company buildings. After 3 days of rioting had inflicted casualties on the police, a company of troops from the Marugame infantry regiment arrived at the Besshi mine on 7 June 1907. The soldiers went into action the following day and by 9 June 1907 the uprising had been put down. It was estimated that the damage wreaked by the miners at Besshi during the 3 days of rioting totalled some ¥2 millions³⁸, since they had coordinated their attacks with "a most orderly and military precision

35 Of the more than 300 miners arrested, 73 were later found guilty of various crimes by the courts. (Nihon Anakizumu Rodō Undō Shi - History Of The Anarchist Labour Movement In Japan, Hagiwara Shintarō, Tōkyō, 1969, pp 29-30.)

36 Akamatsu Katsumaro gives this figure of 116 buildings destroyed in his Nihon Shakai Undō Shi (History Of The Social Movement In Japan), Tōkyō, 1974, p 119.

37 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 3, 16 June 1907, p 1 (English column).

38 'Besshi Dōzan No Daisōjō' ('The Great Riot At Besshi Copper Mine'), Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 3, 16 June 1907, p 2.

using a skillful (sic) tactics!"³⁹ Perhaps part of the explanation for this was that prominent among the rioters were a number of demobilised soldiers who had fought in the Russo-Japanese War and who used their military expertise to good advantage at Besshi.

Direct Action In Practice And Theory

Ashio and Besshi made a deep impression on many of the socialists. There was a handful of socialists among the miners at Ashio⁴⁰ but there was no question of them having instigated the disturbances at the mine and when Nishikawa Kōjirō went from Tōkyō to report on the struggle for the short-lived socialist daily newspaper Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper)* he was promptly arrested. Even the more intelligent of the bourgeois newspapers recognised that the causes of the insurrections went deeper than any marginal influence the socialists might possibly have been able to exert. Félicien Challaye quotes the daily newspaper Mainichi (Everyday) for 7 June 1907 as writing in the middle of the Besshi uprising:

The strikers resort to violence to achieve their ends; they arm themselves and they throw bombs. Have the members of the government at last understood that the real cause of these uprisings is not socialist agitation? The cause is quite simply the condition of the workers. On the one hand, they are crushed by the rising cost of living; on the other hand, the wages they receive are insufficient. It is the economic situation which lies at the root of the problem.

41

Yet, although the outbreak of violence at Ashio, Besshi and elsewhere probably took the socialists in Japan as much by surprise as

* This was a different newspaper from the weekly journal of the same name which was frequently referred to in earlier chapters.

39 Ibid., p 1 (English column).

40 Included in a list of members of the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) published in Hikari (Light) were 4 socialists from Ashio. (Hikari No. 22, 25 September 1906, p 7.)

41 Challaye, op. cit., pp 59-60.

it did anyone else, some of the socialists were eager to draw lessons from these manifestations of working class discontent. Yamakawa Hitoshi, for one, was quick to compare the means of struggle employed by miners in revolt at Besshi with the tactics of those, such as the syndicalists in Europe, who set great store by the general strike.⁴² Ashio and Besshi were seen as pointers to the way in which the class struggle was likely to develop in Japan. Yamakawa concluded his article 'Besshi Dōzan Sōjō Jiken No Kyōkun' ('Lessons Of The Riot At Besshi Copper Mine'), which appeared in the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) one week after the events at Besshi, with the following words:

.... it cannot be denied that for those who study social problems, even though it is a great calamity, Besshi tells us a great deal about the future of the class struggle.

43

The Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) also noticed that, chastened by what had happened in the mines and elsewhere, the capitalists were showing momentary signs of being somewhat more conciliatory towards the workers than they had previously been. As a lead article 'Sara Ni Ippo O Susumeyo' ('Go A Step Further!') put it shortly after the Ashio and Besshi uprisings:

Even though we do not necessarily praise terrorism, the attitude of the capitalists and politicians clearly proves (that working class violence forces them to concede reforms) and therefore we cannot reject terrorism out of hand.

44

The socialists grouped around the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) were inclined to interpret the wave of strikes and insurrections which hit Japan in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War as a significant reorientation of the Japanese working class. It seemed to

42 'Besshi Dōzan Sōjō Jiken No Kyōkun' ('Lessons Of The Riot At Besshi Copper Mine'), Yamakawa Hitoshi, Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 2, 15 June 1907, p 13.

43 Ibid., p 13.

44 Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 3, 1 July 1907, p 1.

them that the workers - lacking the right to vote and hence being insulated from reformist, parliamentary politics - had seen through the diet as a ruling class fraud and were intent on improving their position by their own self-reliant direct action. It also seemed to them that clashes involving the more militant sections of the working class, such as the miners, would spread and eventually become generalised. The final culmination was to be a single vast confrontation in which the forces of the state would be challenged (and beaten) in an ill-defined exercise known as the 'social general strike'. The unlikely nature of this prognosis hardly needs to be emphasised. Anarchist-inclined Japanese socialists were attempting to import syndicalist models of revolution into a Japan where the structures which syndicalism took for granted were virtually absent. The very word 'syndicalism' expresses the fact that it is a theory of how revolutionary trade unions (syndicats) should act. Syndicalism sees the trade unions both as the agents of revolutionary change to overthrow capitalism and as the means for organising production in the new society once capitalism has been swept away. Being a doctrine of trade unionism, syndicalism naturally also focuses its attention on the wage-earning working class. Yet in Japan in the years after the Russo-Japanese War, not only were there hardly any trade unions (and those few which did manage to exist were weak and often minuscule), but the working class was small and highly unstable as well. How a social general strike (which had as its aim the paralysing of social production) was to be implemented in a predominantly peasant society such as Japan, where agriculture was carried on in a fragmentary fashion by family units, was never satisfactorily explained.

Criticisms similar to those I have outlined here have often been made by Japanese commentators eager to discredit the role which anarcho-syndicalism has played in Japan. But it has to be said that many of these Japanese commentators have had their own political reasons (such

as sympathy for Bolshevism) for wishing to belittle anarchism. Political partisanship has often coloured their accounts and has led them to imply that, in its Japanese context, anarchism was never very much more than an exotic transplant from foreign climes introduced into Japan by intellectuals with scant regard for the real situation of the working class within Japanese society. Undoubtedly anarchism was introduced to Japan from abroad - and the chapters which follow will, indeed, be analysing anarchist and other influences from various parts of the world which impinged on socialist thought as it developed in Japan between the dates 1906 and 1918. It is, however, less than honest to present Japanese anarchism solely in this one-sided fashion. There is another side to the anarchist coin as well, which is that - driven to desperate lengths by their poverty and the oppression which they experienced - spirited sections of the Japanese working class were forced into direct, physical confrontation with the state. There might have been a world of difference between, on the one hand, the highly abstract syndicalist concept of a much-rehearsed and well-coordinated social general strike and, on the other, the spectacle of a few hundred enraged miners smashing everything on which they could lay their hands. Yet, however far short of the mythical social general strike they fell, incidents such as Ashio and Besshi undoubtedly were instances of workers' direct action. Deprived of any parliamentary representation and bereft of any machinery for negotiating with the capitalists, the workers at Ashio and Besshi took their fate into their own hands and fought on their own behalves, without any obstructive leaderships or 'representatives' to sell them out. Although largely imposed on the working class in Japan through a lack of any adequate alternatives, direct action was an undeniable feature of the labour disputes of the time. What was more natural, then, than that many socialists in Japan, seeking to understand a tendency which they saw manifesting itself as the class struggle unfolded before them, should

have turned to theories which put a premium on direct action? What was more natural, in other words, than that anarchist and syndicalist theories should have made a profound impact on socialist thought in Japan during the period described here?

The First World War

With its commercial rivals locked in an exhausting conflict in Europe, the First World War provided an eagerly grasped opportunity for Japanese capital to expand. Asian markets absorbed Japanese commodities (especially textiles) in growing quantities and there was a vastly increased demand for freight transport, Japan's merchant marine stepping into the breach left by other major shipping nations' more direct involvement in the war. In the space of 5 years (1914-1918) Japanese shipping companies doubled their naval tonnage from 1½ million tons to over 3 million tons, while their freighting incomes showed a staggering increase from under ¥40 millions in 1914 to more than ¥450 millions in 1918.⁴⁵ The boom enjoyed by shipping companies may have been exceptional, but the impact of the First World War on the Japanese economy as a whole was dramatic nonetheless.

Whereas in 1911-14 the average annual excess of imports over exports amounted to 65 million yen, in 1915-18 the annual excess of exports averaged 352 million yen. In value the exports of 1918 were three times those of 1913; in volume it has been estimated that they were 47 per cent greater.

46

The buoyancy of the markets was demonstrated, then, by Japan's favourable balance of trade during the war years. Businesses profited and fortunes were made - but little of this prosperity percolated through to the working class. Table 8 shows average daily wage rates for different categories of workers over the period 1906-1918. As can be

45 Allen, op. cit., p 98.

46 Ibid., p 98.

seen from this table, there was an average increase in nominal wages of 45 per cent. during the 5 years 1914-1918. Nominal wages ignore fluctuations in the prices of articles of consumption, however, and once price rises are taken into account, one finds that most categories of workers experienced a cut in real wages during these same 5 years. Although the figures presented in Table 9 may not be totally accurate, they do give some indication of how the prices of goods varied from year to year. The Tōkyō wholesale price index was 105.5 in 1914 (1906 = 100) but from 1916 onwards there was runaway inflation and by 1918 the index stood at 212.6. Similarly the cost of living index for Tōkyō showed a 73 per cent. increase during 1916-1918. What needs to be noted with special attention is that rice (the staple food of the working class in Japan) was particularly severely affected by this inflation. Both the wholesale (in Tōkyō) and retail prices of rice more than doubled during the 3 years 1916-1918. Table 10 compares in percentage terms the fluctuations in wage rates, the cost of living (in Tōkyō) and the retail price of rice during the period of the First World War. By so doing, it illustrates the mounting hardships faced by most categories of workers.⁴⁷

The response of the working class in Japan to this worsening of its conditions during the First World War has already been indicated by the figures on labour disputes presented in Table 7. There was an unprecedented rise in the number of disputes, and in the number of

47 Akamatsu Katsumaro gives the indices for wages and prices "in the major cities throughout the country" from 1912-1918 as follows:

Year	Wages	Prices
1912	100	100
1913	102	101
1914	102	99
1915	101	94
1916	104	109
1917	120	145
1918	157	200

(Akamatsu, op. cit., pp 138-139.)

TABLE 8. 48

Average Daily Wage Rates*

Year	Silk Worker	Ship's Carpenter	Agricultural Worker		Carpenter (Tokyo)	Printworker (Tokyo)
			Male	Female		
1906	¥0.230	¥0.695	¥0.338	¥0.203	¥0.975	¥0.538
1907	0.265	0.805	0.358	0.220	1.000	0.638
1908	0.245	0.825	0.385	0.228	1.100	0.658
1909	0.273	0.813	0.383	0.230	1.088	0.663
1910	0.305	0.833	0.393	0.238	1.113	0.675
1911	0.302	0.857	0.415	0.252	1.150	0.688
1912	0.313	0.913	0.438	0.265	1.188	0.700
1913	0.325	0.930	0.458	0.290	1.200	0.713
1914	0.348	0.920	0.473	0.300	1.150	0.750
1915	0.280	0.958	0.455	0.288	1.100	0.750
1916	0.308	0.955	0.483	0.295	1.175	0.775
1917	0.365	1.193	0.565	0.345	1.288	0.850
1918	0.425	1.675	0.748	0.465	1.500	0.908

* These average daily wage rates are average national rates unless otherwise stated.

48 Nihon Keizai Tōkei Shū (Collected Statistics Of The Japanese Economy), Japan Statistical Research Institute, Tokyo, 1968, pp 284-285.

TABLE 9.

Year	Tōkyō Wholesale Price Index* ⁴⁹	Tōkyō Cost of Living Index** ⁵⁰	Price of Rice*** Wholesale ⁵¹ (Tōkyō)	Retail ⁵²
1906	100.0		¥14.72	¥20.43
1907	107.8		16.48	22.34
1908	103.9		15.94	20.70
1909	99.1		13.14	17.59
1910	100.3		13.27	17.19
1911	104.1		17.35	22.45
1912	110.2		20.96	25.51
1913	110.4		21.40	27.48
1914	105.5	100.0	16.13	20.88
1915	106.7	92.5	13.07	16.35
1916	129.0	100.6	13.76	17.19
1917	162.3	123.7	19.84	24.57
1918	212.6	174.3	32.75	38.49

* 1906 = 100 ** 1914 = 100 *** Prices given are for 1 koku of rice (1 koku = 180 litres).

49 Derived from figures given in Ibid., p 252.

50 Ibid., p 258.

51 Ibid., p 254.

52 Ibid., p 262. Kondō Kenji writes that the price of rice was around ¥16.30 per koku at the beginning of 1917 and around ¥23.80 per koku at the end of the year. By the end of July 1918 the price was more than ¥30 per koku, and the retail price reached ¥50 per koku on 7 August 1918. (Jatashi No Mita Nihon Anakizumu Undō Shi - A Personal History Of The Anarchist Movement In Japan, Kondō Kenji, Tōkyō, 1972, p 22.)

TABLE 10.

Fluctuations in Wage Rates, the Cost of Living and the Retail Price of Rice*

Year	Silk Worker	Ship's Carpenter	Agricultural Worker Male	Agricultural Worker Female	Carpenter (Tokyo)	Printworker (Tokyo)	Cost of Living (Tokyo)	Retail Price of Rice
1914	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1915	80.5	104.1	96.2	96.0	95.7	100.0	92.5	78.3
1916	88.5	103.8	102.1	98.3	102.2	103.3	100.6	82.3
1917	104.9	129.7	119.5	115.0	112.0	113.3	123.7	117.7
1918	122.1	182.1	158.1	155.0	130.4	121.1	174.3	184.3

* 1914 = 100 in each case.

workers involved, during 1917/1918. Even the Yūaikai (Friendship Society) trade union federation, whose founding platform sounded "like the pledge of a Sunday School club"⁵³, was radicalised as more and more of its rank and file members found themselves forced to fight in attempts to defend their standards of living. Although trade union activity remained technically illegal under the provisions of the 'police peace preservation law', the Yūaikai had a membership running into tens of thousands by the end of the First World War.⁵⁴ 83 per cent. of all labour disputes which occurred in 1917/1918 centred on wage demands⁵⁵ and, as before, the greatest militance was displayed by workers in the engineering and metal industries, shipyard workers and miners. In 1917, for example, major strikes occurred at the Japan Steelworks in Muroran in Hokkaidō, the Mitsubishi shipyard in Nagasaki, and the Ōsaka Ironworks. In 1918 there were strikes at the shipyard in Uruga (near Tōkyō) and at another Mitsubishi shipyard in Kōbe. Despite the fervour with which many strikes were fought, the forces at the disposal of the state ensured that a high proportion of disputes would end in defeat for the workers. Table 11 shows the outcome of those labour disputes which occurred during the war years. 38 per cent. ended in defeat for the workers, 44 per cent. in some sort of compromise, while in only 18 per cent. of cases were the workers' demands conceded. With chances of victory as slim as this (and taking into account the suffering for the strikers and their families

53 A History Of Labor In Modern Japan, Iwao F. Ayusawa, Honolulu, 1966, p 99.

54 Sakai Toshihiko claimed in an article which was written in 1917 that the Yūaikai had 60,000 members ('Ueberblick über die sozialistische Bewegung in Japan bis 1917', Sakai, Die Kommunistische Internationale No. 16, 1921, p 154). Most later writers estimate the Yūaikai's membership as being far fewer. Ōkōchi Kazuo says it had 27,000 members in March 1917 (Kurai Tanimu No Rōdō Undō - The Labour Movement In The Dark Valley, Ōkōchi Kazuo, Tōkyō, 1973, p 7). Sumiya Mikio gives a figure of 30,000 for 1919 (Social Impact Of Industrialization In Japan, M. Sumiya, Tōkyō, 1963, p 158).

55 Nihon Anakizumu Rōdō Undō Shi (History Of The Anarchist Labour Movement In Japan), Hagiwara Shintarō, Tōkyō, 1969, p 103.

TABLE 11.⁵⁶

Year	No. of Labour Disputes	Outcome of Disputes		
		Workers' Demands Conceded	Compromise	Defeat for the Workers
1914	50	8	22	20
1915	64	17	21	26
1916	108	17	39	52
1917	398	87	167	144
1918	417	60	205	152

56 Ibid., p 102.

which work stoppages entailed), it is clear that only the dire straits in which the workers found themselves could have led to the upsurge in the class struggle which the closing years of the First World War brought with them.

The Rice Riots

As has been seen, the effects of the Russo-Japanese War gave rise to a high incidence of labour disputes in Japan in 1907 and to a number of violent clashes between workers and the state. Following this, the labour movement in Japan was becalmed for several years. When the inflation associated with the First World War started to erode workers' wages, however, the intensity of the class struggle was raised to a new pitch. The incidence of strikes towards the end of the First World War was far greater than the level recorded in 1907 and the scale of the violence entailed in the rice riots of August/September 1918 made the insurrections at Ashio and Besshi 11 years before seem like storms in a teacup. The strikes and riots of 1917/1918 demonstrated to the socialists once more the aggressive potential of the working class, and the spontaneous nature of many of these struggles was taken as fresh confirmation of the anarchist and syndicalist lessons which had been drawn from the earlier disturbances which followed the Russo-Japanese War. Later, when Bolshevik influences started to be felt with some force in Japan, other lessons (such as the supposed need for a vanguard party) were to be drawn from upheavals such as the rice riots. The initial reaction of many socialists in Japan to the rice riots as they actually took place, though, was that they provided striking proof once again of the impact which direct action could make. As the young syndicalist Nabeyama Sadachika - later to become a founder member of the Nihon Kyōsantō (Communist Party of Japan) - discovered when he witnessed the rice riots in Ōsaka:

.... the strength of mass action on the streets was brought home to me. Even unorganised crowds, which congregated from where I did not know, once they were involved in violence on the streets, demonstrated an intense destructive power. My heart raced as I wondered whether, given the right opportunity, this could lead to revolution.

57

The rice riots started in Toyama prefecture, which faces the Sea of Japan, as a protest by fisherwomen against the price of rice. Inspired by the women's action, protests and demonstrations spread throughout more than 30 prefectures over the next 1½ months and took in many of the major cities in Japan, including Kōbe, Kyōto, Nagoya, Ōsaka and Tōkyō. It was estimated that 236,000 people took part in the riots in Ōsaka alone, and perhaps 10 millions in Japan as a whole.⁵⁸ Typically rice stores and other shops were attacked and their goods distributed. Trams, government buildings and newspaper offices were prime targets and frequently were set on fire. The houses of the rich were often threatened and relief money for the poor and the hungry was extorted from their occupants. In many cities the police were unable to cope and troops were called onto the streets. Tens of thousands were arrested and thousands subsequently prosecuted.⁵⁹ The authorities reacted with great ferocity, not a few of those convicted of fire-raising receiving death sentences, for example. More than 100 demonstrators were killed in the course of the riots themselves.⁶⁰

The bald statistics alone cannot possibly convey the impact which the rice riots had on many of the socialists. In Ōsaka on 12 August 1918 it actually seemed "as though a revolution had really come."⁶¹ On the

57 Watashi Wa Kyōsantō O Suteta (I Abandoned The Communist Party), Nabeyama Sadachika, Tōkyō, 1949, p 31.

58 'The Struggles Of The People In Recent Japan', Ii Kei, Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) Vol. IV, No. 3, October 1921, p 13 (English columns).

59 Anakizumu Undō Nenpyō (Chronological Table Of The Anarchist Movement), Hagiwara Shintarō, Tōkyō, 1970, p 26.

60 The Japanese Communist Party, 1922-1945, George M. Beckmann and Okubo Genji, Stanford, 1969, p 17.

61 'The Struggles Of The People In Recent Japan', Ii Kei, Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) Vol. IV, No. 3, October 1921, p 12 (English columns).

same day in Kōbe a gigantic crowd of some 50,000⁶² gathered on the bank of the River Minato and then moved off towards the commercial district of the city. About 1000 police were mobilised and they threw up several cordons to contain the crowds, but the press of bodies was too strong and the demonstrators broke through, smashing shop windows as they advanced. Eventually they had a company which had been making large profits out of its dealings in rice surrounded.

For a time, there was an ominous suspense. Then, the crowd with fearful battle cries rushed to the building. Desperate resistance of police cordons was of no count. Burning faggots began to fly into the building through smashed windows. Oil cans and rags dipped in kerosene (sic) were also finding their way into it. The spacious building was, at last, all aflame. The crowd threw up a mighty cry of victory. The police forces now stood off behind the crowd, confounded and powerless.

63

After this the crowds spread out, helping themselves to rice from several other rice dealers, setting fire to other company offices and to the houses of the rich. Rioting continued in Kōbe for another 2 days, troops being used to crush the demonstrations.

The great rice riots of August/September 1918 were by no means exclusively confined to the working class. Yet workers did play a prominent role in some of the disturbances (especially those in the big cities) and certainly the riots threw some of the major capitalist enterprises in Japan into a panic. Large companies such as Mitsui and Iwasaki contributed millions of yen towards relief work, started various charity schemes, and even opened some of their privately owned parks to the public.⁶⁴ All of these moves were gestures to placate a still young working class which had actually done little more than flex its muscles.

62 Akamatsu, op. cit., p 152.

63 'The Struggles Of The People In Recent Japan', Ii Kei, Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) Vol. IV, No. 3, October 1921, p 12 (English columns).

64 Akamatsu, op. cit., p 154.

The fact was that, whatever else might have goaded workers and peasants into direct action against the rice speculators and others, it certainly was not an understanding of socialism, still less a determination to overthrow capitalism and to establish a socialist society. Capitalism was safer in Japan in 1918 than many of the principal capitalists themselves could realise, for the rice riots were expressions of workers' and peasants' despair and not of zeal for socialism. To argue that the rice riots lacked a socialist potential, however, is not to denigrate these heroic events in the history of the Japanese working class. The riots were a massive protest against the extreme exploitation which workers, tenant farmers and others were suffering. However far short of a socialist revolution they fell, the riots still managed to dent the confidence of Japanese capital, if only for a while. The rice riots were, in other words, a fitting ending to a period in which the direct action of the working class formed the essential background, without which anarchist and syndicalist influences from abroad might well have been able to exert far less influence than they did on socialist thought in Japan.

CHAPTER 8.

Kōtoku Shūsui And The American Connection

During the Russo-Japanese War Kōtoku Shūsui had started to correspond with Albert Johnson, a veteran activist living in San Francisco. Not a great deal is known about Albert Johnson, but he was evidently already an old man (probably in his seventies) when Kōtoku visited the USA in 1905/1906 and is said to have formerly worked as a sailor on one of the ships which plied between San Francisco and Oakland in California.¹ It is not even absolutely certain whether Johnson was himself an anarchist², but what is beyond doubt is that he played an important role in introducing Kōtoku to anarchist thought. It is clear from the correspondence which passed between the two men in 1904 and 1905 that Johnson sent Kōtoku a copy of Peter Kropotkin's Fields, Factories And Workshops³, as well as a picture of Kropotkin⁴ and his address in Britain, where he lived in exile.⁵ In a letter to Johnson dated 5 September 1905, one also finds Kōtoku thanking Johnson for a copy of John R. Kelso's Government Analyzed, and adding: "I think it is a very valuable book and I will

- 1 Zaibei Shakaishugisha Museifushugisha Enkaku (History Of The Socialists And Anarchists Resident In America), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, p 19.
- 2 Ishigaki Eitarō is on record as saying that Albert Johnson was a prominent figure in the San Francisco anarchist groups (Ibid., p 19) and Hippolyte Havel described Johnson as the "veteran Anarchist of California" when Kōtoku's letters to Albert Johnson were published in Mother Earth after Kōtoku's death. (Kotoku Shusui, F. G. Notehelfer, Cambridge, 1971, p 123.) Havel in particular ought to be a reliable source, since from 1900 - when he accompanied Emma Goldman to the USA - he was a very long-standing anarchist in America. On the other hand, Oka Shigeki claimed that Johnson was not an anarchist but a freethinker. (Zaibei Shakaishugisha Museifushugisha Enkaku - History Of The Socialists And Anarchists Resident In America, Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, p 19.) Oka emigrated to the USA in 1899 and, coming from the same part of Japan as Kōtoku, knew Kōtoku well.
- 3 Letter to Albert Johnson dated 10 August 1905. Collected in Kōtoku Shūsui No Nikki To Shokan (The Diaries And Letters Of Kotoku Shusui), Shiota Shōbee (ed.), Tōkyō, 1965, p 433.
- 4 Letter to Albert Johnson dated 25 November 1904. Collected in Ibid., p 430.
- 5 Letter to Albert Johnson dated 30 December 1904. Collected in Ibid., p 431.

learn many things of the evil of government and the good of Anarchy from it."⁶

Prior to making contact with Albert Johnson, Kōtoku had generally been hostile towards anarchism. His writings had contained frequent references to anarchism as a "virus"⁷ and as a "poison"⁸ and, in typical social-democratic style, he had tended to carelessly identify all anarchists with terrorists.⁹ Stopped by the police from making a speech at a public meeting in September 1902, Kōtoku had been strongly critical of the authorities for failing to distinguish between 'socialism' and anarchism and for indiscriminately seeking to suppress both.¹⁰ Yet, having corresponded with Johnson for several months and having read Fields, Factories And Workshops for a second time during his term of imprisonment from February-July 1905, Kōtoku was to write to Albert Johnson on 10 August 1905 that he "had gone (to Sugamo Prison) as a Marxian Socialist and returned as a radical Anarchist."¹¹ Although this claimed adherence first to Marxism and then to anarchism needs to be treated with a certain amount of scepticism on both counts, what is clear is that by the summer of 1905 Kōtoku's interest in anarchism had certainly been aroused. Interested in anarchist ideas, Kōtoku wanted to know more, and the best way of informing himself seemed to be to travel abroad. Kōtoku confided to Johnson that he intended "to live in

6 Ibid., pp 435-436.

7 'Museifutō No Seizō' ('The Making Of Anarchists'), Kōtoku Shūsui. Collected in Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū (Collected Works Of Kotoku Shusui), Editorial Committee for the Collected Works of Kotoku Shusui, Tōkyō, 1968, Vol. III, p 324.

8 Ibid., p 325.

9 'Museifutō Ni Tai Suru No Saku' ('Measures Against The Anarchists'), Kōtoku Shūsui. Collected in Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū (Collected Works Of Kotoku Shusui), Editorial Committee for the Collected Works of Kotoku Shusui, Tōkyō, 1970, Vol. II, pp 386-394.

10 'Shakaishugi To Seifu' ('Socialism And The Government'), Kōtoku Shūsui. Collected in Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū (Collected Works Of Kotoku Shusui), Editorial Committee for the Collected Works of Kotoku Shusui, Tōkyō, 1968, Vol. IV, p 132.

11 Shiota, op. cit., p 433.

America and Europe during several years" for three main purposes. These were to improve his English and learn other languages, to criticise the Japanese emperor without being silenced, and to "visit the leaders of many foreign revolutionists and learn something from their movements."¹² More realistically, in a letter to Oka Shigeki in the USA dated 4 October 1905, Kōtoku talked about visiting the San Francisco area for 6-12 months. To Oka, Kōtoku gave one of his reasons for wanting to live in the USA for a period as the need he felt to be able to discuss freely the new ideas he was becoming aware of:

Especially since within Japan there isn't the slightest freedom of speech or association, I think I would like to experience free discussion in a free country such as you are in.

13

With his poor state of health as an additional reason for taking a holiday, Kōtoku raised the money to travel to the USA and sailed from Yokohama on 14 November 1905. As reading matter for the journey, he took with him Kropotkin's Memoirs Of A Revolutionist and he noted in his diary that, when he read Kropotkin's "comments on the clash between Marx and Bakunin" in the First International, he "felt many deep emotions".¹⁴ Reflecting on the situation of the socialist movement in Japan, another entry in the diary read:

I am certainly going (to America) as a fugitive from a defeated army, who seeks a refuge to hide himself from the world. The way forward, leading to a time when we shall be able to make a fresh assault, is not clear.

15

Albert Johnson and others were waiting to greet Kōtoku on his arrival in San Francisco on 5 December 1905. Based first in San Francisco and then in Oakland, the next 6 months were to involve Kōtoku in a ceaseless round of meetings and discussions with different sections of the

12 Ibid., pp 433-434.

13 Ibid., p 396.

14 Ibid., pp 131-132.

15 Ibid., p 130.

socialist movement in California. By the time he returned to Yokohama on 23 June 1906, his ideas had been significantly changed by what he had learned while in the USA. The first indication that his views had altered came in a speech he made on 'Sekai Kakumei Undō No Chōryū' ('The Tide Of The World Revolutionary Movement') at a public meeting held in Tōkyō on 28 June 1906 to welcome him back to Japan.¹⁶ Kōtoku's speech created a sensation among his audience by virtue of its questioning the usefulness of imitating the SPD and applying an electoral strategy in Japan. Later he followed it up with a major article which was published on the front page of the daily Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) under the title 'Yo Ga Shisō No Henka' ('The Change In My Thought'). Here the importance of his experiences while in the USA was spelt out:

I want to make an honest confession.
My views on the methods and policy to
be adopted by the socialist movement
started to change a little from the time
that I went into prison a couple of
years ago. Then, during my travels
last year, they changed dramatically.
If I recall how I was a few years back,
I get the feeling that I am now almost
like a different person.

17

Given Kōtoku's stature within the socialist movement in Japan¹⁸, the fact that he had adopted a new approach was bound to have widespread repercussions among his comrades. Many of the younger socialists were quick to take up the new ideas and soon Kōtoku's criticisms of social-democracy were being stridently echoed in the socialist press. Hence it is no exaggeration to say that the influences which acted on Kōtoku during his stay in the USA were important not only for him personally but for

16 Hikari (Light) No. 16, 5 July 1906, p 1.

17 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 16, 5 February 1907, p 1. (This article is translated as Appendix 4.)

18 Sakai Toshihiko wrote in the English-language columns of Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism No. 4, 1 July 1906, p 80): ".... Comrade Kotoku is coming back from San Francisco. He is the greatest figure of our socialist movement."

the future development of the entire socialist movement in Japan.

There is thus good reason to examine those American influences carefully.

Kōtoku arrived in the USA at a time when the socialist movement there was highly active. The Socialist Party of America (SPA) was a mass party whose different factions were engaged in a lively debate about the nature of socialism and how it could be achieved. Smaller and more principled than the SPA, the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) was dominated by the formidable Daniel De Leon. A new force to be reckoned with was the militant trade union grouping the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), whose founding conference had been held in Chicago in 1905. Then there were numerous anarchist groups, small and often disorganised, but boasting such talented propagandists as Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. In addition, there were large numbers of European revolutionaries living in exile in the USA. One of these was Kōtoku's landlady in San Francisco, a Mrs. Fritz, who was a Russian revolutionary.¹⁹ In fact, any attempt to distinguish between the American socialist movement and the European revolutionaries resident in the USA is highly artificial. Many of the most prominent activists in the 'American' socialist movement of this period (including Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, who were mentioned above) were themselves immigrants to the USA.

The Socialist Party Of America

Despite Kōtoku Shūsui's claim in August 1905 to have become "a radical Anarchist", he lost no time after his arrival in San Francisco in December of the same year in establishing relations with the Socialist Party of America (SPA). He was present at a meeting of SPA members held on 14 December 1905²⁰ and was soon visiting the local branch of the SPA and sitting in on its discussions.²¹ On 6 January 1906 Kōtoku spoke at

19 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), I, Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 5, 20 January 1906, p 6.

20 Shiota, op. cit., p 136.

21 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), II, Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 5, 20 January 1906, p 6.

a meeting of Japanese immigrants held at the California state headquarters of the SPA in Oakland, where he shared the platform with a representative of the SPA's weekly magazine Socialist Voice. A point of interest is that Kōtoku mentions that the platform was decked out with pictures of Karl Marx, Wilhelm Liebknecht and Ferdinand Lassalle, which he found "rather splendid".²² By 20 January 1906 a letter from Kōtoku had appeared in Hikari (Light) which explained that he had now joined the SPA.²³ A further letter in the next issue of Hikari referred to a meeting held at the Golden Gate Hall in San Francisco, where George Williams - the secretary of the SPA in San Francisco - was present, and where Kōtoku spoke from the platform, advocating universal suffrage.²⁴

All this was peculiar activity for an 'anarchist', of course, and there can be no doubt that during the early part of his visit to the USA Kōtoku's ideas were in a state of flux and that he was much involved with the SPA. Quite apart from other influences which came to act on him, however, and which helped him as the weeks passed to see the SPA in a new light, there were certain features of the SPA itself which raised doubts about its supposedly socialist aspirations. On the one hand, there were the reformist policies favoured by the SPA and, on the other, the party's increasingly blatant racialism.

Whether, left to his own devices, Kōtoku would have come to realise that a majority of the SPA's members were more concerned with reforming capitalism than they were with abolishing it and replacing it with socialism must remain an open question. Certainly he had previously raised few objections to the equally reformist policies advocated by the socialist movement in Japan but, sitting in at SPA meetings, Kōtoku had been initiated by April 1906 into the heated discussions between the

22 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 7, 20 February 1906, p 2.

23 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), II, Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 5, 20 January 1906, p 6.

24 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 6, 5 February 1906, p 2.

minority of genuine socialists within the American party's ranks and its reformist majority. In a letter which he wrote to the socialists in Japan he outlined the debate taking place within the SPA.²⁵ On one side, said Kōtoku, were those who advocated "public ownership" of the monopolies and the use of the ballot box, and on the other were those who stood for "the ideal of pure socialism". He indicated their respective positions as follows:

The former say we must endeavour step by step to promote the actual interests of the working class. It is wrong simply to fix one's eyes on an ideal and disregard the real problems which are staring us in the face. The reason why the German comrades are continually gaining the upper hand and why the British comrades could gain a victory in the recent elections is because they build their electoral platforms around those practical problems which concern the workers directly.

The latter say that today's so-called nationalisation and municipalisation does not abolish the wages system. It merely replaces individual capitalists by government or local authority capitalists. Socialism insists on the complete abolition of the wages system. To support nationalisation and municipalisation under the present system means to make concessions to the social reformers and to state socialism.

Kōtoku explained to his readers in Japan that this controversy was not merely confined to the USA, but was also taking place in Europe. He saw it as a debate between utopians and realists, revolutionaries and reformers, radicals and moderates, and between those who attached greatest importance to principles and those interested above all in electoral victories. He also added that it was a problem which socialists in Japan needed to think about deeply and he expressed the hope that it would not lead to any splits within the Japanese movement

25 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 11, 20 April 1906, p 4.

in the future. Having said this, however, Kōtoku nonetheless sought to identify himself with the revolutionaries:

But if I had to choose between them,
I would hope to be idealistic,
revolutionary and radical. I do not
like lukewarm socialism, sugar and
water socialism, nor state socialism
either.

Whether this admission that he sided with the revolutionaries meant that Kōtoku had fully understood their position is not at all clear. The revolutionary wing of the SPA asserted that, as far as the working class was concerned, capital remained an exploiting agency no matter whether it was in the hands of individual capitalists or whether it was owned by the government and local authorities. As long as working men and women were separated from the means of production, they could not escape the necessity to sell their mental and physical energies for wages. And as long as workers were compelled to sell their labour power for wages, so capitalism would remain in force. Only by abolishing the wages system could capitalism itself be abolished. This was the train of thought of those within the SPA who opposed reformism, but Kōtoku's expression of sympathy for them seemed to suggest more of an emotional preference for 'revolutionary' purism than it did a sure grasp of their analysis of capitalism. Be that as it may, it could not have escaped Kōtoku's attention for long that the revolutionaries were a small minority within the SPA. Whatever his reasons for identifying with them, it must soon have become obvious that the majority of the SPA was firmly committed to reformism.

If this was not sufficient reason for becoming disillusioned with the SPA, Kōtoku could hardly have failed to be aware of the racist tendencies of many of its members. Soon after he returned to Japan a letter was sent to the SPA in the names of Kōtoku, Sakai Toshihiko and Nishikawa Kōjirō, the gist of which was given as follows in the English-language column of Hikari (Light):

We believe that the expulsion question of the Japanese laborers in California is much due to racial prejudice. The Japanese Socialist Party, therefore, hopes that the American Socialist Party will endeavor in bringing the question to a satisfactory issue in accordance with the principal object of the International Laborers' U(ni)on.* We also ask the American Socialist Party to acquaint us with its opinion as to this question.

26

This was a period when there was widespread agitation in the USA (particularly in California and the other western states) against Asian immigration and when hysterical demands were being heard to repatriate the 90,000 - 100,000²⁷ Japanese in America. Faced with this situation, Kōtoku and others called on the SPA to adhere to its supposedly internationalist principles but, although their 'Letter From Japanese Socialists To Their Comrades In The United States' was published in various socialist journals in the USA²⁸, an article in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) in February 1907 indicated that a reply had still not been received from the American party.²⁹ Mentioning that leading members of the SPA such as Morris Hillquit and Ernest Untermann had betrayed socialist principles and opportunistically supported the campaign against the Japanese, the article commented: "We are inwardly ashamed at what the American comrades have done."³⁰ By the end of

* The Japanese version of this letter makes it clear that by "International Laborers' Union" the writers meant "international workers' solidarity" ("bankoku rōdōsha danketsu").

26 'The Japanese Expulsion Question', Hikari (Light) No. 30, 15 December 1906, p 1.

27 'Socialism And Race Hatred', Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 2, 9 June 1907, p 1 (English column). These figures may be too high. The 1910 census gave the number of Japanese in the USA as 72,157 (Japanese In The United States, Yamato Ichihashi, New York, 1969, p 64).

28 The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912, Ira Kipnis, New York, 1968, p 277.

29 'Hainichi Mondai To Shakaitō' ('The Anti-Japanese Question And The Socialist Party'), Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 23, 13 February 1907, p 2.

30 Ibid., p 2.

March 1907 a further article in Heimin Shimbun was saying:

The North American socialists are diametrically opposed to Marx's dictum of "Workers of the world, unite!" and have stooped to a contemptible racial prejudice.... If the socialist party in North America approves of the lynching of negroes and the expulsion of Japanese, Koreans and Chinese, the socialist parties of the whole world should expel the North American socialists.

31

This was scathing criticism of the SPA, and deservedly so, since in March 1907 the party's National Executive Committee passed a resolution on immigration which called on socialist parties "to combat with all means at their command the willful importation of cheap foreign labor calculated to destroy labor organizations, to lower the standard of living of the working class, and to retard the ultimate realization of Socialism."³² This resolution was subsequently adopted by the SPA's National Committee (distinct from the National Executive Committee) and was submitted to the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International in August 1907. Morris Hillquit, who was one of the SPA delegates to the Stuttgart Congress, considered workers from Asian countries to be "incapable of assimilation with the workingmen of the country of their adoption."³³ Although its resolution was rejected at Stuttgart, the National Executive Committee of the SPA soon reaffirmed its racialist stand. In December 1907 it unanimously passed a resolution proposed by A. M. Simons (ironically, editor of the 'International Socialist Review') which maintained that the Second International had no authority to determine the 'tactics' of individual socialist parties and declared that the SPA "at the present time, must stand in opposition to Asiatic immigration."³⁴ Among those who voted for this resolution was Ernest

31 'Shakaishugi To Jinshu Mondai' ('Socialism And The Race Question'), 'B.D.', Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 63, 31 March 1907, p 1.

32 Kipnis, op. cit., p 277.

33 Ibid., p 277.

34 Ibid., pp 278-279.

Untermann (one of the most prominent theoreticians of the SPA), who went one stage better at the national convention of the SPA held in 1908 and announced: "I am determined that my race shall be supreme in this country and in the world."³⁵

Anti-Asian resolutions were again passed by the SPA national congress in 1910 and its national convention in 1912.³⁶ Naturally, by this stage, most of the socialists in Japan were already thoroughly disillusioned with the SPA. There is no record of their ever having received a reply to the letter sent to the SPA by Kōtoku and others³⁷ and they were no doubt in total agreement with Eugene V. Debs when in 1910 he denounced his party's opposition to immigration as being "utterly unsocialistic, reactionary, and in truth outrageous...."³⁸ However well disposed towards the SPA Kōtoku might have been initially, its reformism and racialism became utterly repellent to him.

The Socialist Labour Party

Being a much smaller organisation than the SPA, Kōtoku Shūsui and the other Japanese socialists had fewer dealings with the Socialist Labour Party (SLP). One must also bear in mind that, from the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in June 1905 up to the split which occurred in the IWW's ranks in 1908, the SLP was deeply involved in the new trade union grouping. Thus, during the time when Kōtoku Shūsui was living in the USA, the SLP was concentrating much of its energy on making a success of the IWW and this tended to partially eclipse the SLP's role as an independent political party. During this period SLP members were at least as busy recruiting for the IWW as they were

35 Ibid., p 280.

36 American Labor Unions And Politics, 1900-1918, Marc Karson, Carbondale, 1958, pp 188-189.

37 Kipnis, op. cit., p 277.

38 Karson, op. cit., p 189.

attempting to win converts for their own party, and certainly most politically inclined Japanese immigrants in the USA appear to have had far more contacts with the IWW than with the SLP.

Nevertheless, this is not to say that Kōtoku and the other Japanese socialists had no knowledge of the SLP whatsoever. In view of the SLP's hostility towards anarchism, it is ironical that the person who first put Kōtoku in touch with Albert Johnson appears to have been a member of the SLP. This was Leopold Fleischmann, a newspaper reporter who worked in China and Japan during and after the Russo-Japanese War.³⁹ Described by Hikari (Light) as a member of the "Indepen(den)t Labor party of America", he raised some money in 1905 among those whom Hikari ambiguously called "the comrades of America" to help the socialist movement in Japan⁴⁰ and contributed ¥10 of his own money in April 1906.⁴¹ When Kōtoku called at the headquarters of the SLP in San Francisco on 19 February 1906⁴², the members of the SLP with whom he talked evidently knew Leopold Fleischmann.⁴³ As far as one can tell from the letter which Kōtoku wrote to Hikari (Light) about this visit, his discussion with members of the SLP centred on the anti-Japanese movement in the USA and on the IWW. The SLP was solidly opposed to racialism but its San Francisco members' explanations regarding the IWW cannot have been totally successful, since Kōtoku seems to have come away with the impression that the organisation they were talking about was called the "Sekai Rōdōsha Dōmei" ("World Workers' League").

39 'Rōzannu De Atta Kōtoku Shūsui' ('Kotoku Shusui Whom I Met In Lausanne'), Ōsawa Masamichi, Supplement to Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū (Collected Works Of Kotoku Shusui), Editorial Committee for the Collected Works of Kotoku Shusui, Tōkyō, 1972, Vol. VIII, p 6 and Notehelper, op. cit., p 123.

40 Hikari (Light) No. 7, 20 February 1906, p 1 (English column).

41 Hikari (Light) No. 11, 20 April 1906, p 7.

42 Shiota, op. cit., p 141.

43 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 10, 5 April 1906, p 7.

It is also interesting to note that, despite the fact that he had felt "many deep emotions" on reading about Bakunin's struggle with Marx in the First International, Kōtoku bought a picture of Karl Marx on his visit to the SLP offices and sent it to his comrades in Japan as a souvenir. In his letter to Hikari (Light), he expressed the hope that they would hang Marx's picture on the wall of their meeting place so that it could serve as a source of inspiration.⁴⁴ Here was further proof that, at this stage, Kōtoku was still far from being totally committed to anarchism.

Kōtoku does not seem to have called on the SLP in San Francisco again after his visit in February 1906 but the SLP, for its part, did make some efforts to influence Japanese immigrants to the USA. When a group of Japanese socialists in California started to bring out a journal called Kakumei (Revolution) in December 1906, the well-known SLP member Olive Johnson was quick to write to them.⁴⁵ Her letter roundly denounced the racialist SPA:

The Socialist Party of the United States, catering to the labor unions for support at the ballot box, has repeatedly put itself on record officially as contradicting its international declaration, by taking a stand against the Mongolians.*

Olive Johnson went on to explain that, in contrast to the SPA, the SLP was genuinely internationalist and she called on Japanese socialists in the USA not to remain apart but to integrate themselves into the general labour movement in America.

There exists at this time in this country enough Japanese Socialists to form a nucleus of an organization. The glimpses

* By "Mongolians" Olive Johnson apparently meant Japanese, Chinese and Korean immigrants to the USA.

44 Ibid., p 7.

45 'Socialist Labor Party To Japanese', Olive M. Johnson, Kakumei (Revolution) No. 3, 1 April 1907 (English columns). Collected in Zaibei Shakaishugisha Museifushugisha Enkaku (History Of The Socialists And Anarchists Resident In America), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, p 478.

we have had of them personally or through their press warrants them to be militant, class-conscious, scientific Socialists. But they are, or rather have so far remained distinctly "Japanese Socialists," out of the sphere of contact of the American labor movement. This may be a fault, neither of them nor the movement; it is simply that a relationship has never been effected. Yet, one thing can never be impressed too strongly on any revolutionary group, club or assembly. While it remains simply a group, club or assembly, secret or otherwise, it is no part of the labor movement, even should its members be as clear upon revolutionary principles as Marx himself.

The revolutionary movement presupposes an active and militant participation in the class struggle which is nation-wide and world-wide. A group participates of the nature of a conspiracy, or degenerates into a literary debating society, where individual hobbies find vent. It is the duty of the Japanese Socialists to ally themselves with the general movement of this country.

Beyond all doubt there is an element of truth in what the opponents of Japanese immigration say. This mass of people, unacquainted with our customs and (1) language, present a serious problem, indeed. But to the Socialist the solution of this problem consists, not in keeping them out of the country, out of the unions, and out of the jobs. We S.L.P. and I.W.W. Socialists are looking to teaching the Japanese workers class-consciousness instead of race consciousness, and to organize them for their own emancipation. But it is just at this point where the most serious aspect of the problem presents itself. The mass of Mongolians is almost inaccessible to us on account of the great differences of the languages. Therefore the great mission of the Japanese Socialists in this country, who understand the two languages, should be to form the connecting link between the American labor movement and the Japanese workers. They must carry the message of American Socialism and Industrial Unionism to the Japanese-American working class. If they fail in this they have failed in their duty to themselves, to the Japanese workers, and to the rest of the proletariat.

Olive Johnson urged Japanese socialists to affiliate to the SLP and to join the IWW. Yet, although some Japanese immigrants did join the IWW, few - if any - entered the SLP. By the time Olive Johnson's letter was published in April 1907, the group around Kakumei (Revolution) was already leaning towards anarchism and to the type of political terrorism practised by the Russian Social Revolutionaries (SRs). Olive Johnson was hardly the person to understand the attraction which such ideas could have for Japanese socialists in that period and to patiently and tactfully argue her own case. Her contemptuous dismissal of anything which smacked of anarchism is well expressed by the title of one of her later works - The Virus Of Anarchy: Bakuninism Versus Marxism* - and nothing came of her overture to the group around Kakumei (Revolution).

Indeed, the SLP as a whole was famous for confusing adherence to principles with belligerence, a style of politics which was set by its leader Daniel De Leon. The effect which a meeting with Daniel De Leon could have was well illustrated by the case of Kaneko Kiichi, the former student at Harvard who now worked as a journalist in Chicago. In a letter to the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) in February 1907, he contrasted the SLP with the SPA. Whereas the SPA was tending towards a discriminatory policy against Japanese immigrants, he wrote, "The Socialist Labour Party has allied itself with the Japanese and has run public meetings etc."⁴⁶ After meeting Daniel De Leon at an IWW conference, however, and apparently having been coldly received, Kaneko wrote to the Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) later in the same year in a very different tone. He urged the socialists in Japan to avoid letting splits occur on the basis of clashes of personality. Socialists should divide only over issues of principle,

* Co-authored with Arnold Petersen.

46 'Shikago Dayori' ('Letter From Chicago'), Kaneko Kiichi, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 20, 9 February 1907, p 1.

he maintained, and not for reasons of personal antagonism. Kaneko then elaborated on this theme by referring at considerable length to the SLP and Daniel De Leon. He claimed that the SLP's rivalry with the SPA arose solely from personal issues, De Leon's character playing an important part in these.⁴⁷

This criticism was decidedly unfair. There were plenty of principled reasons for the SLP to oppose the SPA. Yet Kaneko was apparently so incensed by De Leon's abrasive attitude that he allowed his anger to get the better of him and was reluctant to give the SLP due credit even for its stand against racialism. He conceded that not a few of the Japanese in San Francisco sympathised with the SLP because of its censure of the racialist SPA, but he argued that the SLP's hostility towards the SPA had far more to do with sectarian cussedness - with opposition for opposition's sake - than it had with the struggle against racialism.⁴⁸ Again, this criticism was unjust. Whatever its faults as a political organisation, nothing could detract from the fact that the SLP refused to abandon internationalism and follow the SPA in trading principles for popularity. It was inexcusable that Kaneko should have caricatured the SLP in the way he did and the SLP must have been hindered in its attempts to communicate its ideas to Japanese socialists by the misrepresentation it suffered at his hands. Yet, however reprehensible Kaneko's malicious description of the SLP might have been, the claim that the SLP's propaganda was mean and spiteful occurred too often (and not only from Japanese sources) for it to have been totally misplaced. Daniel De Leon was a past master at making enemies and the very ungenerosity of Kaneko's criticism of the SLP illustrates the fact that his meeting with De Leon must have been a

47 'Bunpa Ron Ni Tsuite Nihon No Shodōshi Ni Tsugu' ('A Word To The Comrades In Japan On The Question Of Factions'), Kaneko Kiichi, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 13, 5 December 1907, p 11.

48 Ibid., p 11.

traumatic experience if it caused him to revise so drastically his previously favourable opinion of the SLP. Unfortunately, the SLP cultivated a political style which neutralised much of what was valuable in that party's political theory.

