

# THE ORIGINS OF SOCIALIST THOUGHT IN JAPAN

*Volume 6*

**JOHN CRUMP**



JAPAN

ROUTLEDGE LIBRARY EDITIONS: JAPAN

THE ORIGINS OF SOCIALIST THOUGHT IN JAPAN

# **THE ORIGINS OF SOCIALIST THOUGHT IN JAPAN**

JOHN CRUMP

Volume 67



LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published in 1983

This edition first published in 2011

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge

270 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2010.

To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge's collection of thousands of eBooks please go to [www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk](http://www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk).

© 1983 John Crump

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0-203-84228-6 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 13: 978-0-415-56498-4 (Set)

eISBN 13: 978-0-203-84317-8 (Set)

ISBN 13: 978-0-415-59182-9 (Volume 67)

eISBN 13: 978-0-203-84228-7 (Volume 67)

### **Publisher's Note**

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original copies may be apparent.

### **Disclaimer**

The publisher has made every effort to trace copyright holders and would welcome correspondence from those they have been unable to trace.

The Origins of Socialist Thought in Japan

JOHN CRUMP

CROOM HELM

London & Canberra

ST.MARTIN'S PRESS

New York

© 1983 John Crump

Croom Helm Ltd, Provident House, Burrell Row,  
Beckenham, Kent BR3 1AT

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Crump, John  
The origins of socialist thought in Japan.  
1. Socialism-Japan-History  
I. Title  
355'.00952 HX412

ISBN 0-7099-0739-7

© 1983 John Crump

All rights reserved. For information write:  
St. Martin's Press, Inc., 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010

First published in the United States of America in 1983

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2010.

To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge's  
collection of thousands of eBooks please go to [www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk](http://www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk).

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Crump, J.D. (John D.), 1944–

The origins of socialist thought in Japan.

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. Communism-Japan-History. 2. Socialism-Japan-History. I. Title.  
HX412.C78 1983 335'.00952 82–23075

ISBN 0-312-58872-0

# CONTENTS

[List of Tables](#)

[Preface](#)

[Introduction](#)

[PART ONE TO THE END OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR \(1905\) 1](#)

[1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM IN JAPAN AND THE FORMING OF A WORKING CLASS 3](#)

[The Revolution of 1868 3](#)

[Industrialisation 6](#)

[The Forming of a Working Class 11](#)

[The Samurai 11](#)

[The Artisans 13](#)

[The Peasants](#) 14

[Women](#) 16

[Oppression by the State](#) 17

## [2. POPULISM \(NARODNISM\) AND OTHER RUSSIAN INFLUENCES](#) 29

[Western Sources](#) 30

[First News of 'Socialism'](#) 31

[The 'People's Rights Movement'](#) 35

[Russian Populism](#) 37

[Tolstoy](#) 42

[The Russo-Japanese War](#) 44

## [3. STUDYING AT THE FEET OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY](#) 55

[Sakai Yūzaburō](#) 55

['Authorities' on 'Socialism' 57](#)

[Schäffle's Quintessence of Socialism 58](#)

[Kirkup, Dawson, Ely 61](#)

[False Optimism 62](#)

[The SPD 64](#)

[State Capitalism Again 65](#)

[Reformism 66](#)

[Parliamentarism 72](#)

[European Social-Democracy and the Russo-Japanese War 73](#)

[Marx and Engels 75](#)

[4. INFLUENCES FROM ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES—  
AMERICA, BRITAIN, NEW ZEALAND 89](#)

[Japanese Students in America 89](#)

[Christianity and ‘Socialism’ 91](#)

[Shying Away from the Class Struggle 93](#)

[Henry George 96](#)

[Fabianism 99](#)

[Percy Alden 101](#)

[Labour Leaders 103](#)

[New Zealand’s Lib-Labs 104](#)

[Stony Ground 106](#)

[5. THE LEGACY FROM THE OLD SOCIETY 114](#)

[Money and the Samurai 114](#)

[Samurai Among the Early Socialists 115](#)

[The Samurai Ethos 117](#)

[Commodity Production 119](#)

[Money and the Peasants 122](#)

[Confucianism 124](#)

[Taoism 127](#)

[Elitism 129](#)

[The Monarchy 133](#)

[6. JAPANESE 'SOCIALISM' TO 1905 141](#)

['Socialism' as an Alternative Form of Capitalism 144](#)

[PART TWO FROM THE END OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR \(1905\)  
TO THE GREAT RICE RIOTS \(1918\) 149](#)

[7. THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM AND THE  
FIRST FLEXING OF THE WORKING CLASS' MUSCLES 151](#)

[The Conditions of the Workers 153](#)

[Strikes and Insurrections 158](#)

[Direct Action in Practice and Theory 164](#)

[The First World War 168](#)

[The Rice Riots 175](#)

## [8. KŌTOKU SHŪSUI AND THE AMERICAN CONNECTION 182](#)

[The Socialist Party of America 185](#)

[The Socialist Labour Party 190](#)

[The Industrial Workers of the World 193](#)

[The Anarchists 198](#)

[The Shakai Kakumeitō \(Social-Revolutionary Party\) 201](#)

## [9. INSPIRATION FROM RUSSIA 212](#)

[The Nagasaki Russians 214](#)

[Bronislas Pilsudski and Grigorii Gershuni 217](#)

[The Russian Anarchists 220](#)

[Kropotkin 222](#)

[The Russian Revolution](#) 232

[10. SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY AND SYNDICALISM IN CONTENTION—  
EUROPEAN BATTLES REFOUGHT IN JAPAN](#) 239

[Arnold Roller's The Social General Strike](#) 242

[The Emergence of Support for Kōtoku's Direct Actionism](#) 246

[The Conference of the Nippon Shakaitō \(Socialist Party of Japan\)](#) 250

[The Widening Rift](#) 255

[Keir Hardie in Japan](#) 262

[The Social-Democratic Faction](#) 265

[The Syndicalist Faction](#) 273

[11. CHRISTIANS AND TERRORISTS](#) 291

[Japanese Christian Socialism](#) 296

[Terrorism](#) 301

[State Repression 302](#)

[To Make the Emperor Bleed 307](#)

[High Treason 312](#)

[12. JAPANESE 'SOCIALISM' TO 1918 323](#)

[The Socialist Movement 330](#)

[Was an Alternative to Capitalism Posed? 331](#)

[Appendix A 'ABOLISH MONEY!' by Kōtoku Shūsui 338](#)

[Appendix B 'THE CHANGE IN MY THOUGHT' by Kōtoku Shūsui 341](#)

[Select Bibliography 352](#)

[Glossary 361](#)

[Index 363](#)

# TABLES

1.1 Economic Indicators, 1880–1905 [8–10](#)

1.2 Male and Female Factory Workers, 1880–1905 [18–19](#)

1.3 Labour Disputes, 1897–1905 [21](#)

7.1 Economic Indicators, 1906–18 [152](#)

7.2 Male and Female Factory Workers, 1906–18 [154](#)

7.3 Female Death Rates [157](#)

7.4 Labour Disputes, 1906–18 [160](#)

7.5 Average Daily Wage Rates, 1906–18 [169](#)

7.6 Prices, 1906–18 [170–1](#)

7.7 Fluctuations in Wage Rates, Cost of Living and Retail Price of Rice,  
1914–18 [173](#)

7.8 Outcome of Labour Disputes, 1914–18 [174](#)

This study is dedicated to the working class in Japan, in the hope that a day will come when (along with the workers throughout the rest of the world) they will decide to get up off their knees.

# PREFACE

The idea of writing this study came to me a full ten years ago, when I spoke not a word of Japanese, had never been to Japan, and knew next to nothing about the country. Over the last ten years I have walked a long and often hard road, but I have been assisted by many people who have given me a helping hand along the way.

I should like to thank the staff of the Centre of Japanese Studies at the University of Sheffield for giving me a grounding in Japanese and for putting up with a sometimes difficult undergraduate student. In particular, I should like to thank Graham Healey, who gave up several hours of his own time to guide me through my first stuttering lessons in Japanese (and who later supervised me when I became a postgraduate student).

After graduating from Sheffield, I spent the next two years at the Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo and then returned to the Centre of Japanese Studies, University of Sheffield for a further three years. During these periods I lived on scholarships provided by the Japanese Ministry of Education and the British Social Science Research Council. I should like to record my gratitude to the working class, which involuntarily provides the surplus value from which the various states finance such scholarships.

While in Japan, many people were kind enough to give up hours of their time to talk to me about socialism (or ‘socialism’). They included Andō Jimbei, Arahata Kanson, Fujita Shōzō, Fukumoto Kazuo, Hagiwara Shintarō, Haniya Yutaka, Hara Momoyo, Higuchi Tokuzō, Matsumoto Reiji, Nabeyama Sadachika, Nakajima Masamichi, Nakamura Akira, Nosaka Sanzō, Ozeki Hiroshi, Sakisaka Itsurō, Shimodaira Hiromi, Shirai Shimpei, Taguchi Fukuji, Takahashi Kōkichi, Takahashi Masao, Tsushima Tadayuki, Tsuzuki Chūshichi, Wada Eikichi, Yamakawa Kikue and others who wish me not to mention their names.

Outside Japan, my greatest debts are to those from whom I have gained insights into what socialism genuinely means. It may seem strange to acknowledge my indebtedness to men whom I have never met and who,

indeed, were often dead long before I was born. Yet the fact remains that my intellectual debts to Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Peter Kropotkin and William Morris (to name but four) are enormous. I have also learned lessons and received inspiration from later generations of revolutionary socialists—in other words, from those who have battled to maintain the vision of a genuinely socialist society throughout the bitter years of social-democratic and Bolshevik ascendancy. The men and women I refer to here are those who have stood in the anarcho-communist, council-communist, Bordigist, situationist and Socialist Party of Great Britain traditions. In particular, I gained a great deal from the SPGB (and also gave back a little in return) during the nine years I spent within its ranks. The fact that certain political differences now separate me from the men and women who have formed the SPGB over 75 years does not deter me from acknowledging what I owe to them.

Various people kindly read part or all of my manuscript and commented on it. They are: Anthony Arblaster, Gordon Daniels, Graham Healey, Matsuzawa Hiroaki, Jitendra Mohan, Stephen Stefan and Totsuka Hideo. I am grateful to all of them for their many helpful comments, including those comments which I was too obstinate to act upon! I particularly wish to record my thanks to Matsuzawa Hiroaki, whose detailed knowledge of socialist thought in Japan saved me from making a number of errors, and to Totsuka Hideo, who read the first half of my manuscript while sick in hospital.

My friend Adam Buick read the entire manuscript and commented on it with his usual combination of intelligence and commitment to socialism. My own grasp of socialist theory has benefited greatly from years of friendship with Adam, and I pay tribute to him for being that rarest of animals—a good friend and a dependable comrade.

Last, and most of all, my thanks are due to Midorikawa Taeko. It was she who sustained me in the mind-numbing toil of learning Japanese. Untold hours of her time went into discussing almost every aspect of this study and correcting my translations from the convoluted Japanese of the Meiji era. Above all, it was thanks to her that the writing of this work became a labour of happiness.

John Crump

## NOTE

Japanese names are in general given in the customary East Asian form, i.e. family name followed by personal name. The exceptions to this rule occur when books written by Japanese in Western languages are cited.

Long vowels in Japanese words are indicated by macrons (e.g.  $\bar{o}$ ) except in the cases of Tōkyō, Ōsaka and Kyōto, where convention has been followed and macrons omitted.

# INTRODUCTION

Few of those who might read this work will easily recognise the theoretical position from which it is written. Fewer still are likely to share that position. It is nonetheless hoped that many readers will still be able to get something out of this study. A lot of the information collected here is not otherwise readily available in Western languages and even those who find socialist theory indigestible may still be able to glean many facts and figures which are new to them. All the same, it has to be said that my intention in writing this study was not simply to mechanically assemble data on the socialist movement in Japan. There is an argument which runs through this account of the development of socialist thought in Japan and I shall try to state this briefly here.

Paradoxically, the basic thesis of this history of socialist thought in Japan is that socialism—either as a body of thought or as an active political movement—has barely existed in that country at any period. In my opinion, the vast majority of ideas in Japan which at different times over the years have been labelled ‘socialist’ have been nothing of the sort. The same goes for the groups and the parties (and, indeed, the individuals) which have embodied those ideas. What these various ideas have been concerned with, if not with socialism, I have tried to explain with some precision in the text. Here it is sufficient to generalise and say that, despite fervent protestations of ‘socialism’, those who have held these ideas have nearly all envisaged the continuation of capitalism (even if they have often recognised the need to make some modifications). The last thing to have crossed most of their minds is the perspective of constructing a genuinely new society which would be worthy of the title socialism.

Already I have revealed an important difference between myself and most of those who write on the subject of ‘socialism’. It is remarkable that many supposedly authoritative tomes on ‘socialism’ dispense with definitions of such key concepts as ‘socialism’ itself and ‘capitalism’. All too often, the assumption is made that everyone knows what ‘socialism’ means. Yet a moment’s thought will show that not only is there no unanimity in the world today about what constitutes ‘socialism’ but that many popularly held notions

about ‘socialism’ must be entirely mistaken. One only has to think of the variety of responses which a question such as ‘Is the British Labour Party socialist?’ would evoke in different parts of the world and from different generations to realise that unanimity as to ‘socialism’s meaning clearly does not exist. Similarly, it is evident that many widely accepted ideas about ‘socialism’ must be wrong as soon as one realises that the claims of (shall we say) Western European social-democrats, Russian Leninists and Chinese Maoists to be ‘socialist’ all run counter to one another. Quite clearly they cannot all be right—although there is no reason either why all of them should not be equally wrong!

I will define my use of terms without attempting an elaborate justification of this terminology. To take up the task of explaining thoroughly why I attribute to words such as capitalism and socialism the particular meanings which I do would involve me in writing an entirely different sort of book from the present one (and, indeed, would leave no room for an account of the development of ‘socialist’ thought in Japan—which is, after all, my main purpose here). Suffice it to say that by capitalism I mean a system of society where production is carried on for the purpose of sale on the market, where the majority of people own no significant means of production and are therefore forced to sell their ability to work for wages or salaries in order to survive, and where there are social classes, the state and money. If anyone finds such a definition unsatisfactory because, judged by such criteria, even Russia and China would be capitalist, I can only reply that they are perfectly right. Russia and China are capitalist!—as are the other supposedly ‘socialist countries’ too.

Conversely, throughout this study socialism is taken to mean a social system which negates the principal features of capitalist society. In other words, socialism is given the meaning of a society where production is for the direct satisfaction of human needs without the mediation of a process of buying and selling or exchange, where the means of production are commonly owned and democratically controlled, where there are neither social classes, the state, nor money.<sup>1</sup> Whenever the word socialism is used in any other sense than this it always appears in inverted commas as ‘socialism’, so as to distinguish it from what I regard as genuine socialism.

When it came to writing about those individuals and groupings who claimed to want 'socialism', I was faced with a difficulty. My inclination was to refer to them as 'socialists' and restrict the use of the term socialist to those few whom I consider to have been motivated by the desire to achieve socialism (an example, more or less well known in Britain, would be William Morris). However, this would have so over-loaded the text with inverted commas that I decided against it for the sake of readability. No particular significance should therefore be attached to the word socialist in the following account. The fact that I refer to individuals, organisations, etc. as socialist signifies nothing more than that they are 'socialist' in common parlance.

It may well be wondered why I should have chosen to write about the history of socialist thought in Japan if I deny that much of it has anything to do with socialism. The answer is that Japan is by no means unique in this respect. True, the situation has generally been even bleaker in Japan than it has in other comparable parts of the world (those which—like Japan today—are highly industrialised and have a truly mass working class). Yet even in Western Europe, let alone North America, the history of genuine socialism has been the story of a mere thin red line which has never involved more than relative handfuls of participants and has nothing to do with what are conventionally supposed to be the great victories of 'socialism' (i.e. of social-democracy and Bolshevism). Even if one were to mention some of the theoreticians (such as Anton Pannekoek or Otto Rühle) or some of the currents (such as the Socialist Party of Great Britain or the Council Communists in Germany, Holland, etc.) who—despite many mistakes of their own—have maintained socialism as an intellectual tradition in Europe during this century, they would be unknown by most people even in those countries where they have been active.

Socialism's tragedy up till now has been that—while it is a doctrine of social change, to be brought about by the working class so as to introduce a society which combines individual freedom with communal solidarity—it has existed as a philosophical proposition in a period when only revolutions of an entirely different sort have been on the order of the day. There never yet has been a socialist revolution in any part of the world, nor a socialist society either. Revolutions which have been hailed as socialist, such as the one which occurred in Russia in 1917, have all without exception been capitalist. The

proof of this lies in the capitalist (as defined above) nature of the societies they have given rise to.

Now, it is the fact that we do live in an age which has seen a succession of capitalist revolutions in Russia, China and elsewhere which explains why 'socialism' should have come to be widely thought of as a policy of rapid capital accumulation carried out under the supervision of a strong, centralised state. It is the acutely felt need for capital accumulation which creates the social tensions which give rise to capitalist revolutions and the state has had to shoulder this responsibility in those countries which have embarked on this accumulation process in the relatively unfavourable conditions of the twentieth century, rather than leave it in the private hands of individual bourgeois. What was more natural than that, in a world which has seen the drift towards state capitalism on all sides, 'socialism' should have become a convenient ideological device for masking the ugliness of what has in reality been taking place?

But, if socialism remains throughout the world a future possibility rather than a description of existing reality, the areas of the world where that possibility has the greatest chance of first registering on the popular consciousness are those which are economically the most highly developed and where the blue- and white-collar working class comprises the vast majority of the population. At present this principally means Western Europe, North America and Japan. We can perhaps think of these three areas as forming a triangle, yet it is a triangle of which only one of the sides has been closed. What I mean by this is that, although there is a ready, two-way flow of information and ideas between Western Europe and North America, the same cannot be said of either Japan and North America, on the one hand, or Japan and Western Europe, on the other. Integrated into the world economy though Japan might be, at the level of social thought there are still formidable barriers erected by language and cultural differences which prevent the two-way flow of information between Japan and the rest of the world. This particularly applies to the rest of the world's obtaining a correct understanding of what people think in Japan. It was the idea of helping to correct this deficiency in what for me is the vitally important field of socialist thought that prompted me to take up this study.

This volume is a critical history of socialist thought in Japan up to the great rice riots of 1918. Although it can stand by itself as an independent piece of research, it should be borne in mind that it is intended as the first part of a longer work. 1918 has been chosen as the point at which to end this volume because, in the first place, it was from this year onwards that the influence of Bolshevism increasingly made itself felt in Japan. Under the impact of the Russian revolution, many of the socialists in Japan were henceforth gradually to come round to different positions from those which they had been occupying for the previous decade or so. Besides this, when the rice riots rocked Japan in the summer of 1918 they represented an explosion of working class and peasant resentment against the oppression these classes were experiencing—and hence a somewhat changed political climate for the socialists to work in. 1918 or thereabouts can thus be regarded as a definite turning point in the development of socialist thought in Japan, and it therefore seems an appropriate spot at which to break the narrative.

The end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 can also be taken as an earlier ‘turning point’ in the development of socialist thought in Japan and this is why the pre-1906 period and that from 1906 onwards are treated separately in [Part One](#) and [Part Two](#) of this study. Up till the end of the Russo-Japanese War it was social-democracy which was the dominant form of ‘socialism’ in Japan, whereas soon after that war was over anarchism seized the initiative. Similarly, up till 1905 the Japanese socialists were a more or less united movement, whereas the war’s drawing to a close was the signal for a swift disintegration into rival factions. Of course, there were elements of continuity too which bridged these so-called ‘turning points’ in 1905 and 1918. Some socialists’ ideas altered remarkably little over the years and in other cases, even when change did come, it was hesitant and incomplete. Despite these qualifications, however, 1905 and 1918 were dates of some significance in the development of socialist thought in Japan. They marked the approximate beginnings of periods of considerable theoretical activity (and of organisational renewal) and—for the purposes of analysis—can, I believe, legitimately be regarded as turning points in the history of ‘socialism’ in Japan.

There is, of course, very little published material on socialist thought in Japan available in Western languages. In fact, there is relatively little material

available on any aspect whatsoever of ‘socialism’ in Japan, but most of what has been published has tended to concentrate on the socialist movement—on organisations and personalities, rather than on ideas and theories. In Japan itself the situation is quite different, with a vast literature on ‘socialism’, dealing with both Japan and overseas. Most of this is of post-Second World War vintage and some of it is well researched and highly informative too. Where the majority of the Japanese-language material falls down, however, is in its uncritical adherence to Leninist (and I would emphasise Leninist, as opposed to Marxist) assumptions. Leninism continues to enjoy a tremendous vogue among academics in Japan, resulting in often highly distorted accounts of ‘socialism’ in that country. For example, in assessing the worth of any particular socialist thinker, attention to details (such as whether he/she had a ‘correct’ (by Leninist standards) grasp of the role of the ‘vanguard party’) has tended to totally eclipse more basic considerations such as whether she/he had a vision of socialism which successfully challenged the social relationships of capitalism. To take an obvious case, how often does one find Kōtoku Shūsui contrasted unfavourably with his contemporary, Katayama Sen? This is usually explained as being due to Kōtoku’s ‘petty-bourgeois’ inclinations and to his lack of contact with the working class of his day, while the fact that Kōtoku’s understanding of socialism (despite its many defects) was head and shoulders above Katayama’s (if, indeed, Katayama’s can be said to have existed) is simply ignored.

Wherever possible I have gone back to primary sources but there are limits to what a Western-based scholar can do in this respect. Some of the material presented in this study is new, but much of it is already to be found in Japanese-language books on ‘socialism. As a general approach, I felt it more worthwhile to concentrate my efforts on a re-evaluation of what is (within Japan, at any rate) already broadly known about the development of socialist thought in that country than to attempt to unearth entirely new material on the subject. It seems to me that Japanese scholars are much better equipped than I am to carry out the latter task and I see no point in attempting to duplicate their work in this field. On the other hand, someone standing outside Japanese society, as I do, has a definite advantage in being able to look at facts which are relatively well known within Japan with a fresh eye. I do not claim that my approach to the study of socialist thought in Japan provides all the answers, but I am confident that it does give one greater insights than the

Leninist yardstick applied by most Japanese scholars (and, needless to say, than the unsympathetic line—hostile to anything which calls itself ‘socialism’—adopted by many Western scholars).

Those who will try to classify me either as a ‘Marxist’ or as an ‘anarchist’ and then read my account of the development of socialist thought in Japan according to some such pre-conceived categorisation will, I fear, get less than they might from this study. My debts both to Marx and to anarchists such as Kropotkin are obvious enough, but they should not be allowed to obscure my criticisms of the deficiencies of both Marxism and anarchism. I stand with those who argue that the longstanding juxtaposition of Marxism to anarchism is both confusing and something which needs to be transcended by developing socialist theory further so that it combines the positive elements found in both these schools of thought. Those who disagree and regard Marxism and anarchism as fundamentally incompatible should pause and reflect that, on many questions which are vital to socialism, advocates and opponents have been distributed haphazardly within the so-called ‘Marxist’ and ‘anarchist’ camps. For example, those, on the one hand, who have envisaged that commodity production would persist within their supposedly ‘new’ societies and those committed, on the other hand, to the free distribution of products and the abolition of the wages system have been ranged indiscriminately on both sides of the ‘Marxist’-‘anarchist’ divide. This ought at least to raise some doubts as to whether the polarisation which occurred between Marxism and anarchism was over those issues which are of central importance to socialists wishing to abolish capitalism. A process of separation certainly was needed to divide genuine socialists from those who continued to think along predominantly capitalist lines, but I would contend that, tragically, when the line came to be drawn, it was in entirely the wrong place.

Both ‘Marxists’ and ‘anarchists’ were, I believe, responsible for this confusion and it was a mistake that was compounded by the contradictory elements incorporated into the doctrines of even the foremost theoreticians among them. Even thinkers of the stature of Marx and Kropotkin could not escape such contradictions. There was a rich socialist vein running through the works of both of them, but there were other elements too which ought to have been consigned long ago to the slag heap of capitalism. Instead, the

mutual hostility which exists between Marxism and anarchism has ensured that those identifying with both camps have defended traditional positions, contradictions and all.

I have called this study ‘The Origins of Socialist Thought in Japan’ and the formulation ‘socialist thought’ perhaps needs a word of explanation. The socialists in Japan have, at various junctures, thought a great deal about the problems of the society they live in and their thinking has ranged widely over many varied questions. Different socialists at different times have had things to say about issues ranging from the position of women and of minorities such as the Ainu and Burakumin within society to the problems raised by religion, language, the family and so on. Clearly, it has not been possible for me to follow all the socialists as their thoughts have ranged over all these varied questions. What I have tended to concentrate on in this study has been the socialists’ understanding (or lack of understanding) of how a capitalist economy functions and the extent to which they were able to challenge capitalism (if at all) by posing a genuinely socialist model in its place. Other questions—such as their attitude towards the state—have also received considerable attention as well.

It is true that I regard the questions to which I have paid most attention in this study as acid tests for any who claim to be socialists, but I do not wish to give the impression that I consider issues other than those I have been able to take up here as unimportant. On the contrary, socialists’ attitudes towards discriminated groups within society can be every bit as revealing as their ideas on economic organisation. To mention only one case, Kawakami Kiyoshi’s scurrilous comments on the Ainu, published in 1903,<sup>2</sup> damned him as a socialist just as surely as did his confused ideas on the relationship between wage labour and capital. The point is, however, that limitations of time and space have prevented me from taking up each and every issue on which the socialists in Japan pronounced their views. It is a question of priorities and, while the issues I have concentrated on here are not by any means the sole ones of concern to socialists, they certainly are central to any serious examination of capitalism and socialism.

I take the view that, in writing a history of socialist thought, different considerations apply than if one were writing a history of the socialist

movement. It is not necessary to give a blow by blow or year by year account of developments. Rather one needs to concentrate on periods of theoretical innovation and pay relatively less attention to the years and even decades when political ideas all but marked time. I am aware that the method I have chosen of presenting the data collected in this book has its drawbacks. My approach has been analytical and to those readers who would have preferred a strictly chronological presentation I can only say that this too would have brought fresh problems of its own.

In writing this study I have constantly reminded myself that relatively few people in the West have any knowledge of Japanese. I have therefore tried to incorporate a considerable amount of original material into this history, some of it in the form of often lengthy quotations. It is hoped that this will add to, rather than detract from, the interest of this work. As will be seen, I have used mainly Japanese-language sources—and the difficulties which this incurs are considerable. Quite apart from the sheer toil involved for someone like myself, brought up in Britain, of working in an oriental language, one is obviously not ideally placed when one writes about politics in Japan from a vantage point on the other side of the earth. There have often been problems, both in grasping the subtleties of passages of heavily nuanced Japanese and in obtaining materials. However, I do not wish to make excuses for those errors and deficiencies which, despite all my efforts, will no doubt have crept into the text. I shall be grateful to anyone who can draw my attention to mistakes of either fact or interpretation. Apart from that, all I can say is that I have done my best and that I take comfort in the fact that in scholarship there is never such a thing as a last word or a finished work.

## NOTES

1. The foregoing definition of socialism could serve equally well as a definition of communism. Socialism (the social ownership of the means of production) and communism (the common ownership of the means of production) are one and the same thing, although in order to avoid unnecessary confusion I have chosen generally not to use the term communism in this work.

To those who will rush to tell me that Karl Marx distinguished two different

stages of social development in his Critique of the Gotha Programme, one of which he called socialism, the other communism, I would recommend that they read again what Marx actually wrote (Karl Marx, Selected Works (London, 1942), vol. 2, pp. 563ff.)—only this time without the Leninist footnotes! (Besides, it should also be added that the fact that Marx held a certain view on this or any other subject has no particular significance.)

2. Among other comments, Kawakami wrote that the Ainu ‘are fast degenerating. They keep themselves away from all reforming influence; they cannot adjust themselves to, and are, therefore, being killed by the new civilization.’ (Karl Kiyoshi Kawakami, The Political Ideas of Modern Japan (Tokyo, 1903), p. 15.)

# **Part One**

## **TO THE END OF THE RUSSO- JAPANESE WAR (1905)**

## Chapter 1

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM IN JAPAN AND THE FORMING OF A WORKING CLASS

## THE REVOLUTION OF 1868

Behind the reactionary facade of a restoration of Imperial power, it was a capitalist revolution which occurred in Japan in 1868. The term ‘capitalist revolution’ is deliberately employed here rather than the more conventional ‘bourgeois revolution’, for in Japan the revolution was capitalist without being bourgeois. What is meant by this is that the revolution was capitalist in its effects, in terms of the capitalist society it gave rise to, but that the class which brought it about was not a bourgeoisie—was not the flourishing merchant class, which had raised itself to a position of great economic influence throughout Japan during the preceding centuries, even though state power had remained out of its flabby reach.<sup>1</sup>

Who was it who made the capitalist revolution in Japan, then, if it was not the merchants? The answer to this question is that it was none other than the dissatisfied lower strata of the ruling samurai class itself, especially those from some of the fiefs farthest removed from Edo (later Tokyo), who rose up and overthrew the central bakufu government in 1868 in what has gone down in history as the ‘Meiji Restoration’. For a decade prior to the revolution, disgruntled young samurai from fiefs such as Satsuma, Choshū, Tosa and Hizen in the south and west of Japan had been engaged in plots and armed skirmishes and by 1868–9 the revolutionary army they had formed was strong enough to defeat the bakufu’s forces in a civil war. Given the fact that the leaders of the revolution were samurai, it is hardly surprising that the slogans and imagery they employed during their struggle for power were reactionary in the extreme. Their best-known rallying cry in the fight against the bakufu was *Sonnō Jōi* (Revere the Emperor and Expel the Barbarians!), the figure-head of the Emperor in Kyoto serving as a prestigious symbolic focus for opposition to the government in Edo and the ‘barbarians’ in

question being the imperialist powers who had been applying an increasing pressure on Japan throughout the nineteenth century. Once the bakufu had been brought down, however, Sonnō Jōi no longer expressed the priorities which the new government judged that the situation demanded. Monarchical trappings did, indeed, continue to be important to the new regime as a means of attracting support to itself but Sonnō Jōi was dropped just as surely as fifty years later another group of successful revolutionaries, this time in Russia, were to drop a slogan which had out-lived its usefulness for them—‘All Power to the Soviets!’ In the Japanese case the new, post-revolutionary priorities were formulated as Fukoku Kyōhei (National Wealth and Military Strength!).

Not only were the leaders of the new government<sup>2</sup> of samurai rather than of bourgeois origin themselves, but they had no coherent policy to establish a capitalist society in Japan either. As they saw it, their first responsibility was to protect Japan’s independent existence in the face of the threat posed by the imperialist powers. Hence the relevance of the ‘Military Strength’ half of the Fukoku Kyōhei formula. But in the late nineteenth century effective military strength was everywhere becoming more and more dependent on a powerful industrial base. In other words, what the ‘National Wealth’ half of Fukoku Kyōhei signified for Japan’s political leaders in the Meiji era was the country embarking on the process of industrialisation. ‘Industrialisation’, however, entailed much more than mere technical operations (daunting though even these were) such as building factories, installing machinery, modernising shipyards and extending mines. It also involved creating the social relations which accompany industrialisation—of supervising a process of polarisation in society whereby a minority would come to control the means of capitalist production, while increasing numbers of people would find themselves reduced to a situation where they had no alternative but to go and work for whatever wages they could find in the newly established industrial and commercial enterprises.

It was in this way—at best only half conscious of what they were doing—that the Meiji leaders fostered the development of capitalism in Japan and the formation of a wage-earning working class. One of the great ironies of this process was that, in carrying out their role, the samurai leaders of the new regime were actually responsible for the suppression of the class from which

they themselves had originated. The stipends which the samurai were accustomed to receive from the heads of their fiefs continued to be paid at first, but were soon reduced in value and were finally abolished in favour of interest-bearing bonds which most samurai, unused to business transactions, rapidly squandered. Destitute samurai were one of the elements from which a working class was to be forged in Japan and a lingering nostalgia for the vanished life style of the samurai figured prominently in the ideas of many of the early Japanese socialists, some of whom were of samurai origin themselves.

For the present we can leave the story of the revolution of 1868—the ‘Meiji Restoration’—here. We will come back to it again repeatedly at various stages in the history of socialist thought in Japan for, as with most other revolutions, its influence was to be felt for decades to come. In the remainder of this chapter, however, I wish to deal only with the early development of capitalism in Japan and the forming of a working class, and then only to the extent that these questions are relevant to—the history of socialist thought in Japan up to the end of the Russo-Japanese War (1905). Obviously enough, the relatively undeveloped state of capitalist society in Japan in the Meiji era was bound to hinder the efforts of those there who thought of themselves as socialists either to produce an adequate critique of capitalism or to pose a genuinely socialist alternative to it. Thus a sketch of the level of capitalist development (or underdevelopment) achieved at the time helps to convey the background against which the Meiji socialists were operating. But socialism is supposed to be much more than a disembodied intellectual reaction against capitalism. Until Mao Tse-tung set a new fashion by claiming to have carried out, by means of the peasant forces under his command, a revolution which had as its ‘ultimate perspective...not capitalism but socialism’,<sup>3</sup> it was generally accepted that it is the modern working class—wage labourers forced to sell their labour power for wages, since they own no means of production of their own, forming the majority of the population within advanced capitalist societies—which alone can be the agent for the social change needed to bring about socialism.<sup>4</sup> The size and nature of the working class in Japan is therefore equally as interesting to us as is the level of development reached by capitalism. Indeed, the two go together.

## **INDUSTRIALISATION**

Japan's industrialisation started with the government establishing the nuclei for several basic modern heavy industries which were vital for the country's military capability. These were first set up by the state, employing technical experts from abroad, but the tendency was, once they were working smoothly and the initial problems had been overcome, to transfer them at low prices into private hands. Yet, even in the hands of private companies, these industries were of such importance to the state that they were assured of subsidies and careful nursing by the government. Important though these basic heavy industries were, however, they did not account for the bulk of Japan's industrial enterprises. In terms of sheer numbers of factories and numbers of workers, it was textiles which dominated the industrial sector of the economy. In textiles too the government played a role early on, by establishing a number of model factories where technical difficulties were ironed out, but direct state involvement in light industries was never on anything like the scale which applied in heavy industry.

Accurate statistics showing the development of Japanese capitalism right the way through from 1868 to 1905 do not exist but the figures given in [Table 1.1](#), although often suspect and leaving many gaps, do bring out the essential features of that development. Many of the discrepancies in the figures concerned with numbers of 'factories' and numbers of 'factory' workers arise from the fact that at different times different criteria were applied in deciding which workshops should be counted as 'factories'. On some occasions a workforce of five or more was required for a workshop to qualify as a 'factory', on others a workforce of ten or more, and on yet other occasions a workshop did not become a 'factory' until the total capital invested in it reached ¥1000. A further complication arises from the fact that there was no uniformity when it came to including government-owned 'factories' in the statistics on 'factories' in general. Sometimes they were included and sometimes they were not.

Despite the inaccuracy of our statistics, however, certain facts stand out clearly enough. Industrial operations were generally on a very small scale. Although there was a steady increase in the total number of 'factories', the number using any type of mechanical power remained less than half of the total, this still being the case even at the end of the Russo-Japanese War (1905). In other words, more than one half of so-called 'factories' relied

entirely on human (or animal) labour power. The number of workers per ‘factory’ remained small, averaging 30 for the first year for which we have figures (1882) and being no more than 60 in 1905, and as a percentage of the total population workers in factories were, of course, no more than a drop in an ocean of peasants. In the year before the Russo-Japanese War (1903) there were 483,839 ‘factory’ workers in a population of 46.1 million<sup>5</sup> (just over 1 per cent).

Despite the overall low level of capitalist development, another point brought out by the figures presented in [Table 1.1](#) is the accelerating influence of war on that development. The government favoured industrialisation as a means of increasing Japan’s military capability, yet conversely it was military operations themselves which helped to spur on industrial development. The Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) came right at the end of the period we are considering and its effects do not therefore show up clearly in our table but the effects of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5 (Japan’s booty included an ‘indemnity’ of ¥366 million from China<sup>6</sup>) are unmistakable. If we compare the figures for the year prior to the War (1893) with those for the year following it (1896), we can see that the number of ‘factories’ increased by more than 150 per cent (although the increase in the workforce in the ‘factories’ was less dramatic), the number of banks almost doubled (the increase in their total paid-up capital being almost three-fold), while capital invested in private railways rose by more than 65 per cent. According to Ōkouchi Kazuo, the ‘Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95 gave a powerful impetus to the industrial revolution in Japan and laid the foundations for a modern capitalist economy, a modern factory system, and an independent class of modern wage workers.’<sup>7</sup>

To avoid misunderstanding, it should perhaps be explained that the categories listed in [Table 1.1](#) are, in a sense, quite arbitrary. Statistics relating to joint-stock companies, private banks and

#### [Table 1.1: Economic Indicators, 1880-1905](#)

capital invested in private railways happen to be useful indicators of capitalist development in Japan in the Meiji era, but this is not to imply that capitalism as a social system can be identified only with such representative institutions

of private capital as the joint-stock company. State capital and its institutions are just as much a part of capitalism as is private capital. Similarly, the fact that numbers of 'factory' workers are collated in [Table 1.1](#) does not mean that it is only those working in factories who constitute the working class. The working class includes all of those who, because they own no means of production, are forced to sell their labour power for wages. 'Factory' workers are included in [Table 1.1](#) simply because, in the first place, they are one section of the working class, as representative as any other, and secondly because statistics relating to them are relatively easily available. In the discussion of the nature of the working class in Japan in the Meiji era which follows 'factory' workers will figure prominently again, so it would be as well to bear in mind what has been written here.

## **THE FORMING OF A WORKING CLASS**

### **The Samurai**

As was mentioned previously, one of the elements from which the working class was forged in Japan was destitute members of the samurai class. Under the old regime Japan had been carved up into semi-autonomous fiefs. Following the revolution of 1868, these were dismantled in a two-part operation in which they were first formally 'restored to the Emperor' (hanseki hōkan) in 1869 and then replaced by modern prefectures (haihan chiken) in 1871. Restoration of the fiefs 'to the Emperor' (i.e. to the centralised state) was accompanied by a cut of one half in the income of the feudal lords who had ruled them. A further cut in samurai incomes came in 1875 when hand-outs from the government to the warrior class were converted at a time of rising prices from payments in kind (rice) to payments in money. This move was followed in 1876 by the substitution of government bonds for the allowances to the samurai. These bonds carried interest rates of up to 7 per cent and the maximum period of maturity allowed on them was 14 years.<sup>8</sup>

Samurai resistance to the government's policy will be touched on in a later chapter. Here it is sufficient to explain the economic effects of that policy for the samurai as a class. Samurai numbered about 400,000 (with their families, about 2 million)<sup>9</sup> and of these more than 80 per cent received bonds with a

face value of less than ¥1,100<sup>10</sup> (in contrast to the treatment of a select few, such as the former feudal lords, who received as much as ¥70,000<sup>11</sup>). Since the maximum rate of interest paid on the bonds was 7 per cent, this meant an annual income for an entire family of less than ¥77—a ‘level of income (which) was lower than that for the lowest social class even in those days.’<sup>12</sup> Finding themselves in such dire circumstances, most samurai soon pawned or sold their bonds. A government report reads: ‘Most shizoku (samurai) families have lost their property, and only one or two of every 10 families can sustain their lives. The Government bonds issued for the benefit of shizoku families have mostly gone out of their possession or have been put up as security for loans.’<sup>13</sup> The same report went on to say that, taking the samurai as a whole, only 7 per cent were able to live on the interest derived from their bonds. A further 8 per cent were said to be supporting themselves by their own ‘vocational skills’ (which would seem to mean that they had become policemen or teachers and bureaucrats of various sorts), while 30 per cent were day labourers and the remaining 55 per cent were completely destitute. The day labourers sought work as coolies, rice polishers and rickshaw men but it was the young, unmarried daughters of samurai families more than the samurai themselves who went to work in the newly opening factories, above all the spinning mills. Initially, the mills often employed skilled technicians from abroad to supervise the unfamiliar routines and the prospect of working alongside ‘barbarians’ who were rumoured to be partial to human blood and flesh (an impression gained from the technicians’ wine drinking and meat eating habits) terrified many young girls. Unmarried daughters from samurai families were despatched to the mills as if to the battle front, fortified by assurances that they were sacrificing themselves ‘for the sake of the country’, and when eventually they returned to their homes they were welcomed as heroines. Ōkōchi Kazuo refers to the Tomioka silk reeling mill where, when it was opened in 1872, out of 18 skilled female hands eight were daughters of samurai. Later 200 girls from samurai families in Yamaguchi prefecture are said to have come as one contingent to work in the same factory.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the most important aspect of this sub-mergence of the samurai is the attitudes which those of them who became wage earners took with them into the working class. On the one hand they often exhibited an unruly arrogance towards other workers, conscious of the fact that only yesterday they had been members of a privileged ruling class. This was possibly one of the

reasons why many samurai preferred to take day labour as coolies or rickshaw men rather than being thrown closely together with workers from other social backgrounds in the confined space of a factory. In sharp contrast to this attitude towards other workers, however, was their frequent subservience towards those in authority, a hang-over from the unquestioning obedience, even to the point of death, which a samurai had traditionally owed to his lord. Such subservience was particularly striking among the female factory hands, many of them of samurai origin, who all too often endured the most appalling conditions with depressing obedience.

## **The Artisans**

Apart from impoverished samurai, many members of the traditional artisan class (the *Kō* of the official class hierarchy of the old regime—*Shi Nō Kō Shō* =samurai, peasants, artisans, merchants) found themselves after 1868 pitchforked into the working class. Before the revolution the artisans had been a class of independent skilled craftsmen (though by no means all achieved the status of independent masters, some being de facto wage labourers). After 1868 many of the even independent masters among them discovered that their skills, painfully acquired through long years of apprenticeship, had suddenly become redundant. Those who had catered for the samurai found themselves without a market while others found their laborious techniques displaced by new methods of production introduced from the West. An example of the former case were the swordsmiths, for under the old regime no samurai ever appeared in public without the regulation two swords stuck in his obi (belt). The swords were none the less important for being symbols of samurai status rather than weapons to be used in earnest, but by 1871 the wearing of swords by samurai had become optional and by 1876 the custom was banned altogether. Artisans with skills for which there was little demand any longer, like the swordsmiths, were placed in the same poverty-stricken predicament as samurai without their stipends. Yet most artisans remained deeply aware of the skills which until only yesterday had given them a definite status in society and hung on to them wherever they could by a certain amount of adaptation (traditional blacksmiths becoming metal workers, for example). They were bound to be contemptuous of common wage labourers, even though many of them became just that themselves. Once again it can be said that, as with the

impoverished samurai, some of the attitudes which the artisans took with them into the working class were unlikely to make a positive contribution to the development of working class consciousness.

## **The Peasants**

Having mentioned the samurai and artisans, however, our attention has to be mainly focused on the peasantry, for it was from the masses and masses of poor peasants that the bulk of the new working class emerged. Indeed, this process had already been under way in the days of the old regime.

Agricultural industries such as silk weaving and sake brewing were already flourishing in the Tokugawa period and wage labour had accompanied them, as well as intruding (sometimes in very primitive forms) into feudal agricultural relations too.<sup>15</sup> T.C. Smith has written:

For upward of two hundred years the agricultural labor force had been unwittingly preparing for the transition to factory employment. Commercial farming and the experience of working for wages had taught peasants to respond with alacrity to monetary incentives, and had given them a certain tolerance of impersonal relationships in pursuing monetary goals; but at the same time agriculture had not changed so much as to destroy the habit of loyalty and obedience.<sup>16</sup>

Be that as it may, the process rapidly gathered momentum after 1868 since not only were there economic pressures at work driving peasants from the land but the old, feudal restrictions, which impeded the flow of labour between the countryside and the towns, were removed. What tended to happen, however, was that rather than a stable, totally urbanised working class differentiating itself from the peasantry, considerable numbers of peasants became half-proletarianised, flowing and ebbing back and forth between the country and the towns in response to the fluctuating ups and downs of the capitalist economy. Surplus labour in the countryside (such as younger sons in peasant families where inheritance was restricted to their eldest brother) would drift into the towns when opportunities for work existed in times of economic upsurge. But the reverse side of this coin was that, whenever a recession occurred, unemployed workers would trickle back to their villages to be reabsorbed after a fashion by the agricultural sector of the

economy. The rural villages thus acted as refuges for many workers in times of unemployment and were reservoirs of labour for capital to draw on at will.

The phenomenon which has been described here exhibits itself in many industrialising societies and in Japan's case it gave the working class of this period its *han nō han kō* (half-peasant/half-worker) and *dekasegi* (migrant labour) character which has often been remarked on. This half-peasant/ half-worker and migrant character of the Japanese working class persisted for decades after the period we are concerned with here and gave rise to many further repercussions. The virtually unlimited supply of labour available in the countryside was bound to depress wages and dampen working class militancy, as was the fact that so many Japanese workers did not in the end regard themselves as being solely dependent on their wages for survival in the way in which workers in advanced capitalist societies are. In fact, the abysmally low levels of wages experienced by workers in Japan in the Meiji era can be accounted for in Marxist terms by the fact that wages in Japan were not strictly comparable to wages as they exist in fully developed capitalism. According to Marx's analysis, in a developed capitalist economy wages (the price of labour power) represent under normal conditions the value of that labour power—i.e. they are equivalent to the socially necessary labour required to produce (and reproduce) that labour power. To put this in simple language, since workers in advanced capitalist societies are normally entirely dependent on their wages, the capitalist class has to pay its wage labourers sufficient to keep them in active mental and physical working order and sufficient too to also guarantee a future supply of further generations of proletarians. In Japan this did not apply. Peasants came to the factories either to supplement the farm's income or because their individual labour was surplus to the farm's requirements. The low wages they received could thus be interpreted as reflecting this situation. Wages were low because they were only a supplement to another source of income (so that the capitalists were under no economic compulsion to pay the full value of labour power) or because they were designed to support only an individual (a younger son or daughter) and not an entire working class family.

This half-peasant/half-worker and migrant character of wage labour also had other effects besides low wage levels. Since there was a high turnover among workers, it served to keep the workforce atomised and created the conditions

in which an oyakata<sup>17</sup> pattern of labour recruitment would thrive. The peasant girls who went to work in textile mills were commonly signed on by travelling company representatives and oyakata consciousness was strong among male workers (building workers being a conspicuous example of this). This system of recruitment meant that many workers' strongest allegiances were to their oyakata first, rather than to other rank and file workers like themselves. It also meant that workers in different factories were isolated from one another and often uninformed about wage levels elsewhere, so that a lack of uniformity of wages and working conditions generally prevailed. This is not to imply that wages and working conditions were bad in some places and good in others. On the contrary, they were bad everywhere—but this still did not prevent them from being worse in some cases than in others.

## **Women**

Evident though all these problems were among male workers, they tended to be experienced even more severely by women—who at this stage (and for many years afterwards) outnumbered men in the workforce in the factories. [Table 1.2](#) breaks down the figures on factory workers given in [Table 1.1](#) into numbers of women and numbers of men.

It has already been mentioned that not a few of these women were the daughters of samurai, but the majority still came from peasant backgrounds. Most were relatively short-term contract labourers, the contracts<sup>18</sup> being signed by their parents. They entered the factories for a pre-determined period of a few years and then (if the awful working conditions did not kill them first—tuberculosis was rife) returned home to arranged marriages in the country-side, where they would settle down as peasant wives. Their period in the factories simply tided them over until they were of a marriageable age, their families being too poor to support them at home. Byron K. Marshall has aptly commented:

Many workers, notably the young females in the textile mills, cannot be considered ever really to have left the village environment, since they were recruited through family heads and came to the cities with the intention of staying only a few years before returning home.<sup>19</sup>

Ōkōchi Kazuo describes these young girls as ‘ignorant and apathetic’<sup>20</sup> and one wonders how they could have been anything else when it is remembered that, apart from their daily stints of frequently 15 or 16 hours in the factory,<sup>21</sup> the rest of their time was spent under lock and key in dormitories on the factory premises. It sometimes happened that dormitories were accidentally burned down with the workforce still locked inside them but the vicious practice of confining the girls was justified all the same by the supposed obligation to protect their female virtue, the factory standing in loco parentis while the girls were away from home.

Unbelievably miserable though their lives certainly were, the female factory workers, constituting a majority of the workforce in the factories, were extremely unlikely to show many signs of militancy. The vast majority of them were seeking a personal rather than a class solution to their problems, seeing marriage as their best chance to escape from the drudgery of the factories (not that life as a peasant housewife was very much better!). Add this basic orientation to their youth and inexperience and one soon starts to understand why they were rarely able to mount effective struggles against employers who, after all, held all the trump cards.<sup>22</sup>

## **OPPRESSION BY THE STATE**

To say that the working class as it took form in Japan was oppressed, then, is an understatement. Workers were subjected to the barbarities which always do accompany capitalism in its formative periods anywhere. The horrors which occurred during the industrial revolution in Europe were not missing in Japan. As one European eyewitness put it:

### [Table 1.2: Male and Female Factory Workers, 1880– 1905](#)

In Osatra (Osaka?) I was able to look over the cotton mills and the match factories... without coming across more than a hundred men, nearly all of the work being done by girls and children. The girls earn from 37 to 50 centimes; the children from 25 to 35 centimes. I even saw, in one match works in Osatra (sic), children of six to eight years, almost babies, working eight hours per day for a wage of 7½ centimes.<sup>23</sup>

Even a representative of capital as partisan as the President of the Industrial Bank of Japan had to admit that the ‘condition of labourers is to be pitied by an impartial observer’.<sup>24</sup> There was little pity on the part of the state, though. When, in an attempt to improve their miserable conditions, certain groups of workers (generally male, skilled workers such as railway engineers, mechanics and printers) took the first faltering steps towards creating a trade union movement in the closing years of the nineteenth century, the state moved swiftly to crush the emerging workers’ organisations with the infamous *chian keisatsu hō* (‘public peace police law’), introduced in 1900. As Hagiwara Shintaro has pointed out, this law purported ‘formally to control both labour and capital. But over the following 30 years there was not one single case of its being applied to the employers.’ On paper it might have forbidden equally any agitation which sought to encourage either ‘employers to dismiss workers or refuse workers’ requests for work for the purpose of bringing about a lock-out’ or ‘workers to stop work or refuse offers of employment for the purpose of bringing about a strike’ (Clause XVII). This was simply mystification, however. In practice the ‘public peace police law’ was a straightforward piece of anti-working class legislation designed to ‘completely uproot the labour movement’.<sup>25</sup> The serious effect it had on workers’ struggles to improve their wages and working conditions is shown in [Table 1.3](#), giving annual figures for the number of labour disputes which occurred between 1897 and 1905 and for the number of workers involved in those disputes.

As with the previous tables, one cannot claim a high degree of accuracy for the figures given in [Table 1.3](#), but they do at least illustrate the

#### [Table 1.3: Labour Disputes, 1897–1905](#)

general trend. In view of the still embryonic nature of the working class in the Japan of this period, it comes as no surprise to find that the number of labour disputes was consistently low, with no more than a relative handful of workers involved. On average there were throughout the whole country approximately 18 notified labour disputes per year during this period 1897–1905, though on occasions the number fell as low as eight or even a mere six disputes. As a percentage of the total number of factory workers (not the whole of the working class), the number of workers involved in disputes was

sometimes as low as 0.17 per cent (1904) and was never higher than 1.5 per cent (1898). On the other hand, the number of workers involved in the average dispute was approximately 171 for the period 1897–1905—a figure almost three times the size of the workforce employed in the average ‘factory’ in 1905. This means that the majority of struggles must have occurred in the larger capitalist enterprises, as one would have expected.

The slump in the number of disputes from 1899 onwards speaks for itself but it might seem odd that this drastic decline should have preceded the actual introduction of the ‘public peace police law’ in 1900. This is less strange than it appears at first, however. The Meiji governments never allowed themselves to be hamstrung by anything so trivial as the law, least of all where the working class was concerned. The stepping up of police repression directed at workers in struggle was in advance of the formal passing of the legislation authorising this, as the figures themselves show. Perhaps a word of explanation also needs to be said about the relatively high figures for 1905. Despite the restrictions imposed by the law, there was an upsurge of working class resistance between 1905 and 1907 in response to the additional burdens which the (Russo-Japanese) war effort imposed on workers. Following this, the labour movement was again becalmed and it is worth mentioning that the number of labour disputes slumped to very low figures again in 1909 and 1910 (eleven and ten respectively) even though those years lie outside the period under examination here.

As was stated earlier, the undeveloped state of the capitalist economy in Japan in the Meiji era was bound to seriously hamper the efforts of those there who thought of themselves as socialists to formulate an alternative to capitalism. Aspiring socialists levelled their criticisms at a social system which they did not properly understand and which, especially from what they could see of it in Japan, was not even remotely approaching the stage where ‘all the productive forces, for which there is room in it, have been developed’—which Marx had once suggested represented an essential precondition, before which ‘no social order ever disappears’.<sup>26</sup> Capitalism in Meiji Japan was obviously still immature and on the ascendant and the socialists were faced with the difficulty of trying to challenge a system whose contours were as yet still in the process of being defined. Nor was this the socialists’ only problem. Along with an undeveloped capitalist economy went

an equally undeveloped working class. The backwardness of the workers not only added to the socialists' isolation but even made it difficult for many of the Meiji socialists to recognise in the working class the force which could achieve socialism. In 1956 a veteran of the socialist movement in Japan, Yamakawa Hitoshi, recalled what it was like to be a socialist in Japan in the Meiji era and explained the socialists' estrangement from the working class. Strictly speaking, he was writing about the period 1906–7 but the situation was little different—and certainly no worse—than that which had existed prior to 1905:

the party members enrolled in the Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) were a mere 200 or so. The class differentiation of the provincial party members is not clear but the majority were youths from the lower strata of the middle class. Modern workers were rare. Even if we look at the composition of the party leadership, we find that half were either pre-capitalist types of handicraftsmen who were in the process of being ruined or independent owners of petty workshops. There was not a single factory worker among them. This was partly because socialist thought had still not permeated into the working class but it was also due to the fact that in those days to be marked by the police as a socialist meant to immediately lose one's job. If one did not more or less have some independent means of livelihood, it was difficult to draw close to the movement.<sup>27</sup>

Yamakawa's reminiscences capture the flavour of the period but one should beware of exaggerating the effect of police harassment on the development of socialist understanding. As Yamakawa says, socialist thought had not permeated into the working class, so that even on the odd occasion when workers were able to summon up sufficient forces to overcome the repressive tactics of the police and collectively voice their aspirations, there was nothing even remotely socialist about the views they supported. This was shown perhaps most strikingly of all by the massive demonstration (in the language of the time, a *konshinkai*—social gathering) held in the Mukō-jima district of Tokyo on 3 April 1901 in defiance of a police ban. Twenty thousand people turned out, ignoring a police order that no more than five thousand would be allowed to assemble, and the 1,000 police on duty had little alternative but to allow the meeting to go ahead. During the course of the meeting a series of reformist resolutions calling for labour legislation and extension of the

suffrage were passed unanimously, under a preamble which read:

We workers, subjects of the Empire, receiving great blessings from His Majesty the Emperor, open the grand social gathering...and pass the following resolutions with sincere hearts and minds.<sup>28</sup>

The proceedings also came to an end with three cheers for the Emperor, 'which were most heartily given, because before everything the Japanese working man is patriotic and loyal'.<sup>29</sup>

Sentiments such as these were reactionary by any standards but the most startling thing about the preamble to the resolutions is the fact that it originated from the supposed socialist Katayama Sen (in later years one of Stalin's yes-men in the Comintern), who moved its adoption at the meeting. Among the Meiji socialists Katayama was the one who forged the strongest links with the workers of this period and he has often attracted favourable comment because of this. Yet Katayama's case is a perfect example of the dangers involved in socialists seeking to express the views of a non-socialist working class. Only to the extent that Katayama was prepared to relinquish whatever grasp of socialist principles he might have had,<sup>30</sup> was he able to faithfully represent the ideas of the workers he came in contact with.

## NOTES

1. The notion that capitalism might be capable of being introduced by other social classes besides the bourgeoisie has remained difficult to grasp for many academics but has been well understood by at least some revolutionaries. Michael Velli, for one, has drawn an interesting and valid parallel between post-1868 Japan and post-1917 Russia:

the launching of the primitive accumulation of Capital in Japan after 1868 demonstrated that the process could dispense with the West European bourgeoisie and with its liberal-democratic ideology. Japanese industrialization demonstrated that the social relations required for the primitive accumulation of Capital are a strong State, universal commodity production, and the division of labor... The Bolshevik seizure of State power in 1917 confirmed the lessons learned from the Japanese restoration of the

centralized State in 1868. The accumulation of Capital can dispense with the institutions and ideas of the West European bourgeoisie; what is required is the State, commodity production and the division of labor.

(Michael Velli, *Manual for Revolutionary Leaders* (Detroit, 1972), p. 215.)

2. Or, rather, new governments—since throughout the Meiji era governments were replaced with great rapidity. There were few, if any, significant differences of major policy between them, however, and many of the same individuals appeared repeatedly in the various ministerial posts.

3. Mao Tse-tung, ‘The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party’ in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Peking, 1967), vol. 2, p. 329.

4. It would take us too far afield to adequately discuss whether, in view of what has been said about classes other than the bourgeoisie bringing about capitalism, it might not also be possible for non-proletarian classes to substitute themselves for the working class in a socialist revolution. My own opinion is that the very nature of socialism itself precludes this possibility. However, I will resist the temptation to attempt to demonstrate this theoretically at this point and simply confine myself to what has occurred in historical practice. Revolutions led by non-bourgeois social groups have resulted in societies which exhibit the essential features of capitalism—commodity production, the polarisation of wage labour and capital, the existence of the state and of social classes. Japan is one example of this. Allegedly socialist revolutions (included within this category are revolutions like the Chinese which, while it is admitted by their admirers that they are not purely socialist, are also claimed to have socialism as their ‘ultimate perspective’) led by non-proletarian social groups have also, without exception, resulted in societies which exhibit these selfsame features of capitalism—commodity production, the polarisation of wage labour and capital, the existence of the state and of social classes. They are thus only ‘socialist’ to the extent that ‘socialism’ has been redefined by their leaders, as has happened in China for example, to take in the essential features of capitalism.