The Industrial Workers Of The World

At the time when the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) was formed in June 1905, the principal trade union organisation in the USA was the American Federation of Labour (AFL), which catered for a small minority of skilled workers and was content to leave the rest of the labour force unorganised. If most members of the AFL regarded unskilled workers with an aristocratic disdain, they positively loathed the immigrants from Asia. At the 1904 AFL convention a resolution was passed which demanded that the US government extend the existing Chinese Exclusion Act to cover immigrants from Japan and Korea as well.⁴⁹ Three years later in 1907 the then US president, Theodore Roosevelt, negotiated what was called a "Gentlemen's Agreement" with the Japanese government, which virtually put an end to immigration from Japan. The AFL bore a large part of the responsibility for this agreement, its leader Samuel Gompers having repeatedly attacked "the Japanese and all.... Asiatics" and having declared that "the American workmen, organized and unorganized, have discovered that the Japanese in the United States are as baneful to the interests of American labor and American civilization as are the Chinese."⁵⁰ Not only did the AFL campaign for an end to Japanese immigration, but Gompers favoured discrimination against those Japanese who had already arrived in the USA. Gompers publicly approved the practice, which was followed in San Francisco, of "segregating Japanese children from white children in

49 History Of The Labor Movement In The United States, Philip S. Foner, New York, 1964, Vol. III, p 270.

50 Ibid., p 270.

the public schools"⁵¹ and he wrote that it was "against the entire policy of the American Federation of Labor to admit to membership in its affiliated organizations either Chinese or Japanese."⁵²

The IWW was established on entirely different principles to the AFL, seeking to break down the distinctions both between skilled and unskilled workers and between 'native American' and immigrant workers. The formation of the IWW was noticed in Japan, a report on its founding conference appearing in the 'Sekai No Shimbun' ('Newspapers Of The World') column of Chokugen (Straight Talking) on 27 August 1905⁵³, and it was welcomed by many Japanese in the USA. The Japanese-language North American Times published in Seattle an editorial on the IWW in the spring of 1906, which proclaimed that "In the American history of labor there has never been such a union that may contain the laborers of every nationality in its membership."⁵⁴ The same newspaper also reported:

A few days ago, two men who represent the Industrial Workers of the World called on the Times office, informing us that they are proposing to hold a mass meeting of laborers.... on May 20 (1906).... The special feature of the gathering is that every worker, no matter whether he is Japanese or Chinese, is invited. Here he can raise his voice and express his opinion.... At this juncture we urge upon our brothers from Japan to consider the matter earnestly and those who believe in it should join it at once. This new organization does not exclude you as others do, but they heartily welcome you to join. Don't lose this chance.

55

Soon after Kōtoku Shūsui arrived in San Francisco, three members of the IWW called at his lodgings and invited him to speak at one of

51 Ibid., p 270.

52 Ibid., p 276.

53 Chokugen (Straight Talking) No. 30, 27 August 1905, p 3.

54 The I.W.W: A Study Of American Syndicalism, P. F. Brissenden, New York, 1957, p 209.

55 Foner, op. cit., Vol. IV, p 70.

their meetings.⁵⁶ Whether it was the same meeting or not one cannot be sure, but on 21 January 1906 Kōtoku spoke at a meeting in Oakland to commemorate the first anniversary of the massacre in front of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg on 9 January 1905. One of the other speakers at this meeting was someone called Anthony, who represented the IWW and spoke on the need for revolutionary (rather than conciliatory) trade unions. Besides Kōtoku and Anthony, others who addressed the audience of more than 400, which included 30-40 Japanese, were Olive Johnson of the SLP and Austin Lewis of the SPA (who greatly impressed Kōtoku with his eloquence).⁵⁷ After Kōtoku had returned to Japan, some of those he had associated with during his time in the USA apparently joined the IWW. In a statement reproduced in Shakai Shimbun (Social News) in 1907, Oka Shigeki wrote that, in order to fight discrimination against Japanese workers, he and his comrades had joined the "Sekai Rōdō Dōmeikai" ("World Labour League") and had organised their own branch.⁵⁸ It seems probable that by the "World Labour League" Oka meant the IWW. Also, the Kakumei (Revolution) group are said to have aided the IWW in translating some of its publications into Japanese.⁵⁹

It is difficult to estimate with any confidence the number of Japanese immigrants to the USA who joined the IWW, but the overall number cannot have been very large. At the 1907 conference of the IWW, a delegate from California called George Speed argued that "The whole fight against the Japanese is the fight of the middle class of California, in which they employ the labor faker to back it up." Even he had to admit, however, that it was "practically useless.... under present conditions for the Industrial Workers of the World to take any steps" to organise Japanese workers. The IWW, insisted George Speed, already

56 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), II, Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 5, 20 January 1906, p 6.

57 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 8, 5 March 1906, p 2.

58 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 12, 18 August 1907, p 3.

59 Foner, op. cit., Vol. IV, p 82.

had its hands full as it was, without devoting its energy to the additional massive task of attempting to bridge the language barrier and unionise workers from Japan.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, the IWW certainly did as much as its limited resources allowed to recruit Japanese workers into its ranks. Commenting on an article by Kaneko Kiichi which had appeared in the second issue of Kakumei (Revolution), the IWW's Industrial Union Bulletin wrote:

Industrial Unionists hold that the workman born in Japan is equally eligible to membership in this organization with the workman born in Italy or England. As a matter of fact, Japanese workmen already hold cards in the I.W.W., and more are coming. They are welcome.

61

Guided more by the heart than the head, and probably totally ignorant of the real situation in Japan, the Industrial Union Bulletin then added:

In a little while, as events are happening, we will have strong local unions of the I.W.W. in the principal industrial centers of Japan(!)

62

One of the IWW's pamphlets with the title Japanese And Chinese Exclusion Or Industrial Organization, Which? also referred to its Japanese members. This pamphlet presented a number of "Cold Facts for Consideration by the Working Class". These were:

1. The Japanese and Chinese are here.
2. Thousands of them are wage workers.
3. They have the same commodity to sell as other workers - labor power.
4. They are as anxious as you, to get as much as possible. This is proven by the fact that they have come to this country. For what? To better their conditions.

63

60 Brissenden, op. cit., pp 208-209.

61 Kakumei (Revolution) No. 3, 1 April 1907 (English columns). Collected in Zaibei Shakaishugisha Museifushugisha Enkaku (History Of The Socialists And Anarchists Resident In America), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, p 485.

62 Ibid., p 485.

63 Foner, op. cit., Vol. IV, p 82.

Japanese And Chinese Exclusion Or Industrial Organization,

Which? concluded:

We the Industrial Workers of the World have organized the Japanese and Chinese in lumber camps, on the farms, mines and railroads, and the United Mine Workers of America have organized Japanese in the coal fields of Wyoming. This is proof that they can be organized.

64

Even with only a limited number of members of Japanese origin, contacts were established between the IWW in the USA and socialists in Japan. Nosaka Sanzō, chairman of the central committee of the Nihon Kyōsantō (Communist Party of Japan), recalled in his memoirs how, in the early years of the Taishō period*, "IWW pamphlets came into Japan too by all manner of routes. I also read several of them and sympathised with some of the points they made."⁶⁵ Interviewed in 1974, the old anarchist Wada Eitarō recollected a letter which he and his comrades received from Bill Haywood of the IWW, asking them to block a possible visit to Japan by the AFL leader Samuel Gompers.⁶⁶ As it happened, this visit by Gompers never materialised. Sympathy for the IWW in Japan was demonstrated in December 1917 when Shin Shakai (New Society) published an appeal for donations to support 166 members of the IWW who had been imprisoned for opposing the First World War. These 166 members of the IWW had all been arrested in a mass round-up on 28 September 1917 and charged with offences under the US Espionage Act of June 1917. Other arrests of IWW members followed and many received long terms of imprisonment. Shin Shakai (New Society) attempted to launch a campaign in support of the IWW within the Japanese working class, but this was prevented by the authorities. In the end, the socialists in Japan were able to send the IWW only a little money collected

* See glossary.

64 Ibid., p 82.

65 Fūsetsu No Ayumi (Persevering Against Hardship), Nosaka Sanzō, Tōkyō, 1974, Vol. I, pp 291-292.

66 Interview with Wada Eitarō on 28 April 1974 in Tōkyō.

from among themselves and not the proceeds of a mass campaign, as they had originally intended.⁶⁷

Although it is possible to show that the IWW exerted a certain amount of influence on Japanese socialists, it is not an easy task to identify the precise nature of that influence. The IWW which Kōtoku came in contact with in the USA was a far from uniform organisation, with anarcho-syndicalists, members of the SLP, and many other elements in its ranks. Even after the split in the organisation in 1908, which put an end to the SLP's participation, the theoretical basis for the IWW's trade union activity remained ill-defined. The preamble to the IWW's constitution affirmed that "By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old"⁶⁸, yet the content of this "new society" was never made very clear. Although the IWW was committed to eradicating some of the components of capitalism, such as the state, it was intent on perpetuating the division of workers by industries brought about by capitalism. Thus its statement that "The industrial union furnishes a means of carrying on industry when capitalism is overthrown, and predicates the disappearance of the state.... Present political-geographical divisions will.... die out under an industrially managed form of society" was tempered with the additional comment that "Industrial divisions alone will remain".⁶⁹ In the speech on 'The Tide Of The World Revolutionary Movement' which he made in Tōkyō immediately after returning from the USA, Kōtoku explained the method "which the comrades in Europe and America are adopting as the means for the future revolution". This was the "so-called general strike".⁷⁰ The IWW must have figured prominently among "the comrades in Europe and America" whom

67 Arahata Kanson Chosaku Shū (Collected Works Of Arahata Kanson), Tōkyō, 1976, Vol. II, p 21 and Kanson Jiden (Kanson's Autobiography), Arahata Kanson, Tōkyō, 1974, Vol. I, p 229.

68 Foner, op. cit., Vol. IV, p 142.

69 Ibid., p 142.

70 Hikari (Light) No. 16, 5 July 1906, p 1.

Kōtoku had in mind when he made this speech, and it is clear too that the IWW came to provide many other socialists in Japan besides Kōtoku with an example of how a militant trade union should conduct itself. Whatever the lessons in trade union militancy which the IWW might have been able to provide, however, what the IWW certainly could not teach the socialists in Japan was how socialism was supposed to arise from out of the general strike. The IWW itself always remained uncertain on this point. As the Industrial Worker put it on 5 February 1910:

To try to settle the question of 'just what we will do on the day after the general strike' is like a man with black hair trying to foretell just when his hair will turn gray. Time alone will tell.

71

Many of the socialists in Japan who became sympathetic to syndicalism were prepared to follow the IWW here, and they too held this vital question in abeyance. The "general strike" was invoked as though it were a magic wand, one wave of which would solve all the problems confronting the working class, while the question of what a socialist society would entail was rarely considered.

The Anarchists

No matter whether Albert Johnson was himself an anarchist or not, it has already been shown how he introduced Kōtoku Shūsui to anarchist thought. During the several months Kōtoku spent in San Francisco in 1905/1906, he saw a great deal of Johnson and became very friendly with the old man. Although the diary which Kōtoku kept throughout his visit to the USA⁷² indicates the many hours he spent in Albert Johnson's company, it unfortunately gives few clues to the subjects of their conversations. It is nevertheless reasonable to assume that Albert Johnson talked with Kōtoku a great deal about anarchism, especially since the letters which

71 Foner, op. cit., Vol. IV, p 141 (emphasis in original).

72 Shiota, op. cit., pp 127-146.

Kōtoku wrote to Johnson after his return to Japan were often about anarchism and referred to anarchist periodicals which Johnson had sent him. In a letter dated 3 February 1908, Kōtoku thanked Albert Johnson for the Blade, whose name suggests an anarchist affiliation.⁷³ Two years later he again thanked Johnson for a copy of the Firebrand, an American anarchist publication which Emma Goldman mentioned in her autobiography⁷⁴ and which Kōtoku rated as "a very good magazine".⁷⁵ Another letter which Kōtoku wrote after the Kakumei (Revolution) group had been organised among Japanese immigrants in California also reveals the high regard he had for Albert Johnson's political abilities:

Have you seen the Japanese students in Berkeley who are publishing a magazine which caused a sensation last January? They are all clever and devoted libertarians. I hope the future revolution in Japan will be caused by their hands. Please teach them, educate them, instruct them.

76

Albert Johnson's influence on the socialist movement in Japan did not even end with Kōtoku's execution in 1911. A secret police report which covered the period May 1917 - May 1918 referred to an exchange of letters between Sakai Toshihiko and Albert Johnson immediately after the Russian revolution, by which time Johnson must have been a very old man.⁷⁷

In addition to his almost daily contact with Albert Johnson for much of the time he was in the USA, Kōtoku also started to read Emma Goldman's (and later Alexander Berkman's) magazine Mother Earth.⁷⁸

73 Ibid., p 452.

74 Living My Life, Emma Goldman, London, 1932, p 178.

75 Letter to Albert Johnson dated 11 April 1910. Collected in Shiota, op. cit., p 456.

76 Letter to Albert Johnson dated 3 May 1907. Collected in Ibid., p 444.

77 Tokubetsu Yō Shisatsunin Jōsei Ippan (Outline Of The Situation Of Persons Requiring Special Observation), Research Association for Materials Relating to the History of Modern Japan (eds.), Tōkyō, 1962, Vol. III, p 191.

78 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 11, 20 April 1906, p 4.

Mother Earth became one of the most popular anarchist journals from abroad in Japan and was eagerly read by socialists who understood English.⁷⁹ Material from it was translated into Japanese⁸⁰ and Emma Goldman was much admired, especially when Japanese socialists resident in the USA sent back first-hand accounts of her passionate delivery when she addressed public meetings.⁸¹ Kōtoku does not seem to have met Emma Goldman while in the USA but he corresponded with her and Alexander Berkman after his return to Japan.⁸² Another American anarchist who had contact with Japanese socialists was Julius Hoffman. A secret police report referred (without specifying the date) to a meeting which took place between Abe Shirō and someone who sounds very much like Julius Hoffman⁸³, and Kōtoku mentioned in a letter to Fukuda Eiko in 1908 that he had received a number of publications from Hoffman, including the pioneer anarchist Johann Most's The God Pest.⁸⁴ Finally, it would not do to leave Kōtoku's landlady in San Francisco, Mrs. Fritz, out of this account. Although described by Kōtoku simply as a Russian revolutionary, she seems to have had strong anarchist leanings. Not only was the room which she let to Kōtoku decorated with a picture of Kropotkin on one wall and a portrait of Bakunin on another⁸⁵, but many

79 Ishikawa Sanshirō, for example, was reading Mother Earth in prison in 1907. (Shakai Shimbun - Social News - No. 18, 29 September 1907, p 7.) Arahata Kanson was another who read Mother Earth. (See Kōtoku Shūsui's postcard to Arahata, dated 2 February 1908, in Shiota, op. cit., p 404.)

80 See, for example, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 20, 20 March 1908, p 13.

81 Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 22, 20 April 1908, p 7.

82 Kōtoku Shūsui referred in the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) to letters he had received from both Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman. (No. 4, 15 July 1907, p 11 and No. 11, 5 November 1907, p 5.)

83 Jinbutsu Kenkyū Shiryō (Historical Research Materials Relating To Individuals), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, Vol. I, p 220.

84 Letter to Fukuda Eiko dated 24 January 1908. Collected in Shiota, op. cit., pp 260-262. Kōtoku referred to Johann Most's booklet as God Pestilence, but its details are given as "The God Pest (New York, n.d., 18pp.)" in Socialism And American Life, D. D. Egbert and S. Persons, Princeton, 1952, Vol. II, p 168.

85 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), II, Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 5, 20 January 1906, p 6.

anarchists frequented her house. Kōtoku noted in his diary that on New Year's day 1906 he met a Swedish anarchist called Widen and another old anarchist from Sacramento called Dr. Pyburn at Mrs. Fritz's.⁸⁶ Some of Kōtoku's other laconic entries in his diary are eloquent testimony to the sort of influence Mrs. Fritz sought to exert on her lodger from Japan. On 17 December 1905, he recorded: "Mrs. Fritz argued strongly about the uselessness of universal suffrage."⁸⁷ Six days later "Mrs. Fritz came and argued strongly for assassinating politicians."⁸⁸

A vivid illustration of the fact that it was the anarchist influence which acted most powerfully on Kōtoku while in the USA was his reaction to the major earthquake which occurred in San Francisco on 18 April 1906. Writing a few days after the catastrophe, he described San Francisco as being in a state of complete "Anarchist Communism" (sic). What he meant by this was that, such was the disruption to capitalist life, commodity production had been momentarily suspended. According to Kōtoku, the shops were all closed, vital services such as the post offices, railways and ferries were all free, and food was being distributed daily. Even if one had wanted to buy goods, nothing was on sale. For a brief instant, money was therefore useless. Faced with the massive devastation, people were reacting sensibly by cooperating and working voluntarily. Kōtoku knew perfectly well that this state of affairs was purely temporary and that capitalism would soon reassert itself. For the moment, however, an "ideal paradise" had been created amid the ruins of San Francisco.⁸⁹

86 Shiota, op. cit., p 139.

87 Ibid., p 136.

88 Ibid., p 137.

89 'Museifu Kyōsan Sei No Jitsugen' ('The Realisation Of An Anarcho-Communist System'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 13, 20 May 1906, p 6. Iwasa Sakutarō corroborated Kōtoku's impressions of the way people behaved after the earthquake in San Francisco in his 'Zaibei Undō Shiwa' ('A Talk On The History Of The Movement In America'). Collected in Zaibei Shakaishugisha Museifushugisha Enkaku (History Of The Socialists And Anarchists Resident In America), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, p 529.

However ambivalent Kōtoku's political views were at the time (he is said to have informed Iwasa Sakutarō that he told fellow Japanese he was an "anarcho-communist" and others that he was a "socialist"⁹⁰), his presence in California in 1905/1906 induced most of the Japanese socialists he came in contact with in the USA to move towards anarchism. In a letter which appeared in Hikari (Light) on 5 April 1906, Kōtoku remarked that before coming to the USA he had imagined that most of the Japanese socialists in America would be Christians. Instead, he found that they were "scientific socialists accepting historical materialism, Marxists in other words".⁹¹ Whether Kōtoku was a competent judge of who was a Marxist is questionable, but it is clear that by February 1906 he was participating in discussions on Marxism among the Japanese socialists in California. A Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai (Society for the Study of Socialism) was organised and at one of its meetings, attended by about 20 socialists on 11 February 1906, Ichikawa Tōichi delivered an economic critique of Marxism and this was then followed by a general debate on the subject. Although Kōtoku described the meeting as having been "pretty lively", he unfortunately did not indicate his own position.⁹² What is known is that while in California Kōtoku lectured to the local Japanese socialists on Peter Kropotkin's The State: Its Historic Role.⁹³ Prior to Kōtoku's arrival in the USA, there had been activity among the Japanese socialists in California but there was nothing one could call a regular movement. Not only was it due to Kōtoku that a degree of organisation took place, but we also have the secret police's word for the fact that it was under his influence that the Japanese socialists in

90 Ibid., p 527.

91 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 10, 5 April 1906, p 7.

92 Ibid., p 7.

93 Supplement to Zaibei Shakaishugisha Museifushugisha Enkaku (History Of The Socialists And Anarchists Resident In America), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964 (pages unnumbered).

the USA became oriented towards anarchism.⁹⁴

The Shakai Kakumeitō (Social-Revolutionary Party)

Kōtoku Shūsui hoped to establish in the USA a base and refuge for Japanese revolutionaries, so that America could play the same role for the socialist movement in Japan as Switzerland traditionally had done for the revolutionary movement in Russia.⁹⁵ Shortly before he returned to Japan he therefore tried to weld the Japanese socialists in California into an organisation which would be both an extension of, and a support for, the socialist movement in Japan. It was to fulfil this aim that more than 50 "comrades resident in America" gathered in Oakland in California on 1 June 1906 to found the Shakai Kakumeitō (Social-Revolutionary Party).⁹⁶ They adopted a programme, framed by Kōtoku⁹⁷, which read as follows:

Our party seeks to destroy the present economic and industrial competitive system and, by placing all land and capital under the common ownership of the whole people, to eradicate all vestiges of poverty.

Our party seeks to overhaul the current class system, which depends on superstition and convention, and to secure equal freedom and rights for all people.

Our party seeks to eliminate national bias and racial prejudice and to realise genuine world peace for all people everywhere.

Our party recognises that, in order to attain the objectives given above, it is necessary to unite and cooperate with comrades throughout the world and to bring about a great social revolution.

98

94 Zaibei Shakaishugisha Museifushugisha Enkaku (History Of The Socialists And Anarchists Resident In America), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, pp 94-95.

95 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), I, Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 5, 20 January 1906, p 6.

96 'Shakai Kakumeitō Okoru' ('Social-Revolutionary Party Is Formed'), Hikari (Light) No. 17, 20 July 1906, p 7.

97 See Kōtoku Shūsui's letter to Ishikawa Sanshirō in Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 11, 10 September 1906, p 36.

98 'Shakai Kakumeitō Okoru' ('Social-Revolutionary Party Is Formed'), Hikari (Light) No. 17, 20 July 1906, p 7.

The scale of the group's activities was in inverse proportion to its strength. Of the more than 50 men and women who were present on 1 June 1906, many played no further part and at least two were acting on the orders of the Japanese government's consulate in San Francisco to infiltrate the organization.¹⁹⁷ They founded, the *Shakai Kakumeitō* had another promise for a journal, and reports of



Members of the *Shakai Kakumeitō* (Social-Revolutionary Party) in San Francisco in 1906.

Kōtoku Shūsui is fourth from the right and Albert Johnson sixth from the right.

197. The first issue of the *Shakai Kakumeitō* (Revolutionary Party) appeared in Berkeley in 1906. The "Central Organ" of the party was that already by the time of the revolution. The first issue of *Shakai Kakumeitō*, which was a paper of the party, was published in San Francisco in 1906. A photograph of Albert Johnson, Kōtoku Shūsui and members of the *Shakai Kakumeitō* taken in June 1906, survives and is reproduced here as Photograph 3. The two men on the extreme left of this photograph (Takashi Kōtoku and Kōtoku Shūsui) were prominent figures.

198. *Shakai Kakumeitō* (From America), *Shakai Kakumeitō* (Right) No. 17, 20 July 1906, p. 7. See also *The Social-Revolutionary Party in America*, *Shakai Kakumeitō* (Light) No. 19, 20 August 1906, p. 1 (English edition).

199. *Shakai Kakumeitō* (Right) No. 1, 20 December 1906. Cited in *The Social-Revolutionary Party in America*, *Shakai Kakumeitō* (Light) No. 19, 20 August 1906, p. 1 (English edition).

The scale of the Shakai Kakumeitō's aspirations was in inverse proportion to its strength. Of the more than 50 men and women who were present on 1 June 1906, many played no further part and at least two were acting on the orders of the Japanese government's consulate in San Francisco to infiltrate the organisation.⁹⁹ When founded, the Shakai Kakumeitō had neither premises nor a journal, and reports of meetings it held in Oakland, San Francisco and other Californian towns appeared in Hikari (Light) during only the first few months after its formation. It did, however, manage to give practical expression to its internationalism by the support it gave to a local seamen's strike. When the seamen stopped work in 1906, the shipping companies attempted to break their strike by enrolling Chinese and some Japanese workers as strikebreakers. In cooperation with the seamen's union, the Shakai Kakumeitō produced leaflets in Japanese which explained the struggle and called for no strikebreaking. Because of the similarity of the written languages, Chinese workers as well as Japanese could make sense of these leaflets and the seamen's union much appreciated this act of solidarity by the Shakai Kakumeitō.¹⁰⁰

When the first issue of the short-lived journal Kakumei (Revolution) appeared in Berkeley in California in December 1906, it announced itself as the "Central Organ" of the Shakai Kakumeitō.¹⁰¹ Yet the real situation was that already by the end of 1906 the Shakai Kakumeitō had no more than a paper existence. The final issue of Kakumei (Revolution), which

99 A photograph of Albert Johnson, Kōtoku Shūsui and members of the Shakai Kakumeitō, taken in June 1906, survives and is reproduced here as Photograph 3. The two men on the extreme left of this photograph (Tatsumi Tetsuo and Kawasaki Minotarō) were consular agents.

100 'Beikoku Yori' ('From America'), Hikari (Light) No. 17, 20 July 1906, p 7. See also 'The Socialist Revolutionary Party In Oakland', Hikari (Light) No. 19, 20 August 1906, p 1 (English column).

101 Kakumei (Revolution) No. 1, 20 December 1906. Collected in Zaibei Shakaishugisha Museifushugisha Enkaku (History Of The Socialists And Anarchists Resident In America), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, p 462 (English columns).

came out in April 1907, was more realistic when it admitted in its English-language columns that it was published simply "by four Japanese students, who work during the day for a living and evenings on this paper."¹⁰² One of these students was Iwasa Sakutarō and, although the secret police reports classified all four as members of the Shakai Kakumeitō, Iwasa insisted in later years that the Kakumei group had nothing to do with that party.¹⁰³ Even if the Kakumei group and the Shakai Kakumeitō were organisationally distinct, though, their political ideas were much the same. In common with most other Japanese socialists in the USA, Iwasa and his comrades had moved towards anarchism and they were, in fact, the "clever and devoted libertarians" whom Kōtoku asked Albert Johnson to assist. Thus, although produced by a handful of young men and not by the grandly titled but insubstantial Shakai Kakumeitō, Kakumei was representative of the ideas favoured by a majority of Japanese socialists in the USA at the time.

The most striking aspect of Kakumei (Revolution)'s political stance was its advocacy of terrorism. "Our policy is toward the overthrow of Mikado, King, President as representing the Capitalist Class as soon as possible, and we do not hesitate as to the means", read the English-language columns in the first issue.¹⁰⁴ The Japanese columns were more explicit as to the "sole means of revolution".

The sole means is the bomb. The means whereby the revolution can be funded too is the bomb. The means to destroy the bourgeois class is the bomb.

105

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- 102 Kakumei (Revolution) No. 3, 1 April 1907. Collected in *Ibid.*, p 485 (English columns).
- 103 Jinbutsu Kenkyū Shiryō (Historical Research Materials Relating To Individuals), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1966, Vol. II, p 120.
- 104 Kakumei (Revolution) No. 1, 20 December 1906. Collected in Zaibei Shakaishugisha Museifushugisha Enkaku (History Of The Socialists And Anarchists Resident In America), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, p 462 (English columns).
- 105 'Ran Un Hi Un' ('Storm Clouds'), Kakumei (Revolution) No. 1, 20 December 1906. Collected in *Ibid.*, p 467.

Conversely, "reformism and the parliamentary policy" were "like trying to fight a raging fire with a child's water pistol".¹⁰⁶ Kakumei was prepared to qualify this in countries such as the USA where there was universal suffrage¹⁰⁷, but for Japan it believed that the only way forward lay in violently challenging the state. Addressing the "Japanese Capitalist Class", it threatened that "there may come a day very soon in which there will be built a large mountain of your bloody bodies."¹⁰⁸ As for the Japanese emperor, he was denounced as "a vain creature representing the capitalist class" and "a tool controlled by the present ruling class for the purpose of enslaving the masses."¹⁰⁹

Yet, for all their paper threats and bloodthirsty turns of phrase, the Kakumei group made no moves to translate their words into acts of terrorism. Far from launching an assault on the state, the group was itself soon under pressure from the authorities. After the first issue of the journal appeared on 20 December 1906, the Japanese government prohibited the importing of Kakumei into Japan¹¹⁰ and (through its consulate) saw to it that no Japanese printer in the USA would handle the group's material.¹¹¹ From the second issue, although the Kakumei

106 Ibid., p 467.

107 "'The Revolution' And American Newspapers', Kakumei (Revolution) No. 2, 10 February 1907. Collected in Ibid., p 470 (English columns).

108 "'The Revolution' And Japanese Capitalist Class', Ibid., p 470 (English columns).

109 'The Japanese Superstition About The Mikado', Kakumei (Revolution) No. 3, 1 April 1907. Collected in Ibid., p 478 (English columns).

110 "The Home Department of Japan announced to prohibit the circulation in Japan of the Kakumei (Revolution), a Japanese journal, which is published at Berkeley, Cal. by the Japanese Socialist students in America. Consequently many copies of that paper have been seized by the post master of (Y)okohama." (Heimin Shimbun - Common People's Newspaper - No. 2, 20 January 1907, p 1 - English columns.)

111 Zaibei Shakaishugisha Museifushugisha Enkaku (History Of The Socialists And Anarchists Resident In America), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, p 13.

group still managed to get its English-language articles printed¹¹², the bulk of the journal had to be written by hand and mimeographed. As a result, the Japanese columns were all but illegible. To add to Kakumei's troubles, the authorities in the USA interpreted some of the statements made in the first issue as threats directed at Theodore Roosevelt. Takenouchi Tetsugorō was held responsible for the offending passages and, egged on by sections of the American press¹¹³, he was investigated by immigration officials. For a time it seemed likely that Takenouchi might be deported as an "undesirable alien", but he feigned a poor command of English and pretended that this had led him to make mistakes such as writing "revolution" when he meant "evolution"!¹¹⁴ Although this ruse helped Takenouchi to avoid deportation, the pressure exerted on the group was too severe for it to continue to publish Kakumei. Its third issue, which appeared on 1 April 1907, proved to be its last.

A further demonstration that terrorist ideas had taken hold of many of the Japanese socialists in the USA came on 3 November 1907. This date was significant in that it was the Emperor's birthday and it was taken as an opportunity to distribute an anonymous mimeographed leaflet which threatened to assassinate the monarch.¹¹⁵ The leaflet was entitled

112 According to Kōtoku Shūsui, the English-language material in Kakumei (Revolution) was printed by a publishing company associated with the SPA. ('Okubo Mura Yori' - 'From Okubo Village', Kōtoku Shūsui, Heimin Shimbun - Common People's Newspaper - No. 56, 23 March 1907, p 1.)

113 The San Francisco Chronicle gave a fine display of responsible journalism:
 "Japs Favor Killing of President Roosevelt"
 "Anarchist Paper Advocates Assassination of All Rulers"
 "Vicious Publication is Aimed at All Who Are in Authority"
 (Notehelper, op. cit., p 139.)

114 Zaibei Shakaishugisha Museifushugisha Enkaku (History Of The Socialists And Anarchists Resident In America), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, p 24.

115 Although anonymous, Iwasa Sakutarō claimed in later years that this leaflet was the handiwork of Takenouchi Tetsugorō. (Jinbutsu Kenkyū Shiryō - Historical Research Materials Relating To Individuals, Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1966, Vol. II, p 121.) Iwasa denied any involvement himself in the production of the leaflet, but others have maintained that Iwasa was one of those responsible for its publication. (See Nihon Anakizumu Rōdō Undō Shi - History Of The Anarchist Labour Movement In Japan, Hagiwara Shintarō, Tōkyō, 1969, pp 32-33.)

Ansatsushugi (The Terrorism*) and is said to have been translated into English, French and German and widely distributed.¹¹⁶ The Japanese version carried an English heading: "An Open Letter To Mutsuhito The Emperor Of Japan From Anarchists-Terrorists".¹¹⁷ As a document it was mainly remarkable for its unrestrained abuse of the Emperor. It addressed the Emperor throughout as "sokka" (a neutral - and therefore highly disrespectful - form of "you") and rejected the official dogma that he was descended from the gods. All human beings had evolved from monkeys, declared Ansatsushugi (The Terrorism), and the Emperor was no different. Far from the Japanese emperors being gods, they had all been cruel robbers and oppressors, and the present emperor was no exception. On the contrary, he was a "premeditated murderer" and a "butcher". The authors of Ansatsushugi asserted that it was necessary for socialists to progress from propaganda to assassination and they cautioned the Emperor not to dismiss what they were writing as mere empty threats. The leaflet pointed to the terrorist attacks which had been made on state officials in Russia and France and vowed that Japanese terrorists would base themselves on the rich experience of those countries. The final words to the Emperor were meant to give him some sleepless nights:

Mutsuhito**, poor Mutsuhito! Your life
is almost at an end. The bombs are all
around you and are on the point of
exploding. It is goodbye for you.

3 November 1907
Your Birthday

Despite their menaces, those who produced this leaflet were in no position to carry out their threats. The Japanese consulate reported

* The Terrorism was Ansatsushugi's own rendering of its title into English.

** The calculated insult to the Emperor here is likely to be lost on Western readers. In Japan, convention demanded that the Emperor never be addressed by name.

116 Zaibei Shakaishugisha Museifushugisha Enkaku (History Of The Socialists And Anarchists Resident In America), Suzuki Mosaburo (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, p 24.

117 Quotations from Ansatsushugi (The Terrorism) are all taken from the Japanese version as it appears in the Supplement to Ibid. (pages unnumbered).

the details of Ansatsushugi (The Terrorism) to the government in Japan, and the main effect of the document was simply to increase the paranoia of the authorities.¹¹⁸ From 1907 onwards it became increasingly difficult for the Japanese socialists in the USA to maintain consistent and organised activity. The "Gentlemen's Agreement" between the USA and Japan put an end to free movement between the two countries, and the widespread anti-Asian racialism in the USA added to the hardships faced by all Japanese workers in America. In addition, the Japanese government's consular officials in the USA conducted a widespread spying operation on suspected radicals and made life difficult for them whenever they could. There was still, of course, a fertile correspondence between Japanese socialists in America and Japan, and occasionally Japanese socialists in the USA did summon up sufficient resources to publish Japanese translations of some of the anarchist classics. Among these were Peter Kropotkin's An Appeal To The Young¹¹⁹ and his pamphlet on The State: Its Historic Role.¹²⁰ The notion of the Shakai Kakumeitō (Social-Revolutionary Party) lingered on as well and, although it had long since ceased to exist in reality, in April 1911 a group of Japanese who called themselves the Zaibei Nihon Shakai Kakumeitō (Japanese Social-Revolutionary Party resident in America) sent Kōtoku Shūsui's family in Japan a manuscript Japanese translation of Kropotkin's The State: Its Historic Role. This was in recognition of Kōtoku and the other 11 "martyrs" who had been executed by the Japanese state in January 1911.¹²¹ For many

118 Notehelfer, op. cit., pp 152ff.

119 Ōsugi Sakae was imprisoned in 1907 for translating into Japanese Peter Kropotkin's An Appeal To The Young. His translation was republished by the Japanese Socialists in San Francisco in 1910. (See Kōtoku Shūsui's postcard to Akaba Hajime dated 15 March 1910. Collected in Shiota, op. cit., p 423.) According to Ōsugi, several hundred copies of this American edition of An Appeal To The Young were smuggled into Japan. (Ōsugi Sakae Zenshū - Collected Works Of Osugi Sakae, Matsumoto Tomio (ed.), Tōkyō, 1963, Vol. V, p 664.)

120 Zaibei Shakaishugisha Museifushugisha Enkaku (History Of The Socialists And Anarchists Resident In America), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, p 25.

121 Supplement to Ibid. (pages unnumbered).

Japanese socialists in the USA, however, not only did political activity become well nigh impossible, but it was difficult even to find work and to earn enough to stay alive. Trapped between the nagging pressures exerted by Japanese consular officials and the anti-Japanese movement among the American population at large, many drifted away from the socialist movement and others were forced to return to Japan. Iwasa Sakutarō of the Kakumei (Revolution) group, for example, eventually found life in the USA unendurable and returned to Japan in May 1913.¹²² Other members of the group, such as Takenouchi Tetsugorō and Kuramochi Zensaburō, remained in the USA but were lost to the socialist movement.¹²³ The American connection was thus increasingly eroded, and certainly Kōtoku's dream of turning the USA into the Japanese socialists' Switzerland was never realised.¹²⁴ Even so, the significance for the Japanese socialist movement of Kōtoku's visit to the USA in 1905/1906 can hardly be exaggerated. The influences which acted through him played their part in determining the course the Japanese socialist movement would take during one of the most critical periods of its history.

122 Ibid., p 28.

123 Ibid., p 28.

124 Nonetheless, some financial assistance from American sources was received by the socialists in Japan during the difficult years early in the Taishō period. In his 'Uerblick über die sozialistische Bewegung in Japan bis 1917', written in 1917, Sakai Toshihiko thanked "our foreign comrades, especially the American comrades" for the "moral and material" help which they had provided for the socialist movement in Japan. (Die Kommunistische Internationale No. 16, 1921, p 152.) Four years later, he again wrote: "We must here express our hearty thanks for the deep sympathy given to us at that time by the comrades of all the world, especially for the solatium from (the) American comrades." ('The Struggles Of The People In Recent Japan', T. Sakai, Shakaishugi Kenkyū - The Study Of Socialism - Vol. IV, No. 2, September 1921, p 6 - English columns.)

CHAPTER 9.

Inspiration From Russia

The Russian revolution of 1905 had already made its impact on the socialists in Japan while the Russo-Japanese War was still in progress and the ending of the war in September 1905 did not diminish the interest with which the socialists followed events in Russia. When a group of socialists in Tōkyō launched a new journal in November 1905, they at first considered calling it Denkō (Spark) - in imitation of the Bolshevik-turned-Menshevik organ, Iskra.¹ After some thought, the name Hikari (Light) was chosen instead, but this did not signify any lessening in the attention which was paid to the struggles in Russia. As an article which appeared in the English-language column of Hikari in August 1906 affirmed:

The telegrams of (ie concerning - J.C.) the revolutionary movements in Russia which come successively from London and Berlin, are causing a great effect in the mind of (the) Japanese people. (The) Japanese people, who are imitating European manners in every respect of their life, are now silently seeing that the absolute power of (the) Tsar, which apparently seemed indestructible, is now at last fading away. They are also gradually recognizing that even the force of (the) co(s)sacks are (sic) not strong enough to utterly break down the general strike of the raging people.

2

Hikari also added sarcastically that it was "quite ridiculous" for the bourgeois daily newspapers to talk as though a similar situation could not occur "in this patriotic Japan".³

During the time he spent in the USA, Kōtoku Shūsui met a number of Russian revolutionaries living in exile in California, among them

1 'Kaiko Ichinen' ('A Year In Retrospect'), Yamaguchi Koken, Hikari (Light) No. 27, 15 November 1906, p 4.

2 'The Echoes Of Russian Revolution', Hikari (Light) No. 19, 20 August 1906, p 1.

3 Ibid., p 1.

Maievsky - who for several months during 1905 published a short-lived magazine known as the Russian Review.⁴ Kōtoku seems to have been much impressed by the revolutionary fervour of the Russian émigrés and he wrote to his comrades in Japan that, if the revolution in Russia succeeded, then "the whole of Europe will enter an era of workers' revolution."⁵ Similarly, in the speech which Kōtoku made at the meeting held in Oakland in California on 21 January 1906 to mark the first anniversary of the massacre in front of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg on 9 January 1905, he described the revolution in Russia as the harbinger of a world-wide revolution.⁶ Kōtoku returned to the same theme in an article which he wrote on 12 February 1906 and which was published on the front page of Hikari (Light) the following month. In addition to quoting the New York Worker on the effects of the Russo-Japanese War⁷, Kōtoku declared excitedly that the revolutionary flames which had been kindled in Russia would soon set the whole world alight.

The revolution has come! The revolution has started! The revolution is spreading from Russia to Europe, and from Europe throughout the world. It is like raging flames scorching the fields or like the flooding of dammed waters when the dikes have been breached. The world today is a world of revolution. The era we live in is an era of revolution. And we are the children of this era.
We must be revolutionaries.

8

4 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 11, 20 April 1906, p 4.

5 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 6, 5 February 1906, p 2.

6 'Sōkō Yori' ('From San Francisco'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 8, 5 March 1906, p 2.

7 "That the criminal war in the Far East would result in defeat for the Russian armies and in good for the Russian people, Socialists all over the world predicted at the start. It will be interesting, indeed, if the result in victorious Japan be likewise to awaken the toiling masses, sharpen the class struggle, and bring nearer the downfall of monarchy and capitalism together." ('Ippa Banpa' - 'One Wave; Ten Thousand Waves', Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari - Light - No. 9, 20 March 1906, p 1.)

8 Ibid., p 1.

Kōtoku acknowledged that Russia had lagged behind the countries of western Europe and even Japan in achieving what he called a political revolution. Yet he believed that the political revolution was now about to be accomplished in Russia and that this would provide the impetus for an economic and social revolution in the rest of the world. "The victory of their revolutionary party (in Russia) is immediately going to bring about the victory of our international revolutionary socialist party", he proclaimed.⁹ Kōtoku conceded that there were those who maintained that the revolution in Russia had virtually been subdued, but what they did not realise, he maintained, was that this was merely a temporary lull.

Some of the interest in the Russian revolution of 1905 which was aroused among the Japanese socialists bore a strong resemblance to the fascination with which the 'people's rights movement' of the 1880s had observed the struggles of the Russian populists in its day. Profiles of revolutionary heroines, such as Vera Zasulich and Sophia Perovskaya, frequently appeared in the socialist press in Japan¹⁰ and Japanese socialists urged one another to go "to the people" in the populist style.¹¹ A case in point is a famous poem which Ishikawa Takuboku wrote in 1911, where it was the example of the Russian populists which was held up for radicals in Japan to emulate.¹² Yet there was another more modern side

9 Ibid., p 1.

10 'Hokuō Retsujo Den' ('Lives Of The Heroines Of Northern Europe'), Yamaguchi Koken, Hikari (Light) No. 17, 20 July 1906, p 5 and 'Kakumei Bijin' ('A Revolutionary Beauty'), Yamaguchi Koken, Hikari (Light) No. 18, 5 August 1906, p 4.

11 'Jinmin No Naka Ni' ('To The People'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Heimin Shimbum (Common People's Newspaper) No. 38, 2 March 1907, p 1.

12 The second verse of Ishikawa Takuboku's 'Hateshi Naki Giron No Nochi' ('After An Interminable Discussion') read:

We know what it is that we want
 And what it is that the people want too.
 We even know what it is we have to do.
 In fact, we know a great deal more than did
 the Russian youths of 50 years ago.
 But no-one pounds a clenched fist on the table
 And lets out the cry "V Narod".

(Translated here from Kindai Shisō - Modern Thought - No. 10, July 1913, p 14.)

as well to the lessons which were drawn in Japan from Russian experiences in the years which followed the 1905 revolution. If Kōtoku Shūsui could refer with approval in 1907 to the Russian populists "of 30 years ago" who had left the towns to go and rouse the peasants in the countryside¹³, he could also emphasise that a "revolutionary trend" had been unleashed by the workers in the big cities in Russia in 1905 when they mounted their general strike.¹⁴ A lead article on 'Rokoku Kakumei No Keisei' ('The State Of The Russian Revolution'), which appeared in Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) in February 1907, also made it clear that many socialists in Japan saw the Russian general strike of 1905 as a convincing demonstration of the effectiveness of workers' direct action.¹⁵

The Nagasaki Russians

Japan had long been one of the escape routes for Russian revolutionaries fleeing from Siberia, Michael Bakunin being just one of those who had passed through Japan as he headed for western Europe in 1861.¹⁶ During the period following the Russo-Japanese War there were a number of fugitives from Siberia who stayed briefly in Japan while they made arrangements to travel on to the USA and Europe. In addition to these transients, a small colony of Russian revolutionaries settled in Nagasaki in south-west Japan, finding this port a convenient base for their operations into Siberia. In 1906 they started to publish a paper called Volya, which was smuggled into Russia in considerable quantities aboard

13 'Jinmin No Naka Ni' ('To The People'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 38, 2 March 1907, p 1.

14 'Doitsu Sōsenkyo To Ōshū Shakaitō' ('The German General Election And The European Socialist Parties'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 13, 1 February 1907, p 1.

15 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 35, 27 February 1907, p 1.

16 'Shishi No Fūkotsu Mikaeru Bakūnin' ('The Epitome Of The Shishi - Michael Bakunin'), Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) No. 1, 5 September 1906, p 6.

ships which plied between Nagasaki and the Asian mainland.¹⁷ Evidently the Volya group also tried to infiltrate its emissaries into Siberia, since the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) announced in February 1907 that one of Volya's correspondents had been arrested while engaged in such a mission.¹⁸ The Volya group seems to have been inclined to political terrorism and there is evidence that they supplied explosives to revolutionaries in China intent on assassination.¹⁹

Kutsumi Kesson wrote a profile of one of the Volya group - A. V. Wadezki - in Hikari (Light) in May 1906²⁰, but the most prominent figure among the Nagasaki Russians was Nicholas Russel.²¹ Nicholas Russel was the pseudonym of Nikolai K. Sudzilovski, a doctor who had already become a revolutionary while still a medical student in Russia. Forced into exile in Romania, he had adopted the name Russel to throw the authorities off his trail. From Europe Russel went to the USA and then moved on to Hawaii. Eventually, at the time of the Russo-Japanese War, he left Hawaii to settle in Japan, where he put much effort into distributing revolutionary literature among the many Russian prisoners of war.* On first coming to Japan, Russel lived in Kōbe, but later he moved

* In April 1905 Albert Johnson too had sent revolutionary literature in Russian to Japan and, according to Chokugen (Straight Talking), this was successfully distributed among Russian prisoners of war. (See Chokugen No. 17, 28 May 1905, p 1 and No. 22, 2 July 1905, p 1 - English columns.)

17 'Nagasaki No Roji Goyō Shimbun' ('A Government-Controlled Russian-Language Newspaper In Nagasaki'), Hikari (Light) No. 15, 20 June 1906, p 2. (The government-controlled newspaper referred to here was not Volya but a rival newspaper which the Russian consul intended to publish in order to counter Volya's influence.) See also Gonin No Kakumeika (Five Revolutionaries), Kimura Tsuyoshi, Tōkyō, 1972, p 151.

18 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 27, 17 February 1907, p 2.

19 "We are told that the explosives Wang Ching-wei intended for the Prince Regent in 1909 were made from photographic supplies by the Russians in Nagasaki." (The Japanese And Sun Yat-sen, Marius B. Jansen, Stanford, 1970, p 124. See also Kimura, op. cit., pp 153-154.)

20 'Rokoku No Kakumeika' ('A Russian Revolutionary'), Kutsumi Kesson, Hikari (Light) No. 12, 5 May 1906, p 5.

21 Unless otherwise indicated, the following details on Nicholas Russel are taken from the chapter on him in Kimura, op. cit., pp 131-158.

to Nagasaki to join the other Russian exiles. Being a qualified doctor, Russel was able to practise medicine in Nagasaki and, when his wife joined him in 1907²², she worked as his pharmacist. Between them, they provided the funds to support the Russian colony and its activities in Nagasaki. Russel remained in Nagasaki for many years, the reports by the secret police revealing that he was still in Japan in 1918 but that his name was finally removed from their lists of "people requiring special observation" on 18 September 1920.²³

In his student days Russel had come in contact with the populist movement and, as far as one can tell from the limited information which is available, it was populism which continued to be the strongest influence acting on the group around Volya. In view of the attention which the populists accorded to the peasantry, it was not surprising that, when the Russian revolutionaries and the local Japanese socialists together organised a public meeting in Nagasaki in November 1906, Russel should have chosen to speak on the "land problem". According to the report of this meeting which appeared in Hikari (Light), the audience of more than 500 included 25 Russians, who probably represented virtually the entire Russian colony in Nagasaki at the time.²⁴ Russel contributed an article on 'Judōteki Rekishi To Jidōteki Rekishi' ('Passive History And Active History') to the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) in February 1907²⁵, but it probably tells us a great deal about the Volya group and the ideas they tried to propagate in Japan that the journal with which they established the warmest relations was the

22 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 62, 30 March 1907, p 3.

23 Tokubetsu Yō Shisatsunin Jōsei Ippan (Outline Of The Situation Of Persons Requiring Special Observation), Research Association for Materials Relating to the History of Modern Japan (eds.), Tōkyō, 1962, Vol. IV, pp 302-303.

24 'Nagasaki No Hata Age' ('Raising The Standard In Nagasaki'), Hikari (Light) No. 28, 25 November 1906, p 7.

25 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) Nos. 23 and 24, 13 February 1907, p 2 and 14 February 1907, p 2.

Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review*). Kakumei Hyōron was a bimonthly which was published in Tōkyō from September 1906 to March 1907 by a group of latter-day shishi who were anxious to foment revolution in China and Russia.²⁶ Although words such as "socialist" and "social revolution" formed part of Kakumei Hyōron's vocabulary, most of its contributors preferred to leave questions of political theory well alone and were content to paint romantic pictures of an ill-defined entity they dubbed "the revolution". No doubt confused by the fact that Kakumei Hyōron combined socialist terminology²⁷ with denials that it stood for socialism²⁸, some of its readers felt that it lacked a coherent position. Urged to be more specific about the type of revolution it hoped to achieve, Kakumei Hyōron could only say that "We simply aim at a condition of natural liberty for our brothers throughout the world."²⁹

* Kakumei Hyōron itself rendered its name into the ungainly English title The Review Of Revolutions.

26 In the introduction to the collected edition of Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun and Kakumei Hyōron (Tokyo Social News and Revolutionary Review, Research Association for the History of the Labour Movement (eds.), Tōkyō, 1962) Hayashi Shigeru quotes from Kayano Nagatomo's Chūka Minkoku Kakumei Hikyū (The Secret Story Of The Chinese People's Revolution). Kayano was one of the group associated with Kakumei Hyōron and he explained their basic approach as follows:

China and Russia were the two great autocracies in the world. They suppressed liberty by means of military oppression and this upset world peace. So if it was hoped that civilisation would progress (and hence world peace), it was essential to bring about revolutions in these two great military autocracies and to change their regimes. In order to aid the Chinese and Russian revolutions, the Japanese comrades belonging to the Chūgoku Dōmei Kai (China League) issued a bimonthly magazine called Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review).

27 There were references to "socialists" and "social revolution" in an article in the first issue entitled 'Hakkan No Ji' ('A Word To Mark Our Publication'), Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) No. 1, 5 September 1906, p 1.

28 Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) No. 2, 20 September 1906, p 4.