5. G.C.Allen, *A Short Economic History of Modern Japan* (London, 1972), p. 208.

6. Ibid., p. 48.

7. Kazuo Okochi, *Labor in Modern Japan* (Tokyo, 1958), p. 22.

8. E.H.Norman gives a detailed breakdown of the rates of interest and periods of maturity of these bonds in his *Japan's Emergence as a Modern State* (New York, 1940—reprinted 1973), p. 95.

9. Ōkōchi Kazuo, *Reimeiki no Nihon Rōdō Undō* (The Labour Movement in Japan in the Dawn Period) (Tokyo, 1973), p. 19.

10. M.Sumiya, *Social Impact of Industrialization in Japan* (Tokyo, 1963), p. 11.

11. Norman, *Japan's Emergence*, p. 95.

12. Sumiya, *Social Impact*, p. 11.

13. Ibid., p. 18.

14. Ōkōchi, *Reimeiki*, p. 19.

15. Thomas C.Smith, *The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan* (Stanford, 1959), pp. 114–15.

16. Ibid., p. 212.

17. A foreman or a small capitalist who is leader of a work gang and who acts as intermediary between the workers and the bigger capitalists. See glossary for further details.

18. Ōkochi writes that the 'slave-like nature of early primitive labor relations in Japan is revealed in the following typical employment contract of the period:

(1) The period of employment shall be from three to five years.

(2) Employees shall prove that they have no contract with any other factory.

(3) Employees shall not reveal manufacturing techniques peculiar to their factories.

(4) Employees shall strictly observe the orders of the factory owner or supervisor and shall obey all rules in force now or in the future.

(5) Employees shall not request retirement except in an unavoidable case.

(6) The management shall be free to dismiss workers at any time at its own convenience.

(7) Wages shall be paid in a proper way at the convenience of the management.

(8) Should an employee violate the rules of the factory or his contract of employment, the management may reduce his pay or confiscate his unpaid wages.'

(Okochi, Labor in Modern Japan, p. 16)

19. Byron K. Marshall, Capitalism and Nationalism in Prewar Japan (Stanford, 1967), p. 64.

20. Ōkōchi, Reimeiki, p. 24.

21. The Shokko Jijō (Information on Workers) described labour conditions in Japan around 1890 as follows:

Although labor hours in weaving factories differ according to each factory, there is generally a great difference in working hours between the plants using power-driven looms and small plants using hand-driven looms. In the former, it is generally around twelve hours, but in the case of the latter, a working day of twelve to thirteen hours from sunrise to sunset is the shortest, and it is frequently as long as fifteen to sixteen hours a day from sunrise to 9:00 p.m. or 10 p.m. The majority of weaving factories are adopting the latter system, with even some plants requesting workers to work from seventeen to eighteen hours a day.

Describing the hours worked by cotton spinners, it stated:

They frequently instruct working girls, who were to leave the plant after finishing a day's work, to remain in the plant and to continue work standing until the following morning as long as twenty four hours, or in the case of the worst example, though scarce, they let these girls continue to work on a daytime shift in the following day up to thirty six hours.

(Fujii Jintaro (ed.), *Outline of Japanese History in the Meiji Era* (Tokyo, 1958), p. 448.)

22. There were exceptions, all the same. The *Heimin Shimbun* (Common People's Newspaper) of 6 December 1903 reported an apparently successful strike for a wage increase by 121 female workers in a tea factory in Saitama prefecture.

23. *La Revue Socialiste*, September 1901, p. 356.

24. A. Stead (ed.), *Japan by the Japanese* (London, 1904), p. 466.

25. Hagiwara Shintarō, *Nihon Anakizumu Rōdō Undo Shi* (History of the Anarchist Labour Movement in Japan) (Tokyo, 1969), p. 12.

26. Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Chicago, 1911), p. 12.

27. Ōkōchi Kazuo (ed.), *Shakaishugi Kōza* (Lectures on Socialism) (Tokyo, 1956), vol. 7, p. 219.

28. *Rōdō Sekai* (Labour World), 15 April 1901, p. 3. There is a rather freely translated version of this in the paper's English language columns, p. 8.

29. Alfred Stead, *Great Japan* (London, 1906), p. 233.

30. In fact, as we shall see below, Katayama understood precious little about socialism.

## Chapter 2

# POPULISM (NARODNISM) AND OTHER RUSSIAN INFLUENCES

Despite some bizarre claims which were made by the early socialists in Japan about the long (and even royal!) pedigree which socialism could allegedly boast of in that country,<sup>1</sup> socialist thought as it emerged in Japan in the Meiji era was essentially a collection of imported doctrines taken from the West. Although the Meiji socialists could legitimately point to a number of earlier Japanese thinkers who had anticipated certain elements found in Western socialism<sup>2</sup> (or what was commonly taken to be ‘socialism’, in the West as well as in Japan<sup>3</sup>), there was no native socialist tradition for them to build on. Even if there were no traditions that were specifically socialist, however, there was a long history in Japan of struggle against the authorities and of rebellion, the most spectacular examples being the frequent peasant uprisings (ikki) which had been a continuing feature of Tokugawa rule (and which still occurred under the new regime after 1868). Peasant uprisings were normally short-lived, spontaneous outbursts of violence—gestures of mass despair expressed in a few simple demands to right immediate grievances, with no theoretical insight behind them. Distinct from the peasant uprisings, there had also been intellectual opposition to the old regime during the Tokugawa period, often by dissident members of the ruling samurai class. Yet the samurai status of these dissidents, no less than the draconian repression practised by the bakufu, had tended to limit the scope of their criticism. Often their opposition amounted to little more than variant interpretations of the ideological supports used by the regime to shore up its power—such as Confucianism. Nonetheless, this intellectual opposition together with the peasant uprisings constituted a tradition which, while it fell infinitely far short of socialism, was radical by the standards of the time.

Naturally enough, the early socialists in Japan were influenced by this tradition, as they also were by the capitalist revolution of 1868, which was still very much a living memory at the time when socialist ideas first began to appear in Japan. But it was not only this radical tradition which exerted its influence on the first socialists in Japan. George Lichtheim once described

the emergence of a socialist movement in Europe as a process whereby ‘socialist progressives parted company with liberal progressives, sometimes to the accompaniment of battle-cries which sounded not altogether unlike the despairing complaints of agrarian conservatives and religious traditionalists’.<sup>4</sup> Similarly in Japan there was a heavy slice of conservatism and of nostalgia for the (often imaginary) values of the past incorporated into the ideas of the early socialists. Because of this, while the following chapters will first deal with the Western origins of socialist thought in Japan, they will then go on to examine what further elements in the thought of the pioneer socialists there were inherited from the Japanese past. Having looked at these diverse elements—some of them Western in origin, some of them traditional Japanese; some of them radical in their implications, some of them unambiguously reactionary—I will then attempt to show the synthesis which the Meiji socialists made of them.

## WESTERN SOURCES

There were three major Western sources for the socialist thought which was introduced into Japan prior to 1905. The first, although the least important in the long run, was Russian populism (narodnism), which will be dealt with in this chapter. Following the decline of populism in Russia itself in the 1880s, its influence faded in Japan as well and was replaced by social-democracy. This development was all but inevitable, in that the socialist movement was still struggling to find its feet in Japan at a time when abroad powerful social-democratic parties were coming to be a force to be reckoned with in many European countries and had, from 1889 onwards, allied themselves in an international organisation which was to count its formal adherents by the million. Dazzled by the European parties’ numbers and prestige, to socialists as inexperienced as those in Japan the Second International came to have virtually the stature of a god and its jargon—ridden pronouncements took on the authority of holy writ. Not only that, but at the head of the International stood its largest and seemingly most powerful party, the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD). In its heyday the SPD exerted a fascination that was akin to charisma for many who thought of themselves as socialists—and the socialists in Japan were no exception to this. Yet, however powerful the influence which the SPD exercised on the Japanese socialists, this influence was largely indirect. When socialists in Japan knew a language other than

Japanese it was generally English and, if an opportunity to travel abroad presented itself, it was usually to the USA. This meant that European (primarily German) social-democratic ideas had to find their way to Japan through what can best be described as an English language filter. This reliance on English as the language for most of their international contacts exposed the Japanese socialists to a variety of supposedly socialist doctrines popular in one or other of the world's English-speaking countries. To a greater or lesser extent, socialists in Japan in the years before 1905 absorbed the ideas of American social-gospellers, of British Fabians and even of New Zealand's Lib—Labs. These influences exerted first by the SPD and secondly by the various socialist currents found in the English-speaking countries mentioned above will be the subject of our next two chapters. As in the case of Russian populism in this chapter, the intention is not to describe these different socialist movements in detail, nor to analyse their rise and fall in the countries of their origin. My purpose is simply to examine them in terms of the significance which they had for the development of socialist thought in Japan. We will be looking at them through Japanese eyes, as it were, trying to assess how they appeared to the small groups of socialists active in Japan prior to 1905 and trying to highlight the lessons (often dangerously false, especially in the Japanese context) which the Meiji socialists learned from those abroad whom they took as their mentors.

## **FIRST NEWS OF 'SOCIALISM'**

During the 250 years before the revolution of 1868 the official policy of the old regime had been to rule Japan as a closed country. It is true that loopholes existed, because the policy was never rigorously applied to China and the Dutch East India Company was allowed to maintain a single trading post (to which its officials were normally confined) on a tiny, artificially constructed island in Nagasaki harbour. Due to this, some news of the development of scientific and military techniques by what were generally regarded as the 'butter-stinking barbarians' in the West did trickle into Japan (some of it directly via the Dutch, the rest indirectly by way of China), but obviously the information which could be gleaned in this way was pretty meagre. After the revolution of 1868 there was a complete about-turn in official policy. As was explained in the previous chapter, the new regime saw the chances of Japan's survival as an independent country as depending on its ability to beat (or, at

least, to equal) the Western powers at their own game of industrialisation and military aggression. In order to achieve this, the gates were flung wide open to allow in Western technology—and, along with the new techniques of production and warfare which were adopted, new ideas from the West also came pouring into Japan.

Japan had been closed for so long that, once the gates were opened, the rush of new ideas was like air surging into a vacuum. The only factor to limit the flood was the time it took to translate often garbled versions of a thousand and one unfamiliar ways of looking at a world about which, until only the day before, most people in Japan thought the last word had been said. New theories were introduced in rapid succession, each with its group of recent converts to argue extravagantly (and, as often as not, uninformedly) on its behalf. Bourgeois-democratic ideas from the era of the French revolution and various interpretations of Christianity, British utilitarianism and German statism, theories of natural rights and Social-Darwinism were all locked in an untidy and belligerent tangle and, edging in among these conflicting schools of thought, came the first information on ‘socialism’.

Not too much needs to be said about these first accounts of ‘socialism’ to be heard in Japan. Those responsible for them did not claim to be socialists themselves but were academics hostile to the little they knew about the doctrine they sought to explain. The only reason for briefly mentioning a couple of the very first among them here is to show the mis-representation which socialism suffered right from its initial appearance in Japan. In 1870 a writer called Katō Hiroyuki published a book *Shin Sei Tai I* (Outline of True Government). This was an exposition of the ‘principles of practical politics under constitutional rule’<sup>5</sup> but Kato also had something to say about what he transcribed in Japanese syllabary as ‘komumiyunisume’ (communism) and ‘soshiarisume’ (socialism). He wrote:

Two schools of economics known as ‘komumiyunisume’ (communism) and ‘soshiarisume’ (socialism), as well as by other names, have arisen. Already in Europe a system akin to these existed at the time when Ancient Greece was flourishing and at later times too. There are slight points of difference between these two schools but on the whole they are more in agreement than disagreement. The theory behind them is that everything in the life of the

masses today should be made egalitarian, starting with food, clothing and shelter. The essential reason why these schools arose is that, if the people were left to their various fates, a big gap between rich and poor would be produced, owing to differences in people's ability and to whether they are lazy or hard-working. The rich would become progressively richer and the poor progressively poorer. All the suffering in the world (is said to) stem from this cause. Therefore—starting with food, clothing and shelter and going on to include all of today's privately owned land, implements, industry etc.—everything would be taken out of people's hands and everyone's private property placed collectively under the government's care. It is said that in this way a situation where there were neither rich nor poor could be attained. What it amounts to is a means of achieving so-called 'salvation'. Without a doubt what lies behind it is earnest idealism but the severity of such a system would, in fact, be unbearable. Nothing could go farther than this in restricting (people's) customary feelings of freedom and their rights and, because of this, it has to be said that it is a system which would be most injurious to law and order.<sup>6</sup>

As can be seen, the image of 'socialism' or 'communism' which Katō Hiroyuki projected here was that of a (literally!) Spartan, barracks-room system of forcibly imposed, monotonous egalitarianism, and even more sinister than this was the role he ascribed to the state in his version of a communist/socialist society. Far from the state disappearing, together with the class divisions in society which are the reason for its existence (this was a pivotal demand of many of those in nineteenth century Europe who called themselves communists or socialists), its power was obviously to increase in proportion to its monopoly of property ('everyone's private property placed collectively under the government's care'). This statist view of 'communism'/'socialism' was made even more explicit in an article Katō wrote four years later in which he crossed swords with the famous 'liberal'<sup>7</sup> Fukuzawa Yukichi. Quoting Gustav Frantz, he declared that the 'Communist Party extends state power as far as it can and reduces the people's power as far as it can. It favours its own state rule over all sections of the masses—peasants, workers and merchants.'<sup>8</sup> Many of those reading today what Katō wrote about 'the Communist Party' a hundred years ago will have derived their own ideas on socialism/communism from the policies implemented by political parties in Russia and elsewhere which make use of a 'communist' or

‘socialist’ label. They will therefore be struck by the degree to which Katō /Frantz’s description fits the state capitalist practices of such parties and it would be idle to deny that plans to introduce a state-controlled version of capitalism formed one of the many strands one finds running through the wide range of doctrines in nineteenth century Europe which declared themselves to be ‘socialist’ or ‘communist’. Indeed, the ten-point programme which appeared at the end of Section Two of Marx and Engels’ Communist Manifesto<sup>9</sup> was itself a detailed set of proposals for introducing a state capitalist economy—and there were others calling themselves ‘communists’ who wanted to bring about the sort of crudely imposed egalitarianism (an equality of poverty) which Katō also severely criticised. At the very least, however, it has to be conceded that Katō Hiroyuki’s condemnation of communism/socialism was one-sided. Besides the state capitalist and other extraneous elements included within the umbrella terms ‘socialism’ and ‘communism’, there was a core of socialist/communist doctrine in Europe which Kato completely shut his mind to. In fact, only three years before Katō’s assertion (borrowed from Frantz) that ‘the Communist Party extends state power as far as it can and reduces the people’s power as far as it can. It favours its own state rule over all sections of the masses’, some of those in France who were regarded as ‘communists’ or ‘socialists’ had given a practical demonstration to the contrary at the time of the Paris Commune. There was never any question of the Commune achieving communism and, anyway, it survived only a few weeks during 1871, but even the hasty, stop-gap measures it was able to introduce left many observers in wondering admiration. All its officials were elected on the basis of universal suffrage and could be instantly dismissed whenever those who had elected them chose to do so. In addition, officials of all types were paid far less than their Bonapartist fore-runners had been. There was little in the Paris Commune that smacked of the glorification of state power at the expense of ordinary people, but Katō chose to ignore the side of the ‘Communist Party’ which incidents such as the Paris Commune revealed.

In much the same mould as Katō was the Reverend Dwight W. Learned, who appears to have been the first person from abroad to have felt himself qualified to instruct the Japanese on the subject of socialism. True to his ‘Reverend’ title, Learned is normally described as clutching a bible in one hand and an economics text book in the other<sup>10</sup> and this perhaps gives us an

idea of the quality of his lectures at the Dōshisha University in Kyoto from 1875 onwards. Although dismissing socialism as a delusion, Learned still managed to convey the impression of a system of widespread government control in his references to it. 'It plans to reform things by means of the government taking charge of all property, land and the control of production',<sup>11</sup> he told his young students (and a wider audience too when his lectures were collected in two volumes which appeared in 1886 and 1891).

## **THE 'PEOPLE'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT'**

Measured against the political storms which were raging in post-revolutionary Japan, however, these tendentious judgements pronounced on socialism by academics like Katō and Learned were without a great deal of significance. As is usual following capitalist revolutions, the coterie of leaders who had grasped the reins of government in Japan following the upheavals of 1868–9 had its work cut out to hold on to power in the unsettled years following the revolution. Having so recently come to power, the political leaders of Meiji Japan had at first no aura of tradition with which to legitimise their privileges, in the manner which is customary with ruling classes everywhere. Many of their rivals saw them as political upstarts and nothing more. In addition to this, the revolutionary process itself had aroused hopes among a variety of social classes which the capitalist nature of the revolution made it impossible to satisfy. The new regime thus found itself confronted by a whole range of opponents, all dissatisfied with the government of the day, but still divided by important differences. It was this array (or, as often as not, disarray) of social groups opposed to the policies of the Meiji governments which, from the early 1870s and for the next 20 years, took on the collective proportions of what is normally referred to as the *jiyū minken undō* (literally the 'liberty and popular rights movement' but often rendered more simply as the 'people's rights movement').

As indicated in [Chapter 1](#), it was groups of samurai in fiefs such as Satsuma, Chōshū, Tosa and Hizen in the south and west of Japan who had spearheaded the struggle against the bakufu. After the revolution, however, it was mostly those from Satsuma and Chōshū who were able to secure state power in their own hands. Their erstwhile allies, particularly those from Tosa, found themselves outmanoeuvred in the scramble for power and, as frustrated

aspirants for governmental office, formed for a time one incongruous element in the 'people's rights movement'. Indeed, it was these Tosa politicians' leader, Itagaki Taisuke, who actually launched the Jiyūto (Liberal Party) which stood at the centre of the movement until Itagaki himself was bought off by the government. A second element in the 'people's rights movement' was a wider section of the samurai class as a whole, whose economic and social position was worsening with each year that passed under the new regime. Destitution made desperate men out of many samurai and many of the most militant and vocal activists within the 'people's rights movement' were members of the old warrior class. Samurai also formed the shock troops in many of the insurrections which the 'people's rights movement' witnessed in different parts of the country. Yet all too often elitist sentiments lay behind the democratic phrases used by samurai activists, for the hopeless struggle which many of them were engaged in was more about regaining their own former privileged status than it was about achieving liberty for all and sundry.

The 'people's rights movement' also attracted support from sections of the landlord class and bourgeoisie—who were strongly in favour of 'people's rights', understanding 'people' to mean precisely themselves. They were opposed to the system of taxation used by the government and sought to change this by means of representative government (representing themselves). Worthy of attention in this respect were the sake merchants, who smarted under the taxes levied on their industry. When their attempts to protest were banned by the government, there was for a time the strange spectacle of well-to-do brewers engaged in clandestine activity, until they eventually got cold feet and withdrew from the 'people's rights movement'. Important for the financial backing they gave to the movement, the support of these landlord and bourgeois elements was put under strain by the radical policies favoured by the left wing of the 'people's rights movement', which had entirely different ideas to themselves about what constituted 'the people'. Apart from impoverished samurai, this left wing was composed of poor—and often landless—peasants (who would obviously find themselves at odds with supporters of the movement who were landlords) and the urban poor. The poor peasants wanted tax reductions, the landless yearned for land and the urban poor were simply seeking relief of any kind from the grinding poverty which afflicted them. All wished to free themselves too from the hateful

military service imposed by the government on young men. Clutching at straws, the solution to all these problems facing different sections of the poor seemed for a time somehow to lie in the establishment of a constitutional government.

## **RUSSIAN POPULISM**

It was within this milieu of the left wing of the ‘people’s rights movement’ that the term ‘socialism’ first came to enjoy a degree of popularity in Japan. The main intellectual influence acting on the left wing was French revolutionary thought from the era of the French revolution. Apart from the lessons of history, however, the activists agitating for ‘people’s rights’ were eager to learn from contemporary events in other parts of the world and, not unnaturally, the movement with which they could most readily identify was that of the Russian populists. Although events such as the Paris Commune were reported in the press, it was assassination attempts on tsarist officials and similar incidents which more readily caught people’s imagination in Japan. The similarities between Russian and Japanese societies struck even the casually informed. Both were autocracies wielding a vicious repression which fell mainly across the shoulders of the millions of poor peasants who formed the bulk of the population. If the causes of the Russian and Japanese peoples’ hardships were apparently the same, then presumably the solution would be the same—so that, when the Russian populists talked about ‘socialism’, the left wing of the ‘people’s rights movement’ in Japan was eager to follow suit.

In 1881 the Russian populist movement captured the attention of the world by its successful bid on the life of the tsar Alexander II and the same year marked the beginning of a wave of interest in Russian populism in Japan. According to Yanagida Izumi, in 1881 there were 31 works of one form or another dealing with the Russian ‘nihilists’ (kyomutō) published in Japan and the following three years saw another 34 such works appear.<sup>12</sup> At a time when the reading public was so restricted, figures like these indicate a keenly felt interest in the activity of the Russian populists. We get a good idea of the nature of this interest and the superficiality of the lessons which were learned from Russian populism, however, when it is realised that a good many of these works were semi-fictional novels. These included Tajima Shōji’s *Fujo*

Risshi Ōshū Bidan (Stories from Europe about Women with a Purpose in Life) published in 1881, Somata Sakutarō's Rokoku Kibun Retsujo no Gigoku (Strange News from Russia about the Criminal Case of a Heroine) which appeared in 1882 and Miyazaki Muryu's Kishūshū (The Devil's Weeping) of 1883.<sup>13</sup> Their lurid titles alone suggest that it was the sensational side of the Russian populists' exploits which made the strongest appeal to their admirers in Japan and, in fact, both Tajima's and Somata's books spun romantic melodramas around Vera Zasulich's attempt on the life of the St Petersburg Chief of Police which had taken place on 24 January 1878. Trepov, the Chief of Police, was a brute even by tsarist standards who had made himself notorious by ordering that one political prisoner be flogged simply for not having removed his cap in Trepov's presence. Vera Zasulich was later to become one of the founders of the Russian social-democratic movement but at this stage was still a populist. It was the spectacle of a frail young girl attempting to avenge the Chief of Police's brutality rather than any knowledge of Zasulich's political position which in Japan seems to have evoked the sympathy of the left wing of the 'people's rights movement'. Japan in the Meiji era was well supplied with Trepovs of its own and there were numerous young activists in this period inspired by Zasulich's example. As Uchida Roan says about one of the other books published around this time (Kawashima Tadanosuke's Kyomutō Taiji Kidan—The Strange Story of the Suppression of the Nihilists—1882), 'the fact that it should have been welcomed with such curiosity is clear testimony to the state of mind of the youth of the time'.<sup>14</sup>

Another indication of the influence of Russian populism in Japan at this time was a talk on Tōyō no Kyomutō ('Oriental Nihilists') given by Tarui Tōkichi in Nagasaki in January 1882. Tarui's speech was printed in the issue of the Kinkō Shin Shin which appeared on 2 March 1882 and provides clear evidence that Tarui knew a certain amount about 'Western nihilists' and about the attempts which had been made on the lives of Russian tsars.<sup>15</sup> Tarui compared this 'nihilism' to Taoist and Buddhist doctrines of 'nothingness' (kyomu) and later the same year took part in the organisation of the first political group in Japan which called itself socialist. This was the Tōyō Shakaitō (Oriental Socialist Party), formed in the Saga/Nagasaki region of south-west Japan on 25 May 1882. The Toyō Shakaitō never came to anything, being ordered by the government on 7 July 1882 to disband only a

few weeks after its formation, but the very fact that it should have chosen to call itself a 'socialist party' is not without interest. As Ōsawa Masamichi has said, there are 'various points, such as its being considerably stimulated by the assassination of the Russian tsar in 1881, its raising of party funds by intimidating the rich, its organising the peasants' struggles and its secret meetings, which make one think of it as a Japanese version of the Narodniks'.<sup>16</sup>

An important source of information on the Russian populists was Stepniak (S.M.Kravchinsky)'s *Underground Russia*, which was available in Japan in English translation. Asukai Masamichi calls Miyazaki Muryu's *The Devil's Weeping*, for example, a 'free re-working' of the material found in *Underground Russia* and a later book of Stepniak's (*The Career of a Nihilist*) suffered a similar fate as well.<sup>17</sup> In this latter case it was serialised in the *Kokumin Shimbun* (*The Nation's Newspaper*) in 1896—taking the form of a novel about a shishi revolutionary living in Japan in the period immediately prior to the revolution of 1868! *Underground Russia* was written very much in the romantic vein, being primarily 'a series of animated pictures (of) the men (sic) and the incidents of the Russian Revolutionary movement'.<sup>18</sup> Its 'revolutionary profiles' included accounts of Peter Kropotkin as well as of Vera Zasulich and the terrorist methods employed by the Russian populists were prominently dealt with too. A serious reader of *Underground Russia* in Japan might have been able to learn various organisational lessons from the experiences of the Russian populists and he or she might also have been impressed by their use of terror. Such a reader would almost certainly have agreed with the demands for political liberties which were included in the book in the form of a 'Note' from the populist 'Executive Committee' to the assassinated Alexander II's successor, Alexander III. These called for universal suffrage, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of public meeting and freedom of electoral address and were thus identical to those advanced by the left wing of the 'people's rights movement' in Japan. A sympathetic reader might also have absorbed a heavy dose of elitism from Stepniak and have been inspired by the general activist élan of the Russian populists. When it comes to socialism, however, there were few solid lessons to be learned from Stepniak—or from the other populists either. The word 'socialism' itself appeared repeatedly in *Underground Russia* but Stepniak's approach was extremely vague ('A new world, based upon the fraternity of

all men, in which there will no longer be either misery or tears,... All hail to the Revolution, the sole means of realising this golden ideal.’)<sup>19</sup> The only passages in which ‘socialism’ was given any more concrete meaning than this were those where its affinity with the Russian village commune—‘a form of primitive collective communal property which has...already been to a large extent destroyed’, as others wrote about it<sup>20</sup>—was claimed. It was said before that Underground Russia was a romantic book and the romance spilled over into its treatment of ‘socialism’ too. The following passage captures the general tone of the book and also illustrates just how devoid of theoretical content it was:

He (the revolutionary) will stretch forth his hand. He will tell the peasant how to free himself and become happy. His heart throbs for this poor sufferer, who can only weep...he will do the hard work of the peasant, enduring every privation in order to carry to him the words of redemption, the Gospel of our age,—Socialism. What matters to him if the cut-throats of the Government lay hands upon him? What to him are exile, Siberia, death? Full of his sublime idea, clear, splendid, vivifying as the mid-day sun, he defies suffering, and would meet death with a glance of enthusiasm and a smile of happiness.<sup>21</sup>

Heady stuff though this was, as a basic text on socialism it was full of pitfalls. Not only was it likely to reinforce the elitism of the left wing of the ‘people’s rights movement’, which already showed this tendency due to the many samurai in its ranks, but socialism was also sure to be equated with terrorist action carried out by this elite. Among the ill-informed, socialism became synonymous with terrorism, since ‘the impression conveyed to the general public was that a socialist party is a group of conspirators perpetually plotting to even assassinate the Emperor’.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, although the activists on the left wing of the ‘people’s rights movement’ were not repelled by this terrorist image and were sympathetic to the aura surrounding the word ‘socialism’, the basis of their thought remained the ideas of Rousseau and other thinkers from the period of the French revolution. Given its nature, Russian populism was well suited to serve as a source of encouragement and inspiration for those struggling after elusive ‘people’s rights’ in Meiji Japan, but it was quite inadequate when it came to the problem of theoretical clarification of what socialism was. This was highlighted practically by the

Kaba-san insurrection of 1884. The fact that in this struggle the insurgents should have made such extensive use of bombs—not traditional Japanese weapons—is generally accounted for by the influence of the Russian populists, among whom explosives were a favourite device. Yet, when we look at the programme which these same insurgents were fighting for, we find no trace of socialism whatsoever. There were vague references to ‘equality’, ‘liberty’ and ‘happiness’ and to the unequal treaties which the Japanese government had signed under pressure from the imperialist powers. In addition, they indicated that they were in favour of the opening of a diet and the setting up of a constitutional system of government.<sup>23</sup> Whatever their heroism, in other words, the Kaba-san rebels were fighting for other aims than socialism.

1884 marked the high point of the influence of Russian populism in Japan. This was hardly surprising because even in Russia itself ‘Narodnik Socialism (sic) had spent its force by the ‘eighties and the revolutionary movement could develop no further under its banner.’<sup>24</sup> After 1884 populism’s influence went into a slow decline in Japan, but it still lingered on in radical circles. The adaptation of Stepniak’s *The Career of a Nihilist*, published as late as 1896, has already been mentioned and it is interesting to note that the famous socialist Kōtoku Shūsui’s *Collected Works* contain an unfinished short story entitled *Kyomuto Shosei* (‘Nihilist Students’), written in November 1895 when Kōtoku was 24.<sup>25</sup> Although politically insignificant, it does show the continuing fascination which the Russian populist movement had for radicals in Japan in the late nineteenth century.

## TOLSTOY

To complete the picture of Russian influence acting on the socialist movement in Japan up to the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, it is necessary to say something about the respect with which Tolstoy was regarded. I will also indicate the tenuous contacts which were made with the Russian social-democrats at the time of the war between the two countries. In addition, it should be added that Peter Kropotkin’s ideas were beginning to attract attention in Japan towards the end of the period extending up to 1905 which we are concerned with here. Since [Part Two](#) of this study is mainly concerned with the rise of anarchism in Japan, however, I will defer consideration of Kropotkin until then.

The English-language column of the issue of the Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) which appeared on 14 August 1904 was given over to an article on 'The Influence of Tolstoi in Japan'. According to this, it was 'about fifteen or twenty years ago that his name began to be talked about among us', which would have meant the 1885–90 period. As the article explained, Tolstoy was first introduced to Japan as a great Russian writer, then his religious views became known, and finally—with the approach of the Russo-Japanese War—he became famous for his opposition to militarism. 1885–90 might be a slight exaggeration but certainly by the early 1890s Tolstoy was becoming well-known to many educated Japanese. Abe Isō recalls how, as a young student in the USA between 1891–5, he read Tolstoy's religious and pacifist works and claims that they were important in leading him to 'socialism'.<sup>26</sup> Also the influential magazine Kokumin no Tomo (The Nation's Friend) carried serialisations of some of Tolstoy's novels in the 1890s, a long article on Tolstoy in January 1896<sup>27</sup> and a letter from Tolstoy to the magazine which was translated and published in December 1896.<sup>28</sup> The letter was Christian-pacifist in its arguments and took basically the same stance which Tolstoy was to remain true to at the time of the Russo-Japanese War.

It was above all else this anti-militarism of Tolstoy's which won him the respect of the socialists in Japan, although his religious ideas too appealed to the Christians among the socialists (about whom there will be much more to be said later). As the shadow of war between Russia and Japan drew near, so articles on him began to appear in the socialist press in Japan and, once the war had actually broken out, references to his anti-war stance were repeated in issue after issue of the socialist newspapers. Tolstoy was important to the socialists in Japan for reason of his heroic scale and for the inspiration which could be drawn from his opposition not only to the war but to a despotic government. When a copy of Tolstoy's long article on the war contributed to The Times on 27 June 1904 fell into their hands, two of the early Japanese socialists Kotoku Shusui and Sakai Toshihiko laboured night and day to have a translation ready for the impending issue of the Heimin Shimbun and, when it appeared, it occupied 5½ pages of their eightpage weekly newspaper.<sup>29</sup> Although the following issue of the Heimin Shimbun carried a lead article<sup>30</sup> (apparently written by Kōtoku<sup>31</sup>) which criticised Tolstoy's religious attitude as not giving a sufficient explanation for—nor a sufficient alternative to—

war, it is clear that many of those in Japan who called themselves socialists were in agreement with Tolstoy's analysis of the causes of war.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, it tells us a great deal about the imprecision of socialist ideas in Japan at this period that Tolstoy's opposition to the war was sufficient to qualify him as a 'socialist' in the eyes of most Japanese. Even Kōtoku and Sakai's Heimin Shimbun shared this view, so that, when it was decided to publish a series of six postcards carrying the pictures of 'celebrities who have strong connections with socialism'<sup>33</sup> in order to commemorate the first anniversary of that newspaper in November 1904, Tolstoy was one of those chosen (along with August Bebel, Frederick Engels, Peter Kropotkin, Ferdinand Lassalle and Karl Marx—a motley crew if ever there was one!).

Abe Isō, who as I said before had been influenced by Tolstoy in his youth, made sure to send a copy of the issue of the Heimin Shimbun which carried the Japanese translation of his article in *The Times* to the master in Russia. Tolstoy replied but, due to the war, the exchange of letters took a whole year. When at long last it came, Tolstoy's letter contained a shock for the Japanese socialists, for what he wrote there was:

Wishing to be quite sincere with you,... I must tell you that I do not approve of socialism and am sorry to know that the most spiritually advanced part of your—so clever and energetic—people has taken from Europe the very feeble, illusory and fallacious theory of socialism, which in Europe is beginning to be abandoned.<sup>34</sup>

All that the socialists in Japan could say in answer to this was: 'we are very sorry to know that such a great man as Tolstoy is yet in error as to socialism'.<sup>35</sup> It sounded rather lame, especially in the light of the fact that for some time Tolstoy had been figuring as one of their 'socialist' heroes (as the episode of the postcards showed), and it certainly did not convince some of the Christian youth in Japan who had been identifying with the socialist movement up till then. It seems that Tolstoy's reply was one of the factors which eventually prompted a number of these young Christians to abandon even the nominal allegiance which socialism had claimed from them up till that time.<sup>36</sup>

## **THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR**

The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5 was important for the socialist movement in Japan in many ways. At this point, however, I do not propose to deal with all of the many effects of that war on the Japanese socialists but simply to concern myself with the influences from Russia which the socialists in Japan, who by this time were modelling themselves primarily on the SPD, felt as a result of the war. Even during the early course of the war the Japanese socialists were interested in the struggle of their counterparts in Russia against tsarism, but it was the 1905 revolution—sparked off by the defeat of the Russian army in the war—which focused their full attention on what was happening in Russia. For a period of five months during 1904,<sup>37</sup> while the war was in progress, a serialised and abridged version of *Sixteen Years in Siberia*, the autobiography of Lev Deich (Leo Deutsch), appeared in the *Heimin Shimbun*. This was translated by Kotoku Shusui from the English version of Deich’s book and the sensational title it was given in the *Heimin Shimbun* (‘Gods Lament and Spirits Weep: the Adventurous Story of the Russian Revolution’) was reminiscent of the populist works of a generation earlier. Along with Plekhanov, Zasluchich and Akselrod, Deich had been a founder member of the ‘Emancipation of Labour’ group in 1883 and later he went on to become a Menshevik, but the socialists in Japan had only a hazy grasp of the different factions into which the revolutionary movement in Russia had split. Deich was described vaguely as a ‘leader of the Russian Socialist Party’<sup>38</sup> and, as Kotoku explained in a postscript to the final instalment of his translation, his intention in presenting Deich’s autobiography had been no more than to convey to *Heimin Shimbun*’s readers ‘the hardships of our comrades in Russia’.<sup>39</sup> Evidently Kotoku and other Japanese socialists’ idea in publishing the autobiography of a Russian revolutionary in a Japanese newspaper during the course of a war between the two powers was to underline the fact that in both of the belligerent countries there were men and women struggling against the war-making governments.

With the outbreak of the 1905 revolution, the socialists in Japan declared themselves to be night and day following the events in Russia.<sup>40</sup> Issue after issue of the *Heimin Shimbun*’s successor *Chokugen* (Straight Talking) carried articles on the ‘Lessons of the Russian Revolution’ and so on and these ‘lessons’ were often very similar to those learned earlier from the populist movement. The same elitism still figured prominently. Russia was

portrayed as a country where a few great scholars stood like rocks among a sea of ignorant people and, among the same sea of patriotic and monarchically inclined peasants, stood heroic ‘revolutionaries burning with enthusiasm’.<sup>41</sup> It was correctly pointed out that the experiences of the Russian revolution showed that revolution does not come in a day, that a long struggle is required, but with much less realism the socialists in Japan also assured themselves of things which there was little factual evidence to support but which they desperately wanted to believe. When they asked themselves ‘What lessons can the history of the (Russian) revolutionary movement teach us?’, one of their wishful answers was: ‘What should really surprise us is the ineffectiveness of police power.’<sup>42</sup> There were going to be many surprises in store for the socialist movement in Japan—but the ‘ineffectiveness of police power’ was not going to be one of them.

In the West probably the best known incident in the whole history of the Japanese socialist movement is still the meeting of Katayama Sen and George Plekhanov on the platform of the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International in August 1904. Their symbolic shaking of hands at a time when the Russian and Japanese armies were locked in battle in Manchuria makes Katayama probably even today the best known of all those in Japan considered at one time or another to have been socialists. Whatever the boost in morale Katayama and Plekhanov’s handshake might have given the Japanese socialists, though, it had little influence on the development of socialist thought in Japan. Less dramatic but more important in terms of an exchange of ideas was the statement ‘To the Socialists in Russia’ published by the Heimin Shimbun in March 1904 and the reply to this in the Russian social-democratic paper *Iskra* later the same year. Contact between the two camps was by an extremely tortuous route. ‘To the Socialists in Russia’ first appeared in Japanese as the lead article in issue No. 18 of the Heimin Shimbun published on 13 March 1904. A fairly freely translated English version of this statement was subsequently carried in the next issue of the Heimin Shimbun which came out on 20 March 1904. This English translation was reprinted in many left wing newspapers in Europe and America and thus eventually came to the attention of the Russian social-democrats living in exile in Switzerland. *Iskra* replied and an English translation of its reply was noticed by the Japanese socialists in their turn in the American publication *Worker*. This ‘Russian Reply’ appeared in Japanese in issue No. 37 of the

Heimin Shimbun, published on 24 July 1904, and a week later in English in No. 38. The time taken for the entire operation of exchanging ideas on the war was thus just over four months.

The text of 'To the Socialists in Russia' as it appeared in English in the Heimin Shimbun was as follows:

Dear Comrades:

For many years we have been hearing of you and thinking about you, though we have not yet had an opportunity to shake hands and talk cheerfully with you, being separated from you by many thousand miles. Twenty years have already passed since you began to preach the great principle of humanity in 1884 under the banner of Social Democracy. During that time, the persecutions of a despotic government and the cruel action of detectives have been such as has never before been seen. Your predecessors passed through the bitterest trials, having forsaken fame and fortune; and those who were shut up in prisons, exiled in desolate Siberia or who perished on scaffolds were numberless. In spite (sic) of this your agitation was not checked even in the slightest degree but your courage always increased a hundred-fold after each persecution. It was last year that the several bodies of socialists throughout Russia were united in strong organization and since then socialism has become an immense (sic) power. We express our hearty sympathy for you in your hard situation and at the same time admire your abiding faith in principle.

Dear Comrades! Your Government and our government have plunged into fighting at last in order to satisfy their imperialistic desires, but to socialists there is no barrier of race, territory or nationality. We are comrades, brothers and sisters and have no reason to fight each other. Your enemy is not the Japanese people, but our militarism and so-called patriotism. Nor is our enemy the Russian people but your militarism and so-called patriotism. Yes, patriotism and militarism are our common enemies; nay, all the socialists in the world also look upon them as common enemies. We socialists must fight a brave battle against them. Here is the best and the most important opportunity for us now. We believe you will not let this opportunity pass. We too will try our best.

But permit us to say a few words more. We are neither Nihilists nor Terrorists, but Social Democrats, and are always fighting for peace. We object absolutely to using military force in our fighting. We have to fight by peaceful means; by reason and speech. It may be very difficult for you to fight with speech and produce a revolution by peaceful means in Russia where there is no constitution, and consequently you may be tempted to overthrow the government by force. But those who are fighting for humanity must remember that the end does not justify the means.

We can not foresee which of the two governments shall win in fighting, but whichever gets the victory, the results of the war will be all the same—general misery, the burden of heavy taxes, the degradation of morality and the supremacy of militarism. Therefore the most important question before us is not which government shall win, but how soon can we bring the war to an end. The determination of the International Workmen's League in its agitations in the time of the Franco-Prussian War give us a good lesson. We are comrades, brothers and sisters; and have no reason why we should fight. The fiend, our common enemy, is now breathing poisonous fire in order to torment millions of people. As Karl Marx said: "Workmen of all nations! Unite!", so we socialists must join our hands in order to do our best.

Dear Comrades! When you suffer under the oppression of your government and the pursuit of cruel detectives, please remember that there are thousands of comrades in a distant land, who are praying for your health and success with the deepest sympathy.<sup>43</sup>

As can be seen, the weakest section of the statement was its third paragraph, with its insistence on SPD-style quiescence and respectability. There was something pathetic about the importance which the socialists in Japan obviously attached to the Japanese constitution and the contrast they made with the situation 'in Russia where there is no constitution'. Even on paper, let alone in its actual application, the Japanese constitution of the time (the so-called 'Meiji' constitution which was to remain in force up till the end of the Second World War) was a licence to enforce a despotism every bit as severe as that practised by the tsar.

The Iskra reply put its finger squarely on the weakness in the Japanese socialists' declaration, even if it did so with marked generosity. What the

Russian social-democrats wrote was:

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

In the time of the Franco-Prussian war, Liebknecht and Bebel, by protesting against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, rendered an immortal service to the cause of international Socialism—a service for which they paid the penalty of imprisonment. Not less valuable and significant is the service rendered to the same cause by these advanced representatives of the Japanese working class.

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

Force against force, violence against violence! And in saying this we speak neither as Nihilists nor as Terrorists. The 'Nihilist' is merely a product of the vivid imagination of the novelist Turgenieff and the fears of the European bourgeoisie. Against Terror ism, as an improper method of action, we have never, since the establishment of the Russian Social Democratic Party, ceased to fight. But, regrettable as it may be, the ruling classes have never submitted to forces of reason and we have not the slightest ground for believing that they ever will.

But in the present instance this question is of secondary importance. What is important for us is the feeling of solidarity which the Japanese comrades have

expressed in their message to us. We sent them a hearty greeting. Down with militarism! Hail to the international social Democracy.<sup>44</sup>

It is interesting to note that the only comment which the Japanese socialists made on the English version of the 'Russian Reply' which appeared in the English-language column of their paper was that they felt it demonstrated 'how the feeling of fraternity is prevailing among socialists throughout the world'.<sup>45</sup> The Japanese translation of the 'Russian Reply' had an extra paragraph of comment appended to it, however, a paragraph which the Japanese socialists knew few, if any, outside Japan could read. This said: 'when we see how they say that there are cases where in the end violence cannot be avoided, we feel deep bitterness about the situation within Russia and cannot help feeling sorry about the adversity of their circumstances'.<sup>46</sup> There was a warm-hearted sympathy here being expressed for the plight of others but, reading it today, one is left above all else amazed at the naivety of the socialists in Japan in this period and at their blindness regarding the difficulties confronting not others but themselves.

Right up to the end of the period we are considering here, when the SPD influence acting on them was at its strongest, the Japanese socialists were to remain formally committed to pacifist tactics, no matter what the cost. But the example provided by the 1905 Russian revolution does seem to have planted a few seeds of doubt in their minds. One sign of this was an article *Rokoku Kakumei no Sobo* ('The Grandmother of the Russian Revolution') which Kōtoku wrote in February 1905 in celebration of an elderly Russian revolutionary.<sup>47</sup> In contrast to its criticism of the Russian social-democrats for focusing their attention on the workers and neglecting the peasants, the article spoke in glowing terms about the 'Revolutionary Social Party' (i.e. the Social-Revolutionary Party or SRs). It argued that the revolutionaries in Russia had become dissatisfied with the social-democrats' 'moderation' and had therefore organised an alternative Social-Revolutionary Party, which also boasted a *sentōdan* ('fighting group'). This 'fighting group' was the SRs' assassination organisation, which had assassinated both the Minister of Education, N.P. Bogolepov, in 1901 and the Minister of the Interior, D.S. Sipyagin in 1902. Kōtoku's article gave an early indication of the direction in which the ideas of some of the socialists in Japan were to move in the period after the end of the Russo-Japanese War.

If it was Russian influence which planted seeds of doubt in some of the Japanese socialists' minds, however, it was the repressive actions of the Japanese government itself which helped those seeds cautiously to sprout a little. An article in the English-language column of Chokugen in April 1905 informed the world that 'the government (has) now began to persecute us more severely' and finished with the headline: 'JAPANESE GOVERNMENT IS AS BARBAROUS AS RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT'.<sup>48</sup> All the same, the socialist movement in Japan was in 1905 still young and full of illusions. It was going to take more than comparisons with the situation in Russia to bring home to the socialists in Japan the full extent of governmental barbarism.

## NOTES

1. 'To give an accurate account of the development of Socialism in Japan entails going back to the early days of our history and examining the principles which influenced our sovereigns in governing their people in those far-off times.' (Abe Isō, 'Socialism in Japan' in Shigenobu Ōkuma, *Fifty Years of New Japan* (London, 1909), vol. 2, p. 494.)
2. See, for example, the article 'Hyaku Gojū Nen Mae no Museifushugisha Ando Shoeki' ('Ando Shoeki: an Anarchist of 150 Years Ago') in the *Nihon Heimin Shimbun* (Japan Common People's Newspaper), 20 January 1908, p. 15.
3. See 'Bakumatsu no Shakaishugisha Satō Nobuhiro' ('Sato Nobuhiro: a Socialist of the Late Tokugawa Period') which first appeared in the *Kyōto Hōgakkai Zasshi* (Kyoto Law Society Journal) in October 1909 and is collected in Ōuchi Hyoei et al. (eds.), *Kawakami Hajime Chosaku Shū* (Collected Works of Kawakami Hajime) (Tokyo, 1964), vol. 1, pp. 373–87.
4. George Lichtheim, *Marxism* (London, p. 24. don, 1964),
5. Akamatsu Katsumaro, *Nihon Shakai Undō Shi* (History of the Social Movement in Japan) (Tokyo, 1974), p. 6.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

7. 'Liberal' in the terms of Meiji Japan.
8. 'Fukuzawa Sensei no Ron ni Kotau' ('In Reply to Fukuzawa's Article'), Meiroku Zasshi (The Meiroku Magazine), ?February 1874. The extract quoted here is translated from Kimura Tsuyoshi, Nihon Shakaishugi Shi (A History of Japanese Socialism) (Tokyo, no date given but probably 1926 or 1927), p. 10. See also W.R.Braisted (ed.), Meiroku Zasshi (Harvard, 1976), pp. 22, 29.
9. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in Karl Marx, Selected Works (London, 1947), vol. 1, p. 130.
10. Akamatsu, Shakai Undō, p. 8.
11. Okamoto Hiroshi, Tazoe Tetsuji (Tokyo, 1971), p. 39.
12. Asukai Masamichi, 'Roshia Dai Ichiji Kakumei to Kotoku Shusui' ('The First Russian Revolution and Kotoku Shusui'), Shisō (Thought), no. 520 (October 1967), p. 1328.
13. Akamatsu, Shakai Undō, p. 6. Books such as these were often based on Western works but the fact that Japanese was so little known in the West allowed their 'translators' to take great liberties with the original texts. In many cases the original authors would have been hard-pressed to have recognised their own work in the 'translations' which appeared and, besides, it was common practice in Japan for books to appear under their 'translators' names alone without any acknowledgments.
14. Kimura, Shakaishugi Shi, p. 17.
15. Tarui Tokichi, 'Tōyō no Kyomutō' ('Oriental Nihilists') in Itoya Hisao and Kishimoto Eitaro (eds.), Nihon Shakai Undo Shiso Shi (History of the Thought of the Japanese Social Movement) (Tokyo, 1971), vol. 2, pp. 125–6.
16. Ōsawa Masamichi, Anakizumu Shisō Shi (A History of Anarchist Thought) (Tokyo, 1971) p. 200.
17. Asukai, 'Roshia Dai Ichiji Kakumei', p. 1329.

18. Stepniak, *Underground Russia* (London, 1883), pp. x–xi.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
20. Marx and Engels in the preface to the Russian edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, January 1882. Taken here from Dona Torr (ed.), *Correspondence of Marx and Engels* (London, 1941), p. 355.
21. Stepniak, *Underground Russia*, pp. 12–13.
22. Yamakawa Hitoshi writing in Ōkochi Kazuo (ed.), *Shakaishugi Kōza* (*Lectures on Socialism*) (Tokyo, 1956), vol. 7, p. 219.
23. Itagaki Taisuke, *Jiyūtō Shi* (*History of the Liberal Party*) (Tokyo, 1910), vol. 2, p. 248.
24. N. Berdyaev, *The Origin of Russian Communism* (London, 1937), p. 110.
25. Kōtoku Shūsui *Zenshū* (*Collected Works of Kotoku Shusui*) (Tokyo, 1970), vol. 1, pp. 154–67.
26. Abe Isō, ‘Watakushi o Shakaishugi ni Michibiita Bungaku’ (‘The Literature Which Led Me to Socialism’) in Takano Zenichi, *Nihon Shakaishugi no Chichi Abe Isō* (*Abe Iso—the Father of Japanese Socialism*) (Tokyo, 1970), p. 227.
27. ‘Torusutoi Haku’ (‘Count Tolstoy’), *Kokumin no Tomo*, 25 January 1896, pp. 9–12.
28. ‘Shukyoku wa Chikakeri’ (‘The End Is Nigh’), *Kokumin no Tomo*, 5 December 1896, pp. 16–24.
29. *Heimin Shimbun*, 7 August 1904, pp. 1–6.
30. *Heimin Shimbun*, 14 August 1904, p. 1.
31. See Hayashi Shigeru and Nishida Taketoshi (eds.), *Heimin Shimbun Ronsetsu Shu* (*Collected Editorials of the Common People’s Newspaper*) (Tokyo, 1974), p. 32.

32. See, for example, Shirokuma, 'Torusutoi no Sensō Ron o Yomu' ('Reading Tolstoy's Views on War'), *Shakaishugi (Socialism)*, 3 May 1903, p. 835.

33. *Heimin Shimbun*, 23 October 1904, p. 7.

34. *Chokugen (Straight Talking)*, 27 August 1905, p. 1.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

36. Kimura, *Shakaishugi Shi*, p. 83.

37. *Heimin Shimbun*, 17 April 1904 to 4 September 1904.

38. *Heimin Shimbun*, 17 April 1904, p. 6.

39. *Heimin Shimbun*, 4 September 1904, p. 6.

40. *Chokugen*, 14 May 1905, p. 3.

41. *Chokugen*, 12 March 1905, p. 1.

42. *Chokugen*, 19 February 1905, p. 1.

43. *Heimin Shimbun*, 20 March 1904, p. 1.

44. *Heimin Shimbun*, 31 July 1904, p. 1. The question of who it was who wrote the 'Russian Reply' has much exercised the pens of commentators in Japan. Given the reverence with which Lenin is widely regarded in Japan, some have been eager to attribute its authorship to Lenin. Yet, as Arahata Kanson has pointed out, the Russian social-democratic paper *Iskra* had already by the time of this exchange passed out of Bolshevik control into the hands of the Menshevik opponents of Lenin. (See Arahata Kanson, *Heiminsha Jidai (The Heimin Society Period)* (Tokyo, 1973) p. 116.) This does not entirely rule out the possibility that Lenin might have been its author, since the Menshevik-Bolshevik split was less rigid at first in 1903–4 than it was to become at a later stage, but there is nothing in the content of the 'Russian Reply' which indicates Lenin as its writer. It would have been just as much in character for a Menshevik such as Julius Martov to have

written along the lines of the 'Russian Reply' as it would a Bolshevik such as Vladimir Lenin and the fact is that we do not know who its author was.

45. Ibid., p. 1.

46. Heimin Shimbun, 24 July 1904, p. 5.

47. Chokugen, 12 February 1905, p. 3.

48. Chokugen, 30 April 1905, p. 1.

## Chapter 3

# STUDYING AT THE FEET OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

## SAKAI YŪZABURŌ

In 1889, the year that the social-democratic Second International was founded in Europe, a young man called Sakai Yūzaburō<sup>1</sup> was despatched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce in Japan to be present at the great Exposition being held in Paris. Sakai was appointed because of his knowledge of French but it so happened that the person who had taught him this language was Nakae Chomin, one of the principal theoreticians of the left wing of the ‘people’s rights movement’ and the first person to translate Rousseau into Japanese. Sakai had been influenced by Nakae and was interested in radical political and social thought himself. Realising he had a golden opportunity to investigate this during his time abroad, he paid little attention to his official duties (later he was transferred from the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce to the Foreign Office) and concentrated instead on informing himself of the developments which were taking place in trade union and left wing political activity in Europe. Among other things, he attended the second congress of the Second International held in Brussels in 1891 (being, of course, the only Japanese present—although he did not rank as the delegate of any social-democratic organisation, since none existed in Japan at that time).

Sakai was to die in a fall from a hotel window in Paris but before this happened he wrote a number of reports on social-democracy in Europe which were published in the magazine *Kokumin no Tomo* (The Nation’s Friend). These articles became important sources of basic information on European social-democracy for many radicals in Japan because—although lacking any great depth—they did point to the widespread existence throughout Europe of trade unions and strikes, of social-democratic parties, and of the class struggle in general. An article *Shakaitō no Undō* (‘The Socialist Party Movement’) which appeared in July 1890,<sup>2</sup> for example, gave an account of the May Day agitation and of the social-democratic parties. Although the

bulk of the article dealt with France, it also gave brief sketches of the situations in Germany, Austro-Hungary, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Sweden, Britain and even the USA. The reformist demands (for an eight-hour day, a minimum wage and so on) which had prompted the May Day demonstrations were explained and the split between ‘Marxist’ and ‘possibilist’ factions in the French social-democratic movement was outlined. Both Karl Marx and Auguste Blanqui were referred to as ‘famous socialists’ and the anarchist Louise Michel was mentioned in connection with the idea that a socialist revolution could be achieved by means of an international general strike.

Much of what Sakai wrote here must have passed straight over the heads of many of his readers in Japan. Men such as Blanqui and Marx would have been no more than names to them and it was difficult enough to grasp what was meant by unfamiliar words such as ‘union’ (kumiai—which Sakai supplemented with the word sanjika, a Japanese rendering of the French syndicat) and ‘strike’ (domei hiko—literally ‘an allied work-stoppage’), let alone to appreciate the differences between ‘Marxists’ and ‘possibilists’. Nonetheless, Sakai’s reports did serve a useful purpose, simply by bringing home to some radicals in Japan the fact that the term ‘socialism’ was open to other interpretations than that given it by the Russian populists. An article of Sakai’s which served as a follow-up to ‘The Socialist Party Movement’ dealt at length with the demand for an eight-hour day<sup>3</sup> and it cannot have escaped the attention of thoughtful readers that the wage-earning working class stood at the centre of the concerns of those in Western Europe who called themselves socialists, in a way that was very different to the preoccupations of the Russian populists. A year later, writing from Brussels, Sakai also claimed that the social-democratic parties favoured the general strike as a means for achieving their aims.<sup>4</sup> Irrespective of how true this was, it must at least have suggested once more to Japanese readers how different Western European social-democrats were to the peasant-oriented Russian populists.

## **‘AUTHORITIES’ ON ‘SOCIALISM’**

Despite the prominence which Sakai gave to strikes and demonstrations in his accounts of social-democracy, however, not a few of his readers in Japan failed to realise that socialism was an expression of the struggle between

classes in society. All too often socialism was conceived as just another exotic Western philosophy and, in order to learn more about it, people in Japan turned to some extremely doubtful ‘authorities’. These were men like William Graham—professor of political economy and jurisprudence at Queen’s College, Belfast—whose *Socialism New and Old* (first published in London in 1890) appeared in Japanese translation in 1894.<sup>5</sup> Among Graham’s other profundities in this book was an assurance that, in the ‘sense of the word that it is generally used by writers of authority’,<sup>6</sup> ‘the laws of Solon, equally with certain legislation of today, the Jewish Jubilee, and even the English Poor Law would be Socialism’.<sup>7</sup> When the Minyūsha company, which published *Kokumin no Tomo*, brought out a volume on *Genji no Shakaishugi* (*Socialism Today*) in 1893 it acknowledged its debt to Graham’s *Socialism New and Old* and to another English-language work, John Rae’s *Contemporary Socialism*.<sup>8</sup> If anything, Rae’s *Contemporary Socialism* was even less reliable than Graham’s *Socialism New and Old*—for, in a chapter in which he critically examined the theory of ‘Das Capital’ (sic), the labour theory of value was rejected as a ‘vicious argument’!<sup>9</sup> One gets an idea of the general tenor of Rae’s book from the review it was given in *The Times* when it first appeared in English in 1884: ‘His introductory chapter is well worth studying, as also are his sketches of Lassalle, Karl Marx, and Professor Winkelblech.’<sup>10</sup> This was hardly the most auspicious of recommendations but *Genji no Shakaishugi*—which was, as I said, partially derived from Rae’s *Contemporary Socialism*—had a considerable influence on men like Nishikawa Kōjirō who were to become prominent in the socialist movement in Japan<sup>11</sup> and one finds Rae still being quoted as an ‘authority’ on ‘socialism’ as late as 1903.<sup>12</sup>

Although Sakai Yūzaburō had written mainly about social-democracy in France, by the end of the nineteenth century it was the movement in Germany which was capturing people’s attention everywhere. In Germany, though, the Social-Democratic Party (SPD) was not alone in claiming to be socialist.

On the contrary, the policy of nationalisation which had been initiated by none other than Bismarck himself was frequently described as a type of ‘socialism’ and there was a whole school of academics which explained and justified (and thus provided an ideological back-up for) the measures introduced by the Iron Chancellor and his successors. These academics were

men like the one-time professor of political economy at the University of Vienna and Austrian Minister of Commerce, A. Sch<sup>ä</sup>ffle, and the professor of political economy at the University of Berlin, Adolf Wagner. The activist connotation which 'socialism' had once enjoyed among those who formed the left wing of the 'people's rights movement' was now disappearing as memories of the Russian populists faded in Japan and 'socialism' was coming to be cloaked in an intellectual aura instead around the turn of the century. It was therefore perhaps inevitable that even the radically inclined should have relied on the writings of academics in order to gain more information on the subject of 'socialism'. There was also the point that, until contacts were established with social-democratic parties abroad, the flimsy pamphlets and periodicals in which the social-democratic movement normally argued its case were a great deal harder to come by in Japan than the substantial volumes, published by major companies, in which Sch<sup>ä</sup>ffle and other scholars expressed their views. At any rate, whatever the reason, the English-language version of Sch<sup>ä</sup>ffle's *Quintessenz des Sozialismus* became the virtual bible of those starting to call themselves socialists in Japan. Supplementing Sch<sup>ä</sup>ffle's work, there was also Thomas Kirkup's *An Inquiry into Socialism* (which was heavily German-oriented in its approach<sup>13</sup>), W.H. Dawson's two books *German Socialism and Ferdinand Lassalle and Bismarck* and *State Socialism* and R.T. Ely's *French and German Socialism in Modern Times*. Long forgotten though all these books might now be, it is difficult to exaggerate the esteem in which they were held in Japan in their day.