29 'Kakumei Mondō' ('Questions And Answers About The Revolution'), Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) No. 10, 25 March 1907, p 8.

Such vague sentiments might have struck some of its Japanese readers as unsatisfactory, but Kakumei Hyōron was greeted with great enthusiasm by the Nagasaki Volya. Volya wrote to the Kakumei Hyōron that "your magazine is brilliantly advocating the same principles as us. We would also say that a magazine such as yours is superior to all the other revolutionary publications issued in Japan."³⁰ Precisely what it considered Kakumei Hyōron's "principles" were, Volya did not bother to explain - and an article 'A New Revolutionary Organ In Japan', which was published first in Volya and then reprinted in Japanese translation in the Kakumei Hyōron, was equally unenlightening. Although the hope was expressed in this article that "the day will soon come when we can cooperate with the Kakumei Hyōron group and direct our energies towards aiding the Japanese workers and solving social problems", there was no indication of where the solution to "social problems" lay.³¹

Kakumei Hyōron did not last long enough for there to be very much effective cooperation between it and the Volya group. The main effect on Kakumei Hyōron of the relations it established with the Nagasaki Russians seems to have been that its romantic inclinations were accentuated still further, producing a sense of optimism which at times verged on delirium.

We read with thrilling interest a prophecy in the late number of Volya at Nagasaki, which is the only organ of (the) Russian Revolutionist(s) in the Far East. They say that the bloody storm will swee(p) over the Chinese Empire, before the moon will complete her usual revolutions twice more. We care not what basis of this prophecy that they may have, nor ask (them) for any further substantial explanation thereof. It is very likely that, no soo(n)er or no later, it will inevitably come (ab)out in reality.

32

30 Letter to Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) from Volya, dated 8 September 1906. Published in Kakumei Hyōron No. 2, 20 September 1906, p 4.

31 Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) No. 3, 5 October 1906, p 2.

32 'Prospect Of Chinese Revolution', Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) No. 5, 10 November 1906, p 1 (English column).

Despite its clumsy English, Kakumei Hyōron's high excitement is well conveyed here and, in the end, the fact that the revolution which Volya predicted failed to materialise mattered very little. For Russian populist and Japanese shishi alike, 'spirit' was everything and a sense of realism did not count as one of the revolutionary virtues. It was hardly surprising that they should have recognised each other as kindred spirits.

Bronislas Pilsudski And Grigorii Gershuni

One tsarist political prisoner who passed through Japan on his way to Europe in 1906 was Bronislas Pilsudski. Bronislas Pilsudski was the elder brother of Józef Klemens Pilsudski, the leader of the Polish Socialist Party and future ruler of Poland. Józef Pilsudski had himself visited Japan on the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War and had vainly attempted to persuade the Japanese government to supply his party with weapons to further its struggle against the tsarist regime.³³ Bronislas Pilsudski was a more scholarly type than his brother and had spent several years of his Siberian exile in Saghalien engaged in anthropological studies of the Ainu.³⁴ During his time in Japan he established contacts with the Christian socialists who published Shin Kigen (New Era)³⁵ and with the Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) group.³⁶ He also attended a meeting of a literary society which had socialist leanings and which brought out the journal Kaben (Fire Whip). Pilsudski met with members of the Kaben society on 22 February 1906 and talked with them for more than 4 hours, enquiring about their

33 A History Of Socialist Thought, G. D. H. Cole, London, 1956, Vol. III, p 494.

34 There is a chapter on Bronislas Pilsudski in Kimura, op. cit., pp 234-267.

35 Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 6, 10 April 1906, p 23.

36 Jinbutsu Kenkyū Shiryō (Historical Research Materials Relating To Individuals), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1966, Vol. II, p 107.

principles and what they hoped to achieve. He took extensive notes at this meeting and said that, on his return to Poland, he would



succeeded in eliminating N. P. Bogolepov (the Minister of Education) in 1901 and N. J. Sipyun. The following year, with a reputation for being a daring explorer, Gershon's brief stay

Bronislas Pilsudski and members of the Shin Kigen (New Era) group in 1905.

in Jeddah proved successful. In the back row, from the right, are Abe Isō, Bronislas Pilsudski, Kinoshita Naoe, Ishikawa Sanshiro.

(Revolutionary Review) retained his photograph and several articles relating to him.⁴¹ A meeting was also arranged on the evening of 15

November 1905 between Gershon, members of the Enmei Kyōsei group and

37. "Enmei Kyōsei" ('From the Enmei Society'), Shinbun (Tokyo), Enmei Kyōsei (Tokyo) Vol. 11, No. 1, 12 March 1904, p. 32.

38. Shinbun (Tokyo) (Gerson Pilsudski's newspaper) Nov. 10, 29 January 1907.

39. The Great Russian Revolution, Victor Gollancz, New York, 1906, p. 302.

40. Shinbun (Tokyo), Shinbun (light) No. 20, 26 November 1905, p. 1 (Gerson Pilsudski's newspaper) and Shinbun (Tokyo) (Gerson Pilsudski's newspaper) Nov. 10, 29 January 1907, p. 1.

41. Shinbun (Tokyo) (Gerson Pilsudski's newspaper) No. 5, 21 November 1905, p. 1 (Gerson Pilsudski's newspaper) Nov. 10, 29 January 1907, pp. 1, 2, 5.

principles and what they hoped to achieve. He took extensive notes at this meeting and said that, on his return to Poland, he would publish details of the Kaben society in the Polish press. He also promised to send the society information on Poland, in the hope that they would be able to publicise this within Japan.³⁷ Whether anything ever came of these plans it is impossible to say, although an item which appeared in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) the following year did report that Bronislas Pilsudski had returned to Kraków in Poland.³⁸

Grigorii Gershuni, who escaped from Siberia to Japan in November 1906, was once described by Victor Chernov as "perhaps the greatest revolutionary of all".³⁹ A larger than life character, he was consumed by a passionate hatred of the tsarist autocracy. When the Social-Revolutionary (SR) Party was organised in Russia in 1901, he became head of its audacious 'fighting organisation' for the next two years until he was informed on and arrested in 1903. The SRs' 'fighting organisation' was a group of dedicated assassins who, as was indicated in Chapter 2, succeeded in eliminating N. P. Bogolepov (the Minister of Education) in 1901 and D. S. Sipyagin (the Minister of the Interior) the following year. With a reputation based on these daring exploits, Gershuni's brief stay in Japan aroused considerable attention. He was mentioned in a number of news items in the socialist journals⁴⁰, while Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) published his photograph and several articles relating to him.⁴¹ A meeting was also arranged on the evening of 15 November 1906 between Gershuni, members of the Kakumei Hyōron group and

37 'Kabekai Yori' ('From The Kaben Society'), Morichika Umpei, Kaben (Fire Whip) Vol. II, No. 1, 10 March 1906, p 32.

38 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 10, 29 January 1907, p 2.

39 The Great Russian Revolution, Victor Chernov, New York, 1966, p 393.

40 See, for example, Hikari (Light) No. 28, 25 November 1906, p 1 (English column) and Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 25, 15 February 1907, p 2.

41 Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) No. 6, 25 November 1906, pp 4-5 and No. 8, 25 January 1907, pp 1, 3, 6.

Sun Yat-sen (who was then living in exile in Japan) and - such was the interest which was generated at this meeting - their discussions are reported to have continued throughout the night.⁴²

Gershuni must have been surprised by the naivety of some of the questions which were put to him at this meeting.⁴³ Asked about the "Nihilist Party", he had to explain that there was no such organisation and he described the revolutionary movement in Russia as consisting of the Social-Democratic Party and the Social-Revolutionary Party. This in itself was a misleading over-simplification, glossing over the many different factions active within the revolutionary movement in Russia, but Gershuni was concerned above all to impress on his audience the differences between SRs like himself and the social-democrats. Gershuni declared that he adhered to the SRs because, unlike the social-democrats, he did not believe in the efficacy of propaganda alone. As an SR, he believed that both the pen and the bomb had a role to play in revolutionary activity. He also added that, in his view, neither the general strike nor parliament were capable of achieving a revolution in the face of a repressive regime such as that which existed in Russia. In countries such as Russia the revolution could only be advanced by a policy of politically motivated assassinations and this was why the SRs put so much emphasis on the tactic of terrorism. Those who listened to Gershuni's explanation of the SRs' strategy were in no position to be aware of the drawbacks which terrorism involved. Above all, there was the fact that terrorism, by its very nature, imposes a military discipline on those who resort to it, in place of the self-liberating and creative activity which socialism requires. Terrorist groups find it difficult to avoid developing a stifling command structure, based on those who give

42 Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) No. 8, 25 January 1907, p 6.

43 The following account of the meeting with Gershuni derives from Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) No. 6, 25 November 1906, pp 4-5 and No. 8, 25 January 1907, p 3.

orders and those who obey, and - although neither Gershuni nor his audience knew it at the time - the fate of the SRs' own 'fighting organisation' demonstrated the pitfalls inherent in the tactic of assassination.⁴⁴ Considerations such as this did not occur to those who spent the night of 15 November 1906 in Gershuni's company, however, and it is clear that the Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) group was deeply impressed by Gershuni's passionate arguments. The account of the discussion between Gershuni and Sun Yat-sen, which appeared in Kakumei Hyōron in January 1907, concluded:

So we can see that the bomb is the only answer to tyrannical rule. The bomb means simply "meeting death with death". It is a legitimate defence against tyrannical rule. If we were in Russia, we would - like Gershuni - reject the lukewarm Social-Democratic Party and side with the Social-Revolutionary Party. This is because to rely on the pen without the backing of the bomb is like banging one's head against a brick wall.

45

The proviso "If we were in Russia" was an important qualification to this endorsement of terrorism, but there can be no doubt that - among both shishi and socialists alike - there were those in Japan who sympathised with the methods of political struggle which the Russian SRs employed. The accounts of Gershuni's ideas which were published in Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) must have been read with great interest by many socialists in Japan and they represented one of the many factors which, step by step, were to induce some of them to turn to terrorism. It is interesting to note that, despite the fleeting

44 After Gershuni was arrested by the tsarist police in 1903, an agent provocateur called Yevno Azef succeeded in becoming the leader of the SRs' 'fighting organisation'. Azef's eventual exposure as an agent provocateur "dealt a blow to the tactic of political terror that it never recovered from." (The Origins Of Bolshevism, Theodore Dan, London, 1964, p 269.)

45 Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) No. 8, 25 January 1907, p 3.

nature of his passage through Japan, Gershuni's visit in 1906 was still being recalled by Japanese socialists several years later.⁴⁶

The Russian Anarchists

Kōtoku Shūsui's admiration for the Russian Social-Revolutionary Party was already in evidence while the Russo-Japanese War was in progress* and he was unstinting in his praise for the SRs during the period immediately after his return from the USA. In a polemic with the Christian anarchist Ishikawa Sanshirō in the columns of Shin Kigen (New Era) in September 1906, Kōtoku denied that Ishikawa's strictures on political parties applied to all parties without exception. Kōtoku readily conceded that Ishikawa's criticisms were more than justified in the case of parties which devoted all their energies to playing the parliamentary game, but he maintained that there were other political parties which had stood firm against corruption. As a prime example, he pointed to the Social-Revolutionary Party in Russia. Even though the SRs had succeeded in getting a certain number of their candidates elected to the Russian parliament, their party had not fallen into the trap of respectability and been led astray by the illusory promise of constitutional politics, claimed Kōtoku.⁴⁷

Throughout the years which followed, this admiration felt by many socialists in Japan for the Russian SRs was never entirely eroded. On the outbreak of the First World War, an anarchist like Ōsugi Sakae still felt enough sympathy with the SRs to write in an article 'Ōshū No Tairan To Shakaishugisha No Taido' ('The Upheaval In Europe And The Attitude Of The Socialists') that "the heroic Russian Social-Revolutionary Party will

* See Chapter 2.

46 Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) Vol. II, No. 3, December 1913, p 2.

47 'Seitō Ni Tsuite' ('On Political Parties'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 11, 10 September 1906, pp 35-36.

certainly not let this opportunity (for revolutionary action provided by the war) pass by."⁴⁸ Yet, although the SRs were never entirely written off by Kōtoku and others in the way in which they came to totally reject the social-democrats, and although the SRs' practice of a particular form of direct action continued to endear them to a certain extent to anarchist-inclined Japanese socialists, some of the criticisms which were made of the social-democrats were gradually extended to the SRs as well. In place of the SRs, it was the anarchists who came to be seen as the defenders of the genuine interests of the revolution in Russia.

The high regard in which the anarchists were held is well illustrated by the lead article 'Rokoku Kakumei No Keisei' ('The State Of The Russian Revolution') which appeared in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) in February 1907 and has already been referred to.⁴⁹ The lesson which this article drew from the insurrection of 1905 was that, if all the various forces opposed to tsarism had at that time continued the fight by means of direct action, the revolution could have been won. But, "except for a minority of anarchists", they were all lulled into a false sense of security by the initial victories which were gained. The article criticised both the social-democrats and the SRs for having abandoned direct action for the illusory gains of a constitution, elections and a parliament. The policy favoured by the Russian social-democrats was castigated as being "extremely moderate and grey-haired", while the SRs were blamed for having "put the political revolution before the economic revolution". In contrast to Kōtoku Shūsui's claim - made several months earlier to Ishikawa Sanshirō - that the SRs had succeeded in getting their representatives elected to parliament without having to pay the price of being corrupted as a revolutionary political party,

48 Osugi Sakae Zenshū (Collected Works Of Osugi Sakae), Yasutani Kanichi (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, Additional Volume, p 58.

49 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 35, 27 February 1907, p 1.

it was now asserted that the Russian experience proved that it was impossible to combine a policy of direct action with the practice of contesting parliamentary elections. Direct action and parliamentary politics were now considered to run totally counter to one another, the implication being that elections should be renounced in favour of direct action. By "direct action", this article primarily meant the general strike - and it dwelt specifically on the limitations of the SRs' favourite tactic of political assassination. While recognising that political terrorism might have some role to play, it argued:

However, the economic revolution cannot be achieved, of course, by means of individual assassination. If the tsar is assassinated, it might be hoped that this will shock people in their hearts temporarily, undermine the prestige of the government and bring about a popular uprising. But, in actual fact, assassination these days is more a question of retaliation against the atrocities and massacres carried out by government officials than it is of prosecuting the revolution. Nay! More than retaliation, it arises as an act of legitimate defence.

The prognosis which was given for the revolutionary movement in Russia was that, hopefully, the social-democrats and SRs would turn over a new leaf, abandon parliamentarism and join with the anarchists. Failing this, they would reveal themselves as enemies of the revolution and the task of awakening the working class would then fall to the anarchists alone. Either way, the analysis favoured the anarchists, even though it was conceded that they formed only a minority within the revolutionary movement in Russia. Similarly, in a letter which Kōtoku Shūsui wrote to the Heimin Shinbun (Common People's Newspaper) in March 1907, it was insisted that it was parliamentary institutions which had led the Russian revolution astray and that only the dissolving of parliament could give fresh impetus to the revolution. Therefore "revolutionaries throughout the world are praying that parliament will be dissolved as soon as possible." The "Socialist Party" in Russia was denounced as being thoroughly constitutional and Kōtoku considered it

likely that, when the revolution got under way again, "The banner of the Russian revolution will, in the end, be in the hands of the anarchists."⁵⁰

Kropotkin

One reason for the sympathy which many Japanese socialists felt for the anarchists in Russia was that, despite the fact that Peter Kropotkin had written all his greatest works during the long decades he had spent in exile in western Europe, the Russian anarchist movement was still credited with having produced this foremost theoretician of anarcho-communism. Already during the period of the Russo-Japanese War Kropotkin had attracted the attention of some of the socialists in Japan. It will be recalled that the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) had published a set of 6 postcards to mark its first anniversary in November 1904. These postcards had borne the pictures of various "celebrities who have strong connections with socialism" and among them was Peter Kropotkin. It is also clear from Nishikawa Kōjirō's writings dating from 1904 that some of Kropotkin's works were already being read by socialists in Japan in that period. Nishikawa summarised Kropotkin's ideas on mutual aid in a number of articles which appeared in the Heimin Shimbun during 1904 and concluded the series by urging others to read Kropotkin's Mutual Aid for themselves.⁵¹ By the following year Kōtoku Shūsui had twice read the copy of Kropotkin's Fields, Factories And Workshops which Albert Johnson had sent him* and Yamaguchi Koken was referring to Kropotkin with great respect. In the

* See Chapter 8.

50 'Ōkubo Mura Yori' ('From Okubo Village'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 60, 28 March 1907, p 1.

51 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 32, 19 June 1904, p 4; No. 33, 26 June 1904, p 5; No. 46, 25 September 1904, p 5; No. 49, 16 October 1904, p 5.

issue of Kaben (Fire Whip) which appeared a few days before Kōtoku sailed for the USA in November 1905, Yamaguchi wrote about "our teachers Marx, Bakunin and Kropotkin" and referred specifically to Kropotkin's classic pamphlet An Appeal To The Young.⁵² Sakai Toshihiko launched his theoretical magazine Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) while Kōtoku was in the USA and Kropotkin's thought figured prominently in its second number, which was published in April 1906. Whereas the first issue of Shakaishugi Kenkyū in March 1906 had carried a translation of Marx and Engels' Communist Manifesto, the second issue featured Shirayanagi Shūko's translation of Kropotkin's Anarchism: Its Philosophy And Ideal.⁵³ This was accompanied by Kutsumi Kesson's piece on Kuropotokin No Tokushoku (Kropotkin's Characteristics)⁵⁴ - which dealt with Kropotkin's concept of mutual aid and the ideas which flowed from this - and by a further page of biographical notes on Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin.⁵⁵

It has already been mentioned in the previous chapter that, when Kōtoku Shūsui boarded the ship which would take him to the USA in Yokohama on 14 November 1905, he took with him a copy of Kropotkin's Memoirs Of A Revolutionist. In later years Kōtoku was to write that he had "never received such admonition, consolation and encouragement as I got from that book".⁵⁶ Inspired by Kropotkin's autobiography, and encouraged by Mrs. Fritz, his Russian-born landlady in San Francisco, Kōtoku decided to write directly to Kropotkin. It is unfortunate that this letter has not survived, because it could no doubt have told us a great deal about Kōtoku's political development at that time. Kōtoku did see to it,

52 Kaben (Fire Whip) Vol. I, No. 3, 10 November 1905, pp 9, 35.

53 Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) No. 2, 15 April 1906, pp 1-23.

54 Ibid., pp 30-33.

55 Ibid., p 53.

56 Letter to Ishikawa Sanshirō dated 10 May 1907. Collected in Kōtoku Shūsui No Nikki To Shokan (The Diaries And Letters Of Kotoku Shusui), Shiota Shōbee (ed.), Tōkyō, 1965, p 246.

however, that after he had returned to Japan Kropotkin's reply was published in Japanese translation in Hikari (Light) and the letter which Kropotkin wrote to him does throw some light on Kōtoku's position in relation to anarchism approximately mid-way through 1906. Writing from Bromley in Kent on 25 September 1906, Kropotkin told Kōtoku that he had shown the latter's letter to several of his comrades and that they were all delighted to hear that in Japan too a start had been made to libertarian propoganda. This could well have been mere politeness on Kropotkin's part, though, since he then proceeded to explain very simply but thoroughly his opposition to parliamentary institutions. One suspects that, for all the admiration for Kropotkin which Kōtoku had doubtlessly expressed in his letter, there had probably been some ambivalence with regard to elections and parliament. Nonetheless, Kropotkin was obviously immensely pleased to hear that Kōtoku intended to translate some of his works into Japanese.⁵⁷

In 1906 the first complete English translation of Kropotkin's The Conquest Of Bread became available and it was this book which was to have a profound impact on the entire section of the socialist movement in Japan which was inclined towards direct action. Memoirs Of A Revolutionist had all the excitement of an adventure story, and many Japanese socialists were moved by the passion of An Appeal To The Young, but it was principally from The Conquest Of Bread that they learned what anarcho-communism was. Fields, Factories And Workshops struck many of the socialists as relevant to the problems confronting the peasantry in Japan, and Kropotkin's pamphlets such as Anarchist Communism: Its Basis And Principles were passed from hand to hand and read with much interest, but it was primarily The Conquest Of Bread which Kōtoku Shūsui urged all those who approached him after his return from the USA for information

57 Hikari (Light) No. 28, 25 November 1906, p 3.

about anarchism to study.⁵⁸ That by early 1907 Kōtoku had read the book himself (and vastly improved his knowledge of anarchism in the process) is clear from his article 'Yo Ga Shisō No Henka' ('The Change In My Thought'), which appeared in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) on 5 February 1907. He was echoing Kropotkin when he wrote there that "What the working class needs is not the conquest of political power - it is the 'conquest of bread'"⁵⁹, and he supplemented this with a brief outline of The Conquest Of Bread in a letter he contributed to the same journal the following month. On this occasion he wrote that, in The Conquest Of Bread, "Kropotkin explains the method of the future revolution and the process of constructing an ideal society, writing from a communist position."⁶⁰

The major task which Kōtoku set himself after his return to Japan in June 1906 was to translate The Conquest Of Bread into Japanese. He realised that, unless this was done, the book would remain accessible only to the relative handful of intellectuals who were able to read English. In a letter which he wrote to the imprisoned Ishikawa Sanshirō on 7 July 1907⁶¹, Kōtoku mentioned that Kropotkin had given his consent to have The Conquest Of Bread translated and from about this time sections of the book started to appear in the socialist press in Japan. Many of the passages from The Conquest Of Bread which were carried by the Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) and the Kumamoto Hyōron (Kumamoto Review) were translated by Kōtoku, but he was aided in the work by two young socialists called Ōsugi Sakae and Yamakawa Hitoshi. Yamakawa's

58 See, for example, Kōtoku Shūsui's letters to Yoshikawa Morikuni, dated 23 December 1907; Yamazaki Kesaya, dated 6 May 1908; Niimi Uichirō, dated 10 June 1908; Daijō Toranosuke, dated 30 November 1908. These letters are all collected in Shiota, op. cit., pp 259, 407, 411, 415 respectively.

59 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 16, 5 February 1907, p 1.

60 'Ōkubo Mura Yori' ('From Okubo Village'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 57, 24 March 1907, p 2.

61 Shiota, op. cit., p 250.

translation of Chapter 13 of The Conquest Of Bread ('The Wages System') was serialised in the first 5 issues of the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper, which was later renamed the Nihon Heimin Shimbun - Japan Common People's Newspaper)⁶² and Ōsugi started to translate Chapter 11 ('Free Agreement') in January 1908, but was arrested after only two instalments had appeared in the Nihon Heimin Shimbun.⁶³ Eventually, in 1909, a translation of the whole book was completed and 1000 copies were printed in March of that year. The government, which was becoming increasingly paranoiac in its attitude towards the socialists, immediately banned all sales of The Conquest Of Bread and the police raided the publisher's office with orders to seize all copies. By this stage, however, the socialists in Japan were becoming more adept at clandestine activity and, when the police arrived, they found only 20 copies of the book which they could confiscate. Sakamoto Seima was accused by the authorities of having illegally sold the remaining copies and was fined ¥30. In fact, as the English-language column of Jiyū Shisō (Free Thought) made clear, the bulk of the copies "were distributed among young students and workers through(out) the country and are being read with great interest and curiosity (sic)."⁶⁴ For many socialists a copy of The Conquest Of Bread became a prized possession, to be circulated surreptitiously only among friends and trusted contacts. A typical example of a person who managed to read one of the 1000 copies in the years which followed the publication of The Conquest Of Bread was Yamaga Taiji. Employed as a young printworker, he was lent a copy by one of his fellow workers in 1911. As Yamaga's biography reveals, Kropotkin's book had a profound effect on him, confirming the anarchist ideas which he was then to hold fast to over the next 60 years.⁶⁵

62 Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) Nos. 1-5, June-August 1907.

63 Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 15, 1 January 1908, pp 6-7 and No. 16, 20 January 1908, p 6.

64 Jiyū Shisō (Free Thought) No. 1, 25 May 1909, p 4.

65 Yamaga Taiji Hito To Sono Shōgai (Yamaga Taiji: The Man And His Life), Mukai Kō, Tōkyō, 1974, p 27.

The impact which Kropotkin made on socialist thought in Japan in the years which followed the Russo-Japanese War is well illustrated by a powerful attack which Kōtoku Shūsui made on Leo Tolstoy and his followers in March 1908. During this period Tolstoy continued to have his admirers in Japan and in February 1907 Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) received a letter from Vladimir G. Chertkov, Tolstoy's secretary and disciple. Chertkov wrote the letter on his master's behalf and enclosed a copy of an essay, The Meaning Of The Russian Revolution, which Tolstoy had written in 1906. According to Chertkov, Tolstoy had read the Kakumei Hyōron (presumably Chertkov meant its English-language columns) and, hard though it is to believe, was supposed to have "discovered that its ideas were the same as his own ideas".⁶⁶ It was in the face of Tolstoy's continuing interest in Japan that Kōtoku launched his vigorous denunciation of Tolstoyan ideas in the issue of the Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) which appeared on 20 March 1908. Some people regarded Tolstoy as a type of anarchist, because of his opposition to the state, but Kōtoku dismissed this.

The Tolstoyans say that they condemn the state, but they also condemn revolution. Just believe in god and love your neighbour is all that they have to say. But how many thousands of years is it that pious, honest and meek peasants have been believing in gods and loving their neighbours? How long must they go on believing in gods, loving their neighbours.... and living like cattle and horses? The hard-heartedness of the Tolstoyans' advice amazes me.

67

Rejecting Tolstoy's approach, Kōtoku posed an alternative perspective, which was plainly derived from Kropotkin:

If we wish for true happiness for the peasants, we should encourage them to free themselves from superstition and the depredation from which they suffer. Let them have machines and fertiliser.

66 Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) No. 9, 25 February 1907, p 5.

67 'Kainan Hyōron' ('South Sea Review'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 20, 20 March 1908, p 4.

Let them have land and houses without having to pay taxes or rent. And let them provide themselves with food and clothing by communal farming and spinning and weaving. Yet, as Kropotkin teaches, only after a great social revolution has changed the existing social system can what we have been talking about here really be established. And the revolution of both the factory workers in the towns and the peasants in the provinces has to be realised together, so that they can come to the aid of each other. It would be impossible for the landlords to be destroyed while the capitalists remained, just as it would be for the capitalists to be destroyed while the landlords remained. In short, as our teacher (i.e. Kropotkin - J.C.) argues forcefully again, the common people (heimin) today can achieve their liberation only by means of a generalised revolution.

I know that at present Kropotkin's arguments are still accepted by very few. Yet I also know that, despite whether people agree with these arguments or reject them, it is an undeniable fact that the revolution is daily drawing nearer. From ancient times history has proved that a great upheaval always occurs when the extraction of taxes and the plundering of the people is carried to an extreme.

68

Not only was Kropotkin repeatedly invoked in this short passage (twice by name, and once as "our teacher"), but the argument too was pure Conquest Of Bread. The strength of The Conquest Of Bread lay in its vision of a new society without classes and without the state, where essential products such as food and clothes and houses would all be made free. Kropotkin also excelled in his unswerving opposition to wage labour and in his shrewd insight that, when the social-democrats toyed with notions such as labour vouchers, they were (perhaps unconsciously) seeking to maintain capitalism's wages system under another name. Thus Kropotkin denounced both capitalism in its traditional form and what he called the social-democrats' "Collectivism" - "both being but two different forms of the present wages' system."⁶⁹ At their best, the most perceptive of the Japanese socialists followed Kropotkin here.

68 Ibid., p 4.

69 The Conquest Of Bread, Peter Kropotkin, London, 1913, p 245.

Yamakawa Hitoshi appended some explanatory notes to the final instalment of his translation of Chapter 13 of The Conquest Of Bread when it appeared in the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) on 1 August 1907. Only when a situation has been achieved where people "work according to their ability and receive shares according to their needs", wrote Yamakawa, "can it be said that the ideal of socialism - which has as its aim the withering away of the wages system - has been realised for the first time."⁷⁰

Yet there were inconsistencies in Kropotkin's writings which those who studied his works in Japan not only failed to criticise but even seemed to make their own. Unlike Marx, Kropotkin had no expertise in economics and one is therefore tempted to make allowances for his use of terms such as "commodity" in the context of the new society which he advocated. One's inclination is perhaps to regard this as no more than a terminological slip, especially in view of Kropotkin's often expressed hostility to the corollary of generalised commodity production - wage labour. Other terms, such as "exchange", however, really do appear to be used by Kropotkin to describe equivalent activities to those which go by the same names in societies based on private property. Nowhere did Kropotkin spell out the precise details of the society he envisaged, but the impression which The Conquest Of Bread gave was of a society atomised into thousands of local communes. Within these communes the principal means of production - above all the land - were to be owned and worked in common and, as has already been mentioned, the most vital articles of consumption were to be distributed freely. On the other hand, it was implied that relationships based on "exchange" would exist between the different communes and that there would perhaps even be scope for private property and exchange to flourish within the interstices of the local intra-communal society as well.

70 Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 5, 1 August 1907, p 7.

Because Kropotkin favoured small-scale artisan production (such as that which still existed to a great extent in Paris at the time when he first wrote The Conquest Of Bread as a series of articles for Le Révolté and La Révolte) rather than large-scale factories, a petit-bourgeois label has often been applied to him. Yet the back-to-the-land air which The Conquest Of Bread gave off had much more of the Russian peasant about it than it had of the Parisian artisan. Despite the survival of communal land-holding in nineteenth century Russia, economic relationships based on the exchange of commodities had increasingly intruded into the peasants' lives and it was the Russian villages which seem to have furnished Kropotkin with his basic image of a 'new' society. Brought up as a landed aristocrat in tsarist Russia, Kropotkin wrote The Conquest Of Bread in such a way that reflected in its pages was the situation which existed over large areas of rural Russia in the nineteenth century. His blend of communal institutions and practices, on the one hand, with those based on private property, on the other, failed to appear contradictory to him, or even as requiring explanation.

Kropotkin exerted a strong influence on the pamphlet Nōmin No Fukuin (The Peasant's Gospel) which Akaba Hajime wrote in 1910. Akaba expressed the feelings of peasants everywhere for the land when he proclaimed:

The land is the parent of we human beings.
Human beings are children born by the land
and raised by the land. Just as a baby will
die if taken away from its mother's breast,
so a human being is a strange type of animal
which cannot exist for a single day when
deprived of its parent - the land.

71

Just as with Kropotkin, at the same time that Akaba looked forward to the "anarcho-communism" of the future, he also harked back to an idealised past represented by the "village community" of long ago.

71 Meiji Bunka Shiryō Sōsho (Series On Materials Relating To The Culture Of The Meiji Era), Association to Publish the Series on Materials Relating to the Culture of the Meiji Era, Tōkyō, 1960, Vol. V, p 287.

.... we must send the land robbers (i.e. the landlords - J.C.) to the revolutionary guillotine and return to the "village community" of long ago, which our remote ancestors enjoyed. We must construct the free paradise of "anarcho-communism", which will flesh out the bones of the village community with the most advanced scientific understanding and with the lofty morality of mutual aid.

72

By 1907/1908 some of the socialists in Japan who had turned towards anarchism were exhibiting in their writings many ideas derived from Kropotkin's thought. Ishimaki Kōsei wrote in December 1907 that "we must take as our ideal a society where production, distribution and consumption can all be freely enjoyed according to needs"⁷³ and in April 1908 he made a vigorous attack on the assumption that the "right to work" would somehow be to the workers' advantage.

Our ideal socialist society is a society where people can eat even without working. Looked at from the point of view of today's labourism, this probably seems very utopian, but I would say that the habit of regarding human beings as machines of labour is a major vice of modern civilisation. The men and women of the gentleman clique (shinshi batsu) maintain that human beings have a "right to work", but what they also must have is a "right to well-being". A human being who merely has a "right to work" is, in the end, nothing more than a machine of labour.

In order to protect their own "right to well-being", the men and women of the gentleman clique force the workers to observe the "right to work". Because they need to steal the fruits of production, they preach to the workers a horrific "gospel of labour". In this way, the workers supply their labour (sic) as a commodity to be bought and sold. The workers dedicate their whole lives to labour and produce for the gentleman clique, while never themselves benefiting in the slightest form from the "right to well-being".

74

72 Ibid., p 294.

73 'Museifushugi Keizai Ron' ('On Anarchist Economics'), Ishimaki Kōsei, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 14, 20 December 1907, p 11.

74 'Rōdō Setsuyaku No Rinri' ('The Ethics Of Labour Saving'), Ishimaki Yoshio, Kumamoto Hyōron (Kumamoto Review) No. 21, 20 April 1908, p 1. (Judging by the style of their Japanese, it seems safe to conclude that Ishimaki Kōsei of the Nihon Heimin Shimbun and Ishimaki Yoshio of the Kumamoto Hyōron were one and the same person.)

Ishimaki Kōsei argued that to call for a "right to work" was to reduce human beings to the level of mere machines of labour and this certainly represented a radical break with the ideas held by almost all socialists in Japan only a few years before - when Rōdō Sekai (Labour World), for example, had regularly appeared under the banner "Labour is Sacred". Some of the Japanese socialists who, like Ishimaki, read Kropotkin's works during this period obtained from him a vision of socialist society where consumption would be free and unrestricted and where men and women, liberated from the compelling need to work in order to gain the means of life, would enjoy work as a pleasurable and creative activity - one aspect of their overall "well-being". Unfortunately, however, at the same time that they gained from Kropotkin certain valuable insights into socialism, they also tended to adopt his sometimes unfair criticisms of Karl Marx, as well as his facile attitude towards the problems raised by scarcity. It was incongruous enough that Ishimaki should have suggested that Marx had less ability as an economist than Kropotkin⁷⁵, but to argue that "Marx always idealised the wages system and taught the need for labour vouchers etc."⁷⁶ was to flagrantly misrepresent Marx's position. Far from idealising the wages system, Marx had stood for its abolition.⁷⁷ Yet he was also acutely aware of the fact that, given the productive capacity which was available during his lifetime, it would be impossible to rapidly produce an abundance of the articles of consumption which people wanted, no matter how society was

75 'Museifushugi Keizai Ron' ('On Anarchist Economics'), Ishimaki Kōsei, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 13, 5 December 1907, p 10.

76 'Museifushugi Keizai Ron' ('On Anarchist Economics'), Ishimaki Kōsei, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 14, 20 December 1907, p 11.

77 "Instead of the conservative motto: 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!' they (the working class - J.C.) ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword: 'Abolition of the wage system!'" (Value, Price And Profit, Karl Marx. Collected in Selected Works, Karl Marx, London, 1947, Vol. I, p 275. Emphases in the original.)

organised. Confronted by this dilemma, Marx had suggested that a system of labour vouchers would be necessary in the initial stage of socialism. This was an unfortunate proposal since - as Marx himself admitted - it was tantamount to saying that in the first phase of socialism "the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity-equivalents, so much labour in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labour in another form."⁷⁸ Yet, however seriously in error his 'solution' might have been, Marx at least has to be given credit for recognising that the low level of production of which society was then capable represented a major obstacle for socialists in his day. By way of contrast, Kropotkin's response to the same problem was simply to assert dogmatically that, even in the conditions of the nineteenth century, abundance could be achieved. Taking their lead from Kropotkin, many socialists in Japan were insufficiently aware of the fact that proposals for reorganising society so as to introduce free access to articles of consumption were dependent on production being raised to reach the level of abundance. Writing from Beppu in south-west Japan in November 1907, Kōtoku Shūsui explained to the readers of the Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) that the local public baths were open to all residents free of charge. He wondered why they did not make transport a free service too and then, extending the argument, he added:

And, even though it might take a long while to put into effect, wouldn't it be applying the same logic to go further still and extend public ownership and abolish payment for food, clothing and shelter too? it is such public ownership of the means of the economy which is precisely what we socialists advocate.

79

What Kōtoku neglected to say was that free baths were a practicable proposition in the Beppu locality just because the town was endowed with

78 Critique Of The Gotha Programme, Karl Marx. Collected in Selected Works, Karl Marx, London, 1942, Vol. II, p 564.

79 'Beppu Yori' ('From Beppu'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 13, 5 December 1907, p 5.

hot springs from which hot water flowed naturally in abundance. In the conditions which prevailed in the first decade of the twentieth century, the idea that food or clothing or houses could be supplied in the same abundant quantities as Beppu's hot water was a utopian fantasy. The limited techniques of production which were available during his lifetime stood between Kōtoku Shūsui and the socialism which he advocated in his letter from Beppu. Yet no more than Kropotkin was Kōtoku prepared to admit that genuine socialism remained out of reach during his lifetime and that genuine socialism would only become practicable as the techniques of production at humankind's disposal were improved.

During 1906/1907 various letters passed between Kropotkin and Kōtoku. After Ōsugi Sakae had been imprisoned in 1907 for having translated Kropotkin's An Appeal To The Young, Kropotkin sent his "best fraternal greetings" to the "brave comrades" in prison and he frequently enclosed in his letters copies of anarchist newspapers and pamphlets.⁸⁰ It is clear that an arrangement was made to exchange the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) and Kropotkin's London-based Freedom.⁸¹ Kōtoku was sometimes criticised by other socialists in Japan for his habitual use of the title sensei ('teacher' or 'master') when referring to Kropotkin⁸², but his admiration and respect for Kropotkin remained undiminished to the last. In his prison cell, awaiting execution, Kōtoku wrote a document Gokuchū Yori Bōryoku Kakumei O Ronzu (Thoughts In Prison On Violent Revolution) which can be considered his final testament. In order to prove that not all anarchists were bloodthirsty assassins, he cited Kropotkin, "whom they (the anarchists - J.C.) regard as an

80 Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 5, 1 August 1907, p 13.

81 Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 3, 1 July 1907, p 13.

82 'Kainan Hyōron' ('South Sea Review'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Kumamoto Hyōron (Kumamoto Review) No. 25, 20 June 1908, p 12.

authority".⁸³ Even with the death of Kōtoku in 1911, Kropotkin's "authority" remained unchallenged among the direct action wing of the socialist movement in Japan, at least until the First World War. When the war came, it was against all their expectations that they heard the shattering news that Kropotkin had abandoned his internationalist principles. Denounced as an "anarcho-patriot", Kropotkin's prestige among all socialists throughout the world who stood firm in their opposition to capitalism's wars suffered a blow from which it was never to recover. The Japanese socialists were no exception. Even those socialists who most admired Kropotkin's theoretical writings denounced his position on the war as a "degeneration".⁸⁴ Arahata Kanson's view was representative when, analysing the situation in Europe in 1916, he castigated not only the war-mongering governments and their social-democratic supporters but also "a section of the anarchists and revolutionary trade unionists, who have abandoned their usual principles and ideals and are justifying, advocating and glorifying the war".⁸⁵ Kropotkin had only himself to blame for drawing onto his head such forthright and uncompromising criticism.

The Russian Revolution

The same principled opposition of the Japanese socialists to the war was evident in a resolution on the Russian revolution which was passed by a group of socialists in Japan in 1917. The influence exerted by Lenin and his followers on socialist thought in Japan following the Bolshevik seizure of power in November 1917 will not be touched on here,

83 Shiota, op. cit., p 162.

84 'Iwayuru Shin Gunkokushugi' ('The So-Called New Militarism'), Ōsugi Sakae, Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) Vol. III, No. 1, October 1915, p 24.

85 'Jijitsu To Kaishaku' ('Facts And Interpretations'), Arahata Kanson, Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) Vol. III, No. 4, January 1916, p 11.

since it falls almost entirely outside of the period dealt with in this section. But already by the spring of 1917 the eyes of the socialists in Japan were focused on the revolutionary turmoil in Russia following the overthrow of the tsar and on 7 May 1917 about 30 socialists from the Tōkyō-Yokohama area met in secret and drew up a 'Resolution Of The Japanese Socialists On The Russian Revolution'. Issued in Sakai Toshihiko's name and published by various socialist journals abroad, this resolution declared:

At the same time that the Russian revolution signifies, in one of its aspects, a political revolution by the rising commercial and industrial class against the politics of a medieval despotism, it is also, in another of its aspects, a social revolution by the class of common people (heimin) against capitalism.

86

In addition to this evaluation of the upheaval in Russia as a dual revolution, the resolution concluded:

Therefore on this occasion it is the responsibility of the Russian revolution - and, at the same time, of socialists in all countries - to resolutely insist on an immediate end to the war. The class of common people (heimin) in all the warring countries must be rallied and its fighting strength redirected, so that it is aimed in each case at the ruling class in its own country.

We have confidence in the brave struggle of the Russian Socialist Party and the comrades in all countries and look forward to the success of the socialist revolution.

87

Compared to the harsh judgements passed on both the social-democrats and the social-revolutionaries in Russia a decade earlier, this expression of "confidence in the brave struggle of the Russian Socialist Party" was praise indeed. Articles had appeared in the Japanese newspapers telling of the overthrow of tsarism and of mass struggles in the streets of Petrograd and even those Japanese socialists who were inclined to direct

86 Gendai Shi Shiryō (Materials On Modern History), Tōkyō, 1964, Vol. XIV, p xxi.

87 Ibid., p xxi.

action had had their faith in an ill-defined "Russian Socialist Party" restored by these reports. When the Bolsheviks took over the reins of power in Russia in November 1917 the sympathetic support of a majority of the socialist movement in Japan was automatically transferred to them.

CHAPTER 10.

Social-Democracy And Syndicalism In Contention - European
Battles Refought In Japan

European social-democracy continued to be the major influence acting on the socialist movement in Japan in the period immediately following the Russo-Japanese War. As with the earlier Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) and Chokugen (Straight Talking), the columns of Hikari (Light) were full of glowing references to the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) and to the leaders who had built it up into a mass organisation. The admiration with which the SPD was regarded is conveyed in a short piece on the finances of the SPD which appeared in the first issue of Hikari on 20 November 1905.¹ Figures were rattled off there (such as the SPD's annual income - given as ¥361,530) with the apparent intention of impressing Hikari's readers with the power of the SPD and the support it enjoyed, as demonstrated by its financial resources. A year later, Yamaguchi Koken and Nishikawa Kōjirō decided to mark the first anniversary of Hikari by printing Wilhelm Liebknecht's photograph on the front page of their journal. In the accompanying article, this former leading member of the SPD was quoted with great respect and referred to as sensei ('teacher' or 'master').² Kōtoku Shūsui too, writing from California in an article published in Hikari in March 1906, chose to make his point that a revolution was allegedly coming by directing attention not only to the turmoil in Russia but also to the election of Labour MPs in the January 1906 general election in Britain and to the position of the SPD in German society. Kōtoku's

1 'Doitsu Shakaitō No Zaisei' ('The Finances Of The German Socialist Party'), Hikari (Light) No. 1, 20 November 1905, p 5.

2 'Aa Isshū Nen' ('Ah! The First Anniversary!'), Yamaguchi Yoshizō (Koken) and Nishikawa Kōjirō, Hikari (Light) No. 27, 15 November 1906, p 1.

three points of reference to show that revolution was supposedly on the order of the day were thus Russia, Britain and Germany. The "sober British workers" were "quietly achieving a peaceful revolution", while in Germany "the Socialist Party has finally resolved that revolution is inevitable", thought Kōtoku.³

If in February 1906 Kōtoku was able to be as sanguine as this about the intention of the SPD to carry out a social revolution, how did it come about that twelve months later he was to denounce the same party in a statement addressed to the entire socialist movement in Japan? In his 'Yo Ga Shisō No Henka' ('The Change In My Thought'), which was carried by the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) on 5 February 1907, he criticised the SPD forthrightly:

If the SPD's 3 million members were genuinely conscious party members, the revolution should already have been achieved long ago. But being a member of a party in the sense that one votes for it and being a conscious member are different things altogether. Even if one does have 3 million people trained for the purpose of elections, they are useless for the purpose of making the revolution. The advocates of universal suffrage and a parliamentary policy generally say to the working class: "Vote for us! Vote for us! If you elect our comrades as MPs, and if our comrades win a majority in parliament, that will be the social revolution. All the workers have to do is vote." And the honest worker believes this and trusts in parliament completely. He votes and in this way as many as 3 million votes are amassed. But it is only 3 million votes. It is not a question of 3 million conscious, united socialists.... Thus we can see that, to the extent that a parliamentary policy takes hold, so the revolutionary movement is emasculated.

4

Although 'The Change In My Thought' became the best-known statement of Kōtoku's new attitude towards the SPD and its electoral strategy, there had been many earlier indications that his ideas were developing along such lines. In the speech which he made at the public meeting held in Tōkyō on 28 June 1906 to welcome him back from the USA, Kōtoku

3 'Ippa Banpa' ('One Wave; Ten Thousand Waves'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 9, 20 March 1906, p 1.

4 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 16, 5 February 1907, p 1.

suggested that the "tide of the world revolutionary movement" was flowing against parliamentarism and the SPD and that "the comrades in Europe and America" were moving towards the adoption of the general strike as "the means for the future revolution".⁵ Yet, although some of those in his audience were quick to note the anarchist implications of Kōtoku's speech⁶, he did not categorically commit himself on this occasion. Two months later, however, Kōtoku was making no attempt to hide his anarchist sympathies⁷ and by the end of 1906 he was arguing passionately for direct action. In a letter which he wrote to Hikari (Light) from Ōkubo on 9 December 1906, Kōtoku explained that he no longer had any faith in parliament and the law. "We must make up our minds", he insisted, "that the workers should achieve their rights and advance their interests by relying on their own strength alone."⁸ Kōtoku indicated in this letter that, whereas the socialist movement in Germany had hitherto been almost entirely a parliamentary movement, now the trade unions were coming to the fore. Finally, in an article which appeared in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) just a few days before 'The Change In My Thought', Kōtoku focused specifically on the setback experienced by the SPD in the general election held in Germany in January 1907.* Whereas one year earlier he had been prepared

* Although the number of votes received by SPD candidates increased in 1907, the percentage of the vote captured by the SPD fell, as did the number of its MPs. As events turned out, this proved to be only a temporary setback for the SPD.

Year	No. of Votes	Percentage of Vote	No. of SPD MPs
1903	3,010,000	31.2	81
1907	3,259,000	28.9	43
1912	4,250,000	34.8	110

(Histoire Générale Du Socialisme, Jacques Droz (ed.), Paris, 1974, Vol. II, p 34.)

- 5 'Sekai Kakumei Undō No Chōryū' ('The Tide Of The World Revolutionary Movement'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 16, 5 July 1906, p 1.
- 6 ".... Comrade Kōtoku delivered a speech on the Tendency of Revolutiona(ry) Movements in Europe and America.... Some may criticize it as being anarchistic. Be that as it may, we are much discussing about that question." (Hikari - Light - No. 16, 5 July 1906, p 8 - English column.)
- 7 'Museifutō Chinatsu' ('Suppression Of The Anarchists'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 18, 5 August 1906, p 1.
- 8 'Ōkubo Yori' ('From Okubo'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 30, 15 December 1906, p 5.

to interpret as a "peaceful revolution" the election of Labour MPs in Britain, the conclusion he now drew was that the electoral reverse suffered by the SPD showed the bankruptcy of a parliamentary strategy. In particular, he stressed the hollowness of "parliamentary strength" under a political system such as Germany's (and, by implication, Japan's) where the Kaiser wielded great influence and where the cabinet was not answerable to the people. Kōtoku conceded that for years the SPD had been looked up to as an authority and its lead followed, but he now insisted that - despite its revolutionary pretensions and cries of "no compromise" - it had in fact achieved nothing beyond merely piling up votes for the past 30 years. In opposition to the SPD's emphasis on elections, Kōtoku counterposed an alternative strategy based on direct action and the general strike. Kōtoku also asserted:

What the European working class needs is not to elect a majority of MPs but to gain the assurance of food and clothes and shelter. It does not need the eloquent phrases of Bebel or Jaurès. What it does need is to achieve the social revolution. It is not laws which produce food and clothes, any more than it is votes which can be the means of revolution. We believe that if the European socialist parties persist in their adherence to nothing but a parliamentary policy, they will in the end be incapable of functioning as the revolutionary parties of the working class. They will end up as nothing more than alternative bourgeois (shinshi batsu) parties. As a result, the workers themselves will all desert them and turn to anarcho-communism.

We hope that, instead of this, the recent "defeat in the elections" experienced by the comrades in Germany will act as an incentive for all the European socialist parties to change their policy.

9

It has already been shown in previous chapters how the ideas which Kōtoku came into contact with during the six months he spent in the USA, as well as the writings of Peter Kropotkin, were of great importance in inducing an entire section of the socialist movement in Japan to move

9 'Doitsu Sōsenkyo To Ōshū Shakaitō' ('The German General Election And The European Socialist Parties'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Heimin Shinbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 13, 1 February 1907, p 1.

towards anarchism. An equally important factor which led in the same direction was the example set by the anarcho-syndicalist movement in Europe. In Europe anarcho-syndicalism was a widespread reaction against the respectability and inertia which had become the hallmark of social-democracy in general and the SPD in particular. Anarcho-syndicalists were convinced that when the working class became involved in parliamentary politics it was merely forging new chains for itself and they regarded all political parties (even those which claimed to have the interests of labour at heart) as little more than frauds. In place of political parties, anarcho-syndicalists looked to a militant trade union movement as the means by which the working class could achieve its emancipation and, as an alternative to parliamentary elections, they called for a revolutionary general strike. Despite the fact that the conditions which existed in Japan were in many ways the exact opposite of those which were found in western Europe, anarcho-syndicalism made a strong impact on the Japanese socialist movement. Behind the reaction of Kōtoku and others against the SPD and parliamentarism lay the powerful appeal of anarcho-syndicalism and the general strike.