### Sch<sup>ä</sup>ffle's Quintessence of Socialism

When news of Sch<sup>ä</sup>ffle's death in 1903 reached Japan, obituary notices duly appeared in both the English and Japanese columns of the *Heimin Shimbun* (Common People's Newspaper). The English column said: 'His "Quintessenz des Sozialismus" (sic) and other works were largely (i.e. widely) read among our people. It is through his books that we have obtained the clearest account of Socialism.'<sup>14</sup> Although the clarity of Sch<sup>ä</sup>ffle's treatment of 'socialism' is, in fact, open to dispute, this comment by what was the most representative organ of the socialist movement in Japan at that time shows the influence which his writings exerted. Even the very title of Kōtoku Shūsui's

Shakaishugi Shinzui (The Quintessence of Socialism, published in 1903), which it is probably fair to describe as the most celebrated theoretical work written by any socialist in Japan in the Meiji era.<sup>15</sup> was taken from Schäffle and quotations from Schäffle's books regularly adorned the pages of the socialist publications of the period. In particular, there was a prescription for state capitalism ('The Alpha and Omega of socialism is the transformation of private and competing capitals into a united collective capital') which was quoted again and again over the years<sup>16</sup>—and this gives us a hint of the notions about 'socialism' which the socialists in Japan obtained from Schäffle.

Schäffle was a supporter of Bismarck and in his *Quintessenz des Sozialismus* he attempted to first describe the supposedly socialist policies of the SPD and then subject them to a Bismarckian criticism. Critical though he was of the SPD, however, there was a wider area of agreement between the German social-democrats and those like Schäffle who favoured Bismarck than either side cared to admit. In its calls for widespread state control, the SPD was not seeking anything essentially different from Bismarck's own nationalisation measures and it was this basic similarity of views which enabled a writer like Schäffle—formally hostile to social-democracy—to summarise the SPD's state-capitalist policies as effectively as he did. Reading the English version of his *Quintessenz des Sozialismus*, the Japanese socialists were told that the SPD's aim was to transform the means of production into 'State-factories' and 'public bodies under State regulation and inspection'.<sup>17</sup> In other words, said Schäffle:

The economic quintessence of the socialistic programme, the real aim of the international movement, is as follows.

To replace the system of private capital (i.e. the speculative method of production, regulated on behalf of society only by the free competition of private enterprises) by a system of collective capital...<sup>18</sup>

Capital was to be collectivised, rather than abolished, and put under the control of the state, which in its turn was not to be abolished either but would sport a socialist label. A generation of socialists in Japan cut their teeth on this doctrine and enormous harm it did, for—as has since been proved in

other parts of the world in actual practice—capital no more ceases to be an anarchic force outside of people’s rational control on being collectivised than the state ceases to be an organ of repression on being given a socialist label. Whether private or collectivised, if the means of production within society function as capital—producing commodities for sale on the market within a monetary economy—then a class is bound to form at the opposite pole of society to that capital, consisting of individuals stripped of all means of production and therefore forced to sell their labour power for wages to whoever controls the means of production. It makes no difference whether the minority controlling the means of production do so individually as private capitalists or collectively as a group in command of the state for, as Marx once put it, ‘capital presupposes wage labour; wage labour presupposes capital. They reciprocally condition the existence of each other; they reciprocally evoke each other.’<sup>19</sup> As if in recognition of this, Sch<sup>ä</sup>ffle made it clear that in the SPD scheme of things a class of wage labourers would persist, the only difference in their status being an upgrading of their wages by dubbing them ‘salaries’ instead.<sup>20</sup>

All in all, then, there was a terrible irony in the tribute which the Japanese socialists paid Sch<sup>ä</sup>ffle on his death. The Japanese-language columns of the Heimin Shimbun (Common People’s Newspaper) repeated what the obituary in the English column had said, but also added for good measure:

anyone reading his book (Quintessenz des Sozialismus) will find a great many misunderstandings regarding socialism cleared up and in the end, without fail, will be drawn towards socialism out of sympathy for it.<sup>21</sup>

Nothing could have been further from the truth, for Sch<sup>ä</sup>ffle’s Quintessenz des Sozialismus served as a recruiting manual not for socialism but for state capitalism, and was well supplied with misunderstandings of its own about the nature of a socialist society.

### **Kirkup, Dawson, Ely**

It is not necessary to examine Kirkup’s *An Inquiry into Socialism*, Dawson’s *German Socialism and Ferdinand Lassalle and Bismarck and State Socialism*, or Ely’s *French and German Socialism in Modern Times* in the same detail as

Schäffle's book, because essentially these writers too were saying the same things as Schäffle.

Thomas Kirkup's *An Inquiry into Socialism* (first published in London in 1887) went even further than Schäffle in its praise of the virtues of capital<sup>22</sup> and was equally enthusiastic in its defence of the state.<sup>23</sup> Kirkup had a considerable influence on Kōtoku Shūsui among others<sup>24</sup> and as late as 1906 one finds almost an entire issue of Sakai Toshihiko's theoretical journal *Shakaishugi Kenkyū* (*The Study of Socialism*) given over to translated excerpts from Kirkup's writing.<sup>25</sup> W.H.Dawson's *Bismarck and State Socialism* was translated into Japanese (under the title *Kokka Shakai Sei—The State Social System*) shortly after it first appeared in English in 1890<sup>26</sup> but it was probably his earlier *German Socialism and Ferdinand Lassalle* (first published in 1888) which was the more highly regarded among the Japanese socialists, even though it does not appear to have been translated into Japanese. A provincial correspondent writing to the *Heimin Shimbun* in 1904 to enquire about what to read on 'socialism' was recommended *German Socialism and Ferdinand Lassalle* as an 'interesting book'<sup>27</sup> and Yano Fumio in his utopian novel *Shin Shakai* (*The New Society*, 1902) urged those who could not manage to 'study the theories of Karl Rodbertus, Karl Marx etc.' to read Dawson instead.<sup>28</sup> *Bismarck and State Socialism* was, as its title implies, an account of Bismarck's policy of state intervention in the economy and the image of 'socialism' projected by Dawson in his *German Socialism and Ferdinand Lassalle* is well summed up by the following passage taken from the 'Introduction':

no more singular inconsistency exists than that of subjects of a civilised State declaring against the Communistic and Socialistic principle. For this principle has been extensively adopted in all the most progressive countries, and some of our most highly esteemed institutions are based upon it. The State post, telegraph, railway, and bank, the free school, the poor law system, the factory laws, sanitary legislation—these are all institutions which must be unconditionally condemned if Communism and Socialism are evil in theory.<sup>29</sup>

With teachers like Dawson, no wonder that the Japanese socialists should have seen 'the application of pure socialism in the postal services, the

telegraph and telephones'<sup>30</sup> established by the Meiji state:

R.T.Ely really belongs to the next chapter because he was one of a number of American social-gospellers who exerted a major influence on the Japanese socialist movement. Although I shall come back to him again in [Chapter 4](#), it seems appropriate to mention his French and German Socialism in Modern Times here, because it was one of the works which the Japanese socialists relied on at first as a source of information on European social-democracy. As with the other books I have been considering, the same identification of 'socialism' with state control occurred,<sup>31</sup> but this did not deter the Heimin Shimbun in November 1903 from recommending French and German Socialism in Modern Times as providing 'data for the study of social problems'.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the important role played by this book of Ely's in the socialist movement in Japan around the turn of the century is strikingly indicated by a short piece entitled Yo wa Ika ni shite Shakaishugi(sha) to Narishi ka ('How I Became a Socialist') written by Sakai Toshihiko early in 1904.<sup>33</sup> There he explains how it was Ely's French and German Socialism in Modern Times which set him on the path to 'socialism'.

## FALSE OPTIMISM

In December 1897 a labour paper Rōdō Sekai (Labour World) started to appear in Tokyo on a regular fortnightly basis. Rōdō Sekai varied a good deal from issue to issue, being anything from six to 18 pages in length, but one of its features which never changed was that it always carried a page of news written in English. The fact that it included an English page meant that Rōdō Sekai could be exchanged with labour and social-democratic publications abroad and the benefits of this were so obvious that, even after Rōdō Sekai ceased publication, the practice of printing at least one column of news in English was continued by its successors.<sup>34</sup> Although the Japanese socialists' ability to read publications from abroad was generally restricted to English-language material, there was plenty of information on the European social-democratic parties (particularly the SPD) in the American and British papers with which they established exchange arrangements. Gradually these papers became more important sources of information on European social-democracy for the socialists in Japan than the books by Schaffle and others which I dealt with above.

Throughout the Meiji era the socialists in Japan operated under very difficult circumstances. Their numbers were few, their resources limited and they were continually being threatened by an always repressive and sometimes brutal state. In contrast to the situation in Japan, however, the social-democrats in Europe appeared to be going from strength to strength and the successes scored by the European parties were sources of great encouragement for the Japanese socialists. Viewed from Japan, it seemed that the battle for ‘socialism’ had actually been engaged in Europe and America—and, what was more, that it was being won as they stood watching.<sup>35</sup> ‘Socialism is gradually appearing in the real world and is being put into practice on all sides’,<sup>36</sup> wrote Rōdō Sekai, and the social-democrats’ electoral gains were studied enthusiastically. The fact that there were 58 social-democratic MPs in the German Reichstag, 47 in France, 35 in Belgium and so on was cited as evidence that ‘in the world today socialism...is certainly no wild fancy...(but) ...is being put into practice by the socialist parties’.<sup>37</sup> Nor were election results the only favourable omens for ‘socialism’s realisation, it was held. Plagued continually by police interference as the Japanese socialists were, the fact that there were reported to be social-democratic sympathisers within the police force in Paris and elsewhere abroad was hailed as a matter of great significance. ‘The emergence of believers in socialism in all fields is proof that the time for socialism’s victory is definitely drawing near. We should congratulate ourselves! We should congratulate ourselves!’, they rejoiced.<sup>38</sup> Strange as this seems, odder still was the attitude they took towards the appointment in 1899 of the French social-democrat Millerand to a cabinet position in the government of Waldeck-Rousseau. Unaware that the social-democratic movement in France had divided into two hostile parties over this very issue,<sup>39</sup> the socialists in Japan greeted the entry of a supposed socialist (Rōdō Sekai called him a ‘pure socialist’<sup>40</sup>!) into an avowedly capitalist government as yet another sign of ‘socialism’s impending victory’.<sup>41</sup>

## **THE SPD**

The small group of enthusiasts who tried to raise the socialist flag in Japan at the turn of the century had various alternatives as to which organisation abroad they should model themselves on. Forming a Shakaishugi Kenkyū

Kai (Society for the Study of Socialism) in 1898,<sup>42</sup> they often liked to draw a parallel between their own little study circle and the incomparably more influential Fabian Society in Britain,<sup>43</sup> but generally it was the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) in whose glow they sought to bask. The SPD was far and away the most powerful party in the Second International, with not merely a mass following but its association with Karl Marx and Frederick Engels to add to its international prestige, and to the early socialists in Japan it appeared as an omniscient source of guidance. No wonder, then, that when Abe Iso wrote a series of articles on *Shakaishugi no Unmei o Kessubeki Mondai* ('Questions Which Should Decide the Fate of Socialism') in the *Heimin Shimbun* between November 1903 and January 1904, the SPD figured prominently there. Abe's argument was that one could not expect the socialist movement in Japan to reach the level represented by the SPD within the space of a few years. 'Twenty to thirty years'<sup>44</sup> would be needed for that—and, long before that time had elapsed, the situation in Germany was bound to come to a head. Like it or not, the Japanese socialists were going to be mere spectators to socialism's success or failure in Germany and—in that sense—the SPD was performing a great service for the socialist movement in Japan as well. For 'if our people (sic) see socialism put into practice in that country (i.e. Germany) and if, moreover, it yields excellent results, then they too will want to take advantage of it just as they would want to introduce into Japan discoveries in the field of science'.<sup>45</sup>

Then again, in 1901 the socialists in Japan attempted to launch a political party and the name they chose for it (*Shakai Minshuto*—Social-Democratic Party) is another indication of the reverence with which the SPD was regarded.<sup>46</sup> A remark by Sakai Toshihiko as to why he was publishing biographical essays on Marx and Engels, written respectively by Wilhelm Liebknecht and Karl Kautsky (both leaders of the SPD), in the first issue of his magazine *Shakaishugi Kenkyū* is revealing as well: 'Above all, it is because both these biographies were written by celebrities of the German Socialist Party that I believe they are of value and should be highly esteemed.'<sup>47</sup> The Japanese socialists were isolated at the other end of the world from the main centres of the international movement with which they identified. In addition, their meagre numbers were pitted in an unequal struggle against an over-whelmingly powerful and unscrupulous state. Faced with the enormity of the task which this situation imposed on them, it was

perhaps only natural that they should have been desperate to draw comfort from the image provided by the SPD as a wise and powerful older brother. Not only was the SPD seen as a theoretical mentor, but even the setbacks which the Japanese socialists suffered at the hands of the state were continually being interpreted in the false light shed by SPD experiences, which had occurred under greatly different circumstances from those which applied in Japan. Thus Rōdō Sekai declared in its English columns, on the passing of the ‘public peace police law’, that ‘This peace law like the Exceptional Law of Bismark<sup>48</sup> will prove to be a great blessing to the cause of the labor movement in Japan as it was so in Germany’!<sup>49</sup>

The three main planks of the doctrine which the socialist movement in Japan learned from the SPD were state capitalism, reformism and parliamentarism and these will now be examined in turn.

### **State Capitalism Again**

It is not necessary to analyse the state capitalist component of social-democratic theory in any great detail because it has already been looked at in the section concerned with Schäffle's exposition of SPD ideas. Besides, as far as the mistaken notion that the mechanisms of a capitalist economy could be incorporated into a socialist society was concerned, it does seem that this was generally absorbed by the Japanese socialists from Schäffle, Kirkup and company, rather than directly from the SPD. This appears to have been more a matter of chance than anything else, for the leaders of the SPD like Karl Kautsky had, by the beginning of the twentieth century, come a long way from Karl Marx's call for ‘Abolition of the wage system’<sup>50</sup> and were already loud in their praise of the monetary economy.<sup>51</sup> Yet, if one takes a book such as Katayama Sen's *Wa ga Shakaishugi* (What Socialism Means For Me), published in 1903, references to the German social-democrats are mainly confined to its political sections—Katosukii (i.e. Kautsky) being cited, for example, in support of Katayama's views on the nature of a socialist revolution.<sup>52</sup> Although prices, value, money and taxation are all to be found within Katayama's version of ‘socialism’,<sup>53</sup> he does not seem to have relied on Kautsky and the other leaders of the SPD to any great extent in order to lend weight to his spurious economics.

When we come to the statist element in state capitalism, however, the situation is different, with many direct references to the SPD in the writings of the early socialists in Japan. The leaders of the SPD paid lip service to the Marxist classics and therefore frequently engaged in verbal somersaults in order to avoid referring to socialism and the state in the same breath. Despite this, what they were quite clearly advocating in their social-democratic policies was a scheme of widespread state control and not only did the early socialists in Japan take up such policies themselves but, lacking the verbal sophistication of the SPD, they were naive enough to call a spade a spade (or a state a state!). In an essay *Shakaishugi to Kokka* ('Socialism and the State'), written in 1902, Kōtoku Shūsui admits at one point that 'parties like the German Social-Democratic Party have in fact declared that they hope to abolish the state'. But Kōtoku also reassures his readers (he was writing in the magazine *Nihonjin* (Japanese), most of whose readers would have found such a proposition alarming) that words are used in a 'special, technical sense' by the SPD!<sup>54</sup> He further adds that whether the organ of social control which the SPD was seeking to set up could 'suitably be described by the term state or not is a question we need not go into here'.<sup>55</sup> One is left with few doubts that Kōtoku believed it could, though, and anyway only 18 months before 'Socialism and the State' appeared, Wilhelm Liebknecht had been caught in a quotation on the front page of *Rōdō Sekai* losing his footing in one of the somersaults and actually demanding a 'socialist state' (*shakaishugiteki kokka*).<sup>56</sup> The front page treatment which this demand was given in a paper like *Rōdō Sekai* symbolises the statist influence exerted by German social-democracy on the socialist movement in Japan prior to 1905.

## **Reformism**

Even though the SPD might have had as its ultimate aim a system of all-embracing nationalisation or state capitalism, more or less similar to that which exists in state capitalist countries such as Russia today, it viewed this merely as a long-term prospect. Its day to day political activity was directed towards securing piecemeal reforms within the framework of the Imperial German state. This concern with reforming capitalism was another leaf which the socialists in Japan took out of the SPD's book. One can obtain a very good idea of the reformist example which the SPD set by an article Doitsu

Shakaitō no Seikō (‘The German Socialist Party’s Political Programme’) published in Rōdō Sekai in April 1900. This article criticised Japanese scholars for denouncing socialism as a dangerous doctrine. It itemised the SPD’s proposed reforms of German capitalism (proportional representation,<sup>57</sup> freedom of the press and freedom of assembly, free education, changes in the system of taxation etc.) and assured Rōdō Sekai’s readers of their respectability—assured the Japanese public, in fact, that they ‘are certainly not a policy for subverting Germany’.<sup>58</sup> The same ten-point programme of the SPD was again quoted at length in an article by Nishikawa Kōjirō which appeared in Shakaishugi (Socialism) in September 1903. On this occasion Nishikawa described the SPD’s proposals for reforming capitalism in Germany as ‘appropriate’<sup>59</sup> and, the article was significantly headlined Doitsu Shakaitō no Shōri ga Atauru Kyōkun (‘Lessons Which the German Socialist Party’s Victory Has Taught Us’).

When the still-born Shakai Minshutō (Social-Democratic Party) announced its own political programme in the Japanese press on 20 May 1901, it was its turn to supplement the eight ‘ideals’ (risō) it proclaimed with a list of 28 reformist measures said to be suitable for a ‘practical movement’.<sup>60</sup> Predictably, these reformist measures were of the type which the parties of the Second International habitually called ‘palliatives’ and among them were several of the demands advanced by the SPD. The core of the programme read as follows:

### Manifesto of the Social-Democratic Party

...Our party, in response to the general trend at work within the world, and understanding the tendency of the economy, wishes to abolish the gap between rich and poor and secure a victory for pacifism in the world by means of genuine socialism and democracy. Our party therefore hopes to advance step by step towards the ideals listed below.

- (1) Propagation of the principle that the whole of humankind, regardless of racial and political differences, are brothers and sisters of the same blood.
- (2) Abolition of armaments as the precondition for achieving international peace.

(3) Abolition of class systems.

(4) Land and capital, which are essential as means of production, all to be publicly owned.

(5) Means of transport, such as railways, ships, canals and bridges, all to be publicly owned.

(6) Fair distribution of wealth.

(7) Achievement of equal political rights for the people.

(8) The state to bear the expenses of all education, so that the people can receive education on a basis of equality.

These are our party's ideals but it goes without saying that it is difficult to put them into practice at present. Because of this, our party expects to establish a programme such as the following and expects to put its efforts into a practical movement.

(1) Public ownership of railways throughout the country.

(2) Municipal ownership of trams, electricity boards, gas boards, and all other monopolies.

(3) Prohibition of the selling of publicly-owned land held by either central, prefectural or local government.

(4) Adoption of a policy of the municipalisation of all land in towns and cities. In cases where this policy cannot be speedily implemented, laws to be enacted which will prohibit the buying up and annexing of city land by private persons.

(5) Patent rights to be bought up by the government. In this way inventors can be given a proper reward at the same time that their inventions are made available to the people at moderate prices.

(6) Restriction on house rents so that they do not exceed a certain percentage of the value of the property in question.

- (7) All government works to be undertaken by the government itself. Government works never to be contracted out to private individuals or private companies.
- (8) Taxes on articles of consumption such as alcohol, soy sauce and sugar to be abolished and replaced by inheritance tax, income tax and other direct taxes.
- (9) The period of compulsory education to extend up to higher elementary school. Abolition of tuition fees and text-books to be supplied at public expense.
- (10) Setting up of a labour bureau. Investigations into all aspects of labour to be instigated.
- (11) The employment of children of school age to be forbidden.
- (12) The employment of women in work which is harmful to morals or health to be forbidden.
- (13) Abolition of night-work for minors and females.
- (14) Abolition of Sunday work. Hours of labour to be restricted to eight hours per day.
- (15) Enactment of a law establishing employer responsibility. In cases where workers are injured in the discharge of their duties, appropriate compensation to be paid by the employers.
- (16) Enactment of a law on trade unions. The right of workers to organise freely to be officially recognised and adequate protection to be afforded to them.
- (17) Enactment of a law protecting tenants.
- (18) The insurance industry to be taken over completely by the government.
- (19) All judicial expenses to be borne by the government.

- (20) A law establishing universal suffrage to be introduced.
- (21) A law establishing proportional representation to be adopted.
- (22) All voting to be direct and the ballot to be secret.
- (23) Establishment of a method of directly polling the general public on matters of great importance.
- (24) Abolition of the death penalty.
- (25) Abolition of the House of Lords.
- (26) Armaments to be cut.
- (27) Abolition of the public peace police law.
- (28) Abolition of the newspaper laws. [61](#)

Of these 28 immediate demands, Nos. 8, 9, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24 and 28 were equivalent to proposals in the SPD's programme of reforms as it appeared in the socialist press in Japan at different times, while a number of the other items (such as Nos. 1, 15, 16 and 27) had already been achieved, after one fashion or another, in Germany. The point I am making is not to deny that any of these reformist measures could have benefited the working class in Japan. Although, in fact, little more than pious hopes within the context of Japanese society in the Meiji era, it can readily be admitted that, if by some miracle they could have been achieved, they would have improved the status of working men and women both economically and in terms of their democratic rights. Advantageous though they might have been, however, such improvements would in no way have altered the fundamental nature of Japanese society, any more than Bismarck's nationalisation of the Prussian railways or the repeal of the Exceptional Law against the Socialists had in Germany. The history of the SPD and, for that matter, of the Second International as a whole is eloquent testimony to the fact that 'palliatives' of this kind were not the 'stepping stones to socialism' which social-democratic parties imagined them to be. On the contrary, they were substitutes for socialism, since mass parties like the SPD attempted to swing the working

class behind them on the strength of the tinkering with the capitalist system which they advocated. There can be no doubt that, had conditions allowed it, the Japanese Shakai Minshutō would have played the same role as the SPD was doing in Germany. Ironically, it was saved from this fate not only by the backwardness of the economy but also by the action of the Japanese government—for the government suppressed it as soon as it was formed.

One of the similarities between the situations in Japan and Germany was the existence of groups and individuals to the right of the main body of social-democrats advocating out-and-out reformism. In Germany the mainstream of the SPD could engage in solemn debates on the subject of ‘reform or revolution’ not only with its academic critics like Schäffle and Adolf Wagner but even with its own right wing. Karl Kautsky’s polemics with Eduard Bernstein won him an easy reputation as a ‘revolutionary’, despite his own commitment to a programme of reforms. Similarly in Japan a debate ensued around the turn of the century between Katayama Sen and others, who claimed to stand for ‘socialism’, and a group known as the Shakai Seisaku Gakkai (Society for the Study of Social Policy) which was in favour of ‘social reform’. Members of the Shakai Seisaku Gakkai, such as Kanai Nobu and Kuwada Kumazō (who were both university professors), had been heavily influenced by the writings of Adolf Wagner and other German economists and they held up the policies adopted by Bismarck as examples to be followed. Their calls on the government to introduce reforms were not seen by them as in any way threatening the existence of capitalism. Rather, they saw reform as a means to strengthen the bases of capitalist society in Japan, by preventing the worst excesses of laissez-faire.

The presence of a group such as the Shakai Seisaku Gakkai was unfortunate. When Katayama Sen and others suggested reforms which were slightly more radical or more extensive than the Shakai Seisaku Gakkai’s, the impression was given that they were advocating socialist alternatives to what was seen as the Gakkai’s ‘reformism’. A case in point was the debate between Katayama Sen, Kanai Nobu and others, organised by the printers’ union, which was reported at length in Rōdō Sekai in October 1899. Kanai denounced socialism as ‘something which will destroy the present structure of the state’<sup>62</sup> and supported instead the measures introduced by Bismarck, while Katayama sung ‘socialism’s praises—offering, among other examples, ‘the

city system of San Francisco'<sup>63</sup> as an illustration of how it worked in practice! The fact that there was a degree of similarity between the situations in Germany and Japan was also underlined when Katayama represented the Japanese socialists at the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International in 1904 and voted against 'revisionism'. Just as Kautsky had been built up as a supposed champion of revolutionary principles due to his polemics with the 'revisionist' Bernstein, so Katayama was able to claim:

In Japan, socialists and social reformers always stand on opposite sides when they deal with labor problems or social problems. As Japanese socialists have been faithful to strict principle thus far in spite of many difficulties, I am glad to agree to the Dresden resolution and to vote for it.<sup>64</sup>

It was true that Katayama and his co-workers had crossed swords with Kanai Nobu and the other 'social reformers' of the Shakai Seisaku Gakkai but, whatever the phrase 'faithful to strict principle' was supposed to convey, it certainly did not mean that the socialists in Japan had broken with reformism.

## **Parliamentarism**

In Germany the SPD's strategy was to contest elections and to use the apparatus of parliament as the means for eventually gaining political power. Even within the SPD's terms of reference, such a strategy made sense only in a situation where the franchise was wide enough to include at least a reasonable percentage of SPD supporters and where social-democrats were able to organise themselves into a political party and to engage in activities without too much interference by the state. The socialists in Japan took over the SPD's strategy and tried to apply it in a set of circumstances which ruled out any chance of its success whatsoever. They were prevented from forming a socialist party and the police continually interrupted their meetings and put severe pressure on their newspapers. Not only were the Japanese socialists constantly harassed in these ways, but their repeated affirmations of the policy of working through the Japanese diet<sup>65</sup> were made against a political background where stringent property qualifications restricted the electorate to approximately 1 per cent of the population!<sup>66</sup>

The hopelessness of this imported strategy, borrowed from the SPD, was

highlighted by Kinoshita Naoe's standing in a by-election in the Tokyo constituency in May 1905. Kinoshita was one of the original organisers of the suppressed Shakai Minshūtō and one of the reasons why he stood was that the socialists believed that simply by putting a candidate forward they were somehow demonstrating that their party existed in fact, even though banned by the authorities. 'Founding of the Socialist Party' was the headline of one of the articles in Chokugen (Straight Talking) dealing with Kinoshita's candidature<sup>67</sup> and the Japanese socialists were careful to use other expressions such as 'the people who voted for our party'<sup>68</sup> and so on. Far from being an impressive demonstration that the Shakai Minshūtō was alive and well, however, Kinoshita's campaign achieved little more for the socialists of the time than a succession of bruising at the hands of the state. Polling day was 16 May 1905 and public meetings were arranged nightly from 7 May up to the eve of the poll. Every one of these meetings was broken up by the police and the audience ordered to disperse. The police also prevented the distribution of Kinoshita's election address and, as Chokugen put it, 'were always on the heels of our comrades engaged in the movement, confiscating the leaflets and even arresting some of our comrades'.<sup>69</sup> On top of this, Kinoshita was appealing for votes from 16,800 electors (comprised exclusively of the rich) out of Tokyo's total population of about 1,800,000!<sup>70</sup> Given all these factors militating against him, the surprising thing is not that Kinoshita received only 32 votes but that he managed to get any votes at all.

The Japanese socialists attempted to put a brave face on Kinoshita's performance. Even before election day they had written, in particularly flowery language, that 'winning or losing in the electoral arena is not our purpose. All we want to do is merely to scoop up several sacred votes from out of the mire, raise them on high and allow them to shine like brilliant stars'!<sup>71</sup> After the results were announced, the same simile of stars shining in a clear sky was still being employed to describe the miserable 32 votes which Kinoshita had received and, conscious that they were imitating the electoral strategy of the social-democrats in Europe, the socialists in Japan assured themselves that 'our comrades throughout the world are bound to have seen these from afar and to be applauding and cheering'.<sup>72</sup> Yet however enthusiastic the temporary euphoria, it could only be a matter of time before a more realistic assessment of the situation forced itself on the socialist movement in Japan. Gradually it was to dawn on a majority of the Japanese

socialists that they were attempting to fight to a set of Queensberry rules which they—and they alone—observed. The government in Meiji Japan was incomparably more vicious than the regimes of Western Europe and for the movement in Japan to adopt the parliamentary strategy of the SPD was nothing short of disarming itself before the state. Bit by bit the more clear-sighted among the Japanese socialists were to come to see this.