Arnold Roller's The Social General Strike

In view of the fact that enthusiasm for the idea of the general strike developed hand in hand with a growing hostility towards the SPD, it was appropriate that inspiration for this proposed new strategy for the socialist movement in Japan should have been provided by a German anarchist who was himself fiercely opposed to the SPD. Arnold Roller may have been an otherwise little-known activist, but it happened that an English translation of a short pamphlet he had written on the general strike was published in Chicago in June 1905, six months before Kōtoku Shūsui arrived in the USA. Kōtoku acquired a copy of Roller's The Social General Strike during his stay in California and, after his return to Japan, this flimsy pamphlet of a mere 32 pages came to have an influence

which was out of all proportion to its size. At first it was only the relative handful of Japanese socialists who understood English who were able to read The Social General Strike, but Kōtoku regarded Roller's pamphlet as a vital text and was determined to translate it into Japanese. This was done during 1907 and The Social General Strike was then issued clandestinely in a mimeographed edition under the innocuous title Keizai Soshiki No Mirai (The Future Of Economic Organisation). Distributed secretly, copies were sent out to socialists throughout Japan together with a note which explained that "Since the publication of this pamphlet is the result of a great deal of hard effort, we fervently hope that the reader will make every effort to propagate its ideas by immediately passing it on to other comrades after reading it."¹⁰

In The Social General Strike, Arnold Roller defined the general strike as a vast confrontation "in which the whole class of workers finally refuse to work for the whole class of capitalists".¹¹ This did not mean that from the very outset of the strike the whole of the working class would be involved. On the contrary, the organised workers had a vanguard role to play, since it was asserted that "In every revolution it was the force of the energetic minority that aroused the courage of the timid masses."¹² Whether the action launched by militant trade unions was taken up by the rest of the working class or not, however, the aim of the general strike was to paralyse capitalist production, "so that after the complete annihilation of the old system, the working people can take possession through its labor unions of all the means of production, mines, houses, the land; in short: of all the economic factors".¹³ Hence Roller believed that not only was the general strike

10 Nihon No Hangyaku Shisō (The Rebellious Thought Of Japan), Akiyama Kiyoshi, Tōkyō, 1972, p 32.

11 The Social General Strike, Arnold Roller, Chicago, 1905, p 16.

12 Ibid., p 6.

13 Ibid., p 7.

the newly discovered form which socialist revolution would take, but he also envisaged the unions as the means by which a socialist society would be administered.

.... it will also be the calling of the trades' unions in (the) future to take production into their hands, and by this they are to be not only the element of education and the battle of (?for - J.C.) the social future, but also the embryos of produ(c)tion and reorganization after the death of capitalism.

14

To Arnold Roller it seemed obvious that in countries such as Germany the federated trade unions would provide a ready-made organisational framework for the running of a future socialist society. Yet, given the virtual absence of a trade union movement in Japan, it was perhaps not surprising that some of the Japanese socialists who read The Social General Strike should have been inclined to interpret it as a defence of unorganised anarchist spontaneity. "If you read Roller's The Social General Strike, you will see that he argues that in fact one does not need training for the revolution", wrote someone who signed himself Kurozugin in an article 'Museifu Tetsugaku' ('Anarchist Philosophy') in the Kumamoto Hyōron (Kumamoto Review) in March 1908.¹⁵ Kurozugin made this point within the context of an argument directed against the social-democratic style of disciplined and order-issuing trade unions. In their place, he favoured freely grouped syndicats (although in Europe many anarcho-syndicalist trade unions - such as those which constituted the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) in France - had certainly not been able to avoid a degree of bureaucratisation). Even to discuss such issues in Japan was academic in the extreme, however, since the Meiji state was determined to give the working class no opportunity to organise trade unions of any kind. Kurozugin's contention that no "training" was required for the revolution thus indicates one of the basic differences

14 Ibid., p 32.

15 Kumamoto Hyōron (Kumamoto Review) No. 19, 20 March 1908, p 2.

between anarcho-syndicalism as it was understood in Japan, on the one hand, and in countries such as France, on the other. Far from the revolution being envisaged by the CGT as a spontaneous upheaval in which an untrained working class would be pitted against the forces of the state, all the sectional strikes and partial struggles in which trade unions became involved were conceived of as a preliminary process of "revolutionary gymnastics", the function of which was to forge the revolutionary temper of the workers. Among the activists of the CGT, the general strike was pictured as a highly organised operation by means of which the socialist revolution could be accomplished without the working class having to pay the enormous price inherent in the traditional Parisian revolutionary tactics of street battles and barricades. By way of contrast, with the pitched battles fought by the miners of Ashio and Besshi to inspire them, it was hardly surprising that a markedly different image of the general strike should have been entertained by some of the Japanese socialists. Entirely overlooking the fact that the working class in Japan constituted only a small fraction of the population, and was thus in no position to bring about "the complete annihilation of the old system", Kurozugin wrote:

When the time is ripe and somewhere a strike breaks out, it is bound to spread elsewhere and provoke a so-called general strike and the workers will set about expropriation. This is, in fact, what we learned from the strikes which took place in Britain and the USA last year. There the strikes spread so that even those without any training were sucked into the whirlpool.

16

Not only were wildly unrealistic lessons drawn from strikes which had occurred in Britain and the USA during 1907, but the general strike was portrayed as a spontaneous outburst whose "whirlpool" effect would somehow compensate for the lack of an organised labour movement. The insurrectionary undertones of this particular vision of the general

strike could not be spelt out in the heavily censored socialist press of the time, but few of Kurozugin's readers could have missed the implications of his arguments. A letter which Kōtoku Shūsui wrote to Niimi Uichirō at about the same time is also revealing, in that it described strikes as a form of Bakuninist "propaganda of the deed".

Instigating strikes, just like assassinations and violence, is recognised, after all, as one means of education. Bakunin and others called this propaganda of the deed and advocated it in place of written and spoken propaganda.

17

Again, this drawing of parallels between "strikes", "assassinations" and "violence" suggested a view of the strike weapon which was appreciably different from that held by the majority of syndicalists in Europe.

The Emergence Of Support For Kōtoku's Direct Actionism

One of the first of those to be influenced by Kōtoku Shūsui's turn away from parliamentarism to direct action was Ōsugi Sakae. As a young man of 21, Ōsugi contributed to Sakai Toshihiko's journal Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) during Kōtoku's absence in the USA and his articles of this period were unexceptional in their orthodox, social-democratic tone. As late as August 1906, he could still write on the SPD:

How lucky the German Socialist Party has been! As theoreticians it has had two great geniuses in Marx and Engels. As agitators, it has had three men of great acumen in Lassalle, Liebknecht and Bebel. It has claimed the leadership within the international socialist movement and has the power to put pressure on and attack the high-handed bourgeoisie. And there is certainly nothing accidental about this.

18

Once Ōsugi's interest in European anarcho-syndicalism was aroused by Kōtoku, however, he had the considerable advantage over many of his

17 Letter to Niimi Uichirō dated 10 June 1908. Collected in Kōtoku Shūsui No Nikki To Shokan (The Diaries And Letters Of Kotoku Shusui), Shiota Shōbee (ed.), Tōkyō, 1965, p 410.

18 'Bēberu Den' ('The Life Of Bebel'), Ōsugi Sakae, Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) No. 5, 1 August 1906, p 38.

comrades in the socialist movement of having studied French at college. No doubt it was his ability to read the publications of the French anarchist movement which partly accounted for Ōsugi's rapid transition to an anarchist position. Already by December 1906 Kōtoku was telling Albert Johnson that "Comrade Osugi is a young Anarchist student and a best friend of mine."¹⁹ Kōtoku's 'The Change In My Thought' appeared in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) on 5 February 1907 and the next day it was followed by the first instalment of Ōsugi's 'Ōshū Shakaitō Undō No Taisei' ('The General Tendency Of The European Socialist Movement'). Touching here on the subject of trade unionism, Ōsugi's approach was unambiguously syndicalist. He contrasted syndicats with ordinary trade unions, characterising the former as revolutionary organisations and the latter as reformist bodies. According to Ōsugi, while the reformist trade unions were making overtures to the social-democratic parties in Europe, a section of the membership of these same parties was attracted to the revolutionary syndicats. It was this, asserted Ōsugi, which had sparked off the debates on trade unionism which were currently taking place within the German, French, Italian and other social-democratic parties.²⁰

Ōsugi's long article continued over several issues of the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) and he examined in some detail the recent conferences of the French, German and Italian social-democratic parties.²¹ Ōsugi believed that syndicalist- and anarchist-inclined elements were crystallising within the major European social-democratic parties and that the tide was turning in their favour. He also seized on a letter which the Heimin Shimbun had just received from Kaneko Kiichi

19 Letter to Albert Johnson dated 18 December 1906. Collected in Shiota, op. cit., p 440.

20 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 17, 6 February 1907, p 2.

21 The conferences of the French, German and Italian social-democratic parties were dealt with respectively in issues Nos. 18/19, 7/8 February 1907, pp 2; No. 20, 9 February 1907, p 2; and No. 21, 10 February 1907, p 2.

in the USA in order to suggest that the same trend was at work in that country too.²² Not only that, but now that Kōtoku's declaration 'The Change In My Thought' had been issued in Tōkyō, claimed Ōsugi, the same tendency could be seen manifesting itself in Japan. Indeed, Ōsugi's article conveyed a sense of urgency. It seemed to him that the move towards direct action could be discerned throughout the international socialist movement.

As for his own position, Ōsugi made it clear that he stood with Kōtoku on the question of parliamentarism. He wrote:

From my position of revolutionary socialism, I have come to believe that a parliamentary policy undermines the spirit of social revolution. Without the direct action of the workers, a thoroughgoing social revolution cannot be accomplished.

23

Imprisoned on 29 May 1907 for offences against the press laws²⁴, he used the 5½ months of enforced idleness which followed to read a wide variety of anarchist literature from Europe, including such works of Bakunin, Kropotkin, Élisée Reclus and Errico Malatesta as were available to him, as well as other books by some of the lesser-known anarchist writers of the day.²⁵ While in prison he also found himself reflecting on Láo-zǐ and his interpretation of the ancient Taoist philosopher's thought was a further indication of Ōsugi's commitment to anarchism. In a letter which he wrote from prison and which was published in both

22 'Shikago Dayori' ('Letter From Chicago'), Kaneko Kiichi, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 20, 9 February 1907, p 1.

23 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 22, 12 February 1907, p 2.

24 Ōsugi served 1½ months for his translation of Kropotkin's An Appeal To The Young, which had appeared in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) between 8-31 March 1907, and a further 4 months for his translation of an article 'Aux Conscrits', which had been taken from the French journal L'Anarchie and published in Hikari (Light) on 25 November 1906.

25 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 17, 22 September 1907, p 6. (See also Osaka Heimin Shimbun - Osaka Common People's Newspaper - No. 9, 5 October 1907, p 14.)

the Shakai Shimbun (Social News) and the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) in August/September 1907, Ōsugi explained that he saw in Láo-zǐ's writings the description of a "tranquil anarchist society".²⁶

In addition to Ōsugi Sakae, another key supporter of Kōtoku Shūsui was Yamakawa Hitoshi, a young militant in his mid-twenties, who had already served a jail sentence for lese-majesty.²⁷ By December 1907 Kōtoku was recommending those who contacted him for information about anarchism to talk to either Ōsugi or Yamakawa²⁸, but - despite Kōtoku's opinion - Yamakawa's involvement with anarchism was never as complete as Ōsugi's. In Europe there were those, such as Rosa Luxemburg, whose inclination towards direct action did not take them into the anarchist camp and similarly, in Japan too, the section of the socialist movement which opted for workers' direct action was wider than the out-and-out anarchists alone. Rather than become involved in a no doubt fascinating but perhaps not very fruitful discussion of where anarchism stops and other forms of direct action begin, it is perhaps more pertinent to emphasise that, whatever the differences which existed between Ōsugi and Yamakawa, they were united in their positive response to Kōtoku's denunciation of the SPD and parliamentarism. Ōsugi was wholehearted in his commitment to anarchism, while Yamakawa - for all the influences he undoubtedly absorbed from European anarcho-syndicalism and from Kropotkin - maintained an interest in Marxism throughout the period under consideration here. As such, both played important roles in building up a body of support within the socialist movement in Japan for Kōtoku's changed ideas on parliament and direct action.

26 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 13, 25 August 1907, p 7. (See also Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun - Osaka Common People's Newspaper - No. 7, 5 September 1907, p 14.)

27 Yamakawa was sentenced to 3½ years in jail for insulting the imperial family and was released on parole in June 1904. (Nihon No Kakumei Shisō - Revolutionary Thought In Japan, Takahata Tetsurō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1970, Vol. V, pp 130-131.)

28 Letter to Yoshikawa Morikuni dated 23 December 1907. Collected in Shiota, op. cit., p 259.

Yamakawa expressed his views on the parliamentary strategy of the SPD in a number of articles which were carried in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) during March 1907. Although he believed that "parliament and political parties can offer a challenge to the ruling class", he denied that "the decisive battle" would be fought in the parliamentary arena. On the contrary, he argued that "If one lacks some other weapon for inflicting the final blow, then, even if one boasts the tremendous power of the German Socialist Party, the day will never dawn when one can overthrow the ruling class."²⁹ Yamakawa did not dispute the fact that the SPD had been able to achieve a number of reforms by means of its parliamentary strength, but he provocatively asked whether such reforms had really brought socialism nearer, or whether they had merely given a new lease of life to imperial Germany.³⁰ This criticism of the SPD's reformism was a far cry indeed from the attempt which the Shakai Minshutō (Social-Democratic Party) had made in 1901 to adopt a similar reform programme to that of the SPD.* And whereas the organisers of the Shakai Minshutō had all looked forward to the day when a "law establishing universal suffrage" would be introduced in Japan, Yamakawa was now doubtful that the SPD had genuinely benefited from the existence of universal suffrage in Germany. It seemed to him that it was the existence of the right to vote which had led the SPD to devote all its energies to contesting parliamentary elections, rather than to promoting a general strike. Yamakawa therefore pointedly contrasted the situation in Germany with conditions in tsarist Russia.

I (believe) that the right to vote is mainly responsible for the German Socialist Party's choosing the parliamentary road. On the other

* See Chapter 3.

29 'Ōshū No Kakumei Undō' ('The Revolutionary Movement In Europe'), Yamakawa Hitoshi, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 37, 1 March 1907, p 1.

30 'Doitsu Shakaitō No Chii' ('The Situation Of The German Socialist Party'), Yamakawa Hitoshi, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 44, 9 March 1907, p 1.

hand, I (believe) it is the fact that the right to vote does not exist as in Germany which is mainly responsible for Russian socialism taking the form of the general strike.

31

Although Yamakawa did not possess Ōsugi's facility in French, he too read the classic works of European anarchism which were available to him in English and it has already been mentioned in Chapter 9 how he was the first to translate into Japanese the section on 'The Wages System' from Kropotkin's The Conquest Of Bread. Yet he combined his study of anarchism and his conviction that the general strike represented "the real weapon of the workers"³² with an enduring interest in Marxism and a series of articles on Marx's Capital which he wrote for the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) between August and October 1907 is worth noting.³³ Despite a heavy reliance on the work of other commentators on Marx, Yamakawa showed a considerable familiarity with at least the first volume of Capital and his series of articles was significant not least because it marked the first occasion on which a socialist in Japan came up with a satisfactory rendering of the term 'surplus value' into Japanese.³⁴ Asukai Masamichi has said that "for Yamakawa there was no contradiction between Marx and Kropotkin" during this period and this is a remark which it is advisable to bear in mind.³⁵

31 'Doitsu Shakaitō No Chii' ('The Situation Of The German Socialist Party'), Yamakawa Hitoshi, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 43, 8 March 1907, p 1.

32 'Sōdōmei Hikō No Hanashi' ('A Discussion Of The General Strike'), Yamakawa Hitoshi, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 14, 20 December 1907, p 4.

33 'Marukusu No Shihonron' ('Marx's Capital'), Yamakawa Hitoshi, Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) Nos. 6-9, 20 August 1907 - 5 October 1907, pp 6-7.

34 See Kishimoto Eitarō's introduction to the collected edition of the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper), Research Association for the History of the Labour Movement (eds.), Tōkyō, 1962, p viii.

35 'Meiji Shakaishugi No Kiketsu' ('The Conclusion Of Meiji Socialism'), Asukai Masamichi, Shisō (Thought) No. 524, February 1968, p 277.

In the theoretical controversies which ensued between the direct action wing of the socialist movement in Japan and its opponents, epithets such as 'anarchist' and 'Marxist' were frequently flung around with little regard for terminological precision. Yamakawa demonstrates the point that by no means everyone on the direct action side fitted perfectly into the 'anarchist' category. If this was true of the 'anarchist' camp, how much more so was it of those such as Katayama Sen who, as will be seen below, insisted on calling themselves 'Marxists'?

The Conference Of The Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party Of Japan)

The Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) was organised on 24 February 1906 while Kōtoku Shūsui was away in the USA and its conference held in Tōkyō on 17 February 1907 marked a decisive stage in the polarisation of those socialists who advocated direct action and those who favoured an electoral strategy. The Nippon Shakaitō resulted from the fusion of two other nominal political parties whose formation had been proclaimed in order to test the political climate under the government of Saionji Kinmochi early in 1906. Saionji became prime minister on 7 January 1906 and, since he had a reputation for being less severely authoritarian than his predecessors³⁶, Nishikawa Kōjirō and Higuchi Den announced that they were forming a Nihon Heimintō (Common People's Party of Japan) one week later on 14 January 1906. The platform of the Nihon Heimintō simply stated that "We take as our objective the attempt to realise universal suffrage"³⁷ and, when it was seen that the authorities made no move to crush this organisation, Sakai

36 Commenting on the newly formed Saionji government, the English-language column of Hikari (Light) had the following to say: "The Saionji Cabinet, however, is expected at least to be a little more enlightened than the former barbarous cabinet under Marshal Count Katsura. We shall see how it turns out in its attitude towards our socialist movement." (Hikari - Light - No. 5, 20 January 1906, p 1.)

37 Nihon Shakai Undō Shi (History Of The Social Movement In Japan), Akamatsu Katsumaro, Tōkyō, 1974, pp 111-112.



Members of the Nippon Shakaitō
(Socialist Party of Japan) in
1906.

Among those seated, Sakai
Toshihiko is on the extreme
right, Kōtoku Shūsui in the
centre, and Yamaguchi Koken
is second from the left.

Among those standing, Ōsugi
Sakae is in the centre and
Nishikawa Kōjiro is second
from the left.

Toshihiko and Fukao Shō announced in their turn that they were launching a Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan). Sakai and Fukao's Nippon Shakaitō was just as ephemeral as Nishikawa and Higuchi's group, but its platform was at least bolder in that it was "determined to realise socialism".³⁸ Like the Nihon Heimintō (Common People's Party of Japan), Sakai and Fukao's Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) survived unmolested and it was therefore decided to unite these two groups into a single organisation which would come closer to resembling a genuine social-democratic party. The name Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) was adopted by the new party and its founding conference, attended by 35 delegates, was held in Tōkyō on 24 February 1906. The united Nippon Shakaitō had about 200 members and it committed itself to "advocate socialism within the limits of the law of the land".³⁹

When more than 60 members of the Nippon Shakaitō assembled in Tōkyō a year later on 17 February 1907, they were meeting just 10 days after the Saionji government had put down the insurrection of the miners at Ashio and at a time when militant young activists like Ōsugi Sakae and Yamakawa Hitoshi were already responding enthusiastically to Kōtoku's 'The Change In My Thought', which had been issued in the midst of the Ashio disturbances. At this conference Sakai Toshihiko moved a resolution on behalf of the Nippon Shakaitō's executive committee which read as follows:

Our party seeks to fundamentally reorganise the existing social structure, to have the means of production commonly owned by society and to manage these same in the interests of, and for the happiness of, the entire people.

Holding these objectives, and under the existing circumstances, our party therefore resolves the following items:-

* Our party will arouse the workers' class consciousness and endeavour to develop their solidarity and discipline.

38 Nihon Shakaishugi Undō Shōshi (A Short History Of The Socialist Movement In Japan), Sakai Toshihiko. Serialised in Shakaishugi (Socialism) No. 8, 1 July 1921, p 38.

39 Hikari (Light) No. 8, 5 March 1906, p 6.

* Our party deplors the fact that things went so far as the army being deployed to suppress the disturbance among the workers of Ashio and considers this to have been a grave blunder on the part of the government.

* Our party expresses deep sympathy with all types of revolutionary movements struggling throughout the world.

* Party members are free to follow their own inclinations in involving themselves in the following movements:

a) the movement for amending the police peace preservation law.

b) the universal suffrage movement.

c) the anti-militarist movement.

d) the secular movement.

40

The executive committee's resolution represented an attempt to formulate a number of points of agreement which would bridge the gap which was rapidly widening during 1907 between pro- and anti-parliamentarians within the socialist movement in Japan. Far from being an acceptable compromise, however, it failed to satisfy many in both camps. On the one hand, Tazoe Tetsuji proposed an amendment to the resolution which sought to insert an additional clause after "Our party will arouse the workers' class consciousness and endeavour to develop their solidarity and discipline" and before the paragraph relating to Ashio. This was to read:

Our party recognises that a parliamentary policy is an effective method for the movement.

41

On the other hand, the amendment which Kōtoku put forward sought to delete the approval expressed in the executive committee's resolution of members of the Nippon Shakaitō participating in "the universal suffrage movement" (point "b") and endeavoured to add a new clause reading:

Our party recognises the uselessness of a parliamentary policy.

42

40 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 28, 19 February 1907, p 3.

41 Ibid., p 3.

42 Ibid., p 3.

Prior to the votes being taken on the resolution and its amendments, there was a lively debate which continued for almost three hours. An impassioned speech by Kōtoku occupied a full third of this time and in his address he iterated the same arguments which he had already advanced in 'The Change In My Thought'. In both his earlier declaration and his speech to the conference, Kōtoku restricted his attack on social-democracy almost entirely to the questions of parliament and the vote. It seemed to him that the points at issue within the socialist movement were questions of means rather than ends - of the method of struggle which the movement should adopt, rather than the goal to which that struggle should be directed. In 'The Change In My Thought' he wrote:

If I were to put in a nutshell the way I think now, it would be along the following lines: "A real social revolution cannot possibly be achieved by means of universal suffrage and a parliamentary policy. There is no way to reach our goal of socialism other than by the direct action of the workers, united as one."

43

This was unsatisfactory because it assumed that all the socialists were united in a clear understanding of what a "real social revolution" entailed and that debate was simply confined to the issue of what were the best means to achieve this social revolution. Elsewhere in the same article Kōtoku claimed that what the socialists were aiming at was "a fundamental revolution in economic organisation - the abolition of the wages system, in other words"⁴⁴, but a moment's thought ought to have told him that not all his comrades by any means were committed to this end. In a sense, Kōtoku shied away from the more basic problem by focusing his attention almost exclusively on what was really the secondary issue of means - whether to employ parliament or direct action.

Nonetheless, Kōtoku's criticisms of the formal but limited democracy afforded by parliamentary systems was certainly a welcome change from the

43 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 16, 5 February 1907, p 1 (Kōtoku's emphasis).

44 Ibid., p 1.

illusions entertained by those such as Katayama Sen, who actually thought that parliament and cabinet government would persist within a socialist society!⁴⁵ Kōtoku laid great stress on the need for working class consciousness and also for workers to be self-reliant and not to put their trust in others (especially MPs). The drawback was that few of Kōtoku's arguments really related to the situation in Japan. Whether it was self-reliant or not, the working class in Japan was small and immature, and Kōtoku's passionate assurances that "If the workers are conscious and united, there is no power on earth that can oppose their solidarity" failed to take sufficiently into account the low level of capitalist development in Japan and the weakness of the working class.⁴⁶

Tazoe Tetsuji made the main speech for the pro-parliamentarians and he too repeated arguments which he had expounded before, in his case in an article which had appeared a few days earlier in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) under the title 'Gikai Seisaku Ron' ('On Parliamentary Policy'). In this article Tazoe suggested that a varied approach was required by the socialist movement internationally, one which could encompass both parliamentary action and direct action, even though the precise meaning of the latter term seemed vague to him. Tazoe claimed that within any particular country the importance which was attached to either contesting elections or engaging in direct action generally stemmed from the particular national circumstances. As elsewhere, the socialists in Japan had to adopt those methods which suited them best and, for Tazoe, this meant a sufficient recognition of the usefulness of parliamentary action. Despite a leaning towards crude determinism in his thought, Tazoe did make a number of penetrating

45 'Shakai Keizai No Shōri' ('The Victory Of The Social Economy'), Katayama Sen, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 7, 14 July 1907, p 5.

46 'Kōtoku Shūsui Shi No Enzetsu' ('Mr. Kotoku Shusui's Speech'), Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 28, 19 February 1907, p 2.

criticisms of Kōtoku's anti-parliamentarism. He pointed out that Kōtoku's objections to a parliamentary strategy (the corruption of MPs and so forth) could all be applied with equal relevance to organs of direct action, such as trade unions. Tazoe also made the incisive point that it was idle to glorify the workers' direct action and to attribute to it a significance which, under present conditions, it did not possess. Demands for a few more sen in wages or a few hours less in working time, he argued, are commonly manifestations of pure and simple trade unionism, without any underlying political consciousness. In a particularly telling passage, he wrote:

Even action which engages the capitalists in close struggle and resorts to strikes and other weapons stops short, in the end, at improving the position of the workers as wage workers. As a movement it is totally unconscious of the need for the class liberation of all the workers.

47

As with Kōtoku Shūsui and Tazoe Tetsuji, Sakai Toshihiko had also expressed his ideas in print shortly before the conference of the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan). Sakai was well equipped to attempt the role of mediator and represent the executive committee since, whereas in his article he had said that "in my heart there is almost nothing I disagree with in Kōtoku's views"⁴⁸, Tazoe had said of Sakai that "My ideas are almost identical to Comrade Sakai's."⁴⁹ Sakai admitted that in the past the socialists in Japan had been too one-sided in their adherence to the doctrines of the SPD and he went part of the way with Kōtoku by conceding that in Japan the people had resorted to direct action because there was no genuine parliamentary democracy. Where Sakai parted company with Kōtoku, though, was in the former's

47 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 24, 14 February 1907, p 1.

48 'Shakaitō Undō No Hōshin' ('The Course Of The Socialist Movement'), Sakai Toshihiko, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 21, 10 February 1907, p 1.

49 'Gikai Seisaku Ron' ('On Parliamentary Policy'), Tazoe Tetsuji, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 24, 14 February 1907, p 1.

claim that parliament in Japan would be qualitatively different, were there some socialist MPs. In Sakai's opinion, the function of workers' direct action was to complement the socialists' involvement in parliamentary politics. Direct action would still have a role to play, he suggested, even with a majority of socialist MPs in parliament, since otherwise "those MPs will, in fact, be like so many flowers without any roots. They won't be able to do anything, nor realise anything."⁵⁰ Like Tazoe, Sakai also countered Kōtoku's denunciation of corrupt MPs with the rejoinder that parliamentarians had no monopoly of corruption. Corrupt union leaders in Europe and America provided ample evidence that the organs of direct action were just as susceptible to degeneration as was parliament, argued Sakai.

After the debate, a vote was taken and, while Tazoe's and Kōtoku's amendments secured 2 votes and 22 votes respectively, the executive committee's resolution gained the support of 28 members of the Nippon Shakaitō. The resolution was thus adopted and, on the face of it, compromise appeared to have won the day. This victory for moderation was more apparent than real, however. Kōtoku was perhaps even surprised himself at the support for his position, since just two days prior to the conference he had been admitting that only one member of the Nippon Shakaitō's executive committee (Takenouchi Yosojiro) endorsed his views and that, apart from Ōsugi Sakae, he could count on only two other socialists who had written to him expressing their agreement with his stand.⁵¹ As for Tazoe Tetsuji, the mere 2 votes which his amendment attracted were deceptive. Some of Tazoe's supporters voted for the executive committee's resolution, presumably for the tactical reason of ensuring the defeat of Kōtoku's rejection of parliamentary politics.⁵²

50 'Shakaitō Undō No Hōshin' ('The Course Of The Socialist Movement'), Sakai Toshihiko, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 21, 10 February 1907, p 1.

51 'Heiminsha Yori' ('From The Heiminsha'), Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 25, 15 February 1907, p 1.

52 'Shakaitō Taikai No Ketsugi' ('The Decision Of The Socialist Party Conference'), Sakai Toshihiko, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 28, 19 February 1907, p 2.

Ishikawa Sanshirō had thus been correct in writing on the day before the conference that the Nippon Shakaitō gave the appearance of already having polarised into two factions over the issue of parliament versus direct action.⁵³ The state, for its part, reacted with draconian severity to the turn of events at the Nippon Shakaitō's conference. Perhaps it was additionally incensed by the decision also taken by the conference to strike out from the party rules the commitment to work "within the limits of the law of the land"⁵⁴, but it prosecuted Ishikawa Sanshirō and Fukao Shō for publishing in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) an account of Kōtoku's speech as well as a report of the conference in general. The offending material was said to have been detrimental to public order and morals!⁵⁵ Plain-clothes police tails started to shadow the movements of various socialists⁵⁶ and on 22 February 1907 the Nippon Shakaitō was outlawed. Once again, the reasons given for banning the organisation were that both the resolutions debated at the conference and Kōtoku's speech had supposedly disturbed the social order.⁵⁷

The Widening Rift

In a letter to Albert Johnson dated 18 December 1906, Kōtoku Shūsui had written:

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- 53 'Shakaitōin Shokun Ni Tsugu' ('A Word To The Members Of The Socialist Party'), Ishikawa Sanshirō, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 26, 16 February 1907, p 1.
- 54 The revised party rules simply stated that "This party takes as its objective the realisation of socialism". (Heimin Shimbun - Common People's Newspaper - No. 28, 19 February 1907, p 3.) According to Yamakawa Hitoshi, no-one present at the conference objected to this revision of the party rules. ('Shakaitō Taikai No Seiseki' - 'The Results Of The Socialist Party Conference', Yamakawa Hitoshi, Heimin Shimbun - Common People's Newspaper - No. 29, 20 February 1907, p 1.)
- 55 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 30, 21 February 1907, p 3 and No. 52, 19 March 1907, p 2.
- 56 'Seifu Rōbai Roku' ('The Record Of Government Panic'), Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 36, 28 February 1907, p 1.
- 57 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 32, 23 February 1907, p 2.

The Japanese Socialist Party consists, as you know, of many different elements. Social-Democrats, Social Revolutionists, and even Christian Socialists....

Most of our comrades are inclined to take the tactics of Parliamentaryism (sic) rather than Syndicalism or Anarchism. But it is not because they are assuredly convinced which is true, but because of their ignorance of Anarchist Communism. Therefore our most important work at present is the translation and publication of Anarchist and Free-thought literature. I will do my best, and use our paper (as an organ for the libertarian propaganda.

58

By "our paper" Kōtoku meant the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper), the daily newspaper which the socialists started on 15 January 1907. The attempt to publish a daily newspaper was undertaken against tremendous odds and the venture lasted barely three months, the Heimin Shimbun finally succumbing to a combination of financial pressure and government persecution on 14 April 1907. For as long as the Heimin Shimbun lasted, however, Kōtoku and his supporters did their best to turn it into "an organ for the libertarian propaganda". In the issue of the Heimin Shimbun where the banning of the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) was announced on 23 February 1907, a lead article on 'Ōshū No Chokusetsu Kōdō' ('Direct Action In Europe') appeared. The term 'direct action' was described as being widely used in Europe by "the anarcho-communists, social-revolutionary party and one section of the social-democrats" and the general strike was presented as the "sole weapon" of the revolution. It was claimed that many trade unions in Europe were concerned not only with raising wages. Rather, they were revolutionary unions which had gone beyond the aim of simply increasing wage rates. As for Japan:

In Japan we do not know whether or not in the future revolutionary trade unions will be organised. But when we see the strikes which recently have been occurring in various

places, we have no doubt that the working class is gradually becoming conscious of its solidarity and the strength of its direct action.

59

The rising combativeness of the workers in Japan was a theme which those socialists who were inclined to syndicalism constantly returned to. As was explained in an earlier chapter, 1907 was the peak year for labour disputes during the period between the Russo-Japanese War and the First World War and especially many of the younger activists among the socialists were deeply excited by the prospects which they believed were opened up by this upsurge in the struggle of the working class. A short piece entitled 'Daikakumei No Zenku' ('Forerunners Of A Great Revolution'), which also appeared in the issue of the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) for 23 February 1907, suggested that 1907 would be a critical year. Referring to the riot of the miners of Ashio in the east of Japan and to a strike at the Mitsubishi shipyards in Nagasaki in the west of the country, it was predicted that such mass actions were "the fore-runners of a great revolution in Japanese society".⁶⁰ One week later Heimin Shimbun was asserting that Japan had entered "an era of strikes"⁶¹ and - in view of the wage increases achieved by some workers - "an era of victory for labour!"⁶² Even in the final issue of the newspaper, Yamakawa Hitoshi was far from being despondent at the demise of the journal. He claimed that "The strikes over the last 100 days (the period of the Heimin Shimbun's existence) are a barometer of consciousness".⁶³ Yamakawa and many of his comrades believed that, however repressive the state might be, the workers in Japan were at last getting up off their

59 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 32, 23 February 1907, p 1.

60 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 32, 23 February 1907, p 2.

61 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 39, 3 March 1907, p 2.

62 Ibid., p 2.

63 'Rōdō Kaikyū No Jikaku' ('Working Class Consciousness'), Yamakawa Hitoshi, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 75, 14 April 1907, p 2.

knees. No wonder, then, that the Heimin Shimbun was defiantly confident in its last English-language editorial:

Our movement will be broken to pieces for the present. But the spirit of revolution is now deeply planted into the minds of people. We may be sure that the day will come soon when we can raise our voice again so loudly that it will ring over from one end of the country to the other, and may make the ruling class tremble under our feet.

64

A number of articles also appeared in the Heimin Shimbun which referred directly to the experiences of the syndicalists in Europe. A report on the struggle launched by the Italian syndicalists against their social-democratic adversaries appeared in the 'Sekai No Shimbun' ('Newspapers Of The World') column on 28 February 1907⁶⁵ and in a letter which Kōtoku wrote to the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) from Kamakura on 10 April 1907 he drew the Japanese socialists' attention to the syndicalist movement in France. The French trade unions know that no matter how many "state socialist laws" are enacted, wrote Kōtoku, it will make no difference to the working class. Then, in a particularly significant passage, he added:

Kropotkin says that the future world social revolution will first start in France. It won't be long before they proclaim the revolutionary general strike. At least there should be some sort of upheaval connected with May Day this year. I believe we have good cause for following events there closely.

66

This was a striking indication of the way in which the focus of attention was shifting away from social-democratic Germany to anarcho-syndicalist France, at least among the section of the socialist movement in Japan which favoured direct action.

64 'The Last Words', Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 75, 14 April 1907, p 2.

65 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 36, 28 February 1907, p 2.

66 'Kamakura Yori' ('From Kamakura'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 73, 12 April 1907, p 1.

Katayama Sen had been away in the USA when the conference of the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) was held on 17 February 1907, but he returned to Japan shortly afterwards and contributed an article entitled 'Rōdōsha Shokun Ni Tsugu' ('A Word To The Workers') to the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) on 5 March 1907. This article and the polemic it provoked illustrated vividly the rift which had opened up between those such as Katayama who still adhered to the notion of 'socialism' which had been popular among the Japanese socialists in an earlier period and the new ideas now expounded by the direct actionists. Katayama concluded his article with the following sentiments:

Let us remember! Under the imperial constitution, the rights (human rights as well as property rights) of we subjects first come into effect by law. These laws only come into effect after first being decided by the representatives of the people and then being approved by the Emperor. This being the case, it has to be said that our rights cannot come into effect without at least first being resolved by us imperial subjects. Therefore we workers ought to take a wide view of the general situation within society and embark on a united action. First we should secure the right to universal suffrage and then openly lay claim to our rights in parliament. I believe that this is the sole policy which we should take at present. I hope that the workers will all think deeply and carefully about this.

67

Five years earlier when Kōtoku Shūsui had written with glowing pride about the kokutai (national polity)*, respect for the imperial trappings of the Meiji state had been widespread within the socialist movement in Japan. Even in May 1906, when (in a review of Kita Ikki's Kokutairon Oyobi Junsei Shakaishugi - The Question Of The Kokutai And Pure Socialism) Katayama had denied Kita's contention that the socialists in Japan were in conflict with the kokutai, his remarks had provoked little reaction.⁶⁸ But now in 1907, when it was seen that Katayama's

* See Chapter 5.

67 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 40, 5 March 1907, p 1.

68 Hikari (Light) No. 13, 20 May 1906, p 6.

views on the strategy which the socialists should adopt involved recognising the legitimacy of the imperial constitution, his article was greeted with scornful derision. Two days after the original 'Rōdōsha Shokun Ni Tsugu' ('A Word To The Workers') had appeared, a reply signed "a worker" was published in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) under the heading 'Katayama Sensei Ni Tsugu' ('A Word To Our Teacher Katayama'). This witheringly sarcastic response to Katayama's advice to the working class came from the pen of a young rickshawman called Morioka Eiji.⁶⁹ Adopting a mockingly respectful tone, his final words can roughly be translated as:

You find yourself a place in parliament!
We'll go for the bread!

70

Similarly, a letter from a provincial reader in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) on 4 April 1907 denounced in an equally aggressive manner the supposedly Marxist social-democrats such as Katayama Sen.

In Japan the self-styled Marxists are a bunch of busybodies and the self-styled followers of Lassalle are a crowd of schemers intent on getting elected to parliament by using the workers as a stepping stone. There isn't a spark of sincerity in them.

71

Faced with such hostility, it was hardly surprising that Katayama was disinclined to become involved in the running of the Heimin Shimbun. As far as he was concerned, the paper's editorial statements "were dominated by Comrade Kotoku's influence".⁷² Furthermore, for Katayama, Kōtoku's influence had now become "a conflicting factor in the socialist movement".⁷³ Katayama therefore had little reason to be sorry when the

69 Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 18, 20 February 1908, pp 5, 13.

70 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 42, 7 March 1907, p 2.

71 'Dokusha No Ryōbun' ('Readers' Column'), Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 66, 4 April 1907, p 3.

72 The Labor Movement In Japan, Sen Katayama, Chicago, 1918, p 116.

73 Ibid., p 116.

Heimin Shimbun ceased publication and he reacted swiftly to its disappearance by uniting with Nishikawa Kōjirō and those other socialists who still favoured attempting to work through parliament in order to issue a new weekly journal which would reflect their views. This was the Shakai Shimbun (Social News), which first appeared on 2 June 1907. Kōtoku responded publicly to the launching of the Shakai Shimbun with the non-committal comment that he looked forward to its "healthy development"⁷⁴, but privately he wrote to Albert Johnson:

After the suppression of the daily, we have no organ. Few comrades are going to start a weekly, but they are devotees of Parliamentarism, so we cannot expect very much from it.

75

Instead of the Tōkyō-based Shakai Shimbun (Social News), Kōtoku, Yamakawa and the other advocates of direct action looked towards a bi-monthly called the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) which Morichika Umpei started to edit in Ōsaka from 1 June 1907. The fact that the daily Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) should have been replaced by two separate journals, based on different cities and with teams of writers whose interpretations of 'socialism' diverged considerably, can be seen in retrospect to have marked the beginning of a split in the socialist movement in Japan which was to persist for years to come. Initially, however, efforts were made to minimise the differences between the two sides and to promote cooperation between them. It was still possible for Kōtoku and Yamakawa to address a meeting of the Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai (Society for the Study of Socialism) held in Katayama's house on 14 July 1907, even though they chose to speak on Bakunin and Kropotkin respectively.⁷⁶ The Shakai Shimbun (Social News) also carried an article on 21 July 1907 by an anarchist-inclined doctor, Ōishi Seinosuke, who

74 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 1, 2 June 1907, p 5.

75 Letter to Albert Johnson dated 28 May 1907. Collected in Shiota, op. cit., p 446.

76 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 8, 21 July 1907, p 7.

emphasised what he saw as the bonds uniting all socialists:

.... aren't we comrades, who are bound together by our belief in socialism, all spiritually inseparable? Even if there are some slight differences on some points when it comes to the means which the movement should adopt, surely these are not enough to cause splits when compared with the great principles we all harbour in our hearts.

77

A week later letters appeared in the Shakai Shimbun from Kōtoku Shūsui and Nishikawa Kōjirō (representing the two sides, as it were) both of which expressed approval of Ōishi's article.⁷⁸ Another example of the will to cooperate was a summer school which was held in Tōkyō from 1-10 August 1907 and which was made possible by the combined efforts of the whole movement. Classes were held for about 3 hours each evening and audiences of 80-90 people listened to lectures given by Kōtoku, Yamakawa, Katayama, Nishikawa and others. Despite a certain amount of tension in the discussions which ensued, the summer school was judged to have been "a great success".⁷⁹

One reason why the rival factions did not split immediately into uncompromisingly hostile groups was that they both looked to the Congress of the Second International which was held in Stuttgart in August 1907 to resolve the issues which divided them. Following the conference of the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) Sakai Toshihiko had urged the socialists in Japan - at the same time that they continued to discuss the problem of parliament versus direct action among themselves - to look to the decisions which the social-democratic Second International would arrive at in Stuttgart.⁸⁰ Indeed, Sakai himself had moved a resolution at the Nippon Shakaitō conference that Katō Tokijirō (a

77 'Shakaitō Bunpa Ron' ('The Factions Of The Socialist Party'), Ōishi Rokutei (Seinosuke), Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 8, 21 July 1907, p 4.

78 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 9, 28 July 1907, p 1.

79 Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 6, 20 August 1907, p 7 (English column).

80 'Shakaitō Taikai No Ketsugi' ('The Decision Of The Socialist Party Conference'), Sakai Toshihiko, Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 28, 19 February 1907, p 2.

doctor whom Kōtoku described as "a Social Democrat, or rather Social-
Reformer"⁵¹) should represent the Japanese revolution at the International
Congress and this had been accepted unanimously said elsewhere.⁵² In



The Socialist Summer School in 1907

At Stuttgart the Second International was confronted by more than
one hotly debated issue - immigration controls, militarism and the
general strike all being topics which caused sections to split. As
far as the question of the general strike was concerned, the matter
was handled in the typical social-democratic style of passing a resolution
which was vague enough for virtually everyone to agree with and
which V. I. K. Cole has described as "immaculate".⁵³ "Immaculate" or not,
the direct actionists in Japan were disappointed at the failure of the

51 Letter to Albert Johnson dated 6 December 1907. Collected in
Shiota, op. cit., p. 120.
52 Reinist Shinbun (Gambon Reinista's Newspaper) No. 28, 19 February
1907, p. 2.
53 Daishu Seisaku Shimbun (Gambon Daishu People's Newspaper) No. 1,
1 June 1907, p. 1.
54 Shinbun Shinbun (Social Shinbun) No. 4, 7 July 1907, p. 1 (supplement).
55 A History of Socialist Thought, v. D. E. Cole, London, 1954,
Vol. III, p. 10.

doctor whom Kōtoku described as "a Social Democrat, or rather Social-Reformer"⁸¹) should represent the Japanese socialists at the International Congress and this had been accepted unanimously amid applause.⁸² An editorial 'Hakkan No Ji' ('A Message On Our Publication') in the first issue of the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) made it clear that the socialists grouped around that paper expected the Stuttgart Congress to produce important new developments⁸³, while the Shakai Shimbun (Social News) of 7 July 1907 featured an English-language supplement written by Katayama Sen and addressed to the delegates in Stuttgart. Indicative of the type of decision which Katayama hoped the Congress of the Second International would reach was a passage in this supplement which read:

Universal suffrage movement has been strenuously (sic) carried on by Comrades. Petitions for the equal and suffrage (sic) for both sexes have been sent in every session of Parliament. It is perhaps only the way (i.e. the only way - J.C.) open for our political activity, at the present time.

84

At Stuttgart the Second International was confronted by more than one hotly debated issue - immigration controls, militarism and the general strike all being topics which caused emotions to run high. As far as the question of the general strike was concerned, the matter was handled in the typical social-democratic style of passing a resolution which was vague enough for virtually everyone to agree with and which G. D. H. Cole has described as "innocuous".⁸⁵ "Innocuous" or not, the direct actionists in Japan were disappointed at the failure of the

81 Letter to Albert Johnson dated 6 December 1907. Collected in Shiota, op. cit., p 450.

82 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 28, 19 February 1907, p 3.

83 Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 1, 1 June 1907, p 1.

84 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 6, 7 July 1907, p 1 (supplement).

85 A History Of Socialist Thought, G. D. H. Cole, London, 1956, Vol. III, p 73.

social-democratic Congress to provide any convincing answers to the problems which were agitating the Japanese socialist movement, perhaps even more so when it became clear from Katō Tokijirō's letters from Germany that their own delegate's reformism had been strongly reinforced by his experiences at Stuttgart.⁸⁶ Once the Congress of the Second International had passed without producing any tangible results, an important restraining factor which had temporarily delayed an open split from developing within the socialist movement in Japan was finally removed. The very last coordinated activity which the two sides indulged in was to jointly organise a welcome to Japan for Keir Hardie in August 1907, but their different reactions to the political views expounded by the British labour leader showed that any further cooperation was impossible.

Keir Hardie In Japan

Keir Hardie visited Japan in August 1907 as part of a world tour which he made. When it was known that Hardie would be coming to Japan, Katayama Sen took it on himself to welcome the leader of the British Independent Labour Party (ILP) in the name of "the Japanese socialists".

We, the Japanese socialists, welcome him who has been so ably and heroically fighting for the cause of labour and socialism in England and for international socialism.

87

Katayama's estimate of Hardie was totally at odds with some comments which Sakai Toshihiko had made in the Shakai Shimbun (Social News) a month before. Describing Hardie as a right-wing social-democrat, Sakai had written that - instead of making common cause with the left-wing social-democrats in Britain, such as H. M. Hyndman of the Social-Democratic

86 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 19, 6 October 1907, p 1. (See also Katō Tokijirō's article 'Oshū Ni Okeru Shakaishugi No Keikō' - 'The Tendency Of Socialism In Europe' - in No. 59, 15 September 1909, p 5.)

87 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 12, 18 August 1907, p 1 (English column).

Federation (SDF) - Hardie chose to cooperate "with anti-socialist Labour MPs to organise the Labour Party".⁸⁸

There was no personal animosity in Sakai's evaluation of Hardie and, in fact, when Hardie came to Japan he stayed in Sakai's house, even though it seems to have been mainly Katayama who conducted Hardie around Tōkyō and acted as his interpreter. During the few days that Hardie was in Japan, he had short interviews with the Ministers of Education and Agriculture and considered it worth his while to "expound the aims and principles of socialism" to Count Ōkuma at a longer meeting with that worthy.⁸⁹ In addition, Hardie talked to a group of socialists who gathered in Tōkyō on 21 August 1907 and spoke for 1½ hours to an audience of 150 at a public meeting in Tōkyō the following day. Although Sakai found himself admiring Hardie as an individual, it was he who made some of the most trenchant criticisms of the ILP leader following his visit to Japan. Sakai admired the British SDF as a supposedly "pure Marxist group"⁹⁰, whereas it was plain to him that the ILP "does not have the social revolution as its objective".⁹¹ He also repeated his previous remarks that Hardie had "cooperated with the anti-socialist trade unions" in order to form the Labour Party, which "is definitely not a socialist party".⁹² Prior to meeting Hardie, Sakai had been critical of his politics and "Now, even after having met face to face with Keir Hardie, after having listened to him talking and to his public speech, I find myself still disagreeing with him on the points where I disagreed with him before."⁹³

88 'Gūkan' ('Random Thoughts'), Sakai Toshihiko, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 6, 7 July 1907, p 4.

89 'Keir Hardie In Japan', Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 14, 1 September 1907, p 1 (English column).

90 'Hādē Shi Raiyū Shokan' ('Thoughts On Mr. Hardie's Visit'), Sakai Toshihiko, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 14, 1 September 1907, p 3.

91 'Hādē Ō' ('Hardie'), Sakai Toshihiko, Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 7, 5 September 1907, p 3.

92 'Hādē Shi Raiyū Shokan' ('Thoughts On Mr. Hardie's Visit'), Sakai Toshihiko, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 14, 1 September 1907, p 3.

93 Ibid., p 3.



Keir Hardie with Japanese Socialists in 1907.

Among those squatting, Kōtoku Shūsui is on the extreme left, Yamakawa Hitoshi is fourth from the left, and Arahata Kansō is third from the right.

In the middle row, Sakai Toshihiko is fourth from the left, Katayama Sen is seventh from the left, and Kanno Suga is immediately to the left of Keir Hardie.

In the back row, Nishikawa Kōjirō is second from the left and Tazoe Tetsuji is on the extreme right.

Kōtoku Shūsui, for his part, looked upon Hardie as someone "giving little weight to the class struggle but, rather, exerting his efforts for moderate reforms".⁹⁴ As for Hardie's party, he wrote:

.... the British Independent Labour Party today, even though it calls itself socialist for appearance's sake, confines itself in its practice and attitude to little more than a state-oriented social policy (kokka shakai seisaku) and to social reformism....

95

Like Sakai, Kōtoku found himself in disagreement with Hardie on many questions but naturally in Kōtoku's case this was particularly so with regards to Hardie's attitude towards anarchism. At the public meeting in Tōkyō at which he spoke Hardie apparently described his aim as "state socialism" and he contrasted this with what he called the "free socialism" or "anarchism" advocated by those such as William Morris and Leo Tolstoy. Hardie claimed that while such "anarchism" might perhaps come about as a further development after "state socialism", it was impossible to achieve at the present time.⁹⁶ This view of "state socialism" - or (to employ the equivalent term which has consistently been used throughout this study) state capitalism - as a preliminary stage leading eventually to "free socialism" cut no ice with Kōtoku and he was particularly scornful of Hardie's clouding of the issues by his reference to Tolstoy. His caustic dismissal of both Hardie and Tolstoy was that:

It sounded rather queer to hear the individualist anarchist (kojinteki museifushugisha) Tolstoy introduced as a representative of government-

94 'Tōkyō No Shakai Undō' ('The Social Movement In Tokyo'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 7, 5 September 1907, p 8.