## **EUROPEAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY AND THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR**

Whatever the criticisms one might otherwise be able to make of it, the socialist movement in Meiji Japan has it to its undying credit that it opposed the mass slaughter of the Russo-Japanese War. Having said this, however, it remains the case that although the movement as a whole opposed the war (and suffered severe government persecution as a result) there were definite signs, as the war progressed, of some of the socialists in Japan wavering in their anti-war commitment. One of the reasons for this may well have been the lamentable example set the Japanese socialists by the social-democrats in Europe, many of whom were openly clamouring for a Japanese victory.

August Bebel took the opportunity provided by the Russo-Japanese War to make a speech in the German Reichstag saying that the SPD would fight if Germany went to war with Russia<sup>73</sup> (a foretaste of the SPD's mockery of internationalism 10 years later when it voted for the war credits on 4 August 1914) and a Spanish social-democrat wrote to Shakaishugi: 'You will know, even without our saying, why we socialists hope for a Japanese victory.'<sup>74</sup> The anarchist-inclined Domela Nieuwenhuis in Holland was another who went on record calling for a Russian defeat, saying that if Japan won it would—quite unconsciously—be performing a great service for humankind.<sup>75</sup> Almost all the European social-democrats, in fact, seemed unaware (or indifferent) as to what 'victory' would mean for the Japanese working class—the Russian Menshevik (and internationalist) Julius Martov being one of the very few to point out that it was not the job of socialists 'to assist the ruling classes of Japan to destroy reactionary Russia and thus to lay a solid foundation for the reactionary suppression of the Japanese proletariat'.<sup>76</sup>

Martov's was a voice in the social-democratic wilderness, however, and the

Japanese ruling class was naturally delighted to receive support from such an unexpected quarter as European social-democracy. If nothing else, it provided a useful stick with which to beat the already sorely pressed anti-war movement in Japan and the discomfiture of the Japanese socialists can be imagined when no less a person than the Emperor himself expressed satisfaction with ‘the splendid attitude of the European socialist parties’ newspapers’ towards the war.<sup>77</sup> by this, the Heimin Shimbun delivered one of its very few rebukes to the European social-democrats—although it was extremely mild in the circumstances: ‘we hope that our European comrades will not, because of a passing passion, turn their back on their principles’, it wrote.<sup>78</sup>

The group publishing Heimin Shimbun was centred on Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko, both of whom were successful journalists who had resigned their positions with one of the leading Tokyo daily newspapers because of their opposition to the war. It was mainly due to them that Heimin Shimbun remained firm in its condemnation of the war and its reaction to reports of the fall of Port Arthur to the Japanese army was a fine example of internationalism. While official Japan was crowing over the blood-bath which had taken place, the lead article in Heimin Shimbun was saying: ‘We know that the first thing which the fall of Port Arthur means is that tens of thousands of workers—Japanese and Russian alike—have spilt each other’s blood.’<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, though, the English columns of the paper (which generally seem to have been the responsibility of Abe Isō) were far more suspect in their statements on the war.<sup>80</sup> Also Katayama Sen’s Shakaishugi reproduced a number of pro-Japanese declarations on the war by social-democrats abroad without adding any critical comments of its own, which was equivalent to endorsing them.<sup>81</sup> This was hardly surprising because, despite his famous handshake with Plekhanov in Amsterdam, Katayama Sen had shown quite early on in the war that he was not immune to patriotism.<sup>82</sup>

Thanks to those like Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko, the socialist movement as a whole in Japan held fast to internationalist principles throughout the Russo-Japanese War, but European social-democracy bears part of the blame for those within the Japanese socialists’ ranks who wavered and fell prey to patriotism.

## MARX AND ENGELS

I will conclude this chapter by saying a little about the slightness of the influence which Karl Marx and Frederick Engels exerted on the socialists in Japan prior to 1905.

As early as 1881 Kozaki Hiromichi had touched on Marx's theories in an article *Kinsei Shakaitō no Genin o Ronzu* ('A Discussion of the Origins of Modern Socialism') in the *Rikugō Zasshi* (Universe Magazine), although the treatment was so confused that little, if anything, could be learned from it.<sup>83</sup> Other attempts to expound Marx's theories followed. For example, there was Kusakatei Ujiro's *Marukusu to Raseru* ('Marx and Lassalle'), which appeared in the *Kokka Gakkai Zasshi* (National Academic Society Magazine) in 1893,<sup>84</sup> and a talk which Murai Tomoyoshi gave on 16 April 1899 to the *Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai* on 'Karl Marx's Socialism' was published in the *Rikugō Zasshi* the following month.<sup>85</sup> A more substantial effort was the booklet *Kaaru Marukusu* (Karl Marx) which was written by Nishikawa Kōjirō in 1902, but even this was inadequate in its explanation of Marxist theory, being largely biographical.<sup>86</sup>

As time went by, Marx and 'Engel' (as Engels was frequently called) became reasonably well known to the socialists in Japan and were even elevated into objects of considerable hero worship in papers such as *Rōdō Sekai*. Kawakami Kiyoshi called Marx 'a great man of the German Socialist Party' in a talk he gave in 1899, which was written up in *Rōdō Sekai*,<sup>87</sup> and Nishikawa Kōjirō, writing in *Shakaishugi*, described Engels as 'this benefactor who deserves our gratitude'.<sup>88</sup> In fact, at times the hero worship went beyond all reasonable bounds, such as the occasion when an anonymous writer—referring to 'saviours to whom we owe our deep gratitude'—cited Buddha, Christ, Marx and Ferdinand Lassalle all as examples!<sup>89</sup>

If by the turn of the century Marx and Engels' names were appearing fairly frequently in the socialist press in Japan, however, this was a very different thing from their ideas being correctly understood. In the period which came to an end with the Russo-Japanese War the socialists in Japan already knew enough about European social-democracy to realise that it was the accepted custom among the parties of the Second International to refer to Marx and

Engels with respect. They even knew sufficient about the details of Marx and Engels' careers to imitate some of their exploits. For example, when the Heimin Shimbun was at last forced to give up its lengthy battle with the police and ceased publication, its final number was printed in red, just as the last issue of Marx's *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* had been. Yet the haziness of the Japanese socialists' views on Marxist theory is well summed up by Sakai Toshihiko, writing in *Chokugen* as late as June 1905:

We have been constantly hoping to publish a book giving a simple explanation of the fundamentals of Marx's theory but our own lack of understanding, as well as the fact that we are so busy, does not allow us to do this very easily.<sup>90</sup>

An admission such as the above appears rather strange at first because works such as Engels' *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* and Marx's *Capital* had been recommended in *Chokugen*'s predecessor, the *Heimin Shimbun*,<sup>91</sup> and *Kōtoku Shūsui* claimed to have made use of both—together with the *Communist Manifesto*—in the writing of his *Shakaishugi Shinzui*.<sup>92</sup> *Kōtoku*, for his part, may well have referred to *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* while writing his book,<sup>93</sup> but whether he read either the *Communist Manifesto* or *Capital* is far more doubtful. The fact is that, although such works were 'recommended' or cited as authorities for reasons of prestige, it is open to doubt whether any of the socialists in Japan (apart from *Kōtoku*'s dipping into *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*) had read any of these basic Marxist texts until Sakai and *Kōtoku* jointly translated Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* into Japanese for the first time in 1904. The following year *Kōtoku* appears to have read Engels' *Feuerbach* during a spell of imprisonment<sup>94</sup> and also a special issue of *Chokugen*, devoted to the problems facing women, carried a short extract from *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* by Engels.<sup>95</sup> Finally, in July 1906 (strictly speaking, outside the period we are concerned with here) a translation of *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* appeared in *Shakaishugi Kenkyū*.<sup>96</sup>

In other words, the socialists in Japan started to read Marx and Engels' works for themselves only towards the very end of the period extending up to the end of the Russo-Japanese War and Marx's *Capital* certainly remained a

closed book for them. In confirmation of this, we have the recollections of Arahata Kanson who, at the time when I talked to him in December 1974, was perhaps the last survivor of the movement of seventy years before:

Marx and Engels' works were very difficult to come by at that time—in the middle of the Meiji era. Then again, opportunities for study were few as well. In the Heiminsha<sup>97</sup> we had the three volumes of Capital in English translation<sup>98</sup> but probably no one had read it, I should think... Kōtoku Shūsui gave Marx's Capital as a reference work in his Shakaishugi Shinzui but Shūsui hadn't read it himself, I think... (After translating the Communist Manifesto, Sakai was once asked) 'When did you first read the Communist Manifesto?' Sakai's reply was: 'When I translated it!' (Arahata laughs.) Most people would probably have thought it better to have said that they had read it long before, rather than when they translated it, if they wanted to be known as 'authorities' on Marxism, but Sakai was a person completely without airs and graces ... Probably it was the same in Kōtoku's case as well. Probably neither of them had read the Communist Manifesto until Kojima<sup>99</sup> suggested their translating it. There wasn't the opportunity for study then as there is now when even university students know Marx and Engels' works. We were very busy... Our knowledge was quite 'un-Marxist', If one can use that word.<sup>100</sup>

Even when the early socialists in Meiji Japan did get down to translating basic Marxist texts such as the Communist Manifesto, they were confronted by some major difficulties. As always, one of these was the repressive activities of the state. The Communist Manifesto was translated by Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko for appearance in issue No. 53 of the Heimin Shimbun to mark the first anniversary of the paper in November 1904 and an extra large run was printed in anticipation of the interest it was thought likely to arouse. Predictably, the police stepped in and banned all sales of the issue carrying the Communist Manifesto and Nishikawa Kōjirō, Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko were subsequently fined ¥80 each following their prosecution.<sup>101</sup> Eighteen months later, however, Sakai Toshihiko did manage to publish the same translation of the Communist Manifesto in the first issue of his Shakaishugi Kenkyū. Sakai succeeded on this occasion by means of a skilful manoeuvre. In the previous trial the court had included in its ruling a passage which said that it was acceptable to publish material for historical or

scholarly purposes providing that it did not disturb the social order. Sakai therefore inserted on the first page of *Shakaishugi Kenkyū* a prominent notice to the effect that he was publishing the Communist Manifesto ‘simply as historical information’ and as ‘material for scholarly study’<sup>102</sup>—and probably the fact that *Shakaishugi Kenkyū* was a theoretical journal and not an agitational paper as *Heimin Shimbun* had been allowed the ploy to work. It was one of those small coups which gave the socialists of the time a tremendous boost in morale, but Sakai was not to know that his was to be the only legally published, complete edition of the Communist Manifesto to appear in Japan until after the Second World War.<sup>103</sup>

Apart from the obstacles raised by the author ities, simply the task of rendering the Communist Manifesto into language which would be intelligible to the average Japanese gave rise to problems which it is hard to convey at this distance in time. Kōtoku and Sakai could not read German, so they worked from Samuel Moore’s English version of the Manifesto (first published in 1888).<sup>104</sup> A few errors crept into their translation but these were of fairly minor importance.<sup>105</sup> Their difficulties really started when it came to finding acceptable Japanese terms for many of the words which Marx and Engels regularly used and which had no recognised equivalents in the Japanese language. Kōtoku Shūsui mentioned some of these in his essay *Honyaku no Kushin* (‘The Anguish of Translating’): ‘bourgeoisie’, ‘class consciousness’, ‘proletarian’, ‘exploitation’ and so on.<sup>106</sup> The problem was not so much one of the mechanics of translation as the fact that Marx and Engels had described a capitalist system which was only beginning to take shape in Japan in the Meiji era and which was only slowly making impressions on the popular consciousness. It is worth illustrating this by reference to the terms which Kōtoku and Sakai came up with for the English ‘bourgeoisie’ and ‘proletariat’ because here, in a nutshell, was one reason for socialism’s failure to strike real roots in Japan in this early period.

In later years the problem was solved by transcribing ‘bourgeois’ and ‘proletariat’ in Japanese syllabary and thus coining two new Japanese words *burujōa* and *purōretaria*. This became possible as a modern capitalist class and a modern working class took on a concrete existence in Japanese society, since the unfamiliar ring of the new words to the average Japanese ear was compensated for by this time by familiarity with the social reality which they

expressed. In Kōtoku and Sakai's day such a solution was impossible, however. Their problem was to render the Communist Manifesto intelligible to the average Japanese if they could by describing the still unfamiliar social structure of capitalism in more or less traditional language and the words they therefore hit upon to express 'bourgeoisie' and 'proletariat' were shinshi batsu ('gentleman clique') and heimin ('common people').

As Kōtoku himself admitted, at the turn of the century shinshi batsu probably conjured up the same image for most Japanese as the expression *danna ren* ('the masters').<sup>107</sup> It was vague because the specifically capitalist nature (derived from their control of means of production which function as capital) of this particular class of 'masters' was not made clear and, as a rendering of 'proletariat', heimin was even more unsatisfactory. Traditionally, heimin had referred to all the non-samurai lower classes. It was a generic term, covering peasants, artisans and even the proto-capitalist merchants, and was thus roughly equivalent to the English 'commons' (as in House of Commons) or 'third estate'. This made it totally inappropriate in the context of the Communist Manifesto because, despite the existence of landless peasants and artisans who were de facto wage labourers, as social classes both the peasantry and the artisanat (not to mention the merchants, of course) were owners of means of production, even though of low social status. This was in direct opposition to the most essential feature of the wage-earning working class found in capitalist societies which, as Engels noted in the Communist Manifesto when he defined the term 'proletariat', is a 'class of modern wage labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live'.<sup>108</sup>

The central message of Marx and Engels' Communist Manifesto was that, as it developed, capitalism inexorably created its own grave-digger in the form of the proletariat as defined above. '...not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians', was what Marx and Engels had written early on in the Manifesto.<sup>109</sup> Replace 'bourgeoisie' and 'proletarians' here by 'gentleman clique' and 'commons'/'common people' (as Kōtoku and Sakai did) and one begins to get an idea of how the Communist Manifesto struck those Japanese socialists who managed to read it in 1904 and 1906.

Further on in the same section there was another passage:

The lower strata of the middle class—the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants—all these sink gradually into the proletariat...[110](#)

In Kōtoku and Sakai's translation this was rendered meaningless, because the 'lower strata of the middle class—the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants' (all constituent parts of the 'common people') were said to be sinking gradually into the ...'common people'!

Similarly, what were those who read Kōtoku and Sakai's translation to make of the assertion that 'Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class'?[111](#) Nothing but confusion could result from inserting 'gentleman clique' and 'common people' here, since the term 'common people' was being used as a translation for 'the proletariat' at the same time that it was synonymous in popular understanding with 'all the classes that stand face to face with the gentleman clique today'.

Whether, in fact, Marx and Engels deserve to be included in a chapter on social-democracy is arguable. Certainly, they shared some of the illusions of the social-democrats (and, indeed, must bear part of the responsibility for the ultimate fate of social-democracy) but I would be the first to admit that there is an entire area of their writings which amounts to an often brilliant and penetrating exposition of socialism—something which most of the social-democrats could never be accused of. As far as the Japanese socialists are concerned in this earliest phase of the socialist movement in Japan, however, it makes little difference either way. The lessons which the socialists in Japan learned from European social-democracy were disastrously wrong and they turned to Marx and Engels' works too late in this period which extends up to 1905 to gain a great deal from them. Besides, as I have shown, the poorly developed state of capitalist society in Japan at this time stood like an impenetrable barrier between the Japanese socialists and their gaining a correct understanding of the positive elements in Marxism. The difficulties posed by even the—at first glance—straightforward task of translating the

Communist Manifesto into Japanese make this amply clear.

## NOTES

1. Sakai Yūzaburō was not related to Sakai Toshihiko, who has already been mentioned as one of Japan's early socialists. Although their surnames appear the same when transcribed in the Roman alphabet, the characters with which they are written in Japanese are quite different.
2. Kokumin no Tomo, 13 July 1890, pp. 20–8.
3. 'Gogatsu Tsuitachi no Shakaito Undōkai ni tsuite' ('On the Socialist Party Meetings Held on May Day'), Kokumin no Tomo, 23 July 1890, pp. 17–23.
4. 'Gogatsu Tsuitachi oyobi Sōkyō Dōmei Hikō' ('May Day and the General Strike'), Kokumin no Tomo, 3 July 1891, pp. 15–23.
5. Kimura Tsuyoshi, Nihon Shakaishugi Shi (A History of Japanese Socialism) (Tokyo, no date given but probably 1926 or 1927), p. 42.
6. William Graham, Socialism New and Old (London, 1891), p. 4.
7. Ibid., p. 3.
8. Kimura, Shakaishugi Shi, p. 43.
9. John Rae, Contemporary Socialism (London, 1901), p. 166.
10. Ibid., p.
11. Kimura, Shakaishugi Shi, p. 43.
12. Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper), 20 December 1903, p. 3.
13. 'I should like here to make special acknowledgment of my obligations among German economists to Roscher, Adolf Wagner, Adolf Held, and, above all, to Schaffle...' (Thomas Kirkup, An Inquiry into Socialism (London, 1907—first published 1887), p. vi.)

14. Heimin Shimbun, 10 January 1904, p. 1.

15. One of Kōtoku's biographers calls Shakaishugi Shinzui 'the leading exposition of socialism in Japan prior to World War I'. (F.G.Notehelfer, Kotoku Shusui: Portrait of a Japanese Radical (Cambridge, 1971), p. 68.)

16. For example: Rode Sekai (Labour World), 15 July 1899, p. 10; Heiminsha, Shakaishugi Nyūmon (Introduction to Socialism) (Tokyo, 1904), p. 10; Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study of Socialism), 15 April 1906, p. 49.

17. A.Schäffle, The Quintessence of Socialism (London, 1890), p. 48.

18. Ibid., p. 3.

19. Karl Marx, 'Wage Labour and Capital' in Karl Marx, Selected Works (London, 1947), vol. 1, p. 213.

20. 'The productive labour of all would be associated in establishments for the purposes of production and exchange, socially managed, equipped out of collective capital, and worked by persons in receipt of salaries, not of private profits and of wages.' (Schäffle, Quintessence, p. 5.)

21. Heiminsha Shimbun, 10 January 1904, p. 3.

22. 'Instead of undervaluing or denying the importance of capital, socialists wish to make it more effective for the good of man by transferring it from the private property of a few competing individuals to the systematic management of society. They believe it to be so essential to mankind that it should not be left in private hands, but should be under co-operative control for the common good.' (Kirkup, Inquiry, p. 124.)

23. 'The State, with its wide functions and ample resources, should be organised to promote the welfare and the freedom of the whole community.' (Ibid., p. 212.)

24. Kōtoku wrote in the preface to Shakaishugi Shinzui that Kirkup's An Inquiry into Socialism was one of the sources he had used in the writing of

his own book. (*Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū* (Collected Works of Kotoku Shusui) (Tokyo, 1968), vol. 4, p. 454.) See also Kōtoku's references to Kirkup in his essay 'Shakaishugi to Kokutai' ('Socialism and the National Polity'), collected in *Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū*, vol. 4, p. 534.

25. *Shakaishugi Kenkyū*, 15 May 1906.

26. Kiyama Kumajirō, *Shakaishugi Undo Shi* (A History of the Socialist Movement) (Tokyo, 1908), p. 274.

27. *Heimin Shimbun*, 22 May 1904, p. 5.

28. Yano Fumio, *Shin Shakai* (Tokyo, 1902), p. 62.

29. W.H.Dawson, *German Socialism and Ferdinand Lassalle* (London, 1899), pp. 3–4.

30. *Rōdō Sekai*, 21 July 1901, p. 2.

31. '...the socialist ascribes to the state numerous functions...' (R.T.Ely, *French and German Socialism in Modern Times* (New York, 1883), p. 29.)

32. *Heimin Shimbun*, 29 November 1903, p. 4.

33. *Heimin Shimbun*, 3 January 1904, p. 9.

34. The most important of these (during the period we are considering here up till the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905) were *Shakaishugi* (Socialism) which appeared from March 1903 to December 1904, *Heimin Shimbun* (Common People's Newspaper) which ran from November 1903 to January 1905 and *Chokugen* (Straight Talking) which, subjected to severe harassment by the police, lasted only seven months from February to September 1905.

35. 'People advocating modern socialism are too numerous to count and, even though there are people opposed to this doctrine as well, socialism is proving victorious in Europe and America.' (*Rōdō Sekai*, 1 October 1899, p. 6.)

36. Ibid., p. 6.

37. Rōdō Sekai, 21 July 1901, p. 1.

38. 'Junsa to Shakaishugi' ('The Police and Socialism'), Shakaishugi, 3 March 1903, p. 728.

39. These were the Parti Socialiste de France (supporters of Guesde and Blanqui) and the Parti Socialiste Français (Broussists, Allemanists and Independents). The split lasted until 1905 when they united to form the Parti Socialiste Unifié.

40. Rōdō Sekai, 15 August 1899, p. 3.

41. 'Fifty five years ago Proudhon—that fearless man of France—was imprisoned for (sic) nearly half a dozen times for his cause of socialism, and today we see a socialist minister in the cabinet of the same country. What a difference! What a progress! Yes, time only works miracle; be patient and we will see what become of us after all.' (Letter from Kaneko Kiichi to Kōtoku Shūsui in Heimin Shimbun, 22 January 1905, p. 1. This letter was sent from the USA, where Kaneko was a student at Harvard, and was in English.)

42. The founding members of the Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai were Takagi Masayoshi, Kawakami Kiyoshi, Toyosaki Zennosuke, Kishimoto Nobuta, Makihara Toshihide, Katayama Sen, Saji Jitsunen, Kanda Saichirō, Murai Tomoyoshi, Kōtoku Shūsui, Kaneko Kiichi and Abe Isō. Its aim as a society was to 'conduct research into the principles of socialism and investigate whether or not they could be applied in Japan'. (Ishikawa Kyokuzan (Sanshirō) and Kōtoku Shūsui, Nihon Shakaishugi Shi (A History of Japanese Socialism) in Meiji Bunka Zenshū (Collected Works on the Culture of the Meiji Era) (Tokyo, 1929), vol. 21, p. 363.) Eventually those of its members who were interested only in studying 'socialism' were to drop out and it renamed itself the Shakaishugi Kyōkai (Socialist Association) in 1900.

43. Ibid., p. 363.

44. Heimin Shimbun, 20 December 1903, P. 3.

45. Heimin Shimbun, 27 December 1903, p. 3.

46. The Shakai Minshutō published its manifesto on 20 May 1901 and was immediately banned by the government on the same day. The six men who tested out the political climate to see whether the government would tolerate the existence of a social-democratic party were Abe Isō, Katayama Sen, Kawakami Kiyoshi, Kinoshita Naoe, Kōtoku Shūsui and Nishikawa Kōjirō. More will be said about the Shakai Minshutō and its programme below.

47. Shakaishugi Kenkyū, 15 March 1906, p. 35.

48. The Exceptional Law against the Socialists, introduced in Germany in 1878 and used against the SPD until 1890.

49. Rōdō Sekai, 1 March 1900, p. 8.

50. Karl Marx, 'Value, Price and Profit' in Karl Marx, Selected Works (London, 1947), vol. 1, p. 275.

51. 'I speak here of the wages of labor. What, it will be said, will there be wages in the new society? Shall we not have abolished wage-labor and money? How then can one speak of the wages of labor? These objections would be sound if the social revolution proposed to immediately abolish money. I maintain that this would be impossible.' (Karl Kautsky, The Social Revolution (Chicago, 1902), p. 129.)

52. Katayama Sen, Wa ga Shakaishugi (Tokyo, 1903), p. 73.

53. Ibid., pp. 100, 136, 137, 158 etc.

54. Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū, vol. 4, p. 521.

55. Ibid., p. 522.

56. Katayama Sen, 'Riipukunefuto o Tsuitō Su' ('Mourning Liebknecht'), Rōdō Sekai, 1 October 1900, p. 1.

57. The actual Japanese term used was kōhei senkyo ('fair elections'), but the particular meaning which the Meiji socialists attached to this ambiguous

expression appears to have been proportional representation. Katayama Sen, for example, translated the clause *Kōhei senkyo hō o saiyō suru koto* in the *Shakai Minshutō* manifesto as ‘To adopt the system of the proportional representation’. (*Rōdō Sekai*, 21 July 1901, p. 8.)

58. *Rōdō Sekai*, 15 April 1900, p. 3.

59. *Shakaishugi*, 18 September 1903, p. 1111.

60. ‘*Shakai Minshutō Sengen*’ (‘Manifesto of the Social-Democratic Party’) in *Kishimoto Eitarō* (ed.), *Nihon Shakai Undo Shiso Shi* (History of the Thought of the Japanese Social Movement) (Tokyo, 1968), vol. 3, p. 157.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 156–159.

62. *Rōdō Sekai*, 15 October 1899, p. 5.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

64. *Heimin Shimbun*, 30 October 1904, p. 1 (English column).

65. See, for example, ‘*Rōdōsha to Shakaishugi*’ (‘Workers and Socialism’), *Rōdō Sekai*, 1 April 1899, p. 5 and ‘*Mazu Seiken o Tore*’ (‘First Take Political Power!’), *Heimin Shimbun*, 16 October 1904, p. 1.

66. The property qualifications were given in *Heimin Shimbun*, 30 October 1904, p. 4. Voting rights were extended only to those (a) who had paid more than ¥10 per year in land taxes for a period of more than one year or (b) who had paid more than ¥10 per year in direct taxes (or partly in land tax and partly in direct taxes, the total being more than ¥10 per year) for a period of more than two years.

67. *Chokugen*, 21 May 1905, p. 2.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 2 (emphasis added).

69. *Ibid.*, p. 1 (English column).

70. *Chokugen*, 14 May 1905, p. 1.

71. 'Gotō no Kōhōsha' ('Our Party's Candidate'), Chokugen, 14 May 1905, p. 1.

72. 'Gotō no Senkyojin ni Sha Su' ('Thanks to Those Who Voted For Our Party'), Chokugen, 21 May 1905, p. 2.

73. Heimin Shimbun, 3 July 1904, p. 3.

74. Shakaishugi, 3 November 1904, p. 364.

75. Heimin Shimbun, 3 July 1904, p. 3.

76. Israel Getzler, *Martov* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 96. The report of Bebel's speech in the Heimin Shimbun provoked a correspondent to write in the following issue that, if Bebel wanted a Russian defeat in order to bring about a revolution in Russia, then—bearing in mind what was likely to happen in Japan following a Japanese victory—wasn't victory worse than defeat? Having said this, however, the correspondent (who signed himself Kyokukawa) retreated from such an 'extreme' position and went on to declare that he hoped that universal suffrage would be achieved in Japan after the war and—referring to the position of the SPD in German society—that Japan would become a second Germany. (Heimin Shimbun, 10 July 1904, p. 7.)

77. Heimin Shimbun, 1 May 1904, p. 3.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

79. 'Ryojun Kanraku no Igi' ('The Meaning of the Fall of Port Arthur'), Heimin Shimbun, 28 August 1904, p. 1.

80. A few examples:

...the people must consider it their duty to make an ample recompense for those who have sacrificed their lives for the sake of the fatherland. ('Pensions For Soldiers', Heimin Shimbun, 3 July 1904, p. 1.)

We have enough reasons to congratulate our-selves on our victory at Liaoyang, but our idea of courtesy and humanity forbids us to indulge in

childish exaltation, if we bear in mind that our success means the defeat, humiliation and despair of the Russian people. ('The Japanese Victory at Liaoyang and National Festivity at Home', Heimin Shimbun, 18 September 1904, p. 1.)

The victory at Liaoyang was glad tidings for us and the people have been busy in (sic) expressing their joy by lantern processions and other performances... ('The Victory at Liaoyang', Heimin Shimbun, 25 September 1904, p. 1.)

81. Shakaishugi, 3 July 1904, pp. 262–3 and 3 November 1904, p. 364.

82. 'I am opposed to this war, but as a Japanese I do not wish Japan to be beaten by Russia who in the past treated the Jews as she has in Kishineff, and is still dealing with Fins in the most brutal fashion, and moreover she has shot down many laborers during strikes!' (Sen Katayama, 'Attitude of Japanese Socialists Toward Present War', International Socialist Review, March 1904, p. 514.)

83. Kozaki's article appears in Itoya Hisao and Kishimoto Eitarō (eds.), *Nihon Shakai Undō Shisō Shi* (History of the Thought of the Japanese Social Movement) (Tokyo, 1971), vol. 2. See p. 116.

84. *Ibid.*, pp. 206–19.

85. Murai's article appears in Arahata Kansō and Ōta Masao (eds.), *Meiji Shakaishugi Shiryō Sōsho* (Materials on Meiji Socialism) (Tokyo, 1973), vol. 1, pp. 187–92.

86. Nishikawa's *Kaaru Marukusu* is reproduced in *ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 227–75.

87. *Rōdō Sekai*, 1 April 1899, p. 6.

88. *Shakaishugi*, 18 March 1903, p. 749.

89. *Shakaishugi*, 3 September 1903, p. 1105.

90. *Chokugen*, 4 June 1905, p. 4.