95 'Tōkyō No Shakai Undō' ('The Social Movement In Tokyo'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 8, 20 September 1907, p 2.

96 'Tōkyō No Shakai Undō' ('The Social Movement In Tokyo'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 7, 5 September 1907, p 8.

free socialism (museifuteki shakaishugi).*

97

Both Kōtoku and Sakai identified Hardie's politics with the stand taken by the group which brought out the Shakai Shimbun (Social News) - and they had good reason to do so.⁹⁸ The speech which Hardie made in Tōkyō on 22 August 1907 ardently defended the use of parliament by socialists and was printed at length in the Shakai Shimbun⁹⁹, together with a comment in its English-language column that Hardie's address had "no doubt encouraged our Comrades much and it will help our future agitation".¹⁰⁰ Katayama and his co-thinkers must have been equally delighted with Hardie's explanation of ILP policy at the meeting of socialists on the previous day, where Hardie was reported as saying that "We believe that if only the workers will engage in a united political movement, it inevitably follows that they will come to socialism."¹⁰¹ By "a united political movement" Hardie meant a parliamentary movement, so it was only to be expected that whoever it was who wrote up the talk he gave to the Tōkyō socialists in Shakai Shimbun should have announced:

We believe that the Japanese labour movement has much to learn from Keir Hardie and the Independent Labour Movement (sic).

102

* The standard term for 'anarchism' at this time in Japan was museifushugi - literally 'without government-ism'. Hence "museifuteki shakaishugi" (literally 'without government-type socialism') might be rendered in English "anarcho-socialism" as well as "government-free socialism". It was because of this imprecision that later museifushugi generally came to be replaced by a newly coined Japanese word, anakizumu - i.e. anarchism.

97 Ibid., p 8.

98 'Shakai Shimbun To Shōseira To No Kankei' ('The Relationship Between The Social News And Ourselves'), Sakai Toshihiko and Kōtoku Shūsui, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 11, 5 November 1907, p 11.

99 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 14, 1 September 1907, p 4.

100 'Keir Hardie In Japan', Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 14, 1 September 1907, p 1.

101 'Keya Hādē Kitaru' ('Keir Hardie Came'), Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 13, 25 August 1907, p 3.

102 Ibid., p 3.

Unfortunately for Hardie's reputation even among the Shakai Shimbun faction, he had come to Japan from North America and soon after leaving Japan reports of racialist speeches directed against Asian immigrants which he had made during his stay in Canada started to appear in the press. In a chapter incongruously titled "The Internationalist" in his biography of Keir Hardie, K. O. Morgan writes that Hardie "was struck by the high cost of living, especially in the eastern provinces and the difficulties posed for the Canadian trade union movement by immigrant Chinese and Japanese labour."¹⁰³ This is a rather coy way of putting what Hardie actually did, which was to call in his speeches for the expulsion of Japanese and other Asian workers from Canada. The opposition to Shakai Shimbun grouped around the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) seized on Hardie's racialism and published a damning extract from one speech which he had made in Vancouver. As the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun aptly remarked, for Hardie to have called for the deportation of certain categories of workers while in Canada was equivalent to his having shouted: "Long live the capitalists!"¹⁰⁴

Keir Hardie's visit heaped fuel onto the fires of controversy which were already smouldering in Japan before his arrival. Within a few weeks of his departure the Japanese socialist movement had split wide apart and the opposing factions were publicly denouncing each other.

The Social-Democratic Faction

Katayama Sen's frontal assault on those he tarred indiscriminately with the 'anarchist' brush started in September 1907. Giving an account of the socialist movement as it had developed in Japan, he wrote in the Shakai Shimbun (Social News) on 8 September 1907:

103 Keir Hardie, K. O. Morgan, London, 1975, p 189.

104 'Hādē Shi No Nihonjin Haiseki Ron' ('Mr. Hardie's Argument For Expelling Japanese'), Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 8, 20 September 1907, p 2.

.... our socialist movement in Japan has given the appearance of being in a state of discord over the last few months. I know the socialism which was professed in the weekly Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper), Chokugen (Straight Talking) and Hikari (Light) and this was the same as we advocated too. This socialism was likewise no different in its beliefs and principles from that of the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan), which we organised last year, and the old Shakaishugi Kyōkai (Socialist Association). But this spring, when we came to issue the daily Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper), our previous socialist policy was changed and came to assume an anarchist tendency. My articles and opinions were often derided in that paper and rejected as if they were the jabbering of a foreigner.

105

A week later, he was arguing in the English-language column of the same journal:

The Socialist movement of Japan is somewhat crippled and hindered on account of anarchistic views held by some who profess to be.... socialists and hold some influence among their Comrades. Those who have gone over to Anarchism oppose legislative and parliamentary tactics and political movement, and preached so-called direct action or a revolutionary or destructive general strike. We are sorry that some of our best Comrades have changed to the above views and no longer go with us, the international Socialists!

106

In the bitter polemics which now ensued, Katayama's constant refrain was that only he and his supporters in the movement in Japan had the right to be considered as "international Socialists", because only they adhered to the policies of the Second International. What counted above all else for Katayama was to lay claim to social-democratic orthodoxy, so that the boast could be made: "I base my activity on the canons of the International."¹⁰⁷ Conversely, the worst accusation which he thought

105 'Shakaishugi Hiken' ('My Humble Opinion On Socialism'), Katayama Sen, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 15, 8 September 1907, p 1.

106 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 16, 15 September 1907, p 1.

107 'Shakaishugi Hiken' ('My Humble Opinion On Socialism'), Katayama Sen, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 16, 15 September 1907, p 4.

could be directed at his opponents was to taunt them with having transgressed the commandments of the International. The Second International continued to fill Katayama with awe as "the great world wide movement of Socialists"¹⁰⁸ and it still seemed to him that 'socialism' would be achieved in Japan in the wake of its triumph in the heartlands of the International. Thus, in May 1908, Shakai Shimbun was as confident as ever that:

The development of the socialist parties in Europe in recent times and the power which they are gaining day by day makes our final victory increasingly certain.

109

The group which published the Shakai Shimbun had become known as the Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai (Socialist Comrades' Association) and at its meeting on 3 November 1907 it unanimously passed a resolution, proposed by Katayama, to the effect that: "We declare that we shall advance on the basis of the principles and platform adopted heretofore by the International."¹¹⁰ Similar expressions of loyalty to the International (and to "Marxian socialism") appeared regularly in the Shakai Shimbun (Social News)¹¹¹ and the paper also chose to advertise itself as the "Central Organ" of the Japanese socialists. Katayama attached great importance to maintaining the contacts he had made in 1904 at the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International with the leaders of European social-democracy and he persistently sought to establish the legitimacy of his faction in their eyes. To this end, he included,

108 'Doshikai Meeting', Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 24, 10 November 1907, p 1 (English column).

109 'Shakaitō No Zento' ('The Prospects For The Socialist Party'), Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 44, 25 May 1908, p 2.

110 'Shakaishugi Dōshikai Taikai' ('Conference Of The Socialist Comrades' Association'), Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 24, 10 November 1907, p 5. (Katayama's slightly inaccurate rendering of this resolution into English appears on p 1.)

111 "The principles which we members of the International advocate are Marxian socialism and are scientifically based." ('Shakaishugi No Honryō' - 'The Real Character Of Socialism', Katayama Sen, Shakai Shimbun - Social News - No. 53, 15 March 1909, p 1.)

whenever possible, one or more columns of English-language material in the Shakai Shimbun and wrote frequent letters to the leaders of the SPD and other parties. Any replies that Katayama received were printed in the Shakai Shimbun, even when they were devoid of any significant political content. The Shakai Shimbun of 1 March 1908 carried a letter from Luise Kautsky, acknowledging receipt of certain material (perhaps some copies of the same journal) which Katayama had sent to her husband and excusing Karl from replying himself because of the pressure of work. The same issue also featured a letter from the Danish social-democratic leader P. Knudsen, which again expressed polite thanks for a copy of the Shakai Shimbun which he had received.¹¹² Evidently these letters were considered worth printing because merely to be the recipients of letters bearing such famous signatures was thought to bestow a certain prestige onto Katayama and his comrades.

Given Katayama's concern for the good standing of his Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai (Socialist Comrades' Association) in the eyes of the Second International, it was galling for him that Sakai Toshihiko should have described them as revisionists. Sakai identified three broad groupings within the socialist movement in Japan. These were the "anarchistic inclined" such as Kōtoku Shūsui, the "Marxists" or "hard-line" social-democrats such as himself, and the "gradualists" or "soft-line" social-democrats such as those associated with the Shakai Shimbun.¹¹³ Sakai made these observations without any malicious intention, but simply in order to promote unity between the various contending forces among the Japanese socialists. Katayama, however, was furious at being likened

112 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 37, 1 March 1908, p 3.

113 Sakai seems to have first made this classification of the Japanese socialists at a meeting of the Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai (Society for the Study of Socialism) held on 16 June 1907. (See Shakai Shimbun - Social News - No. 4, 23 June 1907, p 3 and No. 16, 15 September 1907, p 4. Also Nihon Heimin Shimbun - Japan Common People's Newspaper - No. 11, 5 November 1907, p 10.) Sakai was still making a broadly similar classification 7 years later. (See 'Ōsugi Kun To Boku' - 'Osugi And I', Sakai Toshihiko, Kindai Shisō - Modern Thought - No. 23, September 1914, pp 2-4.)

to Jaures and the 'soft-liners' within the International. "We are not revisionists!", he insisted¹¹⁴, proclaiming that he stood with the orthodox majority of the Second International and recalling how he had voted with the so-called 'hard-liners' at Amsterdam.¹¹⁵ Katayama also rejected Sakai's own claim to be a 'hard-line' social-democrat standing on the same ground as those such as Karl Kautsky or H. M. Hyndman. "There is no reason why there should be any concurrence of views between a socialist like myself, on the one hand, and an anarchist like Kōtoku and a semi-anarchist like Sakai, on the other", he maintained, adding for good measure that "Sakai seems to have become virtually an anarchist out of his friendship with Kōtoku."¹¹⁶

The struggle between 'hard-line' and 'soft-line' social-democrats within the Second International was not a dispute over genuine socialism, nor even over the desirability of reforms. Despite the interminable wrangling over 'reform' or 'revolution', both sides to the dispute held to the same basically state-capitalist notion of 'socialism' and both were in favour of seeking reforms. Where the differences between the 'hard-liners' and 'soft-liners' lay was over issues such as whether to

114 'Shakai Shimbun To Shōseira To No Kankei' ('The Relationship Between The Social News And Ourselves'), Sakai Toshihiko and Kōtoku Shūsui, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 11, 5 November 1907, p 10.

115 'Hādē Ō Ni Tsuite' ('About Hardie'), Katayama Sen, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 16, 15 September 1907, p 2.

116 'Shizen No Kekka....' ('A Natural Result....'), Katayama Sen, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 25, 17 November 1907, p 3. Although there was little justification for calling Sakai a "semi-anarchist", Katayama was correct when he pointed to Kōtoku and Sakai's friendship as being what bound them together in this period. In his autobiography, Yamakawa Hitoshi recalls that up till the autumn of 1907 Kōtoku and Sakai had many discussions. Although they started with discussions about the relative merits of parliamentarism and direct action, they progressed to more fundamental questions - such as the problem of the state. These revealed fundamental differences between them, but it was due to their friendship that they pulled back from the abyss of breaking with each other politically. (Yamakawa Hitoshi Jiden - Yamakawa Hitoshi's Autobiography, Yamakawa Kikue and Sakisaka Itsurō (eds.), Tōkyō, 1970, pp 283-284.)

cooperate with avowedly bourgeois parties and whether state capitalism would be achieved at one fell swoop or would have to be introduced gradually by an accumulation of piecemeal measures. In 1907 Katayama claimed that he and his associates were 'hard-line' social-democrats, but his claim was open to serious doubt even then. In September 1907 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) published an article 'Iwayuru Nanpa To Shite No Yo No Shuchō' ('My Position As A So-Called Moderate') by Fukao Shō in which he described himself as a "moderate" who favoured the socialists pursuing an electoral strategy. He then added:

I am also in favour of those who represent
the socialist party becoming ministers,
vice-ministers and directors of bureaux. 117

What Fukao seemed to mean by this was that he was prepared to countenance supposed socialists accepting positions of authority in bourgeois governments. This was exactly what Millerand had done in France and support for such a policy was one of the hallmarks of the right wing of European social-democracy. Similarly, the Shakai Shimbun's frequent assertions, made whenever sectors of the economy were brought under state or municipal control, that "Socialism is being put into effect by our government itself"¹¹⁸ were at odds with the attitude towards such questions adopted by the mainstream of the Second International. It is hard to imagine Karl Kautsky - whatever his many failings - citing "the postal services, the telegraph and the telephone as all being models of socialism"¹¹⁹, any more than he could have agreed with Katayama's view that "since socialism can be realised within the framework of our imperial constitution, it is beyond a shadow of doubt that socialism does not conflict with our kokutai (national polity)."¹²⁰ During the

117 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 15, 8 September 1907, p 5.

118 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 80, 3 August 1911, p 2.

119 'Shakaishugi No Katsu Rekishi' ('The Living History Of Socialism'), Katayama Sen, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 61, 15 November 1909, p 1.

120 'Seiji To Shakaishugi' ('Political Affairs And Socialism'), Katayama Sen, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 73, 15 November 1910, p 1.

entire period of the Shakai Shimbun's existence from 1907-1911, there was little, if any, change in its politics. Its political position was all along akin to that of the 'soft-liners' within the Second International, just as Sakai had claimed. Yet, as the repression mounted by the state steadily increased in severity, so the verbal formulae used by the Shakai Shimbun to express its ideas were toned down. Whereas in its early days it was insistent that it was part of the 'hard-line' wing of social-democracy, at a later stage it found it convenient to announce in headlines that what it stood for was "moderate socialism".¹²¹

An article by Katayama in November 1908 was titled 'Nihon No Shakaishugisha Wa Nani O Yōkyū Su Beki Ka' ('What Should The Japanese Socialists Demand?'). Part of Katayama's reply to his own question was that:

However exquisite one's ideals, one who simply spouts about them and forgets reality is not a true socialist. Someone who is content to advocate measures which are totally impracticable in the present society is not worth a brass farthing in the socialist movement. People like this ought to be called dreamers rather than idealists.

122

Directed at Kōtoku Shūsui and his comrades, there was a grain of truth in this criticism. But, if some of Katayama's opponents within the socialist movement in Japan lay themselves open to the charge of utopianism, Katayama was just as vulnerable to the taunt of class collaboration. He envisaged 'socialism' as being perfectly compatible with the imperial status quo, as the following passage shows:

The Japanese socialism which we advocate too is something which should be put into effect in the present society. Yes, there is a crying need for what we advocate to be realised. We recognise the necessity for achieving socialism if the rights of the individual,

121 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 75, 15 January 1911, p 1.

122 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 49, 10 November 1908, p 8.

which our constitution guarantees, are to be realised completely. As a matter of course, the spirit of socialism has been manifested throughout the history of our country(!)

123

Strange reasoning though this was, one can understand the sentiments which lay behind the practical measures which Katayama longed to see introduced into Japan in his day:

When we are asked what are the demands of we socialists in Japan, we can list the most urgent and immediate ones as :

universal suffrage

a factory law, tenancy law and trade union law

insurance covering workers' illnesses, injuries and deaths

a system of old age pensions for workers

the state to take responsibility for unemployment relief

These are the demands which we socialists make for the Japanese workers. We do so together with our comrades throughout the world. Indeed, in some countries these demands have already been secured.

124

One can agree with Katayama that many of these reforms, if attainable, would have brought advantages to the working class and would have improved its position within the capitalism which was being developed in Japan in the Meiji era. But to concede that much to Katayama is not, in fact, to concede a great deal. The point to emphasise is precisely that any improvements in the lot of the working class along the lines which Katayama suggested would have been nothing more than improvements within capitalism. Yet Katayama's political strategy meant that the price to be paid for such reforms was that, not only would they be misrepresented to the workers as having something to do with 'socialism', but the illusion would also be created that the Meiji state was a possible vehicle for introducing this 'socialism'. The result of such a strategy could only be to foster political confusion among the working class and to disarm

123 Ibid., p 8.

124 Ibid., p 8.

it in the face of a vicious enemy. Hence the price inherent in Katayama's strategy was altogether too high for the working class to pay - and this was the conclusion which, to their great credit, Kōtoku Shūsui, Yamakawa Hitoshi and others drew with regard to the policy of the Shakai Shimbun (Social News) group. Katayama and his comrades' "state socialism" was not socialism at all, insisted the Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper)¹²⁵, and Yamakawa drew an astute parallel between the Shakai Shimbun group and the social reformers of the Shakai Seisaku Gakkai (Society for the Study of Social Policy). Despite the professed 'socialism' of the former and the declared anti-socialism of the latter, Yamakawa stressed how much they had in common, since both relied on the Meiji state to implement a policy of reforms.¹²⁶ As Kōtoku wrote about Katayama and his ilk:

They are so-called social-democrats who still try to achieve everything by means of the power of the state.

127

Katayama's ideas have been given great prominence in this account because he was the dominant figure within the consistently organised social-democratic faction in Japan. The only other members of this faction who enjoyed anything like the same prestige as Katayama were Nishikawa Kōjirō and Tazoe Tetsuji, but both were lost to the group around Shakai Shimbun (Social News) during 1908. Katayama was adamant that Shakai Shimbun should follow a policy of "rigid exclusion of anarchists from the group"¹²⁸ and, when he tried to enforce this rule against Akaba Hajime, it led in February 1908 to the secession of a

125 'Kō Ittsui Nari' ('They Make A Fine Pair'), Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 16, 20 January 1908, p 2.

126 'Heimin Kyōkai No Kōryō O Yomu' ('Reading The Programme Of The Common People's Association'), Yamakawa Hitoshi, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 17, 5 February 1908, p 11.

127 Letter to Takashima Beihō dated 15 March 1908. Collected in Shiota, op. cit., p 268.

128 See the document signed by Katayama Sen, Tazoe Tetsuji and Shiratori Takeshi on 14 March 1908. (Shakai Shimbun - Social News - No. 39, 15 March 1908, p 1.)

majority of the members of the Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai (Socialist Comrades' Association) in Tōkyō, who thereupon set up their own rival newspaper - the Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun (Tokyo Social News).¹²⁹ Nishikawa was among those who broke with Katayama in February 1908 and, if the theoretical orientation of the Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun remained ambivalent throughout the 7 months it survived during 1908¹³⁰, the political position of Nishikawa personally was even more difficult to fathom. Basically a social-democrat and an ardent campaigner for universal suffrage, Nishikawa had failed to make any significant theoretical contribution to the polemic between social-democrats and direct actionists at the time of the open break between the two camps in 1907. Such contributions as he did make to the debate were almost entirely concerned with gossip and counter-gossip, so much so that his statement 'Kōtoku Sakai Ryōshi Ni Kotae....' ('Replying To Messrs. Kotoku And Sakai....') contained hardly a single theoretical pronouncement, despite the fact that it was long enough to occupy two full pages of the Shakai Shimbun (Social News) on 17 November 1907.¹³¹ Similarly, when Nishikawa separated from Katayama in February 1908, he was again unable to raise his arguments to a meaningful theoretical level. On the contrary, it is obvious from what he did say that personalities and not principles were the main issues for him.¹³² According to Nishikawa, relations between Katayama, on the one hand, and Akaba Hajime and his supporters, on the other, had deteriorated to such an extent by February 1908 that a split had become inevitable. Nishikawa

129 According to Akaba Hajime, 25 out of the 30 members of the Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai (Socialist Comrades' Association) in Tōkyō met at Nishikawa Kōjirō's house on 16 February 1908 and unanimously resolved to expel Katayama. ('Katayama Sen Shi Jomei No Tenmatsu' - 'The Circumstances Of Mr. Katayama Sen's Expulsion', Akaba Hajime, Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun - Tokyo Social News - No. 1, 15 March 1908, p 4.)

130 The paper's motto read: "We take socialism as our woof and chivalry as our warp"!

131 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 25, 17 November 1907, pp 4-5.

132 'Kokuhaku' ('Confession'), Nishikawa Kōjirō, Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun (Tokyo Social News) No. 1, 15 March 1908, p 5.

explained that he therefore had to choose between losing one friend (Katayama) or many (the majority of the members of the Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai - Socialist Comrades' Association - in Tōkyō) and that he took the former course.¹³³ What was not clear at the time, but only became apparent several years later, was that Nishikawa's theoretical poverty in 1907/1908 was an early indication of his eventual disillusionment and departure from the socialist movement in 1910.

Tazoe Tetsuji had been the most forthright opponent of Kōtoku's anti-parliamentarism at the conference of the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) held on 17 February 1907. He was an abler thinker than either Katayama or Nishikawa and his death in March 1908 dealt a severe blow to the social-democrats in Japan. For Tazoe it was vitally important to be what he called "practical", by which he meant taking the world as it actually existed as one's starting point and not indulging in "utopian" speculation.¹³⁴ This was the linking factor between Tazoe and Katayama, since it accorded perfectly with Katayama's reformism. Yet what distinguished Tazoe from Katayama was that he gave some indication of understanding what a genuinely socialist society would entail. At any rate, Tazoe recognised the need for abolishing the wages system, a cardinal principle of socialism of which Katayama remained blissfully unaware.¹³⁵ Unfortunately, however, even if Tazoe did on occasions raise his theoretical horizons above the level of the reforms which commanded the whole of Katayama's attention, in terms of practical politics the policies which the two men pursued were virtually indistinguishable. This came about because of Tazoe's determination to follow the trend of the times and to relate his political practice to what was attainable in the short term.

133 'Katayama Sen Shi Jomei No Tenmatsu' ('The Circumstances Of Mr. Katayama Sen's Expulsion'), Akaba Hajime, Tokyo Shakai Shimbun (Tokyo Social News) No. 1, 15 March 1908, p 5.

134 'Mudai Roku' ('Without Title'), Tazoe Tetsuji, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 22, 27 October 1907, p 4.

135 'Shakaishugi No Keizai' ('The Economics Of Socialism'), Tazoe Tetsuji, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 16, 15 September 1907, p 5.

For Tazoe, worldly success was the best proof that existed of theoretical correctness and, impressed by the Second International's advance, he claimed that the Stuttgart Congress of August 1907 had demonstrated that "the socialist party movement is not a revolutionary voice crying in the clouds, but is a revolutionary power actually at work here on earth".¹³⁶ The Stuttgart Congress had demonstrated nothing of the sort and even more preposterous was Tazoe's praise for the "Socialist Party (as he called the Labour Party) in Britain". Labour's success struck Tazoe as a manifestation of the "practical English temperament". Without theoretical accompaniments, Britain had become the "unknown factor of the socialist movement", he claimed, a quiet revolution having supposedly been effected there!¹³⁷ In Japan, as in Europe, Tazoe favoured a policy of reforms because only reformism offered any prospects of rapid realisation.¹³⁸ This myopic focusing on short term success was bound to strand anyone (even someone with an inkling of what socialism was genuinely about) in a period when socialist revolution was objectively impossible. In such a period the socialist's role ought to be one of maintaining the socialist idea and propagating it within the working class, against the day when socialism does become a possibility. Yet this was an approach which was wholly alien to Tazoe - and, needless to say, which was incomprehensible to Katayama and the rest of the social-democratic faction. They stuck to their reformist guns until they were eventually obliterated as an organised group in the period of unremitting repression which followed the execution of Kōtoku Shūsui and 11 of his comrades in 1911. With Tazoe dead and Nishikawa having turned his coat, Katayama struggled on hopelessly but was eventually forced out of Japan into exile in 1914.

136 'Mudai Roku' ('Without Title'), Tazoe Tetsuji, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 22, 27 October 1907, p 4.

137 Ibid., p 4.

138 Tazoe's commitment to reformism is well stated in his Kinsei Shakaishugi Shi (History Of Modern Socialism), collected in Nihon Shakai Undō Shisō Shi (History Of The Thought Of The Japanese Social Movement), Kishimoto Eitarō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1971, Vol. V. See especially pp 257-263.

The Syndicalist Faction

The opponents of Shakai Shimbun (Social News) were a disparate collection of socialists, not all of whom appreciated being referred to as anarchists. Apart from the rather exceptional case of Sakai Toshihiko, who continued to regard himself as a social-democrat and yet was the object of Katayama Sen's wrath because of his friendship with Kōtoku Shūsui, there were others such as Morichika Umpei who chose not to call themselves anarchists. Under Morichika's editorship, the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) readily admitted that it stood for direct action, but denied that direct action could be equated with anarchism.¹³⁹ This was probably a fair statement of the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun's over-all position, even though there were many individual contributors to the paper whose views were unambiguously anarchist. What united the vast majority of the group around the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun was the conviction that the workers could only emancipate themselves through their own independent activity. Since it was generally envisaged that the method the working class would employ to achieve its emancipation would be a general strike, it is reasonable to loosely describe as syndicalists the variety of socialists who brought out first the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun and then the succession of journals which followed it. It has to be realised, however, that the term 'syndicalist' covers here an entire spectrum of political positions, ranging from almost pure anarchism, through anarcho-syndicalism and a type of industrial syndicalism similar to that favoured by Tom Mann in Britain, to the direct actionism of some who rarely described themselves as either anarchists or syndicalists.

A Kinyō Kai (Friday Association - so-called because its meetings were held on Fridays) was formed in Tōkyō in September 1907 as a rival

139 "There are two parties of socialists in Japan, one maintains Direct-actionism and the other Parliamentarism (sic). Each has its own respectable opinion. We do not like to take the side of any who blames pretending that the direct-actionists have the anarchist tendency." (Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun - Osaka Common People's Newspaper - No. 9, 5 October 1907, p 7 - English column.)

to Katayama's Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai (Socialist Comrades' Association). To some members of the Kinyō Kai (Friday Association) it was important to reject as a "meaningless resolution" the declaration of loyalty to the Second International which the Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai (Socialist Comrades' Association) had adopted on 3 November 1907. These elements within the Kinyō Kai pointed out that, far from being monolithic, there were advocates of direct action even inside the Second International.¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, there were other elements within the syndicalist camp who, instead of disputing the Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai (Socialist Comrades' Association)'s claim to social-democratic orthodoxy, embarked on an increasingly bitter denunciation of the Second International itself and its most prominent spokesmen. August Bebel was a frequent target of their attacks, Sakamoto Seima referring sarcastically to the SPD veteran as "Emperor Bebel" and as a sham revolutionary¹⁴¹ and Ishimaki Kōsei arguing in an article 'Bēberu No Gikai Seisaku' ('Bebel's Parliamentary Policy') that it was the SPD's involvement in parliament which had led to the blight of leadership and the centralisation of power within the German party.¹⁴² As early as October 1907 Kōtoku Shūsui expressed strong doubts about the SPD's position on war, as exemplified by Bebel's pronouncements on the subject¹⁴³, and when the First World War came the then dead Bebel was still being remembered by the syndicalists in Japan for his prophetically unprincipled utterances on patriotism and militarism. As Arahata Kanson put it in December 1915:

.... we could not suppress a bitter smile at the (German) socialist party MP Kautsky's contribution to Niyū Geito (?Neue Zeit).

140 Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 13, 5 December 1907, p 7 (English column).

141 'Gikai Ni Iku No Hitsuyō Aru Ka' ('Is There A Need To Go To Parliament?'), Sakamoto Kassui (Seima), Kumamoto Hyōron (Kumamoto Review) No. 25, 20 June 1908, p 6.

142 Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 11, 5 November 1907, p 12.

143 'Tōkyō Hyōron' ('Tokyo Review'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 9, 5 October 1907, p 1.

Wasn't it your friend Bebel who, as soon as the socialist party was criticised for being unpatriotic and disloyal, retorted that even though they were the socialist party, come the day when the country was supposedly in difficulties, they would be found at the battle front? And isn't your own socialist party responsible for today's problems? As soon as the government presented large war credits before parliament, didn't the socialist party fall for the bait of an inheritance tax and approve the war credits? Wasn't it your own socialist party which, in fact, right at the outbreak of the Great War in Europe, approved the war credits and pledged its allegiance before the German Emperor?

144

It is true that certain radical minority tendencies within the Second International (such as that which embraced Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in the SPD) were exempted from these strictures¹⁴⁵, but the First World War, when it came, was seen as corroborating what the Japanese syndicalists had perceived long before about the vast majority of social-democrats. The First World War offered final proof that the social-democratic parties were "part of the bourgeois (shinshi batsu) political parties"¹⁴⁶ and hence were the enemies of the working class.

As the Second International's star waned among those inclined to syndicalism in Japan, so their attention turned elsewhere in Europe for inspiration. Since the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International proved to be such an anti-climax for them, they were naturally interested to hear that an international conference of anarchists had been held in Amsterdam in August 1907, having been deliberately timed so as to coincide with the social-democrats' deliberations. Reports of the debates which had taken place at the international anarchist conference and translations

144 'Jijitsu To Kaishaku' ('Fact And Interpretation'), Arahata Kanson, Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) Series 2, No. 3, December 1915, p 13.

145 'Sensō Ni Tai Suru Sensō' ('The War Against The War'), Ōsugi Sakae. Collected in Ōsugi Sakae Zenshū (Collected Works Of Osugi Sakae), Yasutani Kanichi (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, Supplementary Volume, pp 68-69. (This article first appeared in the Heimin Shimbun - Common People's Newspaper - No. 1, 15 October 1914.)

146 Ibid., p 71.

of documents relating to its discussions occupied many pages of the Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) and Kumamoto Hyōron (Kumamoto Review) during 1907/1908¹⁴⁷, Kōtoku in particular making much of what he saw as the conference's achievements. It is easy to imagine how the announcement by the conference that it was launching an Anarchist International must have looked very impressive from distant Japan and the Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) commented in March 1908:

Since the Amsterdam conference, the anarchist movement in the West has rapidly become active. The comrades of the various countries support the conference's resolutions and are organising the scattered groups within each country into federations. Groups have also started to form in places where none has existed up till now.

148

This was an exceedingly rosy view of what was, in fact, a forlorn experiment in international cooperation among anarchists. Although the supposed Anarchist International did issue for a while a Bulletin de l'Internationale Anarchiste, this ceased to appear in 1909, after complaining - as George Woodcock records - that "apathy has overcome all those who clamoured most loudly at the Congress on the need for the Anarchist International".¹⁴⁹ The International itself did not long outlast its shortlived bulletin, but the extent to which many hard-pressed activists in Japan pinned their hopes on a chimerical organisation in far-away Europe is conveyed by a remark in Jiyū Shisō (Free Thought) in May 1909:

147 See, for example, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 14, 20 December 1907, pp 6-7; No. 19, 5 March 1908, pp 8-9; No. 20, 20 March 1908, pp 8-9; No. 21, 5 April 1908, p 8 and Kumamoto Hyōron (Kumamoto Review) No. 12, 5 December 1907, pp 2, 7; No. 13, 20 December 1907, p 7; No. 14, 1 January 1908, p 9; No. 15, 20 January 1908, pp 2, 7; No. 16, 5 February 1908, p 6; No. 17, 20 February 1908, p 6; No. 18, 5 March 1908, p 6.

148 'Museifutō No Katsudō' ('The Activity Of The Anarchists'), Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 20, 20 March 1908, p 9.

149 Anarchism, George Woodcock, London, 1963, p 251. (Woodcock claims - p 249 - that Japan was represented at the Amsterdam conference, but this was not so.)

There is still much disagreement among the European anarchists as to the merits of the International League organisation and there are still very many who have not joined. But one should by no means underestimate its strength, which was boosted by the Amsterdam conference. We need to pay strict attention to the way in which things develop.

150

Whatever the illusions entertained by Kōtoku on the Anarchist International, he did make some interesting observations on the documents of the Amsterdam conference which were translated into Japanese. In his view, the conference documents revealed a number of important characteristics of the anarchists who had met in Amsterdam and he drew the attention of the socialists in Japan to these.¹⁵¹ Anarchists in the West adhered to the principle of regional autonomy, as opposed to centralised authority, he wrote, and he claimed that this tendency among the anarchists had been in evidence ever since the Bakuninists in the First International quarrelled with the Marxists and split from them. Widening the argument, Kōtoku also maintained that the structure adopted by anarchist organisations was further evidence of their opposition to centralised authority and to the issuing of orders - a conclusion which was oddly at variance with the organisational principles of Bakunin's much-loved secret societies, which had only been saved from being ruthlessly dictatorial by the singular ineptness of their leader. Yet, however little Kōtoku's impressions of anarchist methods of organisation corresponded with Bakuninist reality, it is interesting to notice how his siding with the anarchists in their current dispute with the social-democrats was extended back in time to encompass the antagonism between Bakunin and Marx. Marx was now totally identified with social-democracy for Kōtoku, with the result that his contempt for Shakai Shimbun (Social News) was expressed in the jeer that it was "a mild Marxian monthly".¹⁵²

150 'Museifushugisha Taikai' ('Anarchists' Conference'), Jiyū Shisō (Free Thought) No. 1, 25 May 1909, p 2.

151 'Kainan Hyōron' ('South Sea Review'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 21, 5 April 1908, p 8.

152 Jiyū Shisō (Free Thought) No. 1, 25 May 1909, p 4 (English column).

As well as commenting on terrorism, the general strike and anarchist opposition to militarism, Kōtoku also focused attention on the attitudes of anarchists towards trade unions.¹⁵³ He explained something about the differences which divided anarcho-syndicalists such as Pierre Monatte of the CGT, who had attended the Amsterdam conference, from anarchists such as Errico Malatesta. Monatte was naturally heavily committed to the trade unions, while Malatesta - although not totally opposed to anarchists working in trade unions - did not share the syndicalists' faith that the unions represented the means of revolution, any more than he saw the unions as the elements from which a new society could be constructed. What lay behind Malatesta's uneasiness with the syndicalists' approach was the contradiction which he sensed existed between the masses of trade unionists, engaged in day-to-day skirmishing within capitalism, and the handfuls of revolutionaries, dreaming of a new society. Although Kōtoku translated an article by Malatesta on Anarchism And Syndicalism for the Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) in February 1908¹⁵⁴, tension between anarcho-syndicalists and 'pure' anarchists did not develop in earnest in Japan until after the period extending up to 1918 which is being dealt with here. This was obviously because there was no trade union movement worth talking of in Japan throughout most of this period, the handfuls of revolutionaries having the field to themselves. Thus, although Kōtoku raised the problem in 1908, it failed to evoke much response at that time. Even in October 1914 Ōsugi Sakae could still write in the following detached manner about the divisions which existed in Europe between some anarchists and the anarcho-syndicalists:

153 'Kainan Hyōron' ('South Sea Review'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 21, 5 April 1908, p 8.

154 Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 17, 5 February 1908, pp 6-7 and No. 18, 20 February 1908, pp 6-7. (Malatesta's article had first appeared in the London Freedom in November 1907.)

A long way away as we are, we can look calmly at the relationship between both parties. And it seems to us that the inevitable tendency in both cases should be for anarchists to become trade unionists and for trade unionists to become anarchists, so that in the end there is perfect agreement between them. The vague abstract theories of Kropotkin and others have become clear and concrete in the trade unions. And the trade unions, which for a long time have been weak and uncertain of themselves, have learned through experience and, thanks to anarchism, are at last marching straight ahead in a definite direction.

155

Ōsugi's gratuitous advice to the movement in Europe that anarchists and trade unionists should arrive at "perfect agreement" was an indication of how remote from the problem he was. Nonetheless, although the problem hardly surfaced in Japan prior to 1918, it existed latently within the Japanese syndicalists' theory.

Direct contact between the European anarcho-syndicalist movement and the socialists in Japan was established in March 1908 when Christian Cornelissen wrote to Kōtoku, informing him that a Bulletin International du Mouvement Syndicaliste was to be published. Cornelissen invited Kōtoku to send reports from time to time on "the Japanese trade union movement, strikes, the social conditions of the working class etc."¹⁵⁶, his reference to the non-existent "Japanese trade union movement" underlining how sorely in need of reliable information on Japan the European anarcho-syndicalists were. From the Japanese side there was nothing that resembled an organised movement of trade unions whose activities Kōtoku and his comrades could report to Cornelissen's journal, but the Bulletin International did exert some intellectual influence within Japan as

155 'Kokusai Museifutō Taikai' ('The International Anarchist Conference'), Ōsugi Sakae. Collected in Ōsugi Sakae Zenshū (Collected Works Of Ōsugi Sakae), Yasutani Kanichi (ed.), Tōkyō, 1964, Supplementary Volume, p 84. (This article first appeared in Heimin Shimbun - Common People's Newspaper - No. 1, 15 October 1914.)

156 Letter to Kōtoku Shūsui from Christian Cornelissen dated 2 March 1908. (Nihon Heimin Shimbun - Japan Common People's Newspaper - No. 22, 20 April 1908, p 11.)

syndicalist ideas spread among the socialists there.¹⁵⁷

One of the most remarkable achievements of those Japanese socialists who were attracted to syndicalism was that, even if vicious state repression made it impossible for them to organise any trade unions, they did manage to maintain some sort of propaganda activity during much of the darkest period of reaction following Kōtoku's execution. As has already been seen, even the ostentatiously law-abiding social-democratic faction was smashed in this period, but from October 1912 Ōsugi Sakae and Arahata Kanson* contrived to issue a monthly magazine called Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought). Then, in July 1913, they went one step further and organised a Sanjikirizumu Kenkyū Kai (Association for the Study of Syndicalism). Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) could only survive by cultivating an image of being concerned with literary and philosophical questions, but sandwiched between the articles on aesthetics, or inserted into apparently harmless review articles, were some surprisingly hard-hitting statements of the syndicalist case.¹⁵⁸ As for the Sanjikirizumu Kenkyū Kai (Association for the Study of Syndicalism), the organisation and tactics of the syndicalist movement associated with Tom Mann in Britain¹⁵⁹ and, above all, of the French CGT were

* Ōsugi and Arahata had both been imprisoned from June 1908 to 1910 as a result of the 'red flag incident', which will be dealt with in the following chapter.

157 See, for example, Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) No. 21, June 1914, pp 2-3.

158 As Ōsugi put it, Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) "disseminated among young students revolutionary ideas under a scientific, literary and philosophical form." (Ōsugi Sakae Zenshū - Collected Works Of Osugi Sakae, Kondō Kenji and Yasunari Jiro (eds.), Tōkyō, 1964, Vol. IV, p 19 - Esperanto section.) It was largely the same young intellectuals who frequented the meetings of the Sanjikirizumu Kenkyū Kai (Association for the Study of Syndicalism): "... the workers were still totally unconscious and those who attended were principally literary youths." (Rōdō Undō - Labour Movement - Vol. IV, No. 2, February 1924, p 4 - Esperanto section.)

159 Arahata Kanson, for example, gave a talk on 'Eikoku No Senjikirisumu' ('Syndicalism In Britain') to the Association on 1 November 1914. A report of this talk appeared in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 2, 15 November 1914 and is collected in Arahata Kanson Chosaku Shū (Collected Works Of Arahata Kanson), Tōkyō, 1976, Vol. II, pp 90-94. Elsewhere, Arahata has said that Tom Mann's Industrial Syndicalist (erroneously referred to by Arahata as Industrial

studied with keen interest at its meetings.¹⁶⁰ In fact, the way in which the French movement above all others was held up as an example for the Japanese workers to follow is illustrated by a passage from one of Ōsugi's articles, where he refers to "how much hard work and blood, sweat and tears have been put by the syndicalists of France into improving themselves and into constructing a small society (within the wider society of capitalism - J.C.) on which they could base themselves."¹⁶¹ Georges Sorel's writings were also read and frequently discussed, but both Ōsugi and Arahata made it clear that what syndicalism meant for them was not the theories advanced by Sorel or any other thinker but the practice evolved by bodies of militant workers acting for themselves.¹⁶²

In sharp contrast to Shakai Shimbun (Social News)'s habit of identifying the Meiji government's nationalisation of the railways with 'socialism', the syndicalist faction was adamant that, as the state became the direct employer of men and women working for wages, it also became "the greatest capitalist" of all.¹⁶³ Not only was nationalisation under the existing regime denounced in this way, but syndicalists like Arahata were fully aware that nationalisation even by a government which chose to call itself socialist would still result in the continuing exploitation

Socialism) made a "deep impression" on him. (Kanson Jiden - Kanson's Autobiography, Tōkyō, 1974, Vol. I, p 223.)

- 160 Arahata also lectured to the Sanjikirizumu Kenkyū Kai (Association for the Study of Syndicalism) on the CGT, using The Labor Movement In France: A Study In Revolutionary Syndicalism by Louis Levine (New York, 1912) as his text. (See Arahata's commentary to the reprinted edition of Kindai Shisō - Modern Thought, Komatsu Ryūji (ed.), Tōkyō, 1963, Vol. V, p 3.)
- 161 'Rōdō Undō To Kojinshugi' ('The Labour Movement And Individualism'), Ōsugi Sakae, Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought), Series 2, No. 3, December 1915, p 7.
- 162 'Beruguson To Soreru' ('Bergson And Sorel'), Ōsugi Sakae. Collected in Ōsugi Sakae Zenshū (Collected Works Of Osugi Sakae), Tōkyō, 1963, Vol. I, pp 408-411 and 'Roku Zasshi Bekken' ('A Glance At Six Magazines'), Arahata Kanson, Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) No. 13, October 1913, p 31.
- 163 "In Japan, the conditions of workers are very bad, especially those who (are) hired by the greatest capitalist, the Government." (Nihon Heimin Shimbun - Japan Common People's Newspaper - No. 20, 20 March 1908, p 7 - English column.)

of the working class. Thus, not only was the social-democrats' parliamentarism denounced by the syndicalists in Japan, but their taking control of the economy was equated with the persistence of wage slavery for the working class.

The policy of the socialist parties is to try to achieve the liberation of the working class not by the workers' direct economic action but by a parliamentary policy. Then, in the event of a so-called rational social revolution carried out peacefully, a central government is to administer all production and distribution. But a policy such as this stifles the workers' strength of initiative and the workers' consciousness of their social responsibility. It does not make the workers independent. On the contrary, it makes slaves of them.

164

The alternative to social-democratic parties manipulating the working class was a self-reliant working class, confident of its own strength and trusting nobody but itself. Perhaps without realising its Marxist origins, the syndicalists in Japan harked back to the slogan of the First International:

The emancipation of the working class must be the work of the workers themselves. This old motto of the "International Workers' League" must be our ever new watchword until the emancipation of the workers is completed.

165

One of the theoretically most mature presentations of the syndicalist position during this whole period came in an article by Arahata on 'Rōdō Kumiai Undō No Shōrai' ('The Future Of The Trade Union Movement') which appeared in Shin Shakai (New Society) in January 1918. Not only was the liberation of the working class seen as depending entirely on the workers' own efforts, but it was also grasped that the only form which genuine liberation could take was for the workers to put an end to wage labour.

164 'Boku Jishin' ('I Myself'), Arahata Kanson, Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) No. 17, February 1914, p 17.

165 'Rōdō Undō To Seiji' ('The Labour Movement And Politics'). Collected in Arahata Kanson Chosaku Shū (Collected Works Of Arahata Kanson), Tōkyō, 1976, Vol. II, p 99. (This article first appeared in the Heimin Shimbun - Common People's Newspaper - No. 3, 15 December 1914.)

Referring to the emergence of syndicalism, Arahata claimed that "a spirit has suddenly arisen within today's trade union movement - a spirit which manifests a new consciousness, will and vitality. And the watchword of this spirit is 'abolition of the wages system'."¹⁶⁶ Elsewhere in the same article, he also wrote:

.... to take the example of the means of production having been nationalised, this would be nothing more than state capitalism in the end, since the workers could not escape their slave-like conditions. However generous and magnanimous the bosses were, it would not answer the workers' needs. It follows that the 'abolition of the wages system' and the 'expropriation of industry', which the new trade unionists* advocate, would still be issues which would be bound to arise.

167

Hostility to state capitalism, a commitment to working class self-liberation, and the determination to abolish wages all represented giant theoretical steps forward for the syndicalist wing of the socialist movement in Japan. Adherence to these principles by the syndicalists opened up an enormous gulf between them and the social-democrats, so much so that, when Katayama Sen left Japan for good in 1914, Ōsugi paid him the final insult for a socialist by calling him Mr. Katayama in the Esperanto column of the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper).¹⁶⁸ In Ōsugi's eyes, Katayama no longer qualified for the title "Comrade". Yet, however far beyond social-democracy their ideas had advanced, the syndicalists' theory was not without its own Achilles' heel. Behind their oft-repeated assertions that the trade union organisation represented the germ of the new society within the old lay a dangerous ouvrierism. They underestimated the need for conscious understanding of socialism by

* "new trade unionist" was a synonym for "syndicalist".

166 Arahata Kansō Chosaku Shū (Collected Works Of Arahata Kansō), Tōkyō, 1976, Vol. II, p 116.

167 Ibid., p 124.

168 Kansō Jiden (Kansō's Autobiography), Arahata Kansō, Tōkyō, 1974, Vol. I, p 222.

the mass of the working class, assuming that the everyday struggles of workers within capitalism automatically had a socialist character and that the trade union form of organisation guaranteed that the outcome of such struggles would be socialism. Where, as in various European countries, workers had the opportunity to engage in trade union activity under far less obstructive conditions than existed in Japan, the limited and reformist character of the vast majority of the struggles mounted by the working class organised in its trade unions was beyond doubt. Because reformist trade unionism was all but impossible in Japan, however, the reformist aspirations of most workers during this period were not readily discernible. On the contrary, deprived of all legal channels of protest, frustration periodically built up until sections of the working class exploded into violent direct action. It was all too easy for the syndicalists in Japan to mistake these sporadic confrontations between workers and the forces of the state for deep-seated hostility towards capitalism. Since they assumed that the situation in Europe must be far in advance of that in Japan, it was also imagined that in countries such as France the process of "gradually destroying the foundations of the existing society and developing elements of the new society within the framework of the old" must be well under way.¹⁶⁹ This led to some strangely contradictory pronouncements on trade unions. Ōsugi, for example, was perceptive enough to see that trade unions could only operate successfully if, irrespective of ideological differences, they united all workers in the struggle to improve wages and working conditions. He wrote:

The fundamental organisational principle of the CGT lies in the fact that it is unity of economic interest alone which binds all the union members together. In other words, employees in the same occupation or industry join a trade union (syndicat) no matter what their political, philosophical or

169 'Sei No Sōzō' ('The Creation Of Life'), Ōsugi Sakae, Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) No. 16, January 1914, p 5.

religious views and irrespective of their race, nationality or sex. They do so simply in their capacity of wage labourers. Thus workers who belong to a trade union have not signed a political programme, made a confession of faith, nor agreed to a set of beliefs.

170

Yet, if it were true that the syndicat united workers "simply in their capacity of wage labourers", and not on the basis of any commonly held political views (least of all the determination to abolish wage labour), what sense was there in proclaiming that "the germ of the new society of the future is inherent in syndicalism's solidarity and is developing steadily and vigorously"?¹⁷¹ What grounds were there for believing that the solidarity achieved by virtue of workers' efforts to defend themselves as a class of wage labourers could also act as the kernel of a new society whose realisation would depend on those same workers' determination to abolish themselves as a class of wage labourers? When the syndicalists in Japan argued that "the thing which will bring about a true revolution is, in fact, not these beliefs based on theories but the solidarity of the workers"¹⁷², they were failing to recognise the crucial importance of the mass of the workers themselves having a grasp of socialist theory. Solidarity alone, without an adequate understanding of socialist theory, would never be sufficient for overthrowing capitalism, no matter how attentively the workers heeded the syndicalists' advice to distrust leaders and rely solely on their own direct action. The fate of the CGT in France and Tom Mann's movement in Britain (the principal touchstones of those who advocated syndicalism in Japan) was proof enough of this. Faced with the First World War, they were as little able to mount an effective revolutionary opposition to the mass butchery as was the social-democratic SPD.

170 'Rōdō Undō To Kojinshugi' ('The Labour Movement And Individualism'), Ōsugi Sakae, Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) Series 2, No. 3, December 1915, p 4.

171 'Roku Zasshi Bekken' ('A Glance At Six Magazines'), Arahata Kansō, Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) No. 13, October 1913, p 31.

172 'Boku Jishin' ('I Myself'), Arahata Kansō, Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) No. 17, February 1914, p 17.

CHAPTER 11.Christians And Terrorists

The Russo-Japanese War was a watershed for the Christian religion in Japan. For several centuries prior to the revolution of 1868, Christians had been regarded by the state in Japan as a fifth column for the Western imperialist powers and their religion had been virtually obliterated by ruthless and sustained persecution. Even after 1868, although it was no longer possible to exclude missionaries from abroad or to prevent the emergence of groups of Japanese Christians, the authorities remained suspicious and Christianity in Japan retained its radical and even slightly subversive aura. Yet the special circumstances created by the war with Russia persuaded the Japanese government to change its attitude towards Christianity. In taking on Russia, the Japanese state was well aware of the importance of maintaining peaceful relations with the other Western powers and it had no intention of allowing Orthodox Russia to wring some propagandistic advantage from the claim that it was fighting to defend Christian values against 'heathen' Japan. Despite its relative weakness, Christianity in Japan thus assumed a symbolic importance, since the government was eager to demonstrate that even the Japanese Christians supported the war against Russia. The situation was such that the hitherto hostile state offered the Christian churches in Japan the status of respectability, provided they too would campaign for the war. Support for a war in which tens of thousands would be killed and maimed struck most Japanese Christians as a reasonable price to pay for their acceptance by the authorities and, writing in English to Albert Johnson in December 1906, Kōtoku Shūsui described the changed role of Christianity in Japan as follows:

The most comical fact of the results of the late war is the conciliation (or rather embrace) of Christianity with Buddhism and Shintoism. The history of Christianity in Japan was until now a history of horrible

persecutions. The Japanese diplomatists, however, earnestly desiring to silence the rumors caused and spread in Europe during the war that "Japan is a yellow peril" or "Japan is a pagan country," suddenly began to put on the mask of western civilization, and eagerly welcome and protect (Christianity), and use it as a means of introducing Japan to European and American powers as a civilized Christendom. On the other hand, Christian priests, taking advantage of the weakness of the government, got a great monetary aid from the State, and under its protection they are propagating in full vigor the Gospel of Patriotism. Thus Japanese Christianity, which was before the war the religion of (the) poor, (has) literally now changed within only two years to a great bourgeois religion and a machine of the State and militarism!