91. Heimin Shimbun, 22 November 1903, p. 7 and 29 November 1903, p. 4.
92. Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū, vol. 4, p. 454.
93. Matsuzawa Hiroaki, Nihon Shakaishugi no Shisō (Socialist Thought in Japan) (Tokyo, 1973), p. 40.
94. Letter from Kōtoku to Sakai Toshihiko, 30 May 1905, collected in Shiota Shōbee (ed.), Kōtoku Shūsui no Nikki to Shokan (The Diaries and Letters of Kotoku Shusui) (Tokyo, 1965), p. 192.
95. Chokugen, 23 April 1905, p. 7.
96. Shakaishugi Kenkyū, 1 July 1906, pp. 1–43.
97. The Heimin Society (the group which brought out Heimin Shimbun)'s office.
98. Arahata's memory must have been playing tricks on him here. Only the first volume of Capital could have been in the Heiminsha office, since volumes 2 and 3 still had not appeared in English translation in the period 1904–5.
99. Kojima Ryūtarō.
100. Interview with Arahata Kansō on 9 December 1974 in Tokyo. Yamaji Aizan also wrote in 1908 that 'even Mr Abe Iso, who had the reputation of being the best read person among the socialists of that time, was said still not to have read that (Communist) Manifesto in its entirety'. (Yamaji Aizan, 'Genji no Shakai Mondai oyobi Shakaishugisha' ('Today's Social Problems and Socialists') in Itoya and Kishimoto, Shisō Shi, vol. 2, p. 350.)
101. Heimin Shimbun, 25 December 1904, p. 1.
102. Shakaishugi Kenkyū, 15 March 1906, p. 1.
103. Kawaguchi Takehiko, 'Sakai Toshihiko' in Ōkōchi Kazuo (ed.), Shakaishugi Kōza (Lectures on Socialism) (Tokyo, 1956), vol. 7, p. 278.

104. Heimin Shimbun, 13 November 1904, p. 1.

105. For example, 'Dutch' (Oranda no) on p. 2 of *ibid.* should read 'Danish'.

106. Kimura, *Shakaishugi Shi*, pp. 76–7.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

108. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in *Karl Marx, Selected Works* (London, 1947), vol. 1, p. 110.

109. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

110. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

111. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

## **Chapter 4**

# **INFLUENCES FROM ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES—AMERICA, BRITAIN, NEW ZEALAND**

‘Christian Socialism’, wrote Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in mid-nineteenth century Europe, ‘is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heartburnings of the aristocrat.’<sup>1</sup> By the end of the century, however, ‘Christian Socialism’ had become a placebo for soothing the uneasy conscience of an entirely different class in the non-aristocratic USA. America was changing from a largely agricultural economy into an industrialised society and, as it did so, conscience-stricken Christian intellectuals reacted in horror to the plight of the working class caught up in this process. A Society of Christian Socialists was organised in Boston in 1889 and in 1894 an American Institute of Christian Sociology was set up at Chautauqua with R.T.Ely (professor of political economy at the University of Wisconsin) as its president and George Herron (professor of applied Christianity at Iowa—later Grinnell—College) as its principal instructor. The American Fabian Society, founded in 1895, can also be regarded as part of the Christian Socialist movement since its most prominent member was the clergyman W.D.P. Bliss, who had earlier been active in the Society of Christian Socialists.<sup>2</sup>

## **JAPANESE STUDENTS IN AMERICA**

Ely, Herron, Bliss and other American Christian Socialists and social gossellers exerted a major influence on the early socialist movement in Japan. For many young Japanese intellectuals in the Meiji era Christianity symbolised the West and was identified uncritically by them with ‘civilisation’ and ‘progress’. Even when their religious motivations were not particularly strong, Christianity in the shape of the educational opportunities it provided in missionary-sponsored colleges in Japan and sympathetic universities in the USA exercised a powerful attraction for these young Japanese. It was a sign of the times that when the group of six men whom I referred to before ([Chapter 3](#), note 46) took the decision to try to form the

Shakai Minshutō (Social-Democratic Party) in Tokyo in 1901 all but Kōtoku Shūsui were Christians. Two of these men—Abe Isō and Katayama Sen—had studied theology in the USA and their experiences in that country will be outlined below. In addition, another participant in the attempt to found a political party—Kawakami Kiyoshi—was to enter an American university to read for a higher degree soon after the suppression of the Shakai Minshutō.

Abe Isō was already a clergyman when, at the age of 26 in 1891, he went to study for three years at Hartford Theological Seminary in the USA. When he returned to Japan in 1895, it was not only as a Christian but as a socialist too. According to Abe's recollections, Edward Bellamy's immensely popular novel *Looking Backward* had a stunning impact on him when he read it as a student at Hartford in 1893.<sup>3</sup> In *Looking Backward* Bellamy gave an account of an imaginary, state-capitalist society<sup>4</sup> (where, incidentally, Christianity was still well in evidence) set in Boston in 2000 A.D. It did not occur to Abe that the society which Bellamy described was simply a variation on capitalism as it already existed in the USA. On the contrary, as far as Abe was concerned, it was *Looking Backward* which 'finally made me a socialist'.<sup>5</sup> In addition to his reading, Abe also seems to have been influenced by the Christian Socialists among his fellow students at Hartford and like them (respectable rebels that they all were) sported a red tie as a demonstration of his conversion to 'socialism'.<sup>6</sup>

Katayama Sen came from a much poorer background than Abe and consequently it took him eleven long years in America (1884–95) to work his way through a succession of colleges and universities. These included Grinnell College, Andover Theological Seminary and Yale Divinity School. In later years Katayama claimed that he became a socialist while at Grinnell (1889–92)<sup>7</sup> and in his case it was not Bellamy's but the social gospeller R.T.Ely's influence which appears to have been the important one. Hyman Kublin—Katayama's biographer—records how Katayama 'was a faithful reader of Ely's writings'<sup>8</sup> during his student days and the habit persisted long after his return as a Christian lay worker to Japan. Despite his perennial poverty during his years in America, Katayama recalls in his *Jiden* (Autobiography) that Ely's *The Social Aspects of Christianity* impressed him so much that he bought two or three copies and gave them as presents to his friends while at Grinnell.<sup>9</sup>

Like Katayama, Murai Tomoyoshi was another activist in the early socialist movement in Japan who studied both at Andover Theological Seminary and at Grinnell College. Murai was in many ways typical<sup>10</sup> of the succession of bright young men who went to the USA and embraced ‘socialism’ as the last word in modern, Western civilisation. Returning to Japan, these young men would ‘agitate’ (respectably) for a while, only to eventually accept official government posts (in Murai’s case he became professor of English at the government’s Foreign Languages School) which, of course, meant abandoning their ‘socialism’ entirely. Murai doubled both as a Unitarian preacher and as president of the Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai (Society for the Study of Socialism) when it was formed in 1898 and, when he published the book Shakaishugi (Socialism) the following year, it was ‘dedicated...to Prof (essor) Herron, whose influence he feels led to the study of this noble subject’.<sup>11</sup> Murai had been taught by George Herron at Grinnell.

## **CHRISTIANITY AND ‘SOCIALISM’**

The political doctrine preached by American social gossellers and Christian Socialists like Ely, Herron and Bliss derived from Christian notions of charity and for the Christians among the early socialists in Japan as well their politics were an extension of their religious beliefs. The Christian flavour of the early socialist movement in Japan was particularly noticeable in the English columns of Rōdō Sekai (Labour World), where it was constantly being reiterated that ‘Our ideal is in a socialism based upon the religion of the Galilean Carpenter’.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, very often the implicit assumption during this period was not merely that the socialists’ politics should be ‘based upon’ Christianity but even that socialism and Christianity were one and the same thing. When Katayama Sen was prosecuted in 1901 for having published the manifesto of the Shakai Minshuto, Rodo Sekai maintained on its English page that ‘It will be the very first time in Japan that Socialism as well as Christianity will be tried before the law.’<sup>13</sup> The climate of opinion is also well illustrated by Kōtoku Shūsui’s protest against the fact that ‘In Japan socialism is regarded merely as a special product of Christianity, or as its appendage. People even go to the extreme of believing that ‘socialist’ is synonymous with ‘Christian’.’<sup>14</sup>

In view of what he said here, it is interesting to take note of the claims which

even a non-Christian like Kōtoku sometimes made. In one of his articles he wrote: ‘Christ died on the cross in order to save our souls. Socialism will release us from our material fetters and it is this which will bring about the saving of our souls.’<sup>15</sup> This may well seem an odd way for a non-Christian to have expressed himself, but it has to be remembered that even those pioneer socialists in Japan who were not Christians and who were unable to visit America during this early period extending up to 1905 were still exposed to powerful blasts of Christian Socialist propaganda from their mentors in the USA. R.T.Ely’s and W.D. P.Bliss’ works (such as the former’s *Socialism and Social Reform* and French and German *Socialism in Modern Times* and the latter’s *A Handbook of Socialism and The Encyclopedia of Social Reforms*) were widely read by the socialists in Japan. *Heimin Shimbun* (Common People’s Newspaper) recommended all four of these books as ‘material for the study of social questions’<sup>16</sup> and drew attention to Ely’s *Socialism and Social Reform* in particular as a ‘good’ socialist primer.<sup>17</sup> Ely was looked up to as ‘the famous American economist’<sup>18</sup> (although his fame certainly did not derive from his grasp of Marxian economics, which left a lot to be desired<sup>19</sup>) and it has already been mentioned in the previous chapter that Sakai Toshihiko (like Kōtoku, another non-Christian among the socialists) identified French and German *Socialism in Modern Times* as the book which set him on the path to ‘socialism’.<sup>20</sup> Ely and Bliss were generally read in English by the better educated among the Japanese socialists but their influence was felt even by those who did not know that language, since passages from their works were also frequently translated into Japanese and published by the socialist newspapers.<sup>21</sup>

Washington Gladden (‘the father of the social gospel’, as he has been called<sup>22</sup>) was another American Christian who was quoted with respect by the socialist press in Japan in the Meiji era. Rōdō Sekai’s *Shakaishugi* (‘Socialism’) column, for example, referred at length in its issue of 1 July 1899 to Gladden’s prediction that the USA was on the verge of revolution.<sup>23</sup> In the face of this supposedly imminent revolution, Gladden believed that it would be better for society to be ‘changed’ gradually through the extension of municipalisation and nationalisation. Not unnaturally—in view of the prominent Japanese socialists who had studied at Grinnell College, where he had taught—George Herron too also came in for frequent references in the

columns of the radical press in Japan.<sup>24</sup>

## **SHYING AWAY FROM THE CLASS STRUGGLE**

In works such as Ely's French and German Socialism in Modern Times and Bliss' A Handbook of Socialism, the Christian axe was unashamedly ground. Ely concluded his study on the inaccurate note that 'we rejoice that men of all shades of opinion are turning to Christianity for help in the solution of social problems, and trust that the poor and needy, where they are now estranged from the Church, may ere long be led to recognize in her their best friend'.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Bliss in the preface to his volume wrote about himself as follows:

He believes that no Socialism can be successful unless rooted and grounded in Christ, the Liberator, the Unifier, because the Head of Humanity. The Church he believes to be the world's first, greatest, and necessary International. Modern Socialism he believes to have sprung from Christianity...<sup>26</sup>

It was not only this overtly Christian doctrine which the Meiji socialists all too frequently adopted, however. American social gospellers and Christian Socialists were, as well as being proselytizers of the Christian faith, very different sorts of men in other ways too from European social-democrats such as the leaders of the SPD. Although the reformist and state capitalist core of what they had to say was identical to that of the SPD, their overall approach to politics was different, since they tended to shy away from the slightest scent of the class struggle. Daniel Bell talks somewhere about 'the pale Christian piety of a George Herron'<sup>27</sup> and this remark rather neatly sums up the character of the American Christian Socialist movement as a whole, based as it was on appeals to good will and hopes of voluntary renunciation on the part of the capitalists. It was this basic approach which was absorbed by many of the early socialists in Japan and which came for a time to permeate the theory and practice of the socialist movement there. Brimming over with feelings of 'good will to all men' (including the capitalists), those who returned from America joined forces with home-bred socialists, who were also influenced by American 'Christian Socialism', and together launched themselves into a flurry of activity which—at least until some of their illusions started to wear thin—was often based on nothing more than appeals

to the employers' sense of fair play.

Abe Isō not only bestowed equal praise on Karl Marx on the one hand and 'General' Booth (of the Salvation Army) on the other,<sup>28</sup> but was insisting in 1904 that socialism would benefit the capitalist class as well as the workers.<sup>29</sup> Kawakami Kiyoshi was another who gave a convincing performance of a man beating his head against a brick wall. For example, in an article *Chingin to Seisan no Kankei* ('The Relation Between Wages and Productions'), which appeared in November/December 1898 and was subtitled 'Advice to the Employers', he set out to prove that higher wages were in the employers' own interests and that therefore there was no real conflict between labour and capital.<sup>30</sup> Not surprisingly, the employers were totally unimpressed but the real damage done by Kawakami's arguments was not that they failed in what was an impossible objective anyway (to persuade the capitalists to voluntarily favour higher wages) but that they could only have a negative effect on working men and women's awareness of the nature of the society which they were living in and on socialists' understanding of the struggle that lay before them. In the first place, arguments such as Kawakami's were bound to undermine the spirit of self reliance which it was essential for the working class to acquire as it started to emerge in Meiji Japan. And secondly, Kawakami's gospel of collaboration between classes could only serve to obscure the fact that the way to achieve socialism has to lie through the defeat of that class in capitalist society which controls the means of production and maintains them in their role of capital.

Christianity was not, of course, the only factor at work here. In part, Kawakami's arguments derived from traditional Confucian attitudes, which will be dealt with in the next chapter. Yet Christianity was at least partially to blame for the early socialists' blindness to the class struggle and the same criticism which has been directed at Kawakami can also be levelled at Katayama Sen's article *Shihonka ni Tsugu* ('A Word to the Capitalists') which, like Kawakami's, also appeared in 1898.<sup>31</sup> There Katayama pleaded for the employers to take an understanding attitude, maintaining that trade unions were simply means for educating the workers and therefore not inimical to the capitalists' interests. Even the Meiji government had a better grasp than Katayama of the potential offered by trade unions as organs for prosecuting the class struggle and, as has already been explained in [Chapter](#)

1, it acted to nip the unions in the bud by introducing in 1900 the ‘public peace police law’ as a ban on labour organisations. Rōdō Sekai’s reaction to the new law (under Katayama’s editorship) was as predictable as it was pathetic. A lead article Chian Keisatsu Hō to Rōdōsha (‘The Public Peace Police Law and the Workers’) published on 1 March 1900 claimed that it was ‘not in the interests of the state’ and also denounced it as unconstitutional.<sup>32</sup> Comments such as these could only serve to strengthen illusions about the nature of the state and of the constitution among those interested in socialist ideas and, indeed, among the entire working class.

Perhaps, however, the supreme example of the emasculated limits to which the socialist movement in Japan was, for a time, driven by Christianity is provided by Kinoshita Naoe’s propagandist novel Hi no Hashira (The Pillar of Fire). Hi no Hashira first appeared in serial form in the daily newspaper Mainichi Shimbun, which employed Kinoshita as a journalist, and was subsequently published in book form by the Heiminsha (the publishing company of the group which brought out Heimin Shimbun) in 1904. By the standards of the time, it was a huge success, Heimin Shimbun reporting in December 1904 that it was topping the list of sales of all the Heiminsha’s publications with a total of 3,469 copies already sold.<sup>33</sup> Despite the fact that its excessively didactic style made it all but worthless as literature, Kinoshita’s novel was the most popular ‘socialist’ book of its day.

Hi no Hashira’s very high-minded and moralising hero was a young man called Shinoda, who was an ardent Christian. Speaking about ‘socialism’, he says:

What is socialism? If we put it in one word, it is the heart of god. It is the heart of god, which Christ declared.<sup>34</sup>

It would be superfluous to comment on this but Shinoda’s reaction to the news that he is about to be arrested, which forms the (intended) dramatic climax to the book, is worth explaining. Shinoda tells his sweetheart what he intends to do at his trial:

It certainly is not pleasant for me to go either. Yet, if I can explain to the government, to the nation and to society in general that we comrades are

thinking only pure white thoughts, there would be no greater glory than, this for an insignificant nobody like me.<sup>35</sup>

At the very time when the Heiminsha's Hi no Hashira went on sale, the socialist movement in Japan was locked in a struggle of its own with the government of the day over the war that was being fought with Russia. Shinoda's naive sentimentality, which led him to hope to talk reasonably to the government and persuade it of his comrades' good intentions, was representative of the Christian wing of the socialist movement in Japan and of its view of the struggle which the socialists were engaged in. Sakai Toshihiko recalled in later years the song Tomi no Kusari (Chains of Wealth) which 'was always sung at all our meetings'<sup>36</sup> in the Heiminsha period (1903–5). As Sakai put it, 'the words of that song: "Righteously, purely, beautifully, Friend let's join hands and stand up now"...convey just how sodden with Christianity the movement was at that time.'<sup>37</sup>

## **HENRY GEORGE**

As it happened, the most prominent advocate in Japan of Henry George's proposals for curing society's ills was an American clergyman and ex-army captain by the name of Charles Garst, who took charge of the Disciples of Christ Mission in Japan in 1883.<sup>38</sup> In Garst's case it is not easy to decide whether it was his Christianity or his belief in George's ideas which was the more responsible for his calls for class collaboration but, at any rate, the nub of what he had to say to the Japanese working class was unmistakable:

I hope that wage workers may always be able to cry out

Labor Forever! and Capital Forever!<sup>39</sup>

Henry George's approach to social problems was basically a very simple one. For him the root of society's evils lay in the private ownership of land. The private landlord was therefore to be eliminated, either by the state taking over the land altogether or by the more indirect method of 'concentrating all taxation into a tax upon the value of land, and making that heavy enough to take as near as may be the whole ground rent for common purposes'.<sup>40</sup> This panacea was known as the 'single tax' and it was a measure of Charles

Garst's single-minded insistence on it that he sometimes went by the Japanese name of Tanzei Tarō (Jack Singletax)!

Henry George repeated his arguments tirelessly in a number of books such as *Progress and Poverty* (San Francisco, 1879) and *Social Problems* (London, 1884), the latter being translated into Japanese and published in 1892.<sup>41</sup> Also, the first issue of *Kokumin no Tomo* (The Nation's Friend), which appeared in February 1887, carried a translation of part of an article by George on *Hito no Kenri* ('People's Rights') and he was described there as a 'famous American socialist scholar'.<sup>42</sup> The remainder of the article appeared later in issue No. 3 of *Kokumin no Tomo* the following April. Together with Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, the eminent naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace's *Land Nationalisation* (London, 1882)—which put essentially the same case as George argued in his writings<sup>43</sup>—was recommended by *Heimin Shimbun* in one of the lists of suggested 'materials for the study of social problems' which it drew up.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the socialist claims which were made on George's behalf, there was actually nothing socialist about his proposals whatsoever. Garst was following in his master's footsteps when he urged the Japanese workers to adopt the slogan 'Labour Forever! and Capital Forever!' because, in effect, what George was advocating was for the working class to ally itself with the capitalists in the struggle that was taking place both in Europe and in the USA between industrial capital and landed interests. Whatever George's conscious purpose, his books read like an attempt to deflect the workers' struggle away from their immediate and direct enemy—the capitalists—to the enemy of their enemy—the landlords. The low level of capitalist development in Japan in the Meiji era, however, meant that the battle lines between the classes were drawn up differently from those which applied in countries such as Britain and the USA. In Meiji Japan clashes between landlords and peasants dwarfed the as yet limited struggles which occurred between the still relatively puny forces of capital and labour, so it was only to be expected that Henry George's attacks on those who lived off rent would appeal to many Japanese radicals. The call for nationalisation of the land was taken up by some of those on the left wing of the 'people's rights movement'<sup>45</sup> and it is interesting to note that when Kōtoku Shūsui, whose intellectual roots extended back to the 'people's rights movement', wrote in

1904 about 'How I Became a Socialist' he acknowledged the important influence exerted on him by Henry George's writings.<sup>46</sup>

Like Henry George himself, Charles Garst was an indefatigable propagandist. Yamaguchi Koken recalled in 1919<sup>47</sup> how Garst was often to be seen in front of Waseda University in Tokyo, looking for all the world like a tramp as he stood in his threadbare clothing haranguing the crowds in broken Japanese. Among those who stopped to listen was the young Nishikawa Kōjirō, then a student at Waseda, who later went on to write the pamphlet *Tochi Kokuyū Ron* (Land Nationalisation) which was issued by the Heiminsha in 1904. As well as his tongue, Charles Garst used his pen too. The first issue of *Rōdō Sekai*, published on 1 December 1897, carried a letter from him which announced, among other things, that 'There is no conflict between Labor and Capital'<sup>48</sup> and a fortnight later he wrote an obituary of George for the same journal's English page. Entitled 'Henry George, Single Taxer', it read in part: 'Henry George the great friend of labor and capital, and the Apostle of Freedom has passed from (the) Earth, having lately died in New York.'<sup>49</sup> Garst became a member of the *Shakai Mondai Kenkyū Kai* (Society for the Study of Social Problems) when it was formed in Tokyo in 1897 and was thus in contact with its members such as Katayama Sen. Although Garst died in Japan in December 1898, some of his writings continued to be published after his death. A talk he had given on Tochi, *Rōryoku oyobi Shihon no Kankei* ('The Relation Between Land, Labour and Capital') was written up as an article and put the familiar arguments in *Rōdō Sekai* in March 1899<sup>50</sup> and, according to Akamatsu Katsumaro, his book *Tanzei Keizaigaku* (Single Tax Economics) came out in 1900.<sup>51</sup>

In some ways the Japanese socialists' attitude towards Henry George resembled their views on those like A. Schäffle whom I dealt with in the previous chapter. As time went by they came to pay less regard to George, as they learned that he was not evaluated highly by the European social-democrats—particularly the SPD. Yet, for all that, they continued to pay him a measure of respect and as late as 1926 one still finds Abe Isō rating George's *Progress and Poverty* very highly as a socialist text. 'It may not be right to call him (George) a socialist', wrote Abe, 'but at least we can say that the theory which he used was extremely socialistic.'<sup>52</sup> Coming from someone like Abe, this was perhaps not surprising but even Sakai Toshihiko had the

following to say about Charles Garst in later years:

At the time (1897–8) the intellectual influence exerted by him on Japanese society was certainly not a slight one. It was Henry Georgism—single taxism, in other words; state ownership of the land. you could say that it represented a mid-way stage between capitalism and socialism.<sup>53</sup>

This was at a time when Sakai was calling himself a Marxist, so it is as well to recall the verdict which Marx once gave on George and those with similar ideas to his: ‘All these ‘socialists’ ...have this much in common that they leave wage labour and therefore capitalist production in existence and try to bamboozle themselves or the world into believing that if ground rent were transformed into a state tax all the evils of capitalist production would disappear of themselves. The whole thing is therefore simply an attempt, decked out with socialism, to save capitalist domination and indeed to establish it afresh on an even wider basis than its present one.’<sup>54</sup> The fact that Sakai mistook this consolidation of capitalism for a half-way stage between capitalism and socialism tells us something about the type of ‘socialism’ which he was hoping for.

## FABIANISM

Ishikawa Sanshirō and Kōtoku Shūsui drew a parallel between the Fabian Society in Britain and the Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai (later renamed Shakaishugi Kyōkai) in their *Nihon Shakaishugi Shi* (A History of Japanese Socialism), which was serialised in the *Heimin Shimbun* early in 1907.<sup>55</sup> Yet perhaps it was Kawakami Kiyoshi who most clearly demonstrated the extent to which the members of the Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai/Shakaishugi Kyōkai consciously identified with the Fabians. This was in the thesis *The Political Ideas of Modern Japan* which he wrote for his A.M. degree at Iowa State University, after he had left Japan following the collapse of the *Shakai Minshutō* in 1901. Still in its original English, Kawakami’s study was published in book form in Tokyo in 1903 and today it provides an extremely interesting insight into, if not exactly the political ideas of Meiji Japan, at least the political ideas of one of those who was calling himself a socialist in the period before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. At one point, Kawakami writes:

Five years ago (i.e. 1898) a coterie of men inaugurated an association under the title of the Socialist Association, having for its object social reform on the basis of socialism. Its motto, as that of the Fabian Society of England, is this: 'For the right moment you must wait, as Fabius did most patiently, when warring against Hannibal, though many censured his delays; but when the time comes you must strike, hard as Fabius did, or your waiting will be in vain and fruitless.'<sup>56</sup>

The fact was, of course, that the most significant thing about the Roman general Fabius was not that he waited but that, in the end, he won. It is not merely the benefit of hindsight which today allows one to see that, unlike Fabius, the Fabian Society's strategy never did offer any prospects of victory—not, at any rate, of a victory for socialism. This was lost on Kawakami because, as with the Fabians themselves, it was reform of the existing society (for which Fabian strategy was undeniably well suited) which concerned him, not the achieving of a new and radically different social system. Describing the goal and the activity of the Shakaishugi Kyokai, Kawakami borrowed 'the official statement of the aim and work of the Fabian Society, hoping that it will ...convince the reader of the similar nature of the two associations'<sup>57</sup> and, just in case the point had still escaped anyone, added that the Shakaishugi Kyōkai 'may be regarded in many respects as the Japanese counterpart of the Fabian Society'.<sup>58</sup>

As well as looking up to the Fabian Society as an example to be copied in Japan, Kawakami made it clear from the references given in *The Political Ideas of Modern Japan* that he was familiar with the famous Fabian Essays in Socialism, which had first been published in London in 1889.<sup>59</sup>

Representative of these essays was George Bernard Shaw's contribution on economics, where 'socialism' was described in such a way as to involve the abolition of all unearned incomes—except profits!<sup>60</sup> In the Fabian scheme of things, the money derived from the unearned incomes to be abolished was to be added to so-called 'earned incomes', with the result that—although those working for wages were to be better paid—they were, nonetheless, to remain wage labourers and to continue to engage in the production of commodities. In other words, the 'socialism' which Shaw envisaged was a society where the core of the capitalist economy (wage labour and commodity production) was to remain intact—and it is clear that contradictory notions of this type

held by the Fabians had their repercussions in Japan as well as in Britain. In an early essay *Rōdō Mondai to Shakaishugi* ('Labour Problems and Socialism') which Kōtoku Shūsui wrote in 1899 he quotes from the Fabian Society's programme in order to show how it favours a blend of nationalisation and municipalisation.<sup>61</sup> The image projected by the passage which Kōtoku quotes is one of a society incorporating many elements derived from capitalism. Money, central government and the nation state are just some of the features which occur and, in this early period, Kōtoku accepted them as constituting 'socialism' just as readily as his Fabian teachers did.

## **PERCY ALDEN**

It was perfectly in tune with the Fabians' ideas of what 'socialism' was that they should have expected it to be eventually handed down by benevolent authorities above, rather than achieved by independent working class initiative from the base of society directed against the status quo. The most striking example of this in the Japanese context was Percy Alden, who visited Japan in 1898. In later years Alden was to become a minor official in Ramsay Mac-Donald's Labour government of 1924 but at the time of his visit to Japan he was still a left-wing member of the Liberal Party (a Lib-Lab, as they were called), as well as being on the executive committee of the Fabian Society. During his time in Japan he interviewed Itagaki Taisuke who, it will be remembered from [Chapter 2](#), had once been prominent in the 'people's rights movement'. By this stage of his career, Itagaki was Minister of Home Affairs (as well as having been made a Count). Percy Alden is reported to have had talks with 'the higher officers' of Itagaki's department 'on factory legislation, prison reforms and socialism'<sup>62</sup> and, writing about the interview he had with Itagaki himself, the imagery employed by Alden was characteristic. In an article 'The Industrial Revolution in Japan', which Alden wrote for *Rōdō Sekai*, the workers figured as children and the despotic Meiji government as their father:

Many of the evils of the factory system are clearly recognized by count Itagaki (sic) and his colleague the Minister of Agriculture...

As civilization becomes more complex paternal government becomes more

necessary. May the present ministry be willing to act the part of a wise and sympathetic father to its industrial sons and daughters!<sup>63</sup>

Percy Alden established a close relationship with Katayama Sen and the group around Rōdō Sekai during his stay in Japan. In Britain Alden was active both as a settlement worker and as a Liberal councillor in the Canning Town district of East London and, after his return from Japan, Rōdō Sekai kept in touch with him and reported on his career because of the socialist lessons they imagined could be drawn from it. The Japanese socialists had already been much impressed by what they had heard<sup>64</sup> about supposedly ‘municipal (gas and water) socialism’ in various cities in Britain. Indeed, Katayama Sen referred to Glasgow as ‘the most socialist place in the world’!<sup>65</sup> Bearing this in mind, it was hardly surprising that, when Alden became deputy mayor in Canning Town, Rōdō Sekai should have announced that—under his guidance—the local council had been able to implement ‘socialism’.<sup>66</sup> This claim to have put socialism into practice was illustrated by reference to rises in the council workers’ wages, the introduction of an eight-hour day and the construction of corporation housing—all pure and simple reforms of capitalism, of course. Not only is one struck by the fact that these reforms were identified with socialism, however, but the sort of bright comments they gave rise to among Alden’s admirers in Japan also catch one’s eye. ‘Socialism is truly the saviour of the people’<sup>67</sup> and ‘Isn’t this kind?’ (kore wa...shinsetsu na mono de wa nai ka)<sup>68</sup> were the appreciative expressions they used to show their approval of Alden’s typically Fabian, municipal paternalism.