1

In Part I of this study it was shown how, during the period up till the Russo-Japanese War, a high percentage of the socialists in Japan saw Christianity as being perfectly compatible with what they took to be 'socialism'. The behaviour of the Christian churches during the war shocked many of these socialists, however, and brought some of them into conflict with organised Christianity. As the hostilities progressed and the Christian churches were increasingly embroiled in the war effort against Russia, so differences developed within the ranks of the socialists as to what attitude they should adopt towards Christianity. Tension was such that, when the Heiminsha (the group which had brought out first the weekly Heimin Shimbun - Common People's Newspaper - and then Chokugen - Straight Talking) was dissolved in October 1905, it was replaced by two separate factions publishing rival journals. On the one hand, from 10 November 1905, Ishikawa Sanshirō, Abe Isō, Kinoshita Naoe and their supporters started to publish a Christian Socialist monthly called Shin Kigen (New Era). On the other, the bi-monthly Hikari (Light) was launched later the same month by a larger group of socialists centred on Nishikawa Kōjirō and Yamaguchi Koken.

1 Letter to Albert Johnson dated 18 December 1906. Collected in Kōtoku Shūsui No Nikki To Shokan (The Diaries And Letters Of Kotoku Shusui), Shiota Shōbee (ed.), Tōkyō, 1965, pp 440-441.

The rivalry between these two journals was sometimes presented as though it were a case of a "materialist"² (or even a "Marxist"³) faction grouped around Hikari (Light) opposed to the Christian Socialism of Shin Kigen (New Era). Yet, in fact, the differences between the two factions were less clearly cut than this. Shin Kigen (New Era) certainly preached that Christianity and 'socialism' were inseparable - that, while "Socialism is materialistic Christianity", "Christianity is spiritualistic socialism".⁴ Even as Shin Kigen advanced such arguments, however, it was critical of established religion (including Christianity) in Japan. It reproached "religious believers, who should be propagating the holy love of god," but who instead "have also become slaves to worldly desires in their hearts".⁵ Shin Kigen wanted these religious believers to commit themselves to political action and work for a society where there would be no distinction between rich and poor. At the same time, it exhorted the Japanese socialists to recognise that merely to reorganise the social system was not enough. Individuals too had to be changed and only religion, it believed, could achieve this.⁶

2 'Heiminsha No Kaisan' ('The Dissolution Of The Heiminsha'), Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 1, 10 November 1905, p 15.

3 'Yo No Kankai' ('The Way It Seems To Me'), Kōtoku Shūsui, Hikari (Light) No. 1, 20 November 1905, p 5.

4 Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 10, 10 August 1906, p 21.

5 'Nihon Kokumin No Shimei' ('The Mission Of The Japanese People'), Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 1, 10 November 1905, p 4.

6 "Not only are there similarities in what both (socialism and Christianity - J.C.) maintain, but unless they act in concert it will be difficult for either to attain its aims. We cannot possibly believe that Christian morals can be put into practice except in a society of the type which socialism advocates.... Isn't it obvious that Christianity must seek the help of socialism? However, it is not possible to reform the social structure (shakai soshiki) while neglecting its individual basis. We must foresee that when the social structure which socialism advocates emerges, the moral character of the individual will no longer be what it is today. Therefore, at the same time as we propagate socialism, we must also put our efforts into the spiritual sphere. We do not insist that this absolutely has to be Christianity, but a spirit is certainly needed of the type which Christianity provides." ('Shakaishugi To Kirisutokyo' - 'Socialism And Christianity', Abe Iso, Shin Kigen - New Era - No. 5, 10 March 1906, p 5.)

For its part, Hikari (Light) stood for the separation of religion and politics. Sakai Toshihiko's position was representative when he wrote in Hikari in an article on 'Kirisutokyō Ni Tai Suru Yo No Taido' ('My Attitude Towards Christianity') that religion was a private affair. Far from being totally opposed to religion as a matter of principle, Sakai admitted to having been deeply influenced himself by Confucianism in particular.⁷ As well as insisting that religion should be left to each individual and not intruded into the political arena, Hikari (Light) also differed from Shin Kigen (New Era) with regard to the gusto with which it attacked established religion. While Shin Kigen (New Era) went little further than urging a change of heart on its coreligionists, Hikari (Light) was in the habit of denouncing the Christian churches in Japan as tools of the ruling class. A single issue of Hikari in August 1906 featured articles on 'Gunjin Ni Koburu Kirisuto Kyōkai' ('The Christian Churches Which Curry Favour With The Military'), 'Fugō To Musuberu Kirisuto Kyōkai' ('The Christian Churches Which Join Themselves To The Rich') and 'Kizoku Ni Hizamazukeru Kirisuto Kyōkai' ('The Christian Churches Which Kneel Before The Aristocracy').⁸ Although articles such as these might have given the impression to a casual reader that Hikari was bitterly hostile to Christianity as a doctrine, the fact was that Hikari's scorn was confined to organised religion's failure to live up to its declared principles. However blistering the attacks launched by Hikari on Christianity might have been, the focus of its anger was the established churches' readiness to compromise with the Japanese state. In general, Hikari's contempt for the role played by Christianity in Japan fell considerably short of an unwavering, materialist-based recognition that for the working class religion can only be an ideological snare. Even Yamaguchi Koken, who was not averse to

7 Hikari (Light) No. 20, 5 September 1906, p 6.

8 Hikari (Light) No. 19, 20 August 1906, p 2.

denouncing the Christian clergy in Japan as "intellectual prostitutes"⁹, still wrote in Hikari about "Humanity's first socialist and the representative of the common people, Jesus of Nazareth!"¹⁰ To take another example, in the paper's first editorial, under the headline 'Gojin No Hōfu' ('Our Aspirations'), Hikari declared that "we do not necessarily look upon literature, morality and religion as being entirely useless".¹¹

The fact that the rivalry between Shin Kigen (New Era) and Hikari (Light) was something less than a totally hostile confrontation between religious idealism and materialism was illustrated by the readiness with which both journals eventually ceased publication and pooled their efforts in order to launch the daily Heimin Shinbun (Common People's Newspaper) in January 1907. When the two journals first appeared, Hikari (Light) rather patronisingly acknowledged Shin Kigen (New Era)'s existence in its English-language column:

The first number of the "New Era," another socialistic monthly magazine, has recently been issued in Tokyo. It has its basis on Christian socialism.

A political party had been already organized on the standpoint of State-Socialism. Japan is now going to have several milder forms of Socialism.

12

Hikari (Light)'s own version of 'socialism' was, in fact, mild enough to enable it to welcome the Meiji government's nationalisation of the railways with the comment that "in principle we gained a great deal (for) the cause of Socialism"¹³, but it nevertheless felt that what distinguished it from the other groups in Japan which claimed to be

9 'Hige Jorō No Seikatsu Jōtai' ('The Condition Of Life Of Intellectual Prostitutes'), Yamaguchi Koken, Hikari (Light) No. 3, 20 December 1905, p 3.

10 'Bonjinshugi To Wa Nanzo Ya' ('What Is Mediocrity?'), Yamaguchi Koken, Hikari (Light) No. 2, 5 December 1905, p 1.

11 Hikari (Light) No. 1, 20 November 1905, p 1 (emphasis added).

12 'Organ Of Christian Socialism', Hikari (Light) No. 1, 20 November 1905, p 7.

13 'Minister For Education And Socialism', Hikari (Light) No. 15, 20 June 1906, p 1 (English column).

socialist was its adherence to the social-democratic notion of class struggle. The concept of a struggle within society between opposing classes obviously conflicted with the Christian principle of universal goodwill and it was equally unacceptable to the Kokka Shakaitō (State Socialist Party), which emphasised the unity of the Japanese nation. The Kokka Shakaitō (State Socialist Party) was organised in 1905 by Yamaji Aizan and others, with a platform which read in part:

We hold that the kokutai (national polity) of Great Japan should unite the emperor and his people in the same spirit that father and child are bound together. We also hold that the kokutai should achieve the great cause of communal living by means of the power of the state.

14

Although Yamaji Aizan went on record as declaring "I am not a believer in socialism", he did admit to a considerable respect for Marx's ideas (even though he disagreed with the theory of the class struggle) and, despite the fact that there was nothing even faintly anarchist about his way of thinking, he acknowledged that he found himself moved by Kropotkin's works.¹⁵ What he and his party stood for was actually state capitalism in Japan, with an authoritarian state and the people reduced to inertia by the spectacle provided by the imperial family. In an article 'Kaikyū Sensō Ron Ni Tsuite' ('On The Theory Of The Class War'), which appeared in Hikari (Light) in June 1906, Sakai Toshihiko polemized against Yamaji Aizan and his Kokka Shakaitō (State Socialist Party), as he also did against Ishikawa Sanshirō and the journal Shin Kigen (New Era). Yet, even if he was disturbed by both groups' rejection of the class struggle, Sakai made it plain that he drew a distinction between them. The case made out against Yamaji Aizan was an argument

14 Nihon Shakai Undō Shisō Shi (History Of The Thought Of The Japanese Social Movement), Itoya Hisao and Kishimoto Eitaro (eds.), Tōkyō, 1971, Vol. II, p 424.

15 Genji No Shakai Mondai Oyobi Shakaishugisha (Today's Social Problems And Socialists), Yamaji Aizan. Collected in Itoya and Kishimoto, op. cit., Vol. II, p 388.

directed at a political opponent, whereas Sakai conceded that Hikari (Light)'s differences with Shin Kigen (New Era) were relatively minor - more a question of the form which the socialist movement should take in Japan and the approach which it should adopt than a disagreement over basic doctrine.¹⁶ Perhaps the farthest that the contributors to Hikari (Light) went in distancing themselves from Shin Kigen (New Era) was when Takenouchi Yosojiro declared in January 1906 that although "up till now one can hardly perceive great differences between the beliefs of the so-called Christian Socialists and ourselves, if there is a slight difference between us in terms of our basic thought, then it seems to me that in the future the gap between us will gradually widen".¹⁷ Nine months later, however, when the decisions were taken to discontinue both Hikari (Light) and Shin Kigen (New Era) so that the Japanese socialists could concentrate all their resources on a combined effort to publish a daily newspaper, Hikari wrote in an editorial that, although Christian and anti-Christian factions had been at odds with each other up till then, they had been in agreement as far as 'socialism' was concerned.

.... although there are these two factions,
as far as their interpretation of - and belief
in - socialism is concerned, they are certainly
not incompatible with one another. 18

Hikari (Light) and Shin Kigen (New Era) sunk such differences as they had in order to bring the daily Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) into existence, whereas the Kokka Shakaito (State Socialist Party) remained a separate organisation until it seems to have petered out of existence. As was shown in the previous chapter, when the socialists' daily newspaper foundered in April 1907, it was again

16 Hikari (Light) No. 14, 5 June 1906, pp 1, 6.

17 'Kikokugo No Kanso' ('Thoughts After Returning To Japan'), Takenouchi Yosojiro, Hikari (Light) No. 5, 20 January 1906, p 7.

18 'Nikkan Heimin Shimbun Iden To Su' ('The Daily Common People's Newspaper Is About To Be Published'), Hikari (Light) No. 25, 25 October 1906, p 1.

replaced by two separate organs - the Shakai Shimbun (Social News) and the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper). By the time this happened, however, the issues dividing the Japanese socialists were no longer centred on the controversy about religion. Other questions now decided how the factional battle-lines would be drawn. Thus an organised Christian Socialist faction, publishing its own journal, was a relatively short-lived phenomenon in Japan. Shin Kigen (New Era) survived for barely one year, from November 1905 to November 1906. Yet, despite its transient nature, the Japanese variety of Christian Socialism was not without interest. As with terrorism, flight to the mystical regions of religion appeared to some socialists to offer an avenue of escape from the daunting problems which confronted the socialist movement in Japan early in the twentieth century. It is therefore worth examining the ideas of some of those who were associated with Shin Kigen (New Era) in a little more detail.

Japanese Christian Socialism

The socialists who were grouped around Shin Kigen (New Era) during 1905/1906 were wary of the term 'Christian Socialist' because they did not wish to be identified with the British Christian Socialists, such as Charles Kingsley, whom they regarded as social reformers.¹⁹ Even if they had reservations about the term, though, Christian Socialists they emphatically were. Shin Kigen's front cover invariably featured an angel sporting a pair of feathery wings and holding aloft a shining cross and articles regularly appeared on such esoteric themes as 'Seibo Maria No Kakumei Shisō' ('The Revolutionary Thought Of Holy Mother Mary').²⁰ Indeed, the religious twists which were given to even the most mundane

19 'Shakaishugi To Kirisutokyō' ('Socialism And Christianity'), Abe Isō, Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 5, 10 March 1906, p 5.

20 'Seibo Maria No Kakumei Shisō' ('The Revolutionary Thought Of Holy Mother Mary'), Ishikawa Sanshirō, Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 4, 10 February 1906, p 42.

subjects were (quite unintentionally) often highly amusing. Thus an article by Abe Isō on 'Tōkyō Shi No Gesui Keiei' ('The Management Of The City Of Tokyo's Sewers') appeared under the emblem of the Virgin Mary holding Jesus - complete with halo - in her arms.²¹ It was no mere figure of speech when Ishikawa Sanshirō talked about "taking up the cross and propagating socialism"²² and some of Shin Kigen's statements have to be read to be believed. One, under the title 'Kantō No Inori' ('A Prefatory Prayer'), printed in both Japanese and English in the first issue of Shin Kigen, started in the following vein:

O God! Now, pen in hand, we bow down before
thy glory. Open our hearts and fill us with
thy love and power.

When we shut our eyes and meditate on thee,
our hearts dance in the waves of gladness,
and our lips tremble in the morning wind from
the offing, like the reeds of the shore; but
our stubborn tongues are not nimble enough to
give utterance to the praises which are in our
hearts, and only hot tears fall down like a
shower of rain. But thou art to be praised,
O God! Thou hast not forsaken thy sinful
children, who hide their faces before thy
glory, and thou hast shed thy light upon
their tears as i(f) with the glory of the
setting sun.

23

This hallucinated rambling continued for several paragraphs more, but the gist of it (if gist there were) was that "Thy children have gone astray from thee"; "thy children.... have defiled the earth, the garden of thy holiness." As a solution to this terrible state of affairs, "we pray thee, O God, that the time may soon come, when thou wouldst whip these sinful children of thine with thy whip of love and lead them back from their estrangement into thy loving bosom."²⁴

As for the Christian Socialists:

21 Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 10, 10 August 1906, p 8.

22 'Sakai Kei Ni Ataete Seitō O Ronzu' ('A Discussion Of Political Parties Addressed To Sakai'), Ishikawa Sanshirō, Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 10, 10 August 1906, p 21.

23 'Our Prayer', Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 1, 10 November 1905, p 1 (English columns).

24 Ibid., p 1 (English columns).

We simply rely on thy wisdom and mercy,
and want to walk in thy righteousness....
We pray thee, O God, let us not even for
a single moment be apart from the guidance
of thy almighty hand. Amen!

25

It was small wonder that those socialists who were associated with Hikari (Light), even though by no means all of them were totally dismissive of religion, were still unable to stomach Shin Kigen (New Era)'s delirious incoherencies. If a god were going to set the world to rights, as Shin Kigen asserted, then what, one might ask, was the purpose of men and women organising a political movement - either for socialism or for anything else? Here was an obvious objection to Shin Kigen's very existence and Kinoshita Naoe for one, ultimately finding that he had no answer, left the group organised around Shin Kigen and dropped out of political activity altogether in the summer of 1906.²⁶ Kinoshita had previously been one of the most prominent socialists in Japan. He had fought an election campaign against overwhelming odds when he stood as a parliamentary candidate in Tōkyō in May 1905* and, although other members of the Christian Socialist faction held aloof from the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) when it was formed in February 1906, Kinoshita joined the new party. Yet he did not participate very actively in the Nippon Shakaitō and by July 1906 he had withdrawn from the socialist movement and taken himself off to the Ikaho mountains to the north-west of Tōkyō to live the life of a recluse. Although he returned to Tōkyō in 1908 and started to issue a fortnightly magazine called Shin Seikatsu (New Life), his activity was henceforth of a religious nature. Part of Kinoshita's disillusionment with politics seems to have

* See Chapter 3.

25 Ibid., p 2 (English columns).

26 Kinoshita announced that he was withdrawing from all political activity in an article 'Kyūyū Shokun Ni Tsugu' ('A Word To Former Friends') which, although dated 13 July 1906, did not appear in Shin Kigen (New Era) until issue No. 12, 10 October 1906, pp 17-20.

been due to his dismay at what he regarded as the absence of idealistic fervour among the Japanese people in general.²⁷ A sense of frustration, resulting from the normal docility of the masses, was felt by many of the socialists in Japan during this period (as, indeed, it has been felt by many other socialists at other times and in other places). Individual socialists' reactions to this predicament, which they all shared in common, differed remarkably. In Kinoshita's case, he abandoned the socialist movement entirely and lapsed into morbid self-examination. One suspects that the socialist movement in Meiji Japan, being small and persecuted, must have attracted some fairly odd types and that the movement's lack of concrete success could have done little to help solve their personality problems. On the contrary, a vicious circle was established which those like Kinoshita could escape from only by seeking refuge in religious obscurantism. In other socialists' cases, their response to the same problems as confronted Kinoshita was to attempt to compensate for mass docility by engaging in heroics. As will be seen below, this attitude was frequently found among those socialists who turned to terrorism.

Tokutomi Roka was another member of the Shin Kigen (New Era) circle whose political activity was interrupted by his preoccupation with religion. After contributing an instalment of his novel Kuroshio (Black Current) to the journal in December 1905²⁸, a letter appeared from him in May 1906, announcing that he was going on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and that he also intended to visit Leo Tolstoy.²⁹ Abe Iso, for his part, largely retired from politics (during the period being dealt with here) when the decision was taken to cease publication of Shin Kigen (New Era). Although he contributed the occasional article to the daily Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper), and subsequently

27 See Nihon Shakaishugi No Shiso (Socialist Thought In Japan), Matsuzawa Hiroaki, Tōkyō, 1973, p 68.

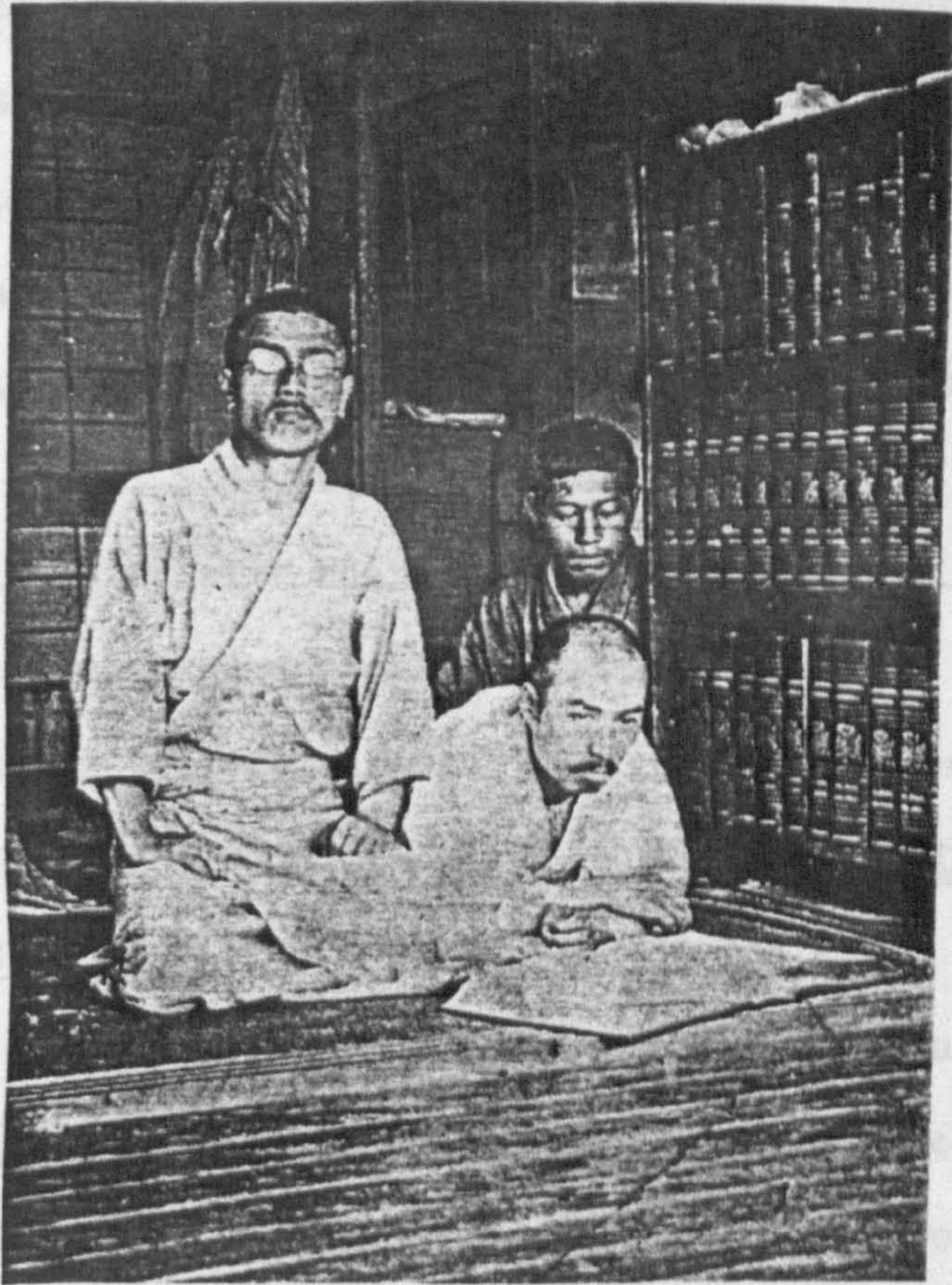
28 Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 2, 10 December 1905, pp 29-31.

29 Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 7, 10 May 1906, p 34.

to the Shakai Shimbun (Social News) too, it was sport which he mainly turned to for many years after 1906. The principal debt which the Japanese working class incurred to Abe Isō was the pioneering work he did in order to popularise baseball in Japan!

Different to all these Christian Socialists, who each in his own way became politically inactive, was the young man who was the driving force behind Shin Kigen (New Era) - Ishikawa Sanshirō. Ishikawa's case is fascinating in that, not only did he remain a committed activist, but - treading a very different path to Kōtoku Shūsui, Ōsugi Sakae and others - his Christian religious faith led him to draw anarchist political conclusions. Not only was the path which Ishikawa took to anarchism very different from Kōtoku's route, but in some respects he arrived at an anarchist position in advance of Kōtoku. Ishikawa did not join the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) when it was formed in February 1906 because he distrusted it, as he did all other political parties. As far as the Nippon Shakaitō was concerned, he insisted that its declared intention to work "within the limits of the law of the land" meant that it was essentially no different from the nationalist Kokka Shakaitō (State Socialist Party).³⁰ His broader argument, directed at all political parties in general, asserted that the party form of organisation was useless for the purpose of rousing people's spirit to change society. He believed that the function of parties was to lull the people and then to start issuing them with orders. Thus the desire to change society would not come about by passing resolutions in party committees but had to come instead from the hearts of the people. Ishikawa claimed that the work of socialists lay not in organising political parties but in the field of propaganda. All of these were classical anarchist arguments but, in Ishikawa's case, they were derived

30 'Sakai Kei Ni Ataete Seitō O Ronzu' ('A Discussion Of Political Parties Addressed To Sakai'), Ishikawa Sanshirō, Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 10, 10 August 1906, p 19.



Ishikawa Sanshirō (kneeling)

The ideal of socialism is the objective and the class war is the means. (19) After we achieve this ideal, we must not forget to pursue activity which is full of life and brightness. Without (the ideal), it ends up after all as blind activity for greed and personal reward.

... socialism is totally based on the mutual love of a common humanity. It certainly does not exist for the class war. If we try to suppress and to destroy the movement and encourage the workers' greed and deliriously foster a feeling of class hatred, our movement will inevitably end up as blind activity.

31. 1930, p. 20.
32. 'Shin Shushu no Yori' ('The Origin of Socialism in Japan'), Ishikawa Sanshirō, Collected in Shin Shushu no Yori (History of the Socialist Movement in Japan), Tokyo, 1970, Part I, p. 3.
33. 1930, p. 11.
34. Shin Shū (New Era) No. 7, 10 May 1930, pp. 4-5.

from his Christian faith, which led him to minimise the role of politics and political parties in bringing about social change and to believe instead "that religion in particular is the most important factor helping to implant socialism in Japan today".³¹ In later years, Ishikawa admitted that his position during the Shin Kigen (New Era) period was not consciously an anarchist one, and was based on his religious views. He added, however, that subsequently, when he did come to consciously identify with anarchism, his earlier attitude towards political parties remained fundamentally unchanged.³²

Ishikawa's Christian beliefs were decisive in determining his views on social classes. He rejected the approach of the Hikari (Light) faction and claimed that in Shin Kigen (New Era) he "advocated a.... theory of class struggle which was opposed to the Marxist theory of class struggle."³³ In an article 'Kaikyū Sensō Ron' ('On Class War'), which appeared in Shin Kigen in May 1906, Ishikawa did not dismiss the notion of class struggle out of hand, but he made the important qualification that class warfare opens the way to human liberation only when it is permeated with socialist consciousness. He wrote:

The ideal of socialism is the objective and the class war is the means. Only when we embrace this ideal does the class war start to become activity which is full of life and brightness. Without (this ideal), it ends up after all as blind activity for greed and personal reward.
 socialism is totally based on the mutual love of a common humanity. It certainly does not exist for the class war. If we try in vain to speed up the success of the movement and encourage the workers' greed and deliberately foster a feeling of class hatred, our movement will inevitably end up acting blindly.

34

31 Ibid., p 20.

32 'Nihon Museifushugi No Yurai' ('The Origins Of Anarchism In Japan'), Ishikawa Sanshiro. Collected in Nihon Museifushugi Undo Shi (History Of The Anarchist Movement In Japan), Ōshima Eisaburo, Isezaki, 1970, Part I, p 9.

33 Ibid., p 11.

34 Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 7, 10 May 1906, pp 4-5.

To the extent that Ishikawa was saying that there is nothing revolutionary in the working class' struggles merely to defend or improve its conditions within capitalism, there was a valid point in the argument he was making here. Refracted though his ideas were by the distorting prism of Christianity, Ishikawa had groped his way to the realisation that the working class is not a revolutionary force capable of radically changing society when it behaves simply as a class of wage-earners. The working class can only become revolutionary if it acts to liberate humanity by abolishing itself as a wage-earning class. To act in such a way, however, the working class needs to acquire genuine socialist consciousness and this was where Ishikawa's ideas were seriously inadequate, since the outlook which he was urging on the Japanese working class was informed by little more than vague and wishy-washy Christian sentimentality. In his polemics with Sakai Toshihiko, Ishikawa repeatedly asserted that he refused to recognise "the workers' selfishness" as an adequate basis for achieving socialism. The realisation of 'socialism', he maintained, involved both changing the economic organisation of society and carrying out a process of "spiritual reform".³⁵ The type of spiritual reform which Ishikawa envisaged was indicated by his reference to the need for a "spirit of sacrifice" (a spirit which, one would have thought, is the very hallmark of the working class as long as it puts up with capitalism!). Ishikawa's religious convictions gave him certain insights which were not always readily apparent to the other socialists active in Japan at this time, but it was the Christian sting in the tail of his sometimes perceptive arguments which tended to undermine his stance and led to his virtual isolation in the socialist movement of this period.

Ishikawa was imprisoned for offences against the press laws on 25 April 1907 and he remained in custody until May 1908. During his

35 'Sakai Kei Ni Kotau' ('Replying To Sakai'), Ishikawa Sanshirō, Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 9, 10 July 1906, p 39.

13 months of imprisonment, he studied the Bible daily³⁶, but he also read Kropotkin's Memoirs Of A Revolutionist and The Conquest Of Bread and by the time he emerged from prison he was consciously an anarchist.³⁷ On 1 March 1913, in the wake of Kōtoku's execution, he sailed from Yokohama to begin almost a decade of life in exile in Europe.³⁸ He visited Edward Carpenter in Britain and stayed for a long while in Belgium and France with Paul Reclus (the nephew of Kropotkin's comrade, Élisée Reclus). Ishikawa did not leave Europe to return to Japan until 1920.³⁹

Terrorism

Ōsawa Masamichi has written that terrorism forms "one of the three pillars of Japanese anarchism" (the others being, in his estimation, Kropotkinism and anarcho-syndicalism).⁴⁰ Terrorism in Japan, however, has never been the monopoly of those who have considered themselves anarchists. A tradition of politically motivated assassinations was established by the shishi revolutionaries in the years leading up to 1868 and this provided a legacy which subsequent generations of right-wing terrorists benefited from at least as much as did those assassins who claimed to be anarchists. During the Meiji era inspiration derived

36 See the letter from Ishikawa published in Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 1, 2 June 1907, p 8. See also Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 21, 5 April 1908, p 13.

37 For Ishikawa's views on Kropotkin, see the letters from him published in Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 1, 2 June 1907, p 8; No. 3, 16 June 1907, p 7; and No. 13, 25 August 1907, p 7. A letter from Kōtoku Shūsui to Ishikawa, dated 29 June 1908, makes it clear that the latter had become an anarcho-communist. (This letter appears in Shiota, op. cit., pp 276-277.)

38 Unable to get a passport, Ishikawa contrived to leave Japan by boarding a French liner as an attendant to the wife of the Belgian consul. (See "'My Dear Sanshiro": Edward Carpenter And His Japanese Disciple', Chushichi Tsuzuki, Hitotsubashi Journal Of Social Studies Vol. VI, No. 1, November 1972, p 5.)

39 Ibid., p 8.

40 Anakizumu Shisō Shi (A History Of Anarchist Thought), Ōsawa Masamichi, Tōkyō, 1971, p 201.

from the terrorist exploits of the shishi was reinforced by reports which filtered into Japan of the activities of violent revolutionaries abroad. Here again, enthusiasm for the assassinations carried out by the Russian populists and others was not restricted to those who called themselves anarchists or socialists. An article which appeared in the first issue of Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) dealt in part with 'Supeinu No Museifutō' ('The Spanish Anarchists') and showed that the rightwards inclined, latter-day shishi grouped around that journal were quite capable of being inspired by the terrorist struggles prosecuted by anarchist groups abroad, even though they were totally unreceptive to anarchism as a political theory.⁴¹ It also needs to be stressed that the occasional terrorist assaults attempted in Japan either by individuals or by small groups of activists of whatever political complexion pale into insignificance when measured against the permanent, institutionalised terrorism practised by the state throughout the entire period under examination here. Initially, terrorism might have had a certain romantic appeal for some of those within the socialists' ranks, but it was eventually translated into action only as a feeble attempt at retaliation against the vicious repression remorselessly mounted by the state. The turn to terrorism by a number of socialists therefore has to be seen against the background of the massive apparatus of terror permanently deployed by the state.

State Repression

The socialist movement in Japan had been the target of state repression ever since its earliest days but the insurrection by the miners of Ashio in February 1907 scared the government and led it to impose new restrictions, which became increasingly severe as time went by. The Ashio uprising lasted from 4-7 February 1907 and by 8 February

41 'Ōshū Kakumei No Taisei' ('The General Situation Of The European Revolution'), Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) No. 1, 5 September 1906, p 2.

an article in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) was already carrying the headline 'Hakugai Kitaru' ('Persecution Has Come'). As the Heimin Shimbun explained, Nishikawa Kōjirō (who had been dispatched to cover the Ashio disturbances) had been arrested, the police had raided the newspaper's premises, and the homes of such prominent socialists as Ishikawa Sanshirō, Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko had all been searched.⁴² When the Heimin Shimbun ceased publication and was followed by the Shakai Shimbun (Social News) in June 1907, the new journal assessed the state of government oppression in its English-language column.

(The Heimin Shimbun) was persecuted so severely and cruelly as well as unjustly by the authority and many a time the paper was prohibited from the sale and confiscated and punished editors into prison (sic). Finally the paper itself was entirely suppressed on the 14th April last. There are three editors in prison serving the penalty for what they wrote and published in the paper, i.e., concerning (the) truth and welfare of working classes. There are twenty-four comrades who are in (i.e. under - J.C.).... prosecution. Eleven of them (are) in prison awaiting for the trial.

43

As it turned out, this was only a foretaste of what was to come. As well as the Shakai Shimbun (Social News), several other socialist journals struggled into print after the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) had disappeared, but all were constantly harassed by the authorities. Not only was the sale of various issues prohibited and the editors imprisoned, but even when sales were formally permitted, the police continually interfered with the distribution of socialist literature. To quote the English-language columns of the Shakai Shimbun again:

The police then g(o) to (the) employers and advi(se) them to prohibit the Socialist Weekly (i.e. Shakai Shimbun - Social News). The employers are glad to do so and order the

42 Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 19, 8 February 1907, pp 2, 3.

43 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 1, 2 June 1907, p 1.

workers not to read the paper and (say that) they will be dismissed if they disobey the order. We have several cases of dismissals of workers because they read the S.W. (Shakai Shimbun) or received a letter from our editor. If our organizer goes to (a) worker's house the police too g(o) to the worker and cross(-)examin(e) him as if he be connected with some criminals! On the road when we sell the Socialist papers or books the police standing by investigate and put down buyers' names and places of living! By this way the authority has been attempting to kill the movement and above all boycott the Socialist Weekly (Shakai Shimbun).

44

In spite of Shakai Shimbun (Social News)'s complaints, it fared a great deal better than the other socialist journals. Although the police intimidated its printers so that on some occasions it could survive only in a hand-written, mimeographed form, it managed to continue up till August 1911 until it finally collapsed under a crippling fine of ¥200. By way of contrast, the Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper), Kumamoto Hyōron (Kumamoto Review) and Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun (Tokyo Social News) were treated far more severely by the state and were all driven out of existence during 1908. Jiyū Shisō (Free Thought), which Kōtoku Shūsui and Kanno Suga attempted to issue in 1909, was outlawed from its very inception. Some of the fines which were imposed in its case were quite breathtaking in their viciousness. On 10 August 1909 Kanno was fined ¥140 and Kōtoku ¥70 because of an article which had advocated the destruction of the family. Then on 1 September 1909 Kanno was fined the enormous sum of ¥400 for having illegally distributed some copies of Jiyū Shisō in defiance of the ban on it. Unable to pay such a fine, she was imprisoned on 18 May 1910.

Parallel with the restrictions placed on their publishing activities, by 1908 any public meetings which the socialists tried to organise were liable to be disrupted. In June 1908 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) gave

44 'Intimidation The Way Of Oppressing Socialist Movement', Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 43, 26 April 1908, p 1.

an account of an attempted propaganda tour. During three weeks' travelling across five prefectures, stopping at ten towns, its speakers had managed to hold only a single meeting. Everywhere else the police had prevented them from hiring halls and had constantly shadowed their every move.⁴⁵ Once again, however, the opponents of Katayama Sen's Shakai Shimbun fared worse than their social-democratic adversaries. A meeting of the syndicalist-inclined Kinyō Kai (Friday Association), held on 17 January 1908, was broken up by the police. Incensed at the police's intervention, six members of the Kinyō Kai took to the roof of the building where the meeting was being held and, out of the police's reach, harangued the crowds which had congregated in the streets below. Eventually apprehended by the police, they were given sentences of several weeks' imprisonment. This affair became known as the 'okujo enzetsu jiken' ('roof speeches incident') in the folklore of the Japanese socialist movement and it served as a precedent for a far more violent 'incident' which occurred a few months later.

The 'akahata jiken' ('red flag incident') erupted following a meeting which was held on 22 June 1908 to celebrate the release of Yamaguchi Koken after 14 months in prison. After the meeting a group of socialists started waving red flags bearing the slogans "Anarchy" and "Anarcho-Communism" and singing radical songs in the street and were set upon by the police. Two of those arrested were Sakai Toshihiko and Yamakawa Hitoshi, both of whom were trying to defuse the situation and to calm down their more excitable comrades. Among those taken to the police station, Arahata Kanson and Ōsugi Sakae were ruthlessly beaten up. Stripped naked, both men were dragged by their feet along the corridors, were kicked, beaten and stamped on, the police only ultimately relenting when Arahata had been beaten into unconsciousness.

45 'Russianized Police System For Socialists!', S. J. Katayama, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 45, 15 June 1908, p 6 (English columns).

The 'red flag incident' marked a new departure in the state's handling of the socialists, both in terms of the brutality of the police and the vindictiveness of the prison sentences handed out. For the heinous crime of demonstrating with red flags, 9 socialists received prison sentences of up to $2\frac{1}{2}$ years. The authorities were also enraged by a scrap of poetry which someone had scrawled in Chinese on a wall in the police cells. This poem celebrated the execution of the king in the French revolution and was interpreted as lese-majesty. Despite the fact that his comrades were adamant that he had not written the verse, a young socialist called Satō Satoru was held responsible and given a term of $3\frac{3}{4}$ years.⁴⁶

Incidents such as the 'red flag incident' were outstanding examples of state repression, but they merely highlighted the daily and even hourly harassment which many socialists had to endure. A political police unit (kōtō keisatsu - literally 'higher police') had been created in 1904 and a report drawn up in July 1908 identified 460 supposed socialists, 98 of whom were classified as active propagandists.⁴⁷ These latter all had individual files kept on them and some were under constant watch. Kōtoku was a prime target of the police and there was no subtlety whatsoever in the methods of surveillance they employed. In a letter he wrote in February 1909, Kōtoku mentioned that there were four detectives posted in front of the gate to his house and that his mail was being interfered with.⁴⁸ F. G. Notehelfer tells us that:

Early in June of 1909 police officials set up a tent in a field across from the Heiminsha and anyone coming to visit Kōtoku was ushered behind its red and white curtain and interrogated. Four policemen constantly watched the exits of the building and anyone coming out was followed.

49

46 Kanson Jiden (Kanson's Autobiography), Arahata Kanson, Tōkyō, 1974, Vol. I, pp 162ff.

47 Thought Control In Prewar Japan, R. H. Mitchell, London, 1976, pp 24-25.

48 Letter to Matsumoto Sugako dated 14 February 1909. Collected in Shiota, op. cit., p 291.

49 Kotoku Shusui, F. G. Notehelfer, Cambridge, 1971, p 174 (note).

In another letter, written in English to Albert Johnson in April 1910, Kōtoku touched on what it meant to be harassed in this way.

During the time I was in Tokio the policemen always followed me. All my business and movements were so illegally and cowardly interfered with by them that I became unable to get any livelihood.

50

There was little exaggeration in what Kōtoku wrote here. The purpose of police activity was not merely to keep watch on the socialists but to make life impossible for them in order to force the weaker elements out of the socialist movement. Few employers would give work to men and women whom police agents were ostentatiously shadowing and many socialists were reduced to the direst poverty. As Kōtoku put it in his "translator's note" to the Japanese edition of The Conquest Of Bread, which was clandestinely distributed in 1909:

Many of the comrades in Tōkyō gradually lost their jobs and their houses. All were threatened by hunger.

51

The police openly boasted that, when it came to controlling the socialist movement, they did not consider themselves bound by the Constitution⁵² and it was widely rumoured that a directive had gone out to army units throughout the country early in 1907 instructing them to hold themselves in readiness "to destroy the socialist movement at its roots".⁵³ After the government ordered the dissolution of the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) on 22 February 1907, all further attempts to organise political parties were routinely suppressed. Katayama Sen and Tazoe Tetsuji attempted to launch a Nihon Shakai Heimintō

50 Letter to Albert Johnson dated 11 April 1910. Collected in Shiota, op. cit., p 456.

51 Nihon No Hangyaku Shisō (The Rebellious Thought Of Japan), Akiyama Kiyoshi, Tōkyō, 1972, p 37.

52 Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 5, 1 August 1907, p 7 (English column).

53 Nihon Shakaishugi Shi (A History Of Japanese Socialism), Ishikawa Kyokuzan (Sanshiro) and Kōtoku Shusui. Collected in Meiji Bunka Zenshū (Collected Works On The Culture Of The Meiji Era), Tōkyō, 1929, Vol. XXI, p 370. See also 'The Last Words', Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 75, 14 April 1907, p 2 (English column).

(Social Common People's Party of Japan) on 25 June 1907, but it was prohibited despite the fact that its programme stressed that "This party has as its aim to advocate socialism within the limits set by the Constitution...."⁵⁴ Likewise, the Heimin Kyōkai (Common People's Association), which Katayama and others tried to set up on 21 December 1907 (and which also declared that it "endeavours to achieve socialism under the constitutional government"), was speedily banned.⁵⁵

Confronted by an unscrupulous and harshly intolerant state, it was little wonder that some of the socialists in Japan should have fallen into the trap of a terrorist response. Frustrated by the police's continual interference with their activity, and angered by the authorities' readiness to use violence, certain socialists began to contemplate an armed counter-attack on the state. Yet, in the circumstances which prevailed, this could only take the form of a conspiratorial minority acting in isolation from those very workers whose interests they claimed to have at heart. Quite apart from other factors involved, this isolation of mere handfuls of plotters from the working class guaranteed that their action could never result in socialism. Here lay the real tragedy of those socialists who turned to terrorism. However heroic one might consider the unequal struggle they embarked on with the overwhelming forces at the disposal of the state, they chose a method of struggle which simply could not be squared with the socialist objective they claimed to be striving for. Rather it was the case that their flirting with terrorism supplied the government with whatever excuse it needed to execute or sentence to life imprisonment some of those who stood at the centre of the socialist movement in Japan in the Meiji era.

54 Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 5, 30 June 1907, p 2; No. 6, 7 July 1907, p 1 (English column); No. 24, 10 November 1907, p 5.

55 'Heimin Kyōkai No Kōryō O Yomu' ('Reading The Programme Of The Common People's Association'), Yamakawa Hitoshi, Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 17, 5 February 1908, p 11.

To Make The Emperor Bleed

Arahata Kanson's book Yanaka Mura Metsubō Shi (A History Of The Destruction Of Yanaka Village) was published in August 1907. The book dealt with the fate of a village whose land had been heavily polluted by waste from the Ashio copper mine. For years the villagers had fought for redress against the mining company, but they had been met with deception and repression at every turn. Arahata's account is interesting in many ways, not least because it captures the mental and emotional climate of the late Meiji era. At one point he writes about the government's fear of "so-called violent anarchists".

But let's look at the facts. Isn't it the government itself which, in fact, gives rise to these violent anarchists? We ought to be grateful to the government. The government abuses people, mistreats them and oppresses them. It mocks the people, has nothing but contempt for them, and governs them badly. And, in doing this, it is producing many violent anarchists, whom we will always regard with affection.

56

Arahata's conviction that the government's own policies were bound to encourage the appearance in Japan of "violent anarchists" was a widely held view within the socialist movement at that time. In December 1907, Kōtoku Shūsui expressed the opinion to Albert Johnson that "Japan, which has already produced Social-Democrats and Anarchist Communist(s), shall now produce many Direct-Actionists, Anti-Militarists, General Strikers and even Terrorists."⁵⁷ Two months later Kōtoku wrote to Arahata himself:

Numerous anarchists have emerged throughout Japan. It looks as though even terrorists will be springing up here and there too, eh?

58

When would-be terrorists did emerge from the socialists' ranks during the period 1908-1910, they were motivated by various considerations.

56 Yanaka Mura Metsubō Shi (A History Of The Destruction Of Yanaka Village), Arahata Kanson, Tōkyō, 1907, p 111.

57 Letter to Albert Johnson dated 6 December 1907. Collected in Shiota, op. cit., pp 449-450.

58 Postcard to Arahata Kanson dated 2 February 1908. Collected in Shiota, op. cit., p 404.

In the first place, there was a thirst for revenge - a determination to give the ruling class a taste of its own medicine. Arahata had already hinted at this gut reaction to ruling class terror when he had written:

Let us look to the day which will surely
come when we will revenge ourselves on them,
using exactly the same means and methods as
they used on the people of Yanaka village.

59

Secondly, there was the feeling, born from desperation, that the deteriorating situation for the socialist movement and the working class in Japan could not be allowed to go from bad to worse without even a single blow being struck against the state. Kanno Suga, Niimura Tadao and others seem to have hoped that, by launching a terrorist attack, they could provoke a "shō kakumei" ("minor revolution"). What they meant by a "minor revolution" was apparently nothing more than rousing the people and perhaps triggering off some riots. They do not appear to have seriously imagined that they could topple the government, let alone that their actions could lead to a real social revolution.⁶⁰ Kōtoku is said to have mused on the possibility of 50 "death-defying" men and women arming themselves with bombs and other weapons and attacking government offices and other strategic points.⁶¹ In the document Gokuchū Yori Bōryoku Kakumei Ō Ronzu (Thoughts In Prison On Violent Revolution), which he wrote late in 1910 shortly before his execution, he admitted to having discussed with his comrades the possibility of staging an uprising in supposed imitation of the Paris Commune. Although Kōtoku stressed that no concrete plan for an immediate insurrection existed and that he would have supported such an initiative only "if today's economic conditions of panic and depression were to

59 Yanaka Mura Metsubō Shi (A History Of The Destruction Of Yanaka Village), Arahata Kanson, Tōkyō, 1907, p 172.

60 Kanson Jiden (Kanson's Autobiography), Arahata Kanson, Tōkyō, 1974, Vol. I, p 190.

61 Kōtoku Shūsui, Nishio Yōtarō, Tōkyō, 1964, pp 225-226.

continue for another 3 to 5 years and assumed a condition where those who had starved to death were strewn along the waysides"⁶², it is clear from what he wrote that what was envisaged was action taken by a minority on behalf of the oppressed.

Taking the example of the Commune, even if we could not achieve all that the Commune uprising managed to do, the main point of our talks was that we wanted - even if only temporarily - to provide warm clothing and plenty of food for the poor.

63

Even if it had been feasible, such a reckless adventure would have been little more than a parody of the Commune of 1871, since the latter had been based on the spontaneous mass action of the Parisian workers. Elitism of this order was not confined to Kōtoku, however, but was common among those socialists in Japan who turned to terrorism. Despite their claimed adherence to a doctrine such as anarchism, which was supposed to be resolutely opposed to leadership, not a few of those who died on the scaffold with Kōtoku saw themselves as revolutionary leaders who were sacrificing themselves for the good of the masses. One of those executed in 1911 was Ōishi Seinosuke and, in a polemic with Tazoe Tetsuji, he had written a few years earlier:

Of course, not all people could sacrifice themselves. But at least the leaders of the revolutionary movement will not be able to arrive at the heaven of the joyful new society without entering through the narrow gate which Christ talked about and accepting the heavy cross of suffering.

64

Elitism and desperation thus combined to produce what Arahata Kanson has called "the individual terrorism or putschism of Kanno and others".⁶⁵

62 Gokuchū Yori Bōryoku Kakumei Ō Ronzu (Thoughts In Prison On Violent Revolution), Kōtoku Shūsui. Collected in Shiota, op. cit., p 175.

63 Ibid., p 175.

64 'Ryokuin Mango Ō Yomu' ('Reading Idle Talk In The Shade Of A Tree'), Ōishi Rokutei (Seinosuke), Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 8, 20 September 1907, p 8.

65 Kanson Jiden (Kanson's Autobiography), Arahata Kanson, Tōkyō, 1974, Vol. I, p 191.

A further important consideration which induced some of the socialists in Japan to adopt terrorist methods was the role played by the Meiji Emperor. The propaganda machine of the Japanese state portrayed the emperor as a god who was above criticism and who had to be obeyed without question. Although an ancient myth, in Meiji Japan the divine status of the emperor paradoxically served the modern function of masking the process of capital accumulation that was under way. As they toiled for the greater glory of capital, the workers in Japan were fed the illusion that all their hardships and suffering would add to the grandeur of the god in the imperial palace. By the closing years of the Meiji era, not a few of the Japanese socialists had come to be appalled at the ease with which the working class was being duped by the imperial charade and some socialists were prepared to run the very great risks involved in campaigning against the monarchy. Akaba Hajime's Nōmin No Fukuin (The Peasant's Gospel), which was illegally distributed in 1910, was critical of the emperor and Akaba became a hunted man, leading an underground existence until the police apprehended him.⁶⁶ Similarly, the tract Nyūgoku Kinen, Museifu Kyōsan (In Commemoration Of Their Imprisonment: Anarcho-Communism), which Uchiyama Gudō published in 1908 as an act of defiance when the sentences were passed on those involved in the 'red flag incident', was outspoken in its denunciation of the emperor. Despite his being a Buddhist monk, the tract which Uchiyama published expressed its contempt for the emperor in the earthy phrases of the peasant when it declared that "There are blood-sucking ticks - the emperor, the rich, the big landlords."⁶⁷ Arrested in May 1909, Uchiyama was found to be in possession of bomb-making equipment

66 ".... Akaba Hajime has secretly published a book entitled 'The Peasant's Gospel'. After widely distributing it, he has disappeared. Now he is wanted by the authorities." (Shakai Shimbun - Social News - No. 69, 15 July 1910, p 3.)

67 Akiyama, op. cit., p 33.

and was sentenced to 12 years' hard labour.* In addition to these attacks on the monarchy in books and pamphlets, the idea took hold in some socialist circles that the poisonous myth of the emperor's divine status could only be dispelled if it were actually demonstrated in practice that the monarch was a man like any other. And what better demonstration that the emperor was made of flesh and blood could there be, it was argued, than to prove that he could bleed and die? In later years, Oka Shigeki maintained that even Kōtoku held this view⁶⁸, although this is not confirmed by what Kōtoku wrote in Thoughts In Prison On Violent Revolution. In that document Kōtoku suggested that the fate of the imperial family would be decided by its own actions. He saw no reason to physically assault the emperor, even in the course of a revolution. On the contrary, the imperial family could be ignored and left to its own devices, providing (and it was an important proviso) that it did not seek to oppress others.⁶⁹

Whatever Kōtoku's view might have been, however, there certainly were some elements within the socialist movement in Japan who attached great significance to shedding imperial blood. Representative of these was a factory worker called Miyashita Takichi, who was one of the dozen socialists executed in 1911. Miyashita had been inspired by the terrorist example set by the Russian populists whom he had read about in Komuriyama Sentarō's work Kinsei Museifushugi (Modern Anarchism) which was published in 1902. The Russian populists had themselves practised regicide but

* Uchiyama was subsequently accused of more serious crimes and was executed with Kōtoku in 1911.

68 Before Oka Shigeki died, Nobutaka Ike interviewed him in the USA and reported as follows:

(Kōtoku) told his friend, Mr. Shigeki Oka, that in order to introduce new social ideas into Japan it would first be necessary to destroy the traditional belief in the divinity of the emperor and that the most effective method would be to assassinate him and thus demonstrate that he was mortal.

('Kotoku: Advocate Of Direct Action', Nobutaka Ike, Far Eastern Quarterly Vol. III, No. 3, May 1944, p 225.)

69 Shiota, op. cit., pp 167-168.

Miyashita's idea of assassinating the emperor in order to prove that he was just another human being and not a god arose, at least in part, from his own experience of Japanese society. As an active socialist, Miyashita found that when he criticised the government he could readily get people to agree with him, but that when it came to the emperor there was an unscalable wall of superstition. Most people, Miyashita found, regarded the emperor as a god and this prevented them from extending their criticism of the government to include the parasites of the imperial family. The actual incident which seems to have convinced Miyashita of the need to assassinate the monarch occurred on 10 November 1908 when the emperor's train passed through Ōbu station in Aichi prefecture on its way to the west of Japan. Believing that this event provided a good opportunity for agitation, Miyashita went along to Ōbu station and distributed Uchiyama's tract In Commemoration Of Their Imprisonment: Anarcho-Communism among the crowds who had gathered to watch the emperor's train. Talking to people that day, Miyashita found that they would listen to his general analysis of society but that his criticism of the emperor fell on deaf ears. Equally depressing was the fact that, when the police issued an instruction that there must be no working in the fields adjacent to the railway track over which the imperial train would pass, the peasants willingly complied. The lesson which Miyashita drew from this experience was that, as long as the people stood in awe of the monarchy, the realisation of a socialist society would remain impossible. Cross-examined after his arrest in 1910, Miyashita is reported to have told the authorities:

Because the people of our country (sic) held this sort of superstition about the imperial family, it was totally impossible to realise socialism. Hence I made up my mind to first make a bomb and then throw it at the emperor. I had to show that the emperor too was a human being whom blood could flow from just like the rest of us, and thus destroy the people's superstition.

It can be seen from this account that it was a whole range of considerations which persuaded some of those associated with the socialist movement in Japan to attempt a terrorist assault on the symbols of state power. A thirst for revenge, an anger born of desperation, and a determination to destroy the myth of the emperor's divinity can all be identified within the socialist movement taken as a whole, though no doubt it varied from individual to individual as to which of these factors was uppermost in motivating the various terrorists.

High Treason

If it had not been for the twelve socialists who were executed in 1911 and the others who spent long years rotting in jails, the ease with which the Japanese state forestalled any terrorist attack on itself would have been farcical. The facts of the 'taigyaku jiken' ('high treason case') are easily told. Miyashita Takichi, Niimura Tadao, Nitta Tōru and Furukawa Rikisaku were arrested on 25 May 1910 after the police had discovered a stock of bomb-making materials which Miyashita had procured. Kanno Suga was already in prison, serving the sentence which arose from her association with the abortive journal Jiyū Shisō (Free Thought), and over the next few weeks a nation-wide police operation resulted in hundreds of suspects being taken into custody. After months of interrogation, 26 socialists were brought to trial in Tōkyō on 10 December 1910, charged with having plotted to assassinate the emperor and with a number of other crimes. The trial was held in camera and on 18 January 1911 twenty-four of the defendants were sentenced to death, the remaining two receiving prison sentences of 8 and 11 years. Of those condemned to death, twelve subsequently had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment, while the other twelve were hung. Those who died on the scaffold were Furukawa Rikisaku, Kanno Suga, Kōtoku Shūsui, Matsuo Uichita, Miyashita Takichi, Morichika Umpei, Naruishi Heishirō, Niimi Uichirō, Niimura Tadao, Ōishi Seinosuke, Okumiya Kenshi and Uchiyama Gudō.

It is not the purpose of this account to establish whether those who were executed and their comrades who were imprisoned were genuinely 'guilty' or otherwise. Capitalist law, however it is administered, is a set of rules designed to maintain the means of production in their role of capital and to legitimise the state's control of the means of violence. Whether the rules are bent arbitrarily or are scrupulously observed, the law still has the same function of maintaining capital's ascendancy over labour. From this perspective, much of what has been written in Japan since the Second World War by left-wing commentators on the iniquity of the 'high treason case' has been singularly naive, since many of those commentators have implied that 'law and order' is acceptable providing it is fairly administered. That there were flagrant irregularities in the state's conduct is indisputable⁷¹, but it is immaterial from the point of view of this study whether or not the 'guilt' of the defendants was adequately proved according to the normal standards of bourgeois justice. What is clear is that there was a terrorist conspiracy which the state discovered and which it then used as a convenient pretext for eliminating a far larger number of socialists than those involved in any concrete preparations for a violent assault

71 Even F. G. Notehelfer, in an account which is unsympathetic to Kōtoku Shūsui, writes:

It would be pointless to deny the element of mystery that continues to surround the trial through which Kōtoku Shūsui lost his life. Whether this is the fault of government design or historical accident remains a further issue of debate. There is, for example, the whole question of records. What became of the Court of Cassation documents in the years that followed? If the records of the trial are still extant, why has the postwar government failed to make them public? If they were lost, as may well have been the case in the Great Earthquake of 1923 or in the bombing raids of World War II, why have the authorities refused to acknowledge their loss? Until such questions are answered.... a considerable cloud of uncertainty cannot help but contribute to the accusations of 'frameup', 'government plot', etc., which are all too often used to describe the trial by current Japanese scholars.

(Notehelfer, op. cit., pp 185-186.)

on the state. Among those executed, Kanno Suga, Miyashita Takichi, Niimura Tadao and a few others can confidently be said to have been committed to a terrorist attempt.⁷² Kanno as good as admitted the involvement of herself and 4 or 5 others in a revealing passage in a text which she wrote after the trial and shortly before her death. Awaiting execution, she wrote:

Ah! My poor friends and comrades! The majority of them became involved in this misfortune on account of five or six of us. Because they were anarchists, they were unexpectedly plunged into the abyss of death.

73

One of the friends and comrades Kanno must have had in mind as she penned these lines was the talented editor of the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper), Morichika Umpei. Arahata Kanson knew Morichika personally and, writing in his autobiography a full 50 years after the event, when there was no longer any reason to be less than perfectly frank, Arahata was adamant that Morichika was not involved in any terrorist plotting.⁷⁴ Apart from Arahata's personal recollections, even at this distance in time the letter which Morichika wrote to his brother during the few days' interval between being sentenced and executed is still a poignant expression of disbelief in the state's capacity for brutality.

The death penalty! It was a totally unexpected sentence.... In fact, up till the very time of the sentence being passed, I was expecting to be found not guilty and was making various plans for the future.

75

Between the two extremes represented by Kanno and Morichika, there is a greyer area into which those such as Kōtoku fall. Kōtoku's case

72 "These days it is already clear that the taigyaku jiken (high treason case) of 1910 was engineered by the Meiji government. Yet one can still say that the ideas of Kanno Suga, Miyashita Takichi, Niimura Tadao, Furukawa Rikisaku and others who were at the centre of this affair were rooted in terrorism." (Ōsawa, op. cit., p 201.)

73 Kanson Jiden (Kanson's Autobiography), Arahata Kanson, Tōkyō, 1974, Vol. I, p 192.

74 Ibid., p 192.

75 Ibid., p 192.



Kanno Suga



Morichika Umpei (in hat)

is interesting because his readiness to consider the possibility of terrorist activity undertaken by a minority apparently conflicted with other principles which he adhered to. Kōtoku often declared that the emancipation of the workers would have to be achieved by the workers themselves.⁷⁶ In this respect, a letter he wrote to Niimi Uichirō in June 1908 is of particular interest because there he explained his ideas on revolution to one of those who, three years later, was to die with him on the scaffold. Kōtoku argued that a social revolution was different from a mere political revolution, in that "it is a revolution of the vast majority of the people (jinmin dai tasū no kakumei)".⁷⁷ He specifically rejected the idea that a minority faction such as the Jacobins could achieve the type of revolution which he wanted to see, maintaining instead that "the common people as a whole (heimin zentai)"* would have to be involved.

It is not something carried out by one party or one faction, such as "the revolutionary party" or "the Jacobin party". It is carried out by the common people (heimin) as a whole. This being the case, it seems to me that, as you suggest, the common people (heimin) must understand the aim of the revolution at that time. It does not mean that the whole of humankind will be involved, but I do think that the vast majority will have to be committed to our policy....

* There is a semantic problem here. Heimin is translated here literally as "the common people". It was, however, frequently used by the socialists in Meiji Japan as equivalent to the English words "working class" and "proletariat". This ambiguity has already been referred to in Chapter 3 and elsewhere.

76 For example: "I don't know whether I'm deluding myself but it seems to me that among the comrades everywhere those who are not satisfied with the palliative of state reform and who have realised the futility of a parliamentary policy are growing in numbers all the time. It really is pleasing to see that they are advancing to the point of unfurling banners which read 'The emancipation of the workers must be carried out by the workers themselves'." ('Kainan Hyōron' - 'South Sea Review', Kōtoku Shūsui, Nihon Heimin Shimbun - Japan Common People's Newspaper - No. 16, 20 January 1908, p 5.)

77 Letter to Niimi Uichirō dated 10 June 1908. Collected in Shiota, op. cit., p 408.

Henceforth, it won't be a question of a revolution carried out by "the communist party" or "the revolutionary party". It will simply have to be a revolution carried out by the common people (heimin) themselves.

78

With his perception of the need for mass socialist consciousness, how is one to account for Kōtoku's willingness to countenance terrorist adventures? There is even evidence, derived from the cross-examination of the suspects in the 'high treason case', that Kōtoku aided the conspirators, at least to the extent of obtaining information for them on how to make bombs. Okumiya Kenshi had been an activist in the 'people's rights movement' of the 1880s and he had friends from that period who had a knowledge of explosives. Part of the prosecution's case was that it was via Kōtoku that information from Okumiya on the construction of bombs was relayed to Miyashita Takichi.⁷⁹ In his autobiography, Arahata Kanson (who also knew Kōtoku personally, as well as Morichika and most of the other accused) accepts this evidence and asks why it was that Kōtoku failed to take a stand against some of the others' terrorist plans. Arahata believes that "this contradiction was due to his (Kōtoku's) character as a revolutionary romantic."⁸⁰ That there was a heavy slice of romanticism in Kōtoku's character is certainly true, but perhaps there was more to his inclination to accept terrorism than certain traits in his personality alone. Kōtoku seems to have regarded the adoption of terrorist tactics as part of the experience which the working class in Japan as elsewhere would have to pass through along the way to attaining an understanding of socialism. Even if he was aware that terrorism could not provide the ultimate solution to the problems facing the working class, he was still inclined to look upon the emergence of terrorists within society as a positive sign. Thus, when

78 Ibid., pp 408-409.

79 Kanson Jiden (Kanson's Autobiography), Arahata Kanson, Tōkyō, 1974, Vol. I, p 191. (See also Notehelfer, op. cit., pp 175-176.)

80 Ibid., p 193.

Miyashita Takichi met Kōtoku on 13 February 1909 and talked of the need for assassinating the emperor, Kōtoku is said to have replied:

Such measures are probably necessary.
At some time the people who will do
such things are bound to emerge.

81

Similarly, in his Thoughts In Prison On Violent Revolution Kōtoku refused to condemn those who might resort to terrorism. In that document, he insisted that "it is only natural that anarchists should hate oppression, detest being ensnaked and, at the same time, reject violence too...."⁸² Yet he also maintained that at times when, for example, "the government is extremely oppressive and many comrades have lost the right to speak, assemble and publish freely and have even been deprived of the means of life", it was only to be expected that hot-blooded youths should resort to assassination and violence, since they lacked any other means of resistance. It seemed to Kōtoku that, under such circumstances, terrorism became "more or less legitimate self-defence".⁸³

Fascinating though it is to try to unravel the tangled knot of Kōtoku's ideas, there is no need to ponder at length on his individual case. Taking the Japanese socialist movement as a whole, it is obvious that terrorism gained a hold on a section of the movement during the period 1908-1910. As with Christianity, terrorism seemed to some socialists to offer a way out from the impasse, created by the hostile environment, in which the movement found itself. Yet, in fact, both Christianity and terrorism proved to be equally illusory escape routes and the consequences of the experiment with political violence were even more disastrous than the intoxication with religion. If the Christian Socialists ran the risk as individuals of becoming depoliticised and withdrawing from activity, those who were inclined to terrorism exposed not only themselves but the entire movement to a

81 Kanno Suga, Itoya Toshio, Tōkyō, 1970, p 162.

82 Shiota, op. cit., p 162.

83 Ibid., p 164.

campaign of frenzied persecution unleashed by the state. After the 'high treason case', the government's behaviour can only be described as hysterical. Typical of its heavy-handed approach was the banning of a scientific work Konchū Shakai (Insect Society) on the grounds that its title contained the outlawed word shakai (society) - the Japanese term for socialism being shakaishugi, literally 'societyism'.⁸⁴ Not all the government's actions were as laughable as this. Its treatment of imprisoned socialists was barbaric. Those serving sentences arising from the 'high treason case' were subjected to brutal discipline and were allowed few reading materials. Takagi Kenmei died in Chiba prison in 1914 and Okabayashi Toramatsu, confined in Nagasaki prison, was driven insane. Others tried to commit suicide.⁸⁵ Akaba Hajime, who was jailed for having published Nōmin No Fukuin (The Peasant's Gospel), died in Chiba prison on 1 March 1912 from what the authorities called "stomach disease".⁸⁶ It was claimed that he had been on hunger strike.⁸⁷

The attempt made by a number of socialists to use terrorist methods turned out to be an unmitigated disaster for the socialist movement. Yet the defeat suffered by the movement in the 'high treason case' did not exorcise the terrorist phantom from the Japanese socialists' ranks. Terrorism had arisen largely as a reaction to oppression by the

84 'Rōdō Undō No Fukkōki' ('The Period When The Labour Movement Was Revived'), Arahata Kanson. Collected in Arahata Kanson Chosaku Shū (Collected Works Of Arahata Kanson), Tōkyō, 1976, Vol. II, p 7. (See also Kanson Jiden - Kanson's Autobiography, Arahata Kanson, Tōkyō, 1974, Vol. I, p 199.)

85 'Kamaradoj En Malliberejo', Ōsugi Sakae Zenshū (Collected Works Of Osugi Sakae), Kondō Kenji and Yasunari Jirō (eds.), Tōkyō, 1964, Vol. IV, pp 21-22 (Esperanto section). (This article was probably first published in the Heimin Shimbun - Common People's Newspaper - No. 2, 15 November 1914.)

86 Tokubetsu Yō Shisatsunin Jōsei Ippan (Outline Of The Situation Of Persons Requiring Special Observation), Research Association for Materials Relating to the History of Modern Japan (eds.), Tōkyō, 1957, Vol. I, p 94.

87 Jinbutsu Kenkyū Shiryo (Historical Research Materials Relating To Individuals), Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Tōkyō, 1966, Vol. II, p 131.

state and, since the state's response to the 'high treason case' was to step up its repressive activities, individuals who dreamed of paying back the ruling class' terror in kind were bound to continue to emerge within the socialist movement. After the arrest of his comrades in 1910, Arahata had the idea of trying to assassinate the prime minister, Katsura Tarō.⁸⁸ Although his plan came to nothing, Arahata's mood is indicated by an article he wrote in Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) in July 1913. Referring to Kropotkin's pamphlet Anarchist Morality, Arahata had the following to say:

.... the overthrowing of the tyrants who set themselves up against civilisation and humanity is not a utopian illusion. Rather, it is the morality which the terrorist practises. It is what we do when we follow the dictates of our conscience. It is the victory of the human emotions over cowardice.

89

During the years of the First World War, another young socialist called Yamaga Taiji decided that "under these circumstances, there is nothing for it but to find a way out of the situation by means of terrorism."⁹⁰ Yamaga too embarked on terrorist plans but in his case he was eventually dissuaded by Ōsugi Sakae's advice that "The revolution will not be started by one or two terrorists."⁹¹ Although neither Arahata's nor Yamaga's plans were put into practice, their cases provide evidence that the terrorist idea survived within the Japanese socialist movement even after the disaster of 1910/1911. In later years, after the close of the period extending up to 1918 which is under examination here, fresh attempts would be made to translate that idea into practice.

88 Kanson Jiden (Kanson's Autobiography), Arahata Kanson, Tōkyō, 1974, Vol. I, pp 195-198.

89 Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) No. 10, July 1913, p 20.

90 Yamaga Taiji Hito To Sono Shōgai (Yamaga Taiji: The Man And His Life), Mukai Kō, Tōkyō, 1974, p 58.

91 Ibid., pp 58-59.

CHAPTER 12.Japanese 'Socialism' To 1918

Once again, in this short chapter I will endeavour to draw together the threads of the various issues which have been discussed in Part II of this study. As in Chapter 6, an effort will be made to reach a decision about the nature of 'socialism' as it existed in Japan during the period under consideration here.

Between 1906-1918 capitalism developed forcefully in Japan and the size of the working class was roughly doubled. Yet the economic and social environment in which the socialists operated in Japan was fundamentally unchanged from what it had been during the first phase of the Japanese socialist movement, extending up to 1905. Despite the economic advances which were achieved, even in 1918 the level of capitalist development in Japan remained far behind that of western Europe and North America. Similarly, although the working class in Japan had grown, it continued to be overshadowed by the peasantry. Not only were the peasants a far more numerous class than the wage-earning workers, but the intimate links which many workers still had with the countryside prevented them from consciously regarding themselves as a class entirely reliant on wages.

Against this economic and social background, new ideas were introduced into the Japanese socialist movement from abroad. Up till 1905 the principal influence acting on the socialist movement in Japan had been German social-democracy. Since the attempt to imitate the SPD's strategy had brought little success in Japan, however, after 1905 some of the Japanese socialists turned to anarchism and syndicalism as alternatives. The six months which Kōtoku Shūsui spent in the USA during 1905/1906 were of crucial importance for the entire socialist movement in Japan. Kōtoku established contacts with the American

anarchist movement, met members of the syndicalist-oriented IWW, and returned to Japan armed with a copy of Arnold Roller's The Social General Strike. While in the USA he had also started to correspond with Peter Kropotkin and Kropotkin's writings on anarcho-communism subsequently made a deep impression on the Japanese socialist movement. Kōtoku's declaration 'Yo Ga Shisō No Henka' ('The Change In My Thought'), which was published as an article in the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) in February 1907, was a rallying call to the Japanese socialists to abandon parliamentarism and to rely instead on direct action. A number of young socialists were attracted by the case which Kōtoku argued and were additionally inspired by the example which was set by the anarcho-syndicalist movement in Europe. There was a lively debate between pro- and anti-parliamentarians at the conference of the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) which was held in February 1907 and, as the months went by, polarisation occurred within the Japanese socialist movement between those who were inclined towards anarchism and syndicalism and those who remained committed to social-democracy. From late 1907 onwards, relations between the rival factions of anarchists/syndicalists, on the one hand, and social-democrats, on the other, were openly hostile. Allowing for certain differences, which arose from the different social and economic conditions found in Japan and in Europe, the situation which existed in Japan was a distant reflection of the confrontation between social-democrats and direct-actionists which divided the socialist movement in contemporary Europe.

Naturally, those Japanese socialists who remained social-democrats continued to uphold the same principles as had previously been accepted by virtually the entire movement. They continued to identify 'socialism' with nationalisation and they saw the diet as the means by which this 'socialism' would be achieved. Until such time as a system of widespread nationalisation could be instituted, they were also in favour of pursuing various reforms. They made few criticisms of the monarchy, since for

them there was no conflict between 'socialism' and the imperial status quo, and they were confident that the role of the socialists was to act as the political leaders of the working class. Perhaps the only change that one could detect between their social-democratic approach and the attitudes which had previously prevailed was that the influence on them of Christianity had weakened, following the support which the Christian churches had given to the war effort during the Russo-Japanese War.

By way of contrast, those Japanese socialists who turned to anarchism and syndicalism broke with many of the movement's earlier assumptions. The state was now recognised as an instrument of repression and the electoral strategy favoured by social-democrats was rejected with scorn. In place of a social-democratic party playing the parliamentary game, trade unions were viewed both as instruments of revolutionary struggle and as the units of administration in the society of the future. Direct action was normally equated with the social general strike, but it also had the subsidiary meaning of politically motivated terrorism. While there were those among the anarchists and syndicalists who insisted that the emancipation of the working class could only be realised by the working class acting for itself, there were others who were inclined to relate to the working class as a self-sacrificing elite. The anarchists and syndicalists were opposed to the monarchy and, together with a thirst for revenge and an anger born from desperation, one of the main considerations which induced some of them to resort to terrorism was the belief that assassinating the emperor would destroy the pernicious myth of the monarch's divine status. The exploits of the shishi revolutionaries, as well as the assassinations carried out by the Russian populists and SRs, provided examples of politically motivated violence which appealed to certain socialists and reinforced their inclination to adopt terrorist methods.

Summarised in this way, it can be seen that, while the social-democrats and the anarchists/syndicalists represented two very different

approaches to political action, what they shared in common was a tendency to adopt many of their ideas from movements abroad which were operating often under very different conditions from those which applied in Japan. How relevant either the social-democratic or the anarchist/syndicalist approaches were to the political situation confronting the working class in Japan is therefore a question worth considering.

The social-democrats were well aware that any move to directly challenge the forces of state repression would be suicidal. They therefore cultivated a respectable style in the hope that this would persuade the state to moderate its hostility towards the socialist movement. It was apparently with this purpose in mind that Katayama signed some of his articles in Shakai Shimbun (Social News) as "Master of Arts Katayama Sen"¹ and some remarks which Nishikawa Kōjirō is reported to have made prior to his break with the socialist movement in 1910 are revealing. Nishikawa insisted that he was quite different from the likes of Kōtoku Shūsui. Indeed, he denounced Kōtoku as "the destroyer of our group".² Nishikawa argued that both in Japan and abroad there were two types of socialists, one of whom the authorities dealt with severely and the other more leniently. As far as the situation in Japan was concerned, this was becoming less and less true, but Nishikawa's opinion was that:

In view of our government's (sic) dealing with our group as the moderate faction, we ought to resort to restrained forms of activity. 3

This was a hopeless attempt to win the government's tolerance when, in fact, the government was increasingly intent on destroying any group which chose to describe itself as socialist. As later events were to

1 See, for example, Shakai Shimbun (Social News) No. 72, 15 October 1910, p 1.

2 Quoted in Hayashi Shigeru's introduction to the collected edition of Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun and Kakumei Hyōron (Tokyo Social News and Revolutionary Review), Research Association for the History of the Labour Movement (eds.), Tōkyō, 1962.

3 Ibid.

show, the state was indiscriminate in its suppression of the socialists and, ironically, the social-democrats weathered the storm of state repression less ably than the anarchists/syndicalists. Regarding the state as an implacable enemy, the anarchists/syndicalists were at least psychologically prepared for harsh treatment at the hands of the authorities. On the other hand, the morale of many social-democrats was shattered by what they regarded as the unreasonable severity of the government. It is easy to see why Nishikawa should have abandoned the struggle in 1910 and why Katayama should have sought refuge in the USA from 1914.

As for the social-democrats' determination to work through the diet, this made little sense in a situation where the working class was totally disenfranchised and where the socialists were prevented either from organising a political party or from freely engaging in electoral activity. The same ¥10 tax qualification which had restricted the electorate in the first phase of the Japanese socialist movement* continued to apply throughout the second phase and hence limited those with the right to vote to less than 3 per cent. of the population. Although Saionji Kinmochi's government did permit the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) to operate for a time during 1906/1907, it was banned shortly after the miners' revolt at Ashio and from then on all the social-democrats' attempts to organise a political party were blocked, no matter how stridently they proclaimed their intention to observe the laws. During the period 1906-1918, the sole occasion on which a socialist contested an election was when Sakai Toshihiko stood as a candidate in the general election of January 1917. Although Sakai had no party organisation to back him, he was supported in his campaign by a group of socialists which included Takabatake Motoyuki, Yamazaki Kesaya and Yoshikawa Morikuni. It was hardly surprising that Sakai

* See Chapter 3, Note 60.

should have received a mere handful of votes, for not only was he appealing to an electorate composed exclusively of capitalists and rich landlords, but the repression in 1917 was worse even than that experienced by Kinoshita Naoe and his supporters in their election campaign in 1905.* All of Sakai's meetings were broken up by the police, newspapers carrying paid advertisements explaining his candidature were prohibited, and when Sakai's supporters attempted to distribute his electoral leaflets they were promptly arrested.⁴

To the anarchists/syndicalists it seemed that the social-democratic strategy had been tried and already found wanting in Japan during the period extending up to the end of the Russo-Japanese War. For those who disagreed and who persisted even after the Russo-Japanese War in the attempt to employ social-democratic methods in Japan, there was little comfort to be drawn from the response they encountered from the state. With their movement lying in ruins after the 'high treason case' of 1910/1911, it was difficult for even ardent social-democrats such as Nishikawa Kōjiro and Katayama Sen to convince themselves any longer that social-democracy offered any prospects of success in Japan.

As has been mentioned in previous chapters, one of the reasons why anarchist and syndicalist doctrines struck a responsive chord in Japan during the period 1906-1918 was that, in emphasising the need for workers' direct action, they seemed to be in tune with tendencies which were actually discernible within the Japanese working class. Thus the uprisings at Ashio and elsewhere were regarded by the anarchists/syndicalists as confirming in practice the lessons on direct action which they had learned in theory by studying books and pamphlets published in

* See Chapter 3.

4 See Nihon Shakai Undō Shi (History Of The Social Movement In Japan), Akamatsu Katsumaro, Tōkyō, 1974, p 150 and Kanson Jiden (Kanson's Autobiography), Arahata Kanson, Tōkyō, 1974, Vol. I, pp 227-228. (The number of votes Sakai received is variously reported as 25, 35 and 45.)

the West. Yet it was difficult to see how syndicalism could be put into practice in a situation such as that which existed in Japan, where the trade unions on which so much store was set barely existed. In this sense, for most of the period being dealt with here syndicalism was no more relevant to the Japanese working class than was the social-democrats' parliamentarism in a context where workers were denied the vote. It is true that, although trade unions remained technically illegal in Japan, towards the end of the period under consideration here unions of a type did start to emerge within Japan. Although when the Yuaikai (Friendship Society) was organised in 1912 it had barely 15 members, by 1918 it had expanded into a federation embracing tens of thousands. Yet just how far removed its constituent groups were from the revolutionary trade unions which the anarchists/syndicalists were dreaming of is indicated by the pronouncements of its most prominent spokesman. In the October 1916 issue of Rōdō Oyobi Sangyō (Labour And Industry), Suzuki Bunji declared:

We cannot believe that workers can achieve well-being by overthrowing the capitalists. Unless we stand together with the capitalists, it is impossible to hope for true well-being. 5

Two years later, in Nihon No Rōdō Mondai (The Labour Question In Japan), he wrote:

The capitalist works and creates the facilities that promote the happiness and well-being of the workers. He not only provides facilities for the education, health, and recreation of the workers, but also for death, sickness, and old age. He provides housing and encourages (the habit of) saving. In doing all this he is like a kind and loving parent and loves his children.... On this basis the factory becomes exactly like a family. 6

Clearly, workers' organisations which would allow their spokesmen to make pronouncements of this kind were aeons removed from the type of

5 Quoted in Capitalism And Nationalism In Prewar Japan, Byron K. Marshall, Stanford, 1967, p 79.

6 Ibid., p 79.

revolutionary trade unions which syndicalists believed would be needed to usher in a new society by means of a general strike.

Not only was there the problem of the deficiencies of the existing workers' organisations, but those inclined to anarchism and syndicalism consistently failed to take sufficiently into account the minority status of the working class within Japanese society. In a series of articles entitled 'Sōdōmei Hikō No Hanashi' ('A Discussion Of The General Strike'), which Yamakawa Hitoshi wrote for the Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) during 1907/1908, he argued that:

.... the development of the capitalist system has led to the situation where almost the whole of society is neatly divided into two camps. While on the one side the capitalists stand together, united by their common interests, on the other side the entire working class links arms and confronts them as enemies.

7

What was noteworthy about Yamakawa's analysis was that no distinction was made between the countries of Europe and Japan. Even in some of the western European countries the stage had still not been reached in 1907 where the whole of society was divided into two major classes, but in Japan's case it was plain mystification to try to present the alignment of classes during this period in this simplistic fashion. Quite apart from the lack of revolutionary trade unions, which has already been referred to, how could a general strike in Japan have attained the dimensions which the anarchists/syndicalists believed were necessary for the overthrow of capitalism when the working class, which was assigned by them the task of carrying out the strike, was a small minority within a still predominantly peasant-based society? For the most part, the anarchists/syndicalists either shut their eyes to this problem, or else engaged in a certain amount of self-deception as to the nature of the working class. Starting from Marx and Engels' observation in the Communist Manifesto that "The history of all hitherto

7 Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) No. 14, 20 December 1907, p 4.

existing society is the history of class struggles"⁸, Akaba Hajime proceeded to argue in an article which was published in the Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun (Tokyo Social News) in 1908:

Thus the history of the world over the past few thousand years was precisely the history of the struggle for bread between the working class and the ruling class.

9

In so doing, of course, the very precise meaning which Marx and Engels had attributed to the term working class was lost and for Akaba the 'working class' was expanded into a vague category which encompassed all who had ever been oppressed and who had ever experienced ruling class coercion. This was no doubt a highly convenient notion for all those who could swallow it, since it meant that at one stroke the millions of poor peasants in Japan were drafted into the 'working class'. Yet the very fact that such theoretical 'adjustments' were required was striking proof of the difficulty of relating syndicalist theory to the realities of the situation in Japan.

The Socialist Movement

As in Chapter 6, the main events which occurred in the Japanese socialist movement are shown here in the form of a chart. Once again, it is hoped that by presenting these events in this fashion, the background against which developments in socialist thought took place in Japan will become clearer to the reader.

Throughout the period 1906-1918, the socialist movement remained small and weak. Although the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) estimated in February 1907 that there were 30,000-40,000 socialists in Japan¹⁰ and the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper)

8 Manifesto Of The Communist Party, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Collected in Selected Works, Karl Marx (sic), London, 1947, Vol. I, p 110.

9 'Pan No Tetsugaku' ('The Philosophy Of Bread'), Akaba Hajime, Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun (Tokyo Social News) No. 7, 15 May 1908, p 1.

10 'Shakaitō Taikai' ('Conference Of The Socialist Party'), Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) No. 27, 17 February 1907, p 2.

Main Events In The Japanese Socialist Movement, 1905-1918

Kokka Shakaitō
(State Socialist Party). Formed August 1905. Eventually petered out of existence.

Russo-Japanese War ended, September 1905.

Riots in Tōkyō on 5 September 1905 by protesters against the peace terms with Russia.

Kaben
(Fire Whip). 1st issue, 10 September 1905. Published monthly up till 10 May 1906.

Heiminsha
dissolved, October 1905.

Shin Kigen
(New Era). 1st issue, 10 November 1905. Appeared monthly up till 10 November 1906.

Kōtoku Shūsui
left Japan
for USA on 14
November 1905.

(Heiminsha)

Hikari (Light).
1st issue,
20 November 1905.
Appeared twice per
month up till 20
August 1906 and
then 3 times per
month up till
15 December 1906.

Saiōji Kinmochi
formed his first
government on
7 January 1906.

(Shin Kigen)

Nishikawa
Kōjirō and
Higuchi Den
formed a
Nihon Heimintō
(Common People's
Party of Japan)
on 14 January
1906.

(Nihon Heimintō)

Sakai Toshihiko
and Fukao Shō
formed a
Nippon Shakaitō
(Socialist Party
of Japan) on
28 January 1906.

Amalgamated
organisation,
also with the
name Nippon
Shakaitō,
held its founding
conference in
Tōkyō on
24 February 1906.

(Hikari)

(Shin Kigen)

Shakai shugi
Kenkyū (The
Study Of
Socialism).
1st issue,
15 March 1906.
Appeared monthly
up till 1 August
1906.

Movement started
in March 1906 to
resist a fare
increase on the

(cont.)

Tōkyō trams.
The movement continued for several months and, as a result of the demonstrations, various socialists received prison sentences of up to 2 years. Because of the lengthy legal procedures, they did not start to serve these sentences until 1908.

(Shin Kigen)

(Nippon Shakaitō)

(Hikari)

Shakai Kakumeitō
(Social-Revolutionary Party) organised by Japanese immigrants in California on 1 June 1906.

Kōtoku Shūsui returned to Japan on 23 June 1906.

Kōtoku delivered his speech on 'The Tide Of The World Revolutionary Movement' at a public meeting in Tōkyō on 28 June 1906.

Kakumei Hyōron
(Revolutionary Review).
1st issue, 5 September
1906. Appeared twice
per month up till
25 January 1907 and
then monthly up till
25 March 1907.

(Nippon
Shakaitō)

Kakumei (Revolution).
1st issue published
in California on
20 December 1906.
Continued for 3 issues
up till 1 April 1907.

(Shin Kigen)

(Hikari)

Heimin Shimbun
(Common People's
Newspaper).
1st issue, 15 January
1907. Appeared daily
up till 14 April 1907.

Insurrection broke
out at the Ashio
copper mine on
4 February 1907.
Put down by troops
on 7 February 1907.

(Nippon Shakaitō)

Kōtoku Shūsui's
article 'The Change
In My Thought'
appeared in the
Heimin Shimibun on
5 February 1907.

Nishikawa Kōjirō
arrested in Ashio
on 7 February 1907.
Held in custody
until 5 May 1907.

Conference of the
Nippon Shakaitō
held in Tōkyō on
17 February 1907.
Dispute between pro-
and anti-parliamentarians.

Nippon Shakaitō
dissolved 22
February 1907,
by order of the
government.

Ishikawa Sanshirō
and Yamaguchi Kōken
imprisoned on 25 April
1907 for offences
against the press
laws. Ishikawa was

(Heimin Shimibun)

(cont.)
released after 13
months in custody on
19 May 1908 and
Yamaguchi after 14
months on 18 June 1908.

(Heimin Shimbun)

Disturbance at the
Horonai coal mine
in Hokkaidō in
April 1907.

Ōsugi Sakae
imprisoned on
29 May 1907 for
5½ months for
offences against
the press laws.

Ōsaka Heimin
Shimbun (Osaka
Common People's
Newspaper). 1st
issue, 1 June 1907.
Appeared twice per
month.

Shakai Shimbun
(Social News).
1st issue, 2 June
1907. Appeared
weekly up till
5 April 1908.

Kumamoto Hyōron
(Kumamoto Review).
1st issue, 20 June
1907. Appeared

Insurrection broke
out at the Besshi
copper mine in
Shikoku on 4 June
1907. Put down by
troops on 8/9 June
1907.

(cont.)
twice per month
up till 20 September
1908. Editors fined and
imprisoned.

Ōsaka Heimin
Shimbun

Katayama Sen and
Tazoe Tetsuji
organised the
Nihon Shakai Heimintō
(Social Common People's
Party of Japan) on
25 June 1907.
Immediately banned
by the government.

Disturbance at
the Ikuno silver mine
near Ōsaka in July
1907.

All sections of the
socialist movement
cooperated in the
running of a summer
school which was held
in Tōkyō from 1-10
August 1907.

Katō Tokijirō represented
the now outlawed Nippon
Shakaitō at the congress
of the IInd International
held in Stuttgart in
August 1907.

(Shakai Shimbun)

Ōsaka Heimin
Shimbun

Rōdōsha (Worker)
produced by Sakai
Toshihiko and
Yamakawa Hitoshi
as a 4 page supplement
to the Ōsaka Heimin
Shimbun. Issues
appeared in October,
November, December 1907
and May 1908. (This
last issue was a special
number devoted to the
peasantry and
therefore entitled
Nōmin No Mezamashi
- The Peasant's Alarm.)
A fine of ¥60 imposed
on Morichika Umpei
(as editor of the
Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun).

(Shakai Shimbun)

Katayama Sen and
his associates
started to hold their
Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai
(Socialist Comrades'
Association) meetings
from 31 August 1907.

Kōtoku Shūsui, Sakai
Toshihiko, Yamakawa
Hitoshi etc. started
to hold Kinyō Kai
(Friday Association)
meetings from 6 September
1907.

(Shakai Shimbun)

(Osaka Heimin
Shimbun)

Renamed Nihon Heimin
Shimbun (Japan Common
People's Newspaper)
from 5 November 1907.
Continued to appear
twice monthly up till
20 May 1908.

A leaflet Ansatsushugi
(The Terrorism),
which threatened the
Japanese emperor with
assassination, distributed
in the USA on 3 November
1907.

Katayama Sen and
Suzuki Tateo organised
the Heimin Kyōkai
(Common People's
Association) on
21 December 1907.
Immediately banned
by the government.

'Okujō enzetsu jiken'
('roof speeches incident')
occurred on 17 January 1908.
6 socialists received prison
sentences of up to 1½ months.

(Shakai Shimbun)

Katayama Sen expelled
from the Shakai Shugi
Dōshi Kai on 16 February
1908.

Morichika Umpei, the
editor of the Nihon
Heimin Shimbun, was
imprisoned for 15 days
from 22 February 1908
and fined ¥2 for an
article which had
appeared in the Osaka
Heimin Shimbun on
1 July 1907. While
serving this prison
sentence, an issue of
the journal appeared
bearing Morichika's
name as editor. He
was therefore fined
a further ¥10.

Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun
(Tokyo Social News)
launched on 15 March 1908
by Nishikawa Kōjiro,
Akaba Hajime and others
who had broken with
Katayama Sen's Shakai Shimbun.
Initially published every
10 days, Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun
became more irregular and
eventually ceased with the
issue which appeared on
15 September 1908.

(Shakai Shimbun)

From 26 April 1908
Shakai Shimbun
became a monthly.
Continued up till
3 August 1911, when
it collapsed under a
fine of ¥200.

Tazoe Tetsuji
died on 20 March 1908.

Tōhoku Hyōron (North-
East Review). 1st issue,
15 May 1908. Further
issues appeared in August,
September and October 1908.
Collapsed when its editors
received prison sentences of
up to 4 months for
infringements of the
press laws.

'Akahata jiken'
('red flag incident')
occurred on 22 June
1908. 9 socialists
received prison
sentences of up to
2½ years.

Saionji government
resigned on 4 July
1908.
Replaced on 14 July
1908 by a government
led by Katsura Tarō.

Akaba Hajime
received a prison
sentence of 8 months
on 31 October 1908
for press offences
connected with the
Tōkyō Shakai Shinbun.

Heimin Hyōron (Common
People's Review). There
was an attempt to issue
this journal as the
successor to Kumamoto
Hyōron on 10 March 1909
but it was banned and
even the 1st issue was
never distributed,

(cont.)
being seized by the police.
Its editors were fined and
received prison sentences
of up to 1 year.

Jiyū Shisō (Free Thought). Kanno Suga and Kotoku Shūsui attempted to issue this journal on 25 May 1909. Both this and the next issue were banned by the government, resulting in the collapse of the venture. Fines totalling many hundreds of yen were imposed and, being unable to pay, Kanno was imprisoned on 18 May 1910.

Ishikawa Sanshirō was imprisoned on 28 March 1910 and fined ¥60 because of an article in Sekai Fujin (World Woman). Released on 18 July 1910.

Arrests of socialists on 25 May 1910 marked the beginning of the 'taigyaku jiken' ('high treason case'). During

(cont.)
the following weeks,
hundreds arrested in
a nation-wide police
operation.

Nishikawa Kōjiro freed
on 17 July 1910, after
2 years in prison because
of his involvement in the
campaign against the
increase in Tokyo's tram
fare in 1906. Broke with
the socialist movement.

Having served a 2 year sentence
for his involvement in the
'red flag incident', Sakai
Toshihiko was released from
prison and formed the 'baibunsha'
('hack writers' company') in
September 1910 to provide a
means of income for some
socialists.

On 18 January 1911, sentences
passed on the 26 accused in the
'high treason case'. 24 received
the death sentence, while the
other two were given prison
sentences of 8 and 11 years.

12 of those sentenced to death executed on 24/25 January 1911. Remaining 12 had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment.

Factory law promulgated on 29 March 1911. Implementation of its provisions delayed until 1916.

Katayama Sen and others tried to organise a 'Shakaitō' ('Socialist Party') on 25 October 1911. Immediately banned by the government.

Saitō Kenjiro and others tried to organise a Dokuritsu Rōdōtō (Independent Labour Party) on 7 November 1911. Immediately banned by the government.

Following a tram strike in Tōkyō, Katayama Sen was arrested for incitement to strike on 15 January 1912. Imprisoned until September 1912, when he was amnestied upon the death of the Meiji Emperor.

Akaba Hajime died in
Chiba prison on 1 March
1912.

Yūaikai (Friendship
Society) started by
Suzuki Bunji and
others on 1 August
1912.

Kindai Shisō (Modern
Thought). 1st issue,
1 October 1912.
Published monthly by
Arahata Kanson and
Ōsugi Sakae up till
1 September 1914.

Ishikawa Sanshirō left
Japan on 1 March 1913.
Did not leave Europe to
return to Japan until 1920.

Arahata Kanson and Ōsugi Sakae
started to hold Sanjīkarizumu
Kenkyū Kai (Association for the
Study of Syndicalism) meetings
(later renamed Heimin Kōen -
Common People's Lectures)
from July 1913. Held at
least monthly, these meetings
continued up till 1916.

Hechima No Hana
(The Gourd Flower).
1st issue, 27 January
1914. Sakai Toshihiko

(cont.)
published this
journal monthly up till
June 1915.

Katayama Sen left
Japan for good on
9 September 1914.
Lived in the USA up
till the Russian
revolution.

(Kindai Shiso)

Replaced by the monthly
Heimin Shimbun (Common
People's Newspaper)
from 15 October 1914.

The Heimin Shimbun was
almost invariably
suppressed and was
discontinued after the
issue which appeared on
15 March 1915.

Replaced by Shin Shakai
(New Society). Appeared
monthly from 1 September
1915.

Replaced by a new series
of Kindai Shiso from
7 October 1915. Although
the first issue was tolerated
by the authorities, there-
after it was repeatedly
banned and publication
ceased with the January
1916 issue.

Arahata Kanson and Kondō Kenji published a 4 page tabloid Rōdō Kumiai (Trade Union) from April 1916. It was repeatedly banned and publication ceased with its 6th issue.

(Shin Shakai)

Sakai Toshihiko stood as a candidate in Tōkyō in the general election in January 1917. Received only a handful of votes.

Ōsugi Sakae, Itō Noe etc. started to issue Bunmei Hihyō (Critique Of Civilisation) in January 1918. Banned in April 1918.

Arahata Kanson, Kondō Kenji and Yamakawa Hitoshi started to publish Aofuku (Blue Uniform) in March 1918 as a supplement to Shin Shakai. Repeatedly banned and discontinued in July 1918. Arahata and Yamakawa received prison sentences

(cont.)
of 4 months
(from October 1918 -
February 1919) for
offences connected
with Aofuku.

Osugi Sakae, Wada
Kyūtarō and Hisaita
Unosuke started to
issue Rōdō Shimbun
(Labour Newspaper)
in April 1918.
Repeatedly banned in
and discontinued in
July 1918. Wada and
Hisaita received
several months'
imprisonment for
offences against the
press laws in 1918.

(Shin Shakai)

The first rice riot
among the fisherwomen
of Toyama prefecture
occurred on 23 July
1918. Developed into
mass disturbances
throughout Japan during
the weeks which followed.

spoke a few months later of "tens of thousands of comrades throughout the country"¹¹, little credence can be given to such figures. It is true that not a few of those who were sympathetic to the socialist cause were unable to declare themselves as socialists because of the risks which were involved. The fear of unemployment certainly forced some of those who were sympathetic to remain outside of the organised socialist movement. In addition, during the period of the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan)'s existence, there were severe legal restrictions on those who were free to join the party. It was against the law for teachers, students, Buddhist priests, Shintō shinkan*, women and people under age to join the party.¹² Yet legal sanctions alone could not have scared away all of the alleged tens of thousands of sympathisers and reduced the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan)'s membership to the region of a mere 200. The fact was that the extent of the support which 'socialism' enjoyed was far more modest than the socialists imagined. In Chapter 11 it was mentioned that in July 1908 the political police identified 460 supposed socialists, 98 of whom were classified as active propagandists. This was a far more realistic assessment of the strength of the socialist movement than the inflated estimates made by some of the socialists themselves.

During the period extending up to 1905 the socialist movement had been largely composed of intellectuals and this feature of the movement did not change to any great extent after 1905. The executive committee of the Nippon Shakaitō consisted of 13 men whose ages varied from the mid-twenties to the mid-forties. A few of these were artisans but the majority were intellectuals of one sort or another. As before, journalists

* See glossary.

11 'Hakkan No Ji' ('A Word To Mark Our Publication'), Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper) No. 1, 1 June 1907, p 1.

12 Hikari (Light) No. 11, 20 April 1906, p 7.

were strongly represented, Nishikawa Kōjirō, Sakai Toshihiko and Tazoe Tetsuji all having practised this profession.¹³ To take another group of socialists about whom information is available, many of the defendants in the 'high treason case' were of an intellectual background. For example, Kōtoku Shūsui and Kanno Suga had been journalists, Ōishi Seinosuke was a doctor, Naruishi Heishirō was a law student and at least 3 of the defendants were Buddhist priests (Uchiyama Gudō, Takagi Kenmei and Minao Setsudō). A factory worker such as Miyashita Takichi was the exception rather than the rule.¹⁴

The small numbers of socialists and the intellectual composition of their movement restricted the range of activities which were open to the various socialist groups. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that, apart from the perpetual battle to publish their journals, there was very little other activity which the socialists of this period were able to engage in. Without universal suffrage, and with no trade unions worth talking of, both the social-democrats and the anarchists/syndicalists were deprived of the means of struggle which they favoured. One of the very few occasions during the period 1906-1918 when socialists were able to participate in anything approaching a mass movement was when a campaign was launched in 1906 to prevent the tram companies in Tōkyō from increasing the standard fare they charged. This movement to block the increase in the tram fare was significant because it threw into sharp relief the strengths and weaknesses of the working class and the socialist movement alike. The Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) called for a mass rally on 11 March 1906 and distributed 50,000 leaflets to publicise the event. When 11 March came, however, it was raining and only a few hundred

13 See Hikari (Light) No. 11, 20 April 1906, p 1 and Shakai Shugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) No. 1, 15 March 1906, p 88 (English columns).

14 'Ueberblick "über die sozialistische Bewegung in Japan bis 1917', Sakai Toshihiko, Die Kommunistische Internationale No. 16, 1921, pp151-152.

people assembled. After the meeting, an orderly demonstration set off to the newspaper offices and the offices of the tram companies, carrying a red flag bearing the slogan "Down with the Increase in the Tram Fare; Socialist Party of Japan". That there was nothing even remotely revolutionary in this demand was confirmed by the fact that even Yamaji Aizan's Kokka Shakaitō (State Socialist Party) was prepared to identify itself with the rally of 11 March.¹⁵

Four days later events took an altogether different turn when 10,000 or more people gathered in Hibiya Park in Tōkyō for another protest meeting.¹⁶ Their considerable numbers gave the demonstrators courage and, after the meeting was over, the tram companies' offices were stoned and a crowd attacked the Town Hall, ransacking its Engineering Section and breaking the windows. Trams were stoned too and the vehicles had to be withdrawn from the streets as darkness approached.¹⁷ The police made many arrests, including several socialists, and prison sentences of up to two years eventually followed for those who were prosecuted.¹⁸ Although the rioting of 15 March 1906 brought a postponement to the increase in the tram fare, by August 1906 the tram companies in Tōkyō had amalgamated and had been given permission by the government to raise the standard fare from 3 sen to 4 sen. In order to counter this, the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) again distributed leaflets, this time calling for a boycott of the trams when the increased fare would come into effect on 11 September 1906.¹⁹

15 Reimeiki No Nihon Rōdō Undō (The Labour Movement In Japan In The Dawn Period), Ōkōchi Kazuo, Tōkyō, 1973, p 149.

16 'The Great Demonstration of Tokyo Citizen(s)', Hikari (Light) No. 9, 20 March 1906, p 1 (English column).

17 'Demonstrations Against The Raising Of The Electric Car Fares', Shin Kigen (New Era) No. 6, 10 April 1906, pp 1-2 (English columns).

18 Tōkyō Shakai Shinbun (Tokyo Social News) No. 13, 25 July 1908, pp 1, 2.

19 'Densha Boicotto Undō' ('The Tram Boycott Movement'), Hikari (Light) No. 19, 20 August 1906, p 7 and 'The Boycott Movement For The (T)ram-Car', Hikari (Light) No. 20, 5 September 1906, p 1 (English column).

At a 'shimin taikai' ('citizens' convention') on 5 September 1906 a motion to boycott the trams was proposed by Morichika Umpei and passed. On the same day, crowds again stoned the trams, forcing the company once more to withdraw its vehicles from the streets as night came down.²⁰ Rioting was repeated on several successive evenings, resulting in a tally of 54 trams damaged, 58 people injured and 94 arrests.²¹

The disturbances which accompanied the campaign against the increase in the tram fare provided fresh evidence of the readiness of workers and others to take to the streets and fight. Yet the irony was that they were unable to translate their sudden outbursts of violent anger into a self-disciplined and coordinated boycott of the trams, which would have been the effective means to have thwarted the company. The rise in the fare coincided with a period of wet weather and the continual rain not only dampened the rioters' spirits but brought passengers onto the trams. The boycott failed and, as Hikari (Light) admitted in its English-language columns, "the tram-companies carried their point, or, the citizens were defeated."²² As for the socialists, little attempt was made to relate the struggle over the tram fare to the wider issues of socialism. Takenouchi Yosojirō was very much the exception when, in an article which appeared in Hikari (Light) in July 1906, he introduced the idea that fares should be abolished into the discussion of the transport system.²³ Most socialists in 1906 went no further in their agitation than the limited demand to freeze the tram fare. When they gave any thought at all to what the ultimate solution should be to the problem of urban transport, most socialists at this time favoured the

20 'A City Of Disturbance', Hikari (Light) No. 21, 15 September 1906, p 1 (English column).

21 Ōkōchi, op. cit., p 151.

22 'The End Of The Tram Affair', Hikari (Light) No. 22, 25 September 1906, p 1 (English column).

23 'Kōtsū Kikan No Rekishi' ('The History Of The Means Of Transport'), Takenouchi Yosojirō, Hikari (Light) No. 17, 20 July 1906, p 6.

reformist course of converting the private tram companies into a public corporation. In other words, most of the socialists who participated in the campaign in 1906 over the Tōkyō tram fare were reformists engaged in a wholly reformist struggle.

Was An Alternative To Capitalism Posed?

In Chapter 6 the conclusion which was reached on Japanese 'socialism' to 1905 was that, far from presenting a challenge to the capitalist social system which was emerging in Japan, it merely represented an alternative form of capitalism. The time has now come to consider whether the same can be said about Japanese 'socialism' to 1918. Was 'socialism' in Japan during the period 1906-1918 no more than a variation on the basic capitalist theme - or did any of the socialists succeed in posing, at least in theoretical terms, an alternative to capitalism?

That the social-democrats failed to pose such an alternative to capitalism even after 1905 must be clear to anyone who accepts the verdict which was given in Chapter 6 on Japanese 'socialism' in its first phase. During the period 1906-1918, the social-democrats maintained the same general outlook as had previously characterised the movement as a whole. The enemy for them remained not capital as such but only capital in the hands of individual capitalists. Conversely, wage labour too was equally acceptable to them, provided its employer was state-controlled capital and not the individual capitalist. The fundamental reason why the social-democrats always insisted, even in the darkest days of governmental reaction, that 'socialism' could very simply be introduced into Japan was that the scope of the change which they were proposing was extremely limited. The foremost social-democrat of the period stated this with great clarity in an article 'Shakai Keizai No Shōri' ('The Victory Of The Social Economy') which was published in Shakai Shinbun (Social News) in July 1907. Katayama Sen wrote:

A socialist economy is not particularly different from the economy advocated by the capitalists. What is different is just its conclusion. It is just that its aim is social rather than individual. The economy which the capitalists advocate is one centred on the individual, so that as long as that person prospers all is well. In a socialist economy the aim is to serve the interests of society as a whole.

24

Here was the bogey of 'free competition', which was referred to in Chapter 6. It was free competition and the spectacle of rival capitalists striving to further their own narrow interests which Katayama found repugnant, and not the basic relationship of capital to wage labour. Katayama also wrote:

It goes without saying that the aim of a social economy is to place both production and distribution under the direction of the principles of a social economy (sic). The means of achieving this are to convert all the great enterprises within the country into government enterprises. Products should all be marketed at actual costs. At such a time, the government will, of course, have to be a government where the cabinet is formed by a political party elected on the basis of universal suffrage.

25

The state-capitalist vision of the social-democrats could not have been expressed more clearly. 'Socialism' for those such as Katayama Sen continued to mean throughout this period nationalisation plus parliamentary democracy. After 1918, under the influence of Bolshevism, Katayama's faith in parliamentary democracy was to weaken. But his commitment to state capitalism never wavered right up till his death in 1933.

The anarchists/syndicalists, on the other hand, were considerably different to the state-capitalist social-democrats. In the first place, the state had become anathema for them and they never tired of ridiculing the social-democratic notion that the state would have a role to play

24 Shakai Shimbum (Social News) No. 7, 14 July 1907, p 5.

25 Ibid., p 5.

in the new society of the future. As for the extent to which they had broken conceptually with capitalist economics, it has already been shown at various stages of this study how a number of anarchists/syndicalists pronounced themselves against the wages system and in favour of the free distribution of communally produced articles of consumption.* Yet, taking the anarchists/syndicalists as a whole, if they were posing an alternative to the capitalist economic system, it was undeniably an extremely vaguely formulated alternative. A typical statement of the anarchist/syndicalist position during this period was that set forth by Sakamoto Seina (who was one of those subsequently sentenced to life imprisonment in the 'high treason case') in an article in the Kumamoto Hyōron (Kumamoto Review) in May 1908. Sakamoto's article is sufficiently representative to make it worth quoting at some length:

I am one of the anarcho-communist revolutionaries and I advocate the social general strike. People say that anarchism is the poison which comes from the mouths of traitors and that it is an extremely evil and dangerous doctrine. I do not know what they mean by traitors and rebels, but let us consider whether the principles of anarcho-communism really are a violent and dangerous doctrine as they say. The society which the great doctrine and spirit of anarcho-communism points to is a society without the state and without government. Indeed, it is a society which denies all authority. It is also a society which, by striving for the happiness and advantage of everyone, will encourage the progress and improvement of humankind. In an anarcho-communist society, free associations will be organised on the basis of the free agreement of all people, and it will then be possible to produce the things which everyone needs by means of mutual aid, which is a natural law of humankind. In such a society

* See Chapters 8, 9, 10.

all the rampage of the present monstrous private property system will disappear and the houses, fields, factories and all the other components of the economy will become the common property of everyone. Under these circumstances, the sum total of production will increase tenfold and a hundredfold over what it is today, even with only a limited effort. And, once this has been done, humankind will be able to throw off its economic bonds and should be able to reach the limits of ethical and moral development.

What this means is that, if humankind is to be improved spiritually, it first has to attain economic freedom. If economic freedom is to be attained, the present capitalist system (in other words, the private property system), which prevents this, has to be overthrown. But, if the private property system is to be overthrown, it has to be done by revolution. And, if the revolution is going to be made, it has to be by means of a social general strike.

26

Sakanoto Seina's outline of a new society was certainly infinitely more attractive than the social-democrats' plans for (state-) capitalist business as usual, but its imprecision and Sakanoto's numerous unsupported assertions were evidence of the lack of theoretical rigour which was characteristic of the anarchists/syndicalists. The holes which could be shot in Sakanoto's arguments were countless. To take a few examples: phrases such as "the happiness and advantage of everyone" and "the progress and improvement of humankind" were vague enough to mean virtually anything, and for that very reason are the normal stock-in-trade of the bourgeois politician. If "mutual aid" was "a natural law of humankind", why had it not asserted itself sufficiently to put an end to class societies, which had existed (presumably 'unnaturally') for thousands of years? What were the preconditions which would permit "the sum total of production (to) increase tenfold and a hundredfold over what it is

26 'Hyūsha No Ji' ('A Word On Joining The Group'), Sakanoto Seina, Kumamoto Hyōron (Kumamoto Review) No. 23, 20 May 1908, p 1.

today, even with only a limited effort"? What, again, were humankind's "economic bonds"? And what was it exactly about the "present capitalist system (in other words, the private property system)" which prevented "economic freedom" from being realised? One of the ways in which the answers to some of these questions could have been found would have been for the anarchists/syndicalists to have studied Marx and Engels' writings on historical materialism and Marx's dissection of capitalism in Capital. Because they identified Marxism with social-democracy, however, such texts were closed to most anarchists/syndicalists and their critique of capitalism remained weak, deprived of the theoretical backbone which some of Marx and Engels' insights into the workings of the capitalist system might have given it.

A final important point about the situation in which the anarchists/syndicalists found themselves during the period 1906-1918 was that, although their powers of physical and psychological endurance were severely tested by the treatment they experienced at the hands of the authorities, the harsh political environment also had the paradoxical effect of not subjecting their theories to any very exacting tests. On the contrary, the brazen tyranny of the state and the naked exploitation practised by the capitalist class made it relatively easy for anyone with radical inclinations to be both 'anti-state' and 'anti-capitalist', without giving very much deep thought to either attitude. The state in Meiji and Taishō Japan was so unshaken in its promotion of capital accumulation, and so unambiguous in the manner in which it championed the interests of the ruling class, that little political sophistication was required to see it as an apparatus of repression. Similarly, with young girls barely into their teens being worked into early graves in the textile mills, one did not need to know how to calculate the rate of surplus value in order to realise that workers were being exploited.

The anarchists'/syndicalists' opposition to the state and to capitalism would only have been put to a real test if they had been

faced with a type of state which claimed to represent the interests of the working class or a form of capitalism where the exploitation of the working class was more subtly camouflaged. Throughout the period extending up to the great rice riots in 1918, the state in Japan never had any need even to pretend that it represented working class interests, any more than the Japanese capitalist class found it necessary to mask its exploitation. It was only at the very end of the period dealt with in this study that news started to trickle into Japan about a state in Russia which did indeed claim to be a workers' state and which was allegedly striving to put an end to capitalist exploitation. It was under this new set of circumstances that, for the first time, anarchist/syndicalist opposition to the state and to capitalism was put to a stringent test. And the sad fact was that, in the face of Bolshevik state capitalism, the like of which they had often denounced in theoretical terms, the objections of many of the anarchists/syndicalists in Japan swiftly evaporated. For many of them, it was only necessary for the state to label itself a 'workers' state' for their hostility towards state power to be extinguished. Similarly, it was only necessary for the wages system to be described as 'the building of socialism' for their calls for its abolition to be silenced.

When the test to their theories came, many of the anarchists/syndicalists in Japan failed it - and this raises legitimate doubts as to how many of them, even in the period before 1918, really were posing a genuine alternative to capitalism. The capitulation of many of the anarchists/syndicalists in Japan to Bolshevism is, however, another story which will have to be left to another day and another volume.

Appendix 1Abolish Money!

When bacteria enter a person's bloodstream, so that person's health is gradually undermined.

It is the same with money as with bacteria. Since money has unlimited power in the world, the ways of the world are bound to be increasingly debased. Step by step, morality is bound to be ruined and human nature faced with corruption. In the end, society is driven to destruction.

There are people calling for the abolition of prostitution, waxing indignant over the depravity of the gentry, advocating the reform of popular customs, urging that morality be improved.... and so on. Yet it seems to me that at times like these, when money is needed even to get hold of a volume dealing with the subject of morality or to gain admission to a half-day course of lectures, all the endless chatter of their sermonising is utterly futile.

Nobody willingly becomes a prostitute. Nobody willingly sells their honour. There is nobody who does not want popular customs to be reformed or who does not want morality to be improved. Yet the reason why things work out differently is simply because of money.

Instead of people putting so much effort into overworking their tongues and wearing out their pens, it would be better for them to give priority to demonstrating the omnipotent power of money. If one does not get rid of money, then one cannot destroy the omnipotent power which money exercises in other spheres. To put it another way, unless one abolishes the necessity for money in this world, it is quite impossible to improve the ways of the world or human nature.

Someone who has no money cannot live. This is the way the world is at present. Yet even in today's corrupt society, no-one could say that this is right and proper. Truly, a person lives by other things

than money. Over and above money, there is strength and there is honour. There is right and there is duty. There is bread and there are clothes. Yet nowadays, when money has unlimited power, is there any room for truth in the world? Can what is right be done?

If one fine morning it were put to the test, if money were abolished and the need for it completely eradicated, what a noble place the world would be! How peaceful! How happy!

Bribery, corruption, people selling their principles - all these would completely disappear. Murder, robbery and adultery would be greatly reduced too. There would be no need to call for the abolition of prostitution, nor to advocate the reform of popular customs. All at once it would be just like the Buddhists' pure land and the Christians' heaven.

It is natural that there should be any number of rises and falls in history but, if money had not existed in the civilisations of ancient India, Egypt, Greece and Rome, I believe that it would have been possible for them to have lasted several thousand years more.

But in days like these when money has such power, if we utter the words 'Abolition of Money', people look at us as though we are mad. Is it madness, though? Are you prepared to say that the modern European socialists who are spreading everywhere throughout the world (sic) are all mad, then? - because the socialists have the abolition of money and the suppression of the private ownership of capital as their ideals.

They take this position because they want to see the individual - and society as a whole - live by other things than money. In other words, they want to replace money by strength and honour, by right and duty. Indeed, truth and righteousness lie in doing just this. So if you agree that truth and righteousness really should be put into practice, then why should you think of socialism as being difficult to realise in actual life? Socialism is far from being an impossibility. Rather it is just that it has not been put into effect up till now.

Why don't people who want to improve human nature and the ways of the world stop their petty squabbles and put their efforts into achieving socialism? If they did this, it would be the quickest way for them to achieve their objectives.

The nineteenth century was the age of liberalism but the twentieth century is about to become the age of socialism. All capable people need to wake up to this new trend in the world - and to this alone.*

Kōtoku Shūsui, Article in the Yorozu Chōhō (Morning News),

9 February 1900.

* I am very conscious of the fact that I have not been able to convey Kōtoku's fine literary style in my translation. Like most educated people of his day, Kōtoku had been heavily influenced by the Chinese classics (which had formed his staple educational diet) and hence expressed himself in prose that was both elegant and pithy. Unfortunately, however, it is also a style of Japanese which is notoriously difficult to translate at all adequately into Western languages.

Appendix 2A Socialist Appeal

* Because some people are rich in this society, others are poor. Because some people are poor, others are rich. Socialism wants to do away at the same time with both rich and poor.

* In a socialist society the rich would not exist. On the other hand, the people would all be wealthy. This is because the wealth of the entire country would be commonly owned by the whole people. Thus, in a socialist society, it would not be possible for anyone to be poor.

* A socialist society would be like one big family picnicking in the park and enjoying the cherry blossom. The seats people sat on, the blossoms, the food at the picnic - all would be commonly owned. And the people would all be at peace with one another, enjoying the spring breezes.

* In a socialist society those who loved each other would be free to settle down as husband and wife. Those who got on well with each other would become friends on a basis of equality. Whatever the circumstances in which people met each other, they would all be like brothers and sisters together. On top of this, the old and the young would everywhere be cherished as the country's treasure.

* Socialism will raise high the banner of love. It advocates the cause of brotherhood and wants to put into practice the ideal of cooperative living for humankind. It also asserts that the common ownership of the land and of capital is the means to achieve these ends.

* Those of you who are suffering from poverty! Those who thirst after righteousness! Those who are hungry for affection! All of you come quickly and lift up your eyes to the new dawn of socialism!

The Japanese Socialist Comrades

(A leaflet for distribution at a 'Workers' Cherry Blossom Viewing Outing' in Tōkyō on 2 April 1905.)

Appendix 3An Outline Of Socialism

* Society in the Tokugawa period was the society of the samurai. The samurai swaggered about, wearing the two swords¹ and trampling the peasants and townspeople underfoot. It was a terrible thing that the lives of the common people were completely at the mercy of the samurai. Society in the Meiji era is the society of the rich. The rich swagger about, flaunting their money and trampling the poor underfoot. And since if the poor lose their jobs they go hungry, their lives are completely at the mercy of the rich in exactly the same way that the common people's lives were in the Tokugawa period. When a commoner was cut down by a samurai it was murder at one stroke, but to lose one's job is like being murdered slowly.

* When they say that today in the Meiji period the four classes² have become equals it is an utter lie. Just as there were samurai on the one hand and peasants and townspeople on the other in Tokugawa society, so there are rich and poor in Meiji society. The millionaires of today are the same as the feudal lords of the old society.

* We call the rich class the 'gentleman clique' and we call the various types of poor people - who all collectively stand opposed to this gentleman clique - the 'common people'. Yet, just as on the edges of the samurai class there were elements such as the chūgen³ and ashigaru⁴, so there are the police, prison warders, primary school teachers, minor officials, small merchants, small landowners and so on on the edges of the gentleman clique. To judge by outward appearances, they all belong

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- 1 The samurai wore two swords stuck in his obi (belt) as the symbols of his status.
 - 2 The four traditional classes of Tokugawa society - samurai, peasants, artisans and merchants.
 - 3 Samurai's attendants or footmen.
 - 4 Samurai of the lowest rank - foot soldiers.

to the gentleman clique, but in actual fact they are part of the class of common people.

* The chūgen and ashigaru, together with the peasants and townspeople, gradually got up off their knees in the final years of the Tokugawa period and early in the Meiji era and defeated the samurai class. In the same way, the class of common people in society today will have to firmly unite and overthrow the gentleman clique.

* In the end, whether one calls them feudal lords or samurai, the rich or the gentleman clique, what gave rise to all these classes was that the strongest rogues took over the land and property and passed it on to their descendants. So, if we want to do away with these classes, what we have to do is put an end to the situation where land and property are privately owned and convert them instead into the common property of all the people, communally held by the whole of society.

* Land and property will be commonly owned by the people. There will be neither rich nor poor, neither a gentleman clique nor common people. All will draw close together and help each other. People will truly think of each other as being brothers and sisters of the same blood. A pure, beautiful, lofty and noble society will be achieved. This is what socialism is all about.

(A leaflet written by Sakai Toshihiko to mark the first anniversary of his wife's death. It appeared in Chokugen (Straight Talking) on 27 August 1905.)

Appendix 4

The Change In My Thought
 (On Universal Suffrage)

I

I want to make an honest confession. My views on the methods and policy to be adopted by the socialist movement started to change a little from the time that I went into prison a couple of years ago.¹ Then, during my travels last year², they changed dramatically. If I recall how I was a few years back, I get the feeling that I am now almost like a different person.

Because of this change in my ideas, I have had heated discussions with Sakai³ on dozens of occasions and have also frequently tried talking things over with a few of my other friends too. Then again, since I have from time to time put down some of my ideas in articles in Hikari⁴, there may be some people who have already grasped the gist of what I have been thinking. All the same, for want of a suitable organ⁵ and also because my illness has made writing difficult⁶, up till now I have not been able to address all the comrades and explain my basic ideas. But now the opportunity has come, for I certainly would not be true to my principles if I kept silent indefinitely.

- 1 Kōtoku was imprisoned for an offence against the press law from February to July 1905.
- 2 Kōtoku was away from Japan, living in the USA, from November 1905 to June 1906.
- 3 Sakai Toshihiko.
- 4 Hikari (Light), socialist paper which appeared from 20 November 1905 to 15 December 1906. Initially it was published twice monthly and later three times per month. Kōtoku was an irregular contributor.
- 5 This article, The Change In My Thought, appeared in the daily Heimin Shinbun (Common People's Newspaper) which was published from 15 January 1907 to 14 April 1907. Kōtoku's words "for want of a suitable organ" refer to the situation which had existed for some time prior to the appearance of the daily Heimin Shinbun, when there was no single journal recognised by all sections of the socialist movement in Japan.
- 6 Kōtoku was by this stage a semi-invalid suffering from chronic intestinal tuberculosis.

For these reasons, I want - as I said before - to make an honest confession. If I were to put in a nutshell the way I think now, it would be along the following lines: "A real social revolution cannot possibly be achieved by means of universal suffrage and a parliamentary policy. There is no way to reach our goal of socialism other than by the direct action of the workers, united as one."

II

Formerly I listened only to the theories of the German socialists and those in the same current and laid far too much emphasis on the effectiveness of votes and of parliament. I used to think: "If universal suffrage is achieved, then surely a majority of our comrades will be elected. And if a majority of the seats in parliament are occupied by our comrades, then socialism can be put into effect by means of a parliamentary resolution." It is true, of course, that I recognised at the same time the urgent need for workers' solidarity, but still I believed that at least the first priority for the social movement in Japan was universal suffrage. My speeches and articles were full of this, but I now think of it as an extremely childish and naive idea.

To go into a little more detail, one cannot promote the happiness of the majority under today's so-called representative system. The representatives are first elected from out of a morass of candidates, supporters, henchmen, newspapers, deception, threats, banquets and corruption. It makes one wonder if there really are any who are seriously thinking about either the state or the people. Yet even if, for the sake of argument, we assume that competent people were to be elected, what then? People change with their circumstances and as MPs they would by no means be the same individuals as when they first put themselves forward as candidates. As politicians living in the capital, they would be different again from the public-spirited people they first were when still in their home districts. One wonders if there really can be any

who genuinely remain true to the values they held before they were elected. Isn't prestige what invariably comes first in the lives of all MPs (or, at any rate, the vast majority of them)? And next comes power, followed by profit. Isn't their field of vision restricted to themselves, their families, or at most - and even this applies to only the very best among them - to their parties?

Nor is this the case simply in present-day Japan. It is not only in Japan, with its restricted franchise, that this occurs. Even in Switzerland, Germany, France and the USA (and in other countries too, no matter how universal their system of suffrage) most of those who gain victory in elections are either those with the most money or the most brazen and those with the greatest skill at playing to the gallery. Both within the country, and within parties too, it is an extremely rare occurrence for first-rate people to be elected.

So you could say that there is not a parliament anywhere in the world which up till now, in the strict sense of the word, has represented the will of the people. The fact that even under universal suffrage parliament is unable to fully represent the will of the people is recognised these days by a majority of scholars throughout the world and various remedies have been devised to correct this, in the form of proportional representation, the referendum and the initiative. However, even if we set aside for the moment a detailed consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of these remedies, what we can at least say is that parliament is not constituted from the majority of the people - from the working class, in other words. The fact of the matter is that at present parliament is constituted from the bourgeoisie, the very class which regards the working class with hostility and uses it as a stepping stone. Kropotkin argues in his Wage System that, while the parliamentary system became established by virtue of the middle class - on the one hand - opposing the royal family, it is at the same time a mechanism designed for the middle class to rule and suppress

the working class. The parliamentary system is, in other words, a form specific to the rule of the middle class and, in saying this, Kropotkin hit the nail right on the head.⁷

Perhaps MPs do not only have to be of bourgeois origin. If universal suffrage is achieved, many working class MPs might be elected. Indeed, already in Britain 50 workers were elected last year.⁸ But no sooner are these MPs elected than immediately most of them lose their working class frame of mind, develop a taste for fine clothes and fine food in the bourgeois style, and give themselves airs and graces. And aren't they the butt of bitter condemnation because of this?

To take a couple of examples, shop assistants often do their best for their masters and lawyers do the same for their clients. But what about MPs? MPs are the only ones who make no efforts, least of all for the mass of the working class. Even if they might just happen to revise some of those laws which are harmful to the people or introduce other, beneficial laws, this usually turns out to be in line with their plans to win fame or to benefit themselves temporarily - or else it is connected with their preparations to get reelected!

III

The idea exists, however, that even if our present MPs are despicable in the ways I have been describing, since socialist MPs would be sincerely motivated there is no need to fear that they would

7 The Wage System refers to Chapter 13 ("The Collectivist Wages System") of Kropotkin's The Conquest Of Bread. This chapter has on occasions been published as an independent pamphlet under the title The Wage(s) System. Kropotkin writes there: "Built up by the middle classes to hold their own against royalty, sanctioning, and, at the same time strengthening, their sway over the workers, parliamentary rule is pre-eminently a middle-class rule.... The middle classes have simply used the parliamentary system to raise a protecting barrier against the pretensions of royalty, without giving the people liberty." (The Conquest Of Bread, Peter Kropotkin, London, 1972, p 175.)

8 In the British general election of 1906.

betray the will of the people. And I readily admit that the socialists in Japan today are all sincere men and women. Whichever the group, as long as conditions are unfavourable, there are few who betray their principles. This is simply because, since there is no advantage to be gained from being a member of groups which are struggling against the stream, people who are not sincere do not come and join us in the first place. But come the day when socialism is a force to be reckoned with and when it gains a majority in the electoral arena, what happens then? Under those circumstances, many of the candidates who have fought the election professing to be socialists will not be anything like the sincere men and women of today. On the contrary, they will be people who have joined the socialist party in order to acquire honour, power and profit for themselves - or simply in order to win a seat in parliament. And, in fact, most of those who will have been elected will be the same people we were talking about before - those with the most money, those who are most brazen, and those with the greatest skill at playing to the gallery.

At the time when the old Jiyūtō (Liberal Party)⁹ was struggling against the stream, the party members were all patriots burning with righteous indignation. And when we think of their spirit and élan, it was far superior to that of the socialists today. Yet no sooner had they become a force in parliament than, instead of putting the interests of the people first, they became occupied with maintaining their own strength in parliament, defending their seats and advancing their own interests. Didn't that one-time revolutionary party, even as it spun a web of fine words about 'cooperation', 'compromise' and 'mutual concessions', end up becoming utterly enslaved to the governing cliques

9 The Jiyūtō (Liberal Party) was formed in 1881, holding its founding conference on 18 October of that year. For a time it stood at the centre of the 'jiyū minken undō' ('people's rights movement'). See Chapter 2 for the 'people's rights movement'.

which it had once seen as its bitter enemies? And there is nothing surprising in this at all since it is only natural that a party which advances towards the objectives of simply establishing a parliament and then occupying a majority of the seats within that parliament should become utterly corrupted once those objectives are achieved. But what if the socialist party too were to be dazzled and seduced by the type of worldly power which comes with winning a majority of votes and occupying a majority of seats in parliament? If it made this its first priority, its fate would be no different from the sorry end of the Jiyūtō and one would have to say that the way ahead was fraught with danger.

Nor is it only the Jiyūtō which can be held up as an example. There are even lessons to be learned from the present day socialist parties as well. Didn't Millerand in France compromise with the bourgeoisie some time ago and join the cabinet? Hasn't also John Burns in Britain cooperated with the individualists (sic)¹⁰ on this occasion and likewise joined the cabinet? As it happens, I respect Millerand and Burns as individuals but, at the same time, it has to be admitted that as revolutionaries they have been corrupted to a certain extent. Hoping to win a majority of votes and a majority of seats in parliament is nothing more nor less than hoping to get one's hands on power. And isn't hoping to get one's hands on power what gives rise to cooperation with the enemy and compromise?

Fortunately, the socialist parties in Britain and France have not been corrupted along with Millerand and Burns. But although they have parted company with Millerand and Burns and preserved their integrity, what we have to understand is that, if one traces the problem back to

10 By "individualists" Kōtoku seems to have meant the Liberals. John Burns had joined the Liberal government in Britain in 1906 as President of the Local Government Board. For some details on Burns see the section "Labour Leaders" in Chapter 4. For Millerand see the section "False Optimism" in Chapter 3.

its source, both Millerand and Burns are in fact the products of the electoral and parliamentary policies of the socialist parties as a whole.

IV

Even if I were to concede everything and we were to assume that elections really were conducted fairly, that suitable MPs could be elected, and that on the whole those MPs faithfully represented the will of the people, could we still in fact achieve socialism by these means? Let us take Germany - the country of both Marx and Lassalle - as an example. When the first comrades were elected there under universal suffrage, there were only two of them. After that it took more than thirty years, struggling day by day, to reach a total of 81 MPs. And the fruit of those more than 30 years of hard fighting and bitter struggle was that they were sent packing by a piddling imperial proclamation ordering parliament to dissolve and were unable to put up any resistance whatsoever. Doesn't this illustrate just how fragile a thing an electoral majority is?

There are times when the constitution is suspended, when the right to universal suffrage is snatched away, when parliament is dissolved. Indeed, when the despotic ruling class sees the triumphant strength of the socialist party in parliament, it is sure to resort to these methods. In Germany, for example, this has happened frequently. And when this turn of events occurs, there is nothing for it but to rely on the strength of the united working class. Yes! - there is nothing for it but to rely on the direct action of the united workers. But the question is will it be possible to immediately resort to direct action as soon as it is required unless effort has already been expended on training the ordinary working class itself to acquire solidarity?

Hyndman, the leader of the Social-Democratic Federation in Britain, complained in the American publication Wilshire's Magazine last year as

follows: In as little as forty years the Japanese have rushed forward from the feudal system of the middle ages to the modern capitalist system. They have accomplished within forty years the work which it took other empires several hundred years to complete. On the other hand, just what have we socialists managed to achieve in these same forty years? The German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) has acquired 3 million members (sic). This means it has a following equivalent to more than two-fifths of the German army. They are clear on what their purpose is and they know that their time has come. So isn't the fact that they still have not roused themselves a case of carrying forbearance and humility and modesty just a little too far? They call themselves a revolutionary party but what have they achieved over forty years? I ask the Germans and the other peoples: Isn't death in Europe and America far more terrifying after all than the deaths which have occurred in Manchuria?¹¹

Hyndman's harsh words are certainly not unreasonable. If the SPD's 3 million members were genuinely conscious party members, the revolution should already have been achieved long ago. But being a member of a party in the sense that one votes for it and being a conscious member are different things altogether. Even if one does have 3 million people trained for the purpose of elections, they are useless for the purpose of making the revolution. The advocates of universal suffrage and a parliamentary policy generally say to the working class: "Vote for us! Vote for us! If you elect our comrades as MPs, and if our comrades win a majority in parliament, that will be the social revolution. All the workers have to do is vote." And the honest worker believes this and trusts in parliament completely. He votes and in this way as many as 3 million votes are amassed. But it is only 3 million votes. It is not a question of 3 million conscious, united socialists. So what happens is that when the workers are told "Now is the revolution! Rise

11 "... the deaths which have occurred in Manchuria" is an obvious reference to the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905.

up!", they are flabbergasted and, seeing that the ballot is worthless, have to rethink their ideas all over again. Thus we can see that, to the extent that a parliamentary policy takes hold, so the revolutionary movement is emasculated.

In those areas of the German Confederation such as Saxony, Lübeck, Hamburg and so on where socialism is strongest, there were severe limitations on the right to vote in the election which took place a couple of years or so ago. But instead of the people rising up against this they did no more than whine about it. Bebel¹² says that the general strike and other forms of direct action are our final resorts, that as long as we have the right to vote it follows that we should fight in the parliamentary arena. But I cannot help having my doubts that the same thing as happened a couple of years ago will not then simply go on being endlessly repeated.

V

Over the last forty years the German socialist party's blood, sweat and tears have gone into the electoral movement. If it had devoted the same effort to genuinely arousing the consciousness and solidarity of the workers, perhaps we would not have the situation such as we find today where the workers are still allowing the Kaiser and prime minister to crow over their victories. I am not, of course, saying that the German socialist party has taught the workers nothing, but no one can deny either that most of its activity has been directed towards the goal of the elections.

Of course, even the advocates of universal suffrage and a parliamentary policy cannot do without the consciousness and solidarity of the workers. They recognise that even when there is universal suffrage, they can do nothing in parliament without the consciousness and solidarity

12 August Bebel, a leader of the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) from its inception in 1869 till his death in 1913.

of the working class. But, on the other hand, if the workers can arrive at genuine consciousness and solidarity, then can't they achieve whatever they wish anyway by means of their own direct action? And when events have progressed that far, there is absolutely no need for them to start electing MPs and relying on parliament.

If MPs are corrupted, then all is done for. Should parliament be dissolved, then again all is done for. What this means, then, is that the social revolution (in other words, the workers' revolution) has ultimately to depend on the strength of the workers themselves. Instead of the workers serving as a stepping stone for parliamentary candidates who are nothing but bourgeois schemers, they should immediately go forward themselves and aim at securing a decent life. That is they should provide themselves with decent food and clothing.

Movements for universal suffrage and the electing of MPs might arguably be one form of propaganda but, even if they are, don't they amount to resorting to indirect means, while neglecting to propagandise directly in any way whatsoever? Isn't it a question of failing to develop a powerful solidarity and of trusting instead in a fragile thing like the vote. In Japan today it costs not less than ¥2000 to contest a single constituency. Yet if one spent no more than this on pure and simple propaganda and on encouraging solidarity among the workers, I wonder what a huge effect it would have.

A majority of socialists in Europe today have become disillusioned with the poor results which parliamentary power has to offer. A tendency has emerged in the various continental countries for friction to often develop between the socialist MPs and the working class. Even the British trade unions, which make frantic efforts to get MPs elected, have witnessed a gradual decline in the number of their members and in their funds. Shouldn't we socialists in Japan pay the greatest attention to this point?

What the working class needs is not the conquest of political power - it is the "conquest of bread".¹³ It is not laws - but food and clothing. Hence it follows that parliament has almost no use for the working class. Suppose we were to go as far as putting our faith and trust simply in such things as introducing a paragraph into a parliamentary law here or revising several clauses in some bill or other there. In that case we could get our aims carried out merely by putting our trust in the advocates of social reform and the state socialists. But if instead of this what we want is to carry out a genuine social revolution and to improve and maintain the real living standards of the working class, we must concentrate all our efforts not on parliamentary power but on developing the workers' solidarity. And the workers themselves too must be ready not to rely on such creatures as bourgeois MPs and politicians but to achieve their aims by means of their own power and their own direct action. To repeat: the last thing the workers should do is to put their trust in votes and MPs.

VI

Although I have been talking in this way, I certainly do not think it would be a bad thing to gain the right to vote. Nor am I by any means vehemently opposed to the movement for reforming the election laws. Should universal suffrage be achieved, then the workers' views would at least to some extent have to be borne in mind as parliament went about its business of law making. No one could deny that at least there would be a certain amount of advantage to the workers in this. But, all the same, it still has to be said that whatever the workers gained from this would be nothing more than the advantages accruing to them from such schemes as projects for social reform. We can mention the benefits which workers might get from laws dealing with labour insurance, factory

13 A reference to Kropotkin's famous book of the same name.

inspection, tenants' problems, labour protection and poor relief. Or the benefits to them of amending or repealing the police peace preservation law and press law. Because there are advantages to be had here, launching movements to achieve these aims is by no means a bad thing. On the contrary, it is all to the good - but that is not to say that, because we are socialists, we are forced to take up these movements ourselves.

Then, again, I do not by any means regard it as a bad thing for comrades to stand as parliamentary candidates and fight elections. Nor would I be in the least opposed if, once elected, comrades were active within parliament. Rather, I would be pleased to see the number of our comrades in parliament grow, for the same reason as it would also give me pleasure to see the number of our comrades increase in all other spheres of society and among all the different classes. I would be pleased to see our comrades on the increase within the government and within the business world, within the army and within the navy, in the field of education and among the workers and peasants. So, if it is possible to wage the electoral struggle, that is alright by me. But what I cannot agree with is that waging the electoral struggle is something which, as a socialist party, we should be disproportionately concerned with.

The point is that as a socialist and as a member of the socialist party there are certain things I believe are important for attaining our end. What we are aiming at is a fundamental revolution in economic organisation - the abolition of the wages system, in other words. Now, I believe that, in order to attain this end, it is more important to arouse the consciousness of ten workers than it is to get a thousand signatures on a petition for universal suffrage. I also believe that it is more urgent for us to use ¥10 for promoting the solidarity of the workers than it is to spend ¥2000 on an electoral campaign and that there is far more merit in holding a single discussion with a group of workers than there is in making ten speeches in parliament.

Comrades! The conclusion I draw from the foregoing is as follows:
I hope that from now on our socialist movement in Japan will abandon its
commitment to a parliamentary policy and will adopt as its method and
policy the direct action of the workers united as one.

At a time like this when many comrades are zealously engaged in the movement for universal suffrage, I have been extremely reluctant to say what has been on my mind. Many is the time I have taken up my pen to write - and then had second thoughts. But my conscience will not allow me to stay silent any longer. I believe that keeping silent would be an utter betrayal of my principles. And, anyway, since some of those very comrades engaged in the movement for universal suffrage were kind enough to suggest that I write this 'confession', I decided to commit myself to paper in the firm hope that comrades will criticise and comment on what I have to say. I also hope that all comrades will recognise the sincerity of my views.

Kōtoku Shūsui, Article in the Heimin Shimbun

(Common People's Newspaper) No. 16, 5 February 1907,

p 1.

Appendix 5Biographical Sketches

ABE Isō (安部磯雄) Born into a samurai family in Fukuoka in 1865. Attended Dōshisha University and became a Christian clergyman. Went to study in the USA in 1891. Returned to Japan as a Christian Socialist in 1895. Abe was a founder-member of the Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai (Society for the Study of Socialism) in 1898. Became a university professor. Wrote the Manifesto of the abortive Shakai Minshutō (Social-Democratic Party) in 1901 and numerous articles and books on 'socialism'. After the Heiminsha (the group which published the Heimin Shimbun - Common People's Newspaper - and Chokugen - Straight Talking) was dissolved in October 1905, was associated with Shin Kigen (New Era). Following the disappearance of Shin Kigen, virtually retired from politics for many years but became active again in the 1920s and was a social-democratic MP from 1928-1940. Died 1949.

AKABA Hajime (赤羽一) Born 1875 in Nagano prefecture. Studied law and became a journalist. Lived in the USA from 1902-1905. Joined the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) in 1906. Wrote for the daily Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper), Shakai Shimbun (Social News) and other journals. Although associated with the social-democratic Shakai Shimbun, Akaba advocated direct action. It was friction between Katayama Sen and Akaba which led in 1908 to the separation of the Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun (Tokyo Social News) from the Shakai Shimbun (Social News). In prison 1908-1909 for offences connected with the Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun. Published Nōmin No Fukuin (The Peasant's Gospel) clandestinely in 1910 and imprisoned for this. Died in prison in March 1912.

ARAHATA Kanson (荒畑寒村) Born in 1887 in Yokohama, Arahata was attracted to the socialist movement as a young boy of 16. By 1905 he was an active propagandist. Involved in the 'red flag incident' in

June 1908, he was imprisoned until February 1910. Together with Ōsugi Sakae, published Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) from October 1912-January 1916. Also with Ōsugi, organised a Sanjikirizumu Kenkyū Kai (Association for the Study of Syndicalism) in July 1913. Published Rōdō Kumiai (Trade Union) in 1916 and Aofuku (Blue Uniform) in 1918. After the Russian revolution, moved towards Bolshevism and became a founder-member of the Nihon Kyōsantō (Communist Party of Japan) in 1922. In prison 1918-1919, 1921, 1926-1927. Visited Russia in 1923. Broke with the Communist Party and became associated with the Rōnōha (Worker-Farmer Group) in 1927. In prison again 1937-1938. Today he is the sole survivor of the Meiji generation of socialists.

ISHIKAWA Sanshirō (石川三四郎) Born 1876 in Saitama prefecture. Studied law and in 1902 became a journalist on the Yorozu Chōhō (Morning News). Joined the Heiminsha group (which brought out the Heinin Shimbun - Common People's Newspaper) in 1903. As an ardent Christian, was the key figure in the group which published Shin Kigen (New Era) during 1905-1906. In prison 1907-1908. Like many other socialists of this period, became an anarchist, but Ishikawa was exceptional in that it was his Christian beliefs which led him to draw anarchist political conclusions. Imprisoned again 1910. Left Japan in 1913 to spend almost a decade in exile in Europe. After his return to Japan, remained an anarchist propagandist until his death in 1956.

KANNO Suga (菅野須賀) Born in Ōsaka in 1881. Made contact with the socialists in 1904. Arrested at the time of the 'red flag incident' in June 1908. Together with Kōtoku Shūsui, attempted to publish Jiyū Shisō (Free Thought) in 1909. Jiyū Shisō was crushed by the authorities and Kanno was imprisoned in May 1910. Executed for 'high treason' in January 1911.

KATAYAMA Sen (片山潜) Born in Okayama prefecture in 1859. His parents were peasants. Worked and studied in the USA from 1884-1896 and became a Christian. Published Rōdō Sekai (Labour World) from December 1897. Katayama was a founder-member of the Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai (Society for the Study of Socialism), formed in 1898, and the abortive Shakai Minshutō (Social-Democratic Party) of 1901. Represented the Japanese socialists at the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International in August 1904. From June 1907, published Shakai Shinbun (Social News), which was the principal organ of those socialists who continued to advocate parliamentarism in the face of Kōtoku and others' direct actionism. Imprisoned in 1912. Went into permanent exile in 1914. Katayama was active in the USA and Mexico until 1921. From 1922 he lived in Russia and worked for the Comintern. Died in 1933 and was buried in the wall of the Kremlin.

KAWAKAMI Kiyoshi (河上清) Born 1873. Became a journalist on the Yorozu Chōhō (Morning News). Kawakami was a founder-member of the Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai (Society for the Study of Socialism) in 1898 and the abortive Shakai Minshutō (Social-Democratic Party) in 1901. After the failure of the Shakai Minshutō went to study in the USA. Remained in the USA for many years and became an apologist for the policies pursued by the Japanese state.

KINOSHITA Naoe (木下尚江) Born into a samurai family in Shinshū in 1869. After studying law, became a journalist. In 1901 attempted with others to form the Shakai Minshutō (Social-Democratic Party). During the period of the Russo-Japanese War Kinoshita was one of the most active socialist propagandists. As well as being a popular writer, he was generally acclaimed as the best orator in the Japanese socialist movement of the time. Stood unsuccessfully as a socialist candidate in an election held in Tōkyō in May 1905. As a Christian Socialist, was

associated with Shin Kigen (New Era) from November 1905. Joined the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) in February 1906, but abandoned political activity for religion in July 1906. Died 1937.

KŌTOKU Shūsui (幸徳秋水) Born 1871 in Kōchi prefecture, the son of a merchant father and a samurai mother. Became a journalist. Helped found the Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai (Society for the Study of Socialism) in 1898 and was involved in the abortive attempt to launch a Shakai Minshutō (Social-Democratic Party) in 1901. Published Shakaishugi Shinzui (The Quintessence Of Socialism) in 1903. Resigned from the Yorozu Chōhō (Morning News) in 1903 when that newspaper came out in support of war with Russia. With others, published the anti-war Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) from November 1903. Imprisoned in 1905. During the 6 months he spent in the USA in 1905-1906 his ideas underwent a major change. Hence Kōtoku's 'The Change In My Thought', issued in February 1907, called on the Japanese socialists to abandon parliamentarism and turn instead to direct action. Wrote numerous articles and books. Translated Kropotkin's The Conquest Of Bread in 1909. His attempt to launch Jiyū Shisō (Free Thought) in 1909 was thwarted by the authorities. Arrested June 1910. Executed for 'high treason' in January 1911.

MORICHIKA Umpei (森近運平) Born 1881 in Okayama prefecture. Studied agriculture and became a minor official, but lost his post on becoming a socialist in 1904. Was active as a socialist in Okayama, Ōsaka and Tōkyō. Edited the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper)/Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) in 1907-1908. Imprisoned 1908. After the Nihon Heimin Shimbun collapsed, returned to Okayama in March 1909 and became a farmer. Arrested in the summer of 1910. Executed for 'high treason' in January 1911.

NISHIKAWA Kōjirō (西川 光二郎) Born 1876 in Hyōgo prefecture. Became a journalist. Along with others, attempted to form the Shakai Minshutō (Social-Democratic Party) in 1901. From 1902 cooperated with Katayama Sen in the production of Rōdō Sekai (Labour World) and Shakaishugi (Socialism). Then joined the Heiminsha group and was a frequent contributor to the weekly Heimin Shinbun (Common People's Newspaper). Imprisoned 1905. Together with Yamaguchi Koken, edited Hikari (Light) during 1905-1906. Dispatched to Ashio by the daily Heimin Shinbun (Common People's Newspaper) at the time of the miners' insurrection in February 1907, Nishikawa was arrested and held in custody for 3 months. After the daily paper collapsed, cooperated with Katayama Sen on the social-democratic Shakai Shinbun (Social News) from June 1907. Broke with Katayama Sen in February 1908 and was then involved in the production of the Tōkyō Shakai Shinbun (Tokyo Social News). In prison 1908-1910 because of offences connected with the campaign against the increase in Tōkyō's tram fare in 1906. Left the socialist movement in 1910. Died 1940.

ŌSUGI Sakae (大杉 栄) Born 1885, the son of an army officer. Attracted to the socialist movement while still a student studying foreign languages in Tōkyō. Under Kōtoku Shūsui's influence, became an anarchist in 1906. Imprisoned in 1907. Involved in the 'roof speeches incident' in January 1908 and the 'red flag incident' in June 1908. Imprisoned for 2½ years on account of the latter. Together with Arahata Kanson, published Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) from October 1912-January 1916 and organised a Sanjikirizumu Kenkyū Kai (Association for the Study of Syndicalism) in July 1913. After the Russian revolution, Ōsugi remained an anarchist and, despite some initial cooperation with the Comintern, he criticised the Bolsheviks in a succession of short-lived journals which he published. In prison 1919-1920. Visited China in 1920 and France in 1923. Murdered by the military police in September 1923.

SAKAI Toshihiko (堺利彦) Born into a samurai family in Fukuoka prefecture in 1870. Became a journalist and, like Kōtoku Shūsui, worked on the Yorozu Chōhō (Morning News). Together with Kōtoku, resigned from the Yorozu Chōhō in 1903 and helped launch the anti-war Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) in November 1903. Imprisoned 1904. Published Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study Of Socialism) during 1906. Sakai remained a social-democrat, committed to contesting parliamentary elections, even after Kōtoku's 'The Change In My Thought' appeared in 1907. Yet his enduring friendship with Kōtoku kept Sakai apart from the other social-democrats, such as Katayama Sen. Sakai was a prolific writer of books and articles. Involved in the 'roof speeches incident' of January 1908 and the 'red flag incident' of June 1908. In prison 1908-1910, as a result of the latter. After his release from prison in 1910, formed the 'baibunsha' ('hack writers' company') to provide a means of income for some socialists. Published Hechima No Hana (The Gourd Flower) in 1914-1915 and Shin Shakai (New Society) from September 1915. Sakai was an unsuccessful parliamentary candidate in the general election in January 1917. Elected chairman of the central committee of the Nihon Kyōsantō (Communist Party of Japan) when it was formed in July 1922. Imprisoned 1923. Subsequently broke with the Communist Party in favour of the Rōnōha (Worker-Farmer Group). Died in 1933.

TAZOE Tetsuji (田添鉄二) Born 1875 in Kumamoto prefecture. Studied in the USA from 1898-1900. After returning to Japan, worked as a journalist. Became involved in the Heiminsha group in 1904. Tazoe was a consistent social-democrat who clashed with Kōtoku Shūsui at the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) conference in February 1907 in the debate on parliamentarism versus direct action. Following the collapse of the daily Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper), he cooperated with Katayama Sen to produce Shakai Shimbun (Social News) from June 1907. Died of pulmonary tuberculosis in 1908.

YAMAGUCHI Koken (山口 孤剣) Born c. 1883 in Shimonoseki, Yamaguchi prefecture. Became an active socialist propagandist and wrote for the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) and Chokugen (Straight Talking). Together with Nishikawa Kōjirō, edited Hikari (Light) during 1905-1906. In prison 1907-1908. The celebration to mark Yamaguchi's release from prison in June 1908 led to the 'red flag incident'. Imprisoned again in 1908 for offences arising from the campaign against the increase in Tōkyō's tram fare in 1906. Became a journalist. Contributed to Sakai Toshihiko's Shin Shakai (New Society). Died from kidney disease in 1920.

YAMAKAWA Hitoshi (山川 均) Born 1880 in Okayama prefecture. Became a Christian. Imprisoned from 1900-1904 for lese-majesty. Joined the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) in 1906. Yamakawa supported Kōtoku's direct-actionism in the many articles he wrote in the daily Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) and Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People's Newspaper). Yamakawa was involved in both the 'roof speeches incident' of January 1908 and the 'red flag incident' of June 1908. On account of the latter incident, he was imprisoned for 2 years. Following Kōtoku's execution in 1911, Yamakawa lived quietly in the countryside for several years. He returned to Tōkyō in 1916 and cooperated with Sakai Toshihiko in the publication of Shin Shakai (New Society). Yamakawa was a founder-member of the Nihon Kyōsantō (Communist Party of Japan) in 1922. Later he split with the Communist Party to form the Rōnōha (Worker-Farmer Group). Died in 1958.

GLOSSARY

Ainu (アイヌ) a minority people found in northern Japan who are racially distinct (and formerly were culturally distinct) from the Japanese.

Bakufu (幕府) literally 'tent (i.e. military) government'; this was the form of government throughout the Tokugawa (徳川) period.

Burakumin (部落民) an outcaste minority which, although racially indistinguishable from other Japanese, suffers widespread discrimination; its members live in (or, at least, originate from) special villages (部落, buraku).

Edo (江戸) the capital city throughout the Tokugawa (徳川) period; renamed Tōkyō (東京) after the revolution of 1868.

Genrō (元老) a small group of Meiji (明治) elder statesmen, most of whom had repeatedly held important political office and who, even when out of formal office, continued to wield considerable political power.

Gōshi (郷士) rustic samurai who continued to live in the countryside, rather than - as was the case with most members of the samurai class during the Tokugawa (徳川) period - take up residence in the castle towns.

Kansai (関西) literally 'west of the barrier'; refers to the Kyōto (京都)-Ōsaka (大阪) area.

Kantō (関東) literally 'east of the barrier'; refers to the area around Tōkyō (東京).

Meiji (明治) the era from 1868-1912 which coincided with the reign of the Meiji Emperor.

Oyakata (親方) literally 'parent person'; a foreman or small capitalist who stands in a quasi-parental relationship to a group of workers (who are regarded as his kokata (子方) - literally 'child person').

Shinkan (神官) shintō (神道) priest.

Shishi (志士) revolutionary samurai who struggled against the bakufu (幕府) in the name of the Emperor during the period of the Meiji (明治) Restoration.

Taishō (大正) the era from 1912-1926 which coincided with the reign of the Taishō Emperor.

Tokugawa (徳川) the family name of the hereditary shōgun (将軍 - commander-in-chief; general) who held effective power from 1603 up to 1868 (the Tokugawa period).

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