## **LABOUR LEADERS**

As far as labour leaders went, though, Alden was only a small fish. There were others who had climbed on the backs of the working class in Britain to positions of power and influence far exceeding Alden’s and the fascination which men like John Burns and Will Crooks held for some of the socialists in Meiji Japan is worth noting too. In 1905 the Heimisha (the publishing company of the group which brought out Heimin Shimbun) re-issued a biography of John Burns by Nishikawa Kōjirō which had first been published by the Rōdō Shimbun Sha (Labour Newspaper Company) in 1902. Burns was described on the title page as ‘a great man in British labour

circles',<sup>69</sup> but perhaps the oddest thing about this book was that it had been written by Nishikawa under the misapprehension that Burns was already dead. Not only was John Burns still very much alive but only a year after the re-issuing of his biography (i.e. in 1906) he was to show his true colours beyond any shadow of doubt by taking office in a Liberal government, first as President of the Local Government Board and later as President of the Board of Trade.

It was Nishikawa Kōjirō who also wrote the profile of Will Crooks (Uranagaya Yori Kokkai—'From the Slums to Parliament') which appeared in the first issue of Heimin Shimbun in November 1903.<sup>70</sup> Crooks was described here as a paternal figure to whom the workers in the Poplar district of East London would turn whatever their problems. Even domestic quarrels between husbands and wives were allegedly resolved by the antagonists shouting at one another 'Let's go to Crooks Sensei!' (sensei being an untranslatable Japanese term which literally means one who is senior but which is usually used in the sense of 'teacher' or 'master'). Nishikawa could barely find the words to adequately express his regard for Will Crooks ('Even if the foregoing were all that could be said about him, he would be truly admirable but I respect him much more than this') because, according to Nishikawa, Crooks was a model of self-sacrifice who thought only of helping other people. The reactionary undertone to the whole article was also emphasised in its concluding section where the author lamented the fact that people like Crooks were unfortunately becoming fewer and fewer these days, the implication being that those motivated by altruism had been commoner in the Tokugawa period:

It is because we are now living in a period when this type of person has become rarer than ever before that I particularly hold him in esteem.

To this, Nishikawa added:

I envy Britain for having a person like this. But, when we look at Japan, I cannot help but be moved to tears by the misfortune of the workers in our country (sic) in not having a person like Crooks.<sup>71</sup>

Nishikawa could have saved his tears. Labour leaders such as John Burns and

Will Crooks were parasites on the working class. In Britain the militants of the time showed their contempt for politicians of this kind by talking not of labour leaders but of ‘labour bleeders’ and—as Japanese workers were to find to their cost—no sooner had the labour movement in Japan developed sufficiently to offer some rich pickings of its own, than Japanese equivalents of Burns and Crooks were quickly to emerge. That is another story, however—outside of the period being dealt with here.

## **NEW ZEALAND’S LIB-LABS**

New Zealand was another country which, around the turn of the century, produced a number of Lib-Lab politicians who became heroes of the socialist movement in Japan. Up till the late nineteenth century New Zealand’s economy had been dominated by the production of wool. It followed that it was the owners of the vast sheep estates who held political sway and who looked after their own interests to the detriment of not only the working class but the small farmers too. The development of efficient methods of refrigeration in the final decades of the nineteenth century, however, meant a shift in emphasis away from wool towards meat and dairy products. This had the effect of putting the smaller farmers in a stronger economic position vis-à-vis the big estates than they had been previously. Changes in the economic balance of forces were subsequently reflected in political alignments and the Liberal governments headed by John Ballance (1891–3) and Richard Seddon (1893–1906) weighted taxation against the big estates and encouraged small farmers to settle on the land.<sup>72</sup>

As well as introducing a number of reforms such as old age pensions, another of the Liberal governments’ concerns was to enforce a system of compulsory arbitration on workers and employers who were in dispute. Incongruously, this gave rise to a lot of loose talk about ‘socialism’ and the result was that the often oppressively paternalistic policies followed by New Zealand’s Liberal governments around the turn of the century came to be highly evaluated by the socialist movement in Japan. Yano Fumio, a former Japanese minister to China who had embraced ‘socialism’, probably spoke for most of the early socialists in Japan when he described New Zealand in his popular book *Shin Shakai* (The New Society), which was published in 1902, as a country which was putting socialism into effect<sup>73</sup> and by 1905

New Zealand was figuring in the columns of Chokugen (Straight Talking) as an ‘advanced, socialist country’.<sup>74</sup> In particular, Prime Minister Richard Seddon came in for considerable hero-worship. When Rōdō Sekai published a letter written by Seddon to Katayama Sen in February 1901, Seddon was portrayed in the accompanying commentary as a man ‘famous for having put modern socialism into practice and for having perfected labour protection’.<sup>75</sup> A biographical piece on Richard Seddon which appeared in Shakaishugi in December 1903 went even further and, under a headline which read Seikō Bidan (‘An Admirable Story of Success’), piled superlative upon superlative in assessing his political career.<sup>76</sup>

The socialists in Japan were able to react to New Zealand as ‘a country which is setting a fine example of establishing socialism’<sup>77</sup> only because, for the most part, they were completely indifferent to what for socialists should have been the most vital aspect of the policies being implemented by its Liberal governments. This facet of the Liberal governments’ measures was the New Zealand workers’ loss of independence, for the price which the working class had to pay for such minor benefits as came its way under first John Ballance’s and then Richard Seddon’s governments was its loss of the right to strike. In 1894 a Compulsory Arbitration Act was introduced in New Zealand by the then Minister of Labour, William Reeves (about whom G.D.H.Cole remarked that he was ‘an ardent believer in a sort of “State Socialism” which involved the public regulation of labour conditions, the abandonment of the strike weapon, and the nationalisation of key enterprises’<sup>78</sup>). Reeves’ labour legislation not only outlawed work stoppages and provided for penalties for any workers who did go on strike but worked in practice to eventually cut real wages. Notwithstanding this, the Japanese socialists not merely sung the praises of the compulsory arbitration system in its New Zealand context but an article in Heimin Shimbun in December 1903 even took the dangerous course of recommending the example set by New Zealand to the government in Japan.<sup>79</sup> The article claimed that the existence of Courts of Arbitration in New Zealand made strikes unnecessary, but the course of events alone proved this to be wrong, since opposition in New Zealand to compulsory arbitration eventually built up among those very workers who the Japanese socialists imagined were benefiting. Although the Compulsory Arbitration Act succeeded in smothering labour disputes in New Zealand up till 1906, from then on rank and file trade unionists—finding the

Act working against them and their wages lagging behind—increasingly took the law into their own hands and went on strike regardless.

All in all, it was a strange form of ‘socialism’ which the movement in Japan thought it was witnessing in New Zealand.

## STONY GROUND

So far in this chapter the major influences deriving from English-speaking countries which affected the development of socialist thought in Japan in the period extending up to the end of the Russo-Japanese War have been discussed. This is not to say, however, that American ‘Christian Socialism’, British Fabianism and New Zealand’s Lib-Labism were the only influences which were felt.<sup>80</sup> It is not possible, nor is it necessary, to give an account of all those who wrote in English whose books or articles were read in Japan by the socialists of this period. Some of the writings of H.M.Hyndman and other leaders of the British Social-Democratic Federation, for example, were translated into Japanese<sup>81</sup> but this need not concern us here—since their message was much the same as that of the German social-democrats, which was dealt with at length in [Chapter 3](#). Robert Blatchford’s *Merrie England* was also translated on more than one occasion. It was serialised in *Shakaishugi* from 3 March 1903 and again in *Chokugen* from 12 February 1905. Yet *Merrie England* illustrates very well the difficulty one sometimes experiences in trying to trace back with certainty to authors such as Blatchford influences acting on those in Japan who read works from abroad in translation. If one compares the two translations of Blatchford’s work which I have mentioned, one finds them very different and—set against the original—it is doubtful whether the version which appeared in *Chokugen* can really be called a translation at all. It was Sakai Toshihiko who was responsible for what appeared in *Chokugen* over Blatchford’s name and, as Sakai admitted,<sup>82</sup> what he did in this case was to render in his own words some of Blatchford’s arguments. The result was as far from Blatchford’s original text as the title which Sakai chose to use (*Tsūzoku Shakaishugi*—‘Popular Socialism’) was from ‘*Merrie England*’.

Even if it is not possible to examine all the English-language books which were translated into Japanese, though, it is worthwhile singling out for

attention one which had something to say that was qualitatively different from the sources which have been considered so far. This is William Morris' novel *News From Nowhere*. The fact that a work of this sort was published in Japanese at all illustrates the point that there was naturally a great deal of chance involved in the ideas from abroad which found their way to Japan in the Meiji era—and just as much of the hit and miss as well in the books which happened to get translated. On the other hand, the very lack of influence which Morris' book was able to exert even when translated indicates the stony soil which Japan offered in the Meiji era for the implantation of genuinely socialist ideas.

Morris' *News From Nowhere* became available in an abbreviated translation under the title *Risō Kyō* (*An Ideal Country*) brought out by the Heiminsha in 1904. It was issued in a uniform edition with another utopian novel—Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (in Japanese *Hyakunengo no Shin Shakai*—*The New Society a Hundred Years On*), the same book as had made such an impact on Abe Isō during his student days in America. Both novels were translated by Sakai Toshihiko (who made a more faithful job of them than he did of Blatchford's *Merrie England*), *Looking Backward* appearing in March 1904 and *News From Nowhere* in December of the same year. It was unfortunate that these two books should have been published in a uniform edition—and doubly unfortunate that Bellamy's was released first, since William Morris had originally been prompted to write *News From Nowhere* as a reaction against Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*.<sup>83</sup> As a socialist, Morris had been appalled on reading Bellamy's novel by the regimented, state capitalist society portrayed there. Reacting against *Looking Backward*, Morris therefore wrote in *News From Nowhere* about the free, creative and uncommercialised society that he wanted to live in.

Despite this, in Japan *News From Nowhere* was overshadowed by Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. Partly this resulted from Morris' book being issued subsequently to the release of *Looking Backward*, but a more fundamental reason was that Bellamy's views were more in harmony anyway with the Japanese socialists' predominantly state capitalist inclinations (inherited from the SPD and elsewhere) than was Morris' concept of socialism. Their translator—Sakai Toshihiko's own remarks are revealing in this respect. In a survey of socialist literature available in Japan, which was included in the

first issue of Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study of Socialism), Sakai recommended his own translation of Bellamy as a good introduction to ‘socialism’.<sup>84</sup> In contrast to this, Morris’ book was said by Sakai to describe the ‘anarchist ideal’.<sup>85</sup> The fact is that there is nothing particularly anarchist about Morris’ account of socialist society in News From Nowhere and, during the course of his political activity, Morris himself had sometimes criticised the anarchists of his day.<sup>86</sup> The fact that Sakai should have referred to News From Nowhere in the way he did is clear evidence of the state capitalist prejudices which even the better of the Japanese socialists (one of whom was Sakai) held during this period. Drowned in the state capitalist tide, those like Morris who took a different line to the prevailing ideas on ‘socialism’ which the socialists in Meiji Japan learned from their various teachers abroad, were liable either to be labelled as ‘anarchists’ or simply to be overlooked.

## NOTES

1. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, ‘Manifesto of the Communist Party’ in Karl Marx, Selected Works (London, 1947), vol. 1, p. 133.
2. Morris Hillquit, History of Socialism in the United States (New York, 1910), pp. 292–3.
3. Abe Isō, ‘Yo wa Ika ni shite Shakaishugisha to Narishi ka’ (‘How I Became a Socialist’), Heimin Shimbun (Common People’s Newspaper), 20 March 1904, p. 7. See also Abe’s ‘Watakushi o Shakaishugi ni Michibiita Bungaku’ (‘The Literature Which Led Me to Socialism’) in Takano Zenichi, Nihon Shakaishugi no Chichi Abe Isō (Abe Iso: the Father of Japanese Socialism) (Tokyo, 1970), p. 227.
4. ‘The nation...organized as the one great business corporation in which all other corporations were absorbed; it became the one capitalist in the place of all other capitalists, the sole employer, the final monopoly...’ (E.Bellamy, Looking Backward (London, 1893), pp. 43–4.)
5. Takano, Abe Isō, p. 227.

6. Cyril H. Powles, 'Abe Isoo and the Role of Christians in the Founding of the Japanese Socialist Movement: 1895–1905' in *Papers on Japan* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), vol. 1, pp. 102, 124.
7. Katayama Sen, *Jiden* (Autobiography) (Tokyo, 1964), p. 176.
8. Hyman Kublin, *Asian Revolutionary* (Princeton, 1964), p. 70.
9. Katayama, *Jiden*, pp. 175–6.
10. More so than Abe and Katayama who—irrespective of the doubtfulness of their 'socialism'—have to be given credit for adhering over the years to what they believed.
11. *Rōdō Sekai* (Labour World), 1 July 1899, p. 10 (English column).
12. *Rōdō Sekai*, 15 June 1898, p. 10.
13. *Rōdō Sekai*, 21 June 1901, p. 6.
14. Kōtoku Shūsui, 'Shakaishugi to Shūkyō' ('Socialism and Religion') in *Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū* (Collected Works of Kotoku Shusui) (Tokyo, 1968), vol. 4, pp. 390–1.
15. 'Hishakaishugisha ni Oshiyu' ('Counsel for Anti-Socialists'), *Rōdō Sekai*, 15 May 1900, p. 5.
16. *Heimin Shimbun*, 22 November 1903, p. 7 and 29 November 1903, p. 4.
17. *Heimin Shimbun*, 22 May 1904, p. 5.
18. *Rōdō Sekai*, 1 May 1901, p. 2.
19. In explaining Marx's economic theories in *French and German Socialism in Modern Times* Ely wrote that 'The capitalist buys the commodity labor'. (R.T.Ely, *French and German Socialism in Modern Times* (New York, 1883), p. 181.) According to Marxist economic theory, however, the commodity the capitalist buys is labour power and, as anyone who has read Marx's writings carefully knows, this distinction between 'labour' and 'labour power' is

crucial to his analysis of capitalism.

20. Heimin Shimbun, 3 January 1904, p. 9.

21. See, for example: Chokugen (Straight Talking), 4 June 1905, p. 4 and 11 June 1905, p. 4; Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study of Socialism), 15 April 1906, pp. 33ff.

22. D.D.Egbert and S.Persons, Socialism and American Life (Princeton, 1952), vol. 1, p. 117.

23. Rōdō Sekai, 1 July 1899, p. 4.

24. See, for example: Rōdō Sekai, 1 March 1901, p. 5; Shakaishugi (Socialism), 3 July 1903, pp. 978–9

25. Ely, French and German Socialism, p. 261.

26. W.D.P.Bliss, A Handbook of Socialism (London, 1895), p. viii.

27. Daniel Bell, Marxian Socialism in the United States (Princeton, 1967) p. 45.

28. Takano, Abe Isō, p. 91.

29. Heiminsha, Shakaishugi Nyūmon (Introduction to Socialism) (Tokyo, 1904), pp. 73–5.

30. Rōdō Sekai, 15 November 1898, pp. 7–8 and 1 December 1898, p. 7.

31. Rōdō Sekai, 1 February 1898, p. 2.

32. Rōdō Sekai, 1 March 1900, pp. 1–2.

33. Heimin Shimbun, 25 December 1904, p. 1.

34. Kinoshita Naoe, Hi no Hashira (Tokyo, 1904), p. 295.

35. Ibid., p. 293 (emphasis added).

36. Sakai Toshihiko, *Nihon Shakaishugi Undō Shōshi* (A Short History of the Socialist Movement in Japan). Serialised in *Shakaishugi*, 1 March 1921, p. 40.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
38. Frank Cary, *History of Christianity in Japan* (Tokyo, 1959), p. 121.
39. *Rōdō Sekai*, 1 March 1898, p. 10 (English column).
40. Henry George, *Social Problems* (London, 1884), p. 276.
41. Kimura Tsuyoshi, *Nihon Shakaishugi Shi* (A History of Japanese Socialism) (Tokyo, no date given but probably 1926 or 1927), p. 44.
42. *Kokumin no Tomo*, February 1887, pp. 23–4.
43. ‘His (Henry George’s) conclusions support and his mode of argument supplements my own...’ (Alfred Russel Wallace, *Land Nationalisation* (London, 1882), p. 20.)
44. *Heimin Shimbun*, 29 November 1903, p. 4.
45. Ishikawa Kyokuzan (Sanshirō) and Kōtoku Shūsui, *Nihon Shakaishugi Shi* (A History of Japanese Socialism) in *Meiji Bunka Zenshū* (Collected Works on the Culture of the Meiji Era) (Tokyo, 1929), vol. 21, p. 350.
46. Kōtoku Denjirō (Shūsui), ‘Yo wa Ika ni shite Shakaishugisha to Narishika’ (‘How I Became a Socialist’), *Heimin Shimbun*, 17 January 1904, p. 5.
47. Yamaguchi Koken, ‘Nihon Shakaishugi Undō Shi’ (‘A History of the Socialist Movement in Japan’) in Kishimoto Eitarō (ed.), *Nihon Shakai Undō Shisō Shi* (History of the Thought of the Japanese Social Movement) (Tokyo, 1971), vol. 6, p. 512. (Yamaguchi’s ‘History’ first appeared in *Kaizō* (Reconstruction), 1 October 1919.)
48. *Rōdō Sekai*, 1 December 1897, p. 12 (English column).
49. *Rōdō Sekai*, 15 December 1897, p. 10.

50. Rōdō Sekai, 15 March 1899, pp. 5–6.
51. Akainatsu Katsumaro, Nihon Shakai Undō Shi (History of the Social Movement in Japan) (Tokyo, 1974), p. 62.
52. Takano, Abe Isō, p. 229.
53. Sakai, Shōshi. Serialised in Shakaishugi, 1 September 1920, p. 39.
54. Letter from Karl Marx to Friedrich Sorge, 30 June 1881, collected in Dona Torr (ed.), Correspondence of Marx and Engels (London, 1941), pp. 3956 (emphases in original):
55. Ishikawa and Kōtoku, Nihon Shakaishugi Shi in Meiji Bunka Zenshū, vol. 21, p. 363.
56. Karl Kiyoshi Kawakami, The Political Ideas of Modern Japan (Tokyo, 1903), p. 184.
57. Ibid., p. 184.
58. Ibid., p. 185.
59. Ibid., pp. 180, 182, 187, 192.
60. G. Bernard Shaw (ed.), Fabian Essays in Socialism (London, 1889), pp. 26–7.
61. Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū, vol. 2, p. 213.
62. Rōdō Sekai, 1 September 1898, p. 10 (English column).
63. Ibid., p. 10.
64. Or seen, in the case of Katayama Sen and Abe Isō. Both Katayama and Abe had (separately) made brief visits to Britain from the USA in 1894 and Katayama had met Percy Alden in London then.
65. ‘Katayama Sen Shi no Shakaishugi’ (‘Mr Katayama Sen’s Socialism’), R

ōdō Sekai, 15 October 1899, p. 4.

66. Rōdō Sekai, 1 December 1899, p. 3.

67. Ibid., pp. 3–4.

68. Ibid., p. 4.

69. Nishikawa Kōjirō, Jiyon Baansu in Arahata Kanson and Ota Masao (eds.), Meiji Shakaishugi Shirō Sōsho (Materials on Meiji Socialism) (Tokyo, 1972), vol. 6, p. 125.

70. Heimin Shimbun, 15 November 1903, p. 6.

71. Compare this with what Nishikawa had also written in Jiyon Baansu:

The reason why a great organisation has yet to be established in Japan's labour world, and why it has repeatedly collapsed on the point of being established, is none other than the fact that there is no-one at all like John Burns in Japanese labour circles.

As long as there is no-one about whom people will say 'It's only this person who is above suspicion'—a person who will sacrifice everything for others—a really great organisation cannot be established. (Arahata and Ōta, Meiji Shakaishugi, vol. 6, p. 158.)

...we cannot but fervently hope that a person like John Burns will emerge in Japanese labour circles. Ah! Which factory can it be that Japan's John Burns is now hidden in? We feel like rushing out and searching high and low for him. (Arahata and Ōta, Meiji Shakaishugi, vol. 6, p. 149.)

72. G.D.H.Cole, A History of Socialist Thought (London, 1963), vol. 3, pp. 885ff.

73. Yano Fumio, Shin Shakai (Tokyo, 1902), p. 253.

74. Chokugen, 2 April 1905, p. 3.

75. Rōdō Sekai, 1 February 1901, p. 3.

76. Shakaishugi, 3 December 1903, pp. 1285–6.

77. Rōdō Sekai, 21 July 1901, p. 1.

78. Cole, Socialist Thought, vol. 3, p. 891.

79. Heimin Shimbun, 20 December 1903, p. 5.

80. The categories American ‘Christian Socialism’, British Fabianism and New Zealand Lib-Labism were not, of course, water-tight compartments. Fabianism was British in its origins but—as has already been made clear—W.D.P.Bliss of the American Fabian Society was influential in Japan. Similarly, although the ‘Christian Socialism’ which was felt in Japan was predominantly American, Christians from countries other than the USA were in touch with the socialists in Japan. There was, for example, a certain Annie Clegg (‘a British Workman’s Daughter’, as she described herself—Rōdō Sekai, 15 April 1899, p.10) whose letters in the English columns of Rodō Sekai read like Sunday school texts.

81. For example: H.M.Hyndman, ‘Seisan Hōhō no Hensen’ (‘Changes in the Mode of Production’), serialised in Chokugen from 18 June 1905, p. 4; H. Quelch, ‘Shakaishugi to Aikokushin’ (‘Socialism and Patriotism’), Chokugen, 20 August 1905, p. 1.

82. Chokugen, 12 February 1905, p. 6.

83. See Jack Lindsay, William Morris (London, 1975), p. 337 in conjunction with Morris’ letter to J.Bruce Glasier of 13 May 1889, collected in Philip Henderson (ed.), The Letters of William Morris (London, 1950), p. 315. In this letter, Morris says of Bellamy:

Thank you, I wouldn’t care to live in such a cockney paradise as he imagines.

84. ‘Shakaishugi Kankei Bunsho Kaisetsu’ (‘A Commentary on the Literature Relating to Socialism’), Shakaishugi Kenkyū, 15 March 1906, pp. 84–5.

85. Ibid., p. 85.

86. See William Morris' letter to J.Bruce Glasier, 15 December 1888, collected in Henderson, Letters, p. 304.

## Chapter 5

# THE LEGACY FROM THE OLD SOCIETY

## MONEY AND THE SAMURAI

On 9 February 1900 the popular Tokyo daily newspaper *Yorozu Chōhō* (Morning News) carried an article written by Kōtoku Shūsui with the striking title *Kinsen o Haishi Seyo* ('Abolish Money!').<sup>1</sup> At first glance, here was a modern idea borrowed from Western socialist theory—and Kōtoku himself claimed in the article that 'the modern European socialists...have the abolition of money and the suppression of the private ownership of capital as their ideals'.<sup>2</sup> The fact was, however, that although the European social-democrats (Kōtoku's 'modern European socialists') might on rare occasions have sought to prove their Marxist pedigree by parading slogans such as 'Abolish money!' and 'Abolition of the wages system!', in practice they were committed to maintaining the monetary economy in existence. Kōtoku referred to 'modern European socialists' in his article in order to bolster his argument (the implication being that, if an idea was believed in the West, it was self-evidently correct—a common enough assumption in the Meiji era) but the actual argument itself owed far more to traditional samurai attitudes than it did to socialism. In fact, the ideals which Kōtoku attributed to the 'modern European socialists' were unmistakably those of the samurai and were as remote from social-democracy as they were from genuine socialism itself:

(the socialists) want to replace money by strength and honour, by right and duty. Indeed, truth and righteousness lie in doing just this.<sup>3</sup>

### Samurai Among The Early Socialists

Kōtoku Shūsui was not a samurai himself. Yet, although his ancestors on his father's side had been merchants for generations, they had cultivated relations with the local samurai so assiduously that Kōtoku's father was able to marry the daughter of a *gōshi* (a low-ranking samurai). Not only did Kōtoku's mother exercise a powerful influence over Shūsui—her youngest son—but,

having ‘always associated closely with gōshi families, it was only natural for (his) family to identify with the warrior’s cause’<sup>4</sup> in the years following the revolution of 1868.

As for many of the other early socialists in Japan, identification with the samurai and their values came even more naturally than it did in Kōtoku’s case. Kinoshita Naoe’s family had been samurai in the Shinano fief in central Japan prior to the revolution and, although his father sought accommodation with the new regime to the extent of becoming a policeman, one of his grandfathers showed his defiance by refusing to cut off his samurai topknot as the government had ordered. As one commentator has explained, ‘Old loyalties seem to have remained strong in the family.’<sup>5</sup> Abe Isō was another who came from a samurai background. His father was accomplished in a number of the martial arts and taught jūdō to the young samurai of the Chikuzen fief in south-west Japan, Isō starting his own martial training at the age of seven or eight.<sup>6</sup> Like many others of their class, the family felt the strain of poverty following the upheaval of 1868 and Abe saw this impoverishment of the samurai as one of the factors which drove him towards radical politics. ‘A change came over the lives of us of the samurai class’, he wrote.<sup>7</sup> ‘There was a sudden change and I was plummeted down from a life of relative ease to one of poverty.’<sup>8</sup> It was the same in Sakai Toshihiko’s case. His family were samurai in the Buzen fief<sup>9</sup> (again in the south-west of Japan) and it is known that in the Meiji era some of Sakai’s relatives fell on hard times and were eventually driven to suicide under the burden of accumulating debts.<sup>10</sup> An extremely revealing article of Sakai’s is one which he wrote for the Yorozu Chōhō (Morning News) newspaper (on which, like Kōtoku, he was employed as a journalist) in October 1901. Entitled Shizoku to Shinshi (‘Samurai and Gentlemen’), it read in part:

Society has completely forgotten the samurai. But the samurai have still never once forgotten themselves... It is not that the samurai have not forgotten themselves because they dream of the power they wielded in the old days or because they resent their current loss of prestige. It is just that the samurai refuse to forget themselves and that this helps cultivate the character of society as a whole... In the final analysis, the samurai are not recognised by society by virtue of their numbers or their property but still they have sunk deep roots into society’s foundations by virtue of their character... Society

today has completely forgotten the samurai. Yet the reason why society's morality can be maintained depends very much on the character of the samurai. Alas! Alas! Although the samurai will soon be ruined, their successor has still not arisen. Bushidō (the way of the samurai) has collapsed but shinshidō (the way of the gentleman) has still not arisen. It is the responsibility of we thoughtful people to develop this shinshidō.<sup>11</sup>

As Matsuzawa Hiroaki has aptly commented, 'what one can hear here is the cry of a dying class at a turning point in history'.<sup>12</sup>

Even in the case of those early socialists about whom it is more difficult to discover biographical details, there is often circumstantial evidence suggesting their samurai origins. For example, in an article *Kokka no Ryūsei to Rōdōsha* ('The Prosperity of the State and the Workers') which Kawakami Kiyoshi wrote for *Rōdō Sekai* (Labour World) in March 1899, he drew a strange parallel between samurai and wage workers. 'In olden days, war was an everyday occurrence for the state, but now it is industry which becomes the mainstay of the country', said Kawakami. 'In times of war, samurai formed the majority, but in an industrial age workers become the majority. In barbarous warfaring days the country could not have existed for a single day without the samurai. In exactly the same way, how can the country maintain itself in an enlightened, civilised age without the worker?'<sup>13</sup> It was, of course, factually incorrect to say that samurai had ever formed a majority. Under the old regime the samurai had been the minority which had held political power, while it was the peasants who had formed the overwhelming majority of the population. One would guess that Kawakami came from a samurai family himself, since otherwise it seems inconceivable that he should have compared the wage-earning working class with the samurai, rather than with its obvious equivalent—the exploited peasantry. Strange though Kawakami's attitude now seems, however, it was far from being unusual. An unsigned lead article which appeared in *Rōdō Sekai* on 3 April 1901 carried the headline 'The Union Is the Flower of the Workers; the Worker is the Samurai of the Industrialised Country'.<sup>14</sup>

## **The Samurai Ethos**

Behind those early socialists who had absorbed the samurai ethos lay a

centuries old tradition of hostility to commerce. The reverse side of this coin was that, in contrast to the antagonism which the samurai had traditionally displayed towards the merchants as a class and towards trade in general, a long line of scholars throughout the more than 250 years of the Tokugawa period had sung the praises of the peasantry and of agriculture. Less than honest though this praise was, since it was accompanied by an unremitting exploitation and repression of the peasants, it nonetheless expressed the samurai's at least theoretical adherence to agrarian values.

The official class hierarchy of the Tokugawa regime was *Shi Nō Kō Shō* (samurai, peasants, artisans, merchants)—the merchants supposedly being the lowest class of all, although the economic influence they were able to exert belied their allegedly low social status. Like all ruling classes, the samurai defended their rule with an ideology which sought to explain and to justify their power and privileges. According to this, peasants were seen as the bedrock of society, fulfilling an essential economic function, while the samurai governed and maintained 'law and order'. Even the lowly artisans were sometimes recognised as being engaged in useful economic activity, but the merchants were condemned outright as parasites, mere 'money-grubbers (who) buy cheap grain with dear coin and increase their goods', as one scholar (Muro Kyūsō, 1658–1734) put it.<sup>15</sup> The grip of this ideology on the dominant thinkers in Tokugawa society is particularly well illustrated in the writings of Yamagata Bantō (1748–1821), for Yamagata presents the interesting example of a scholar, himself of merchant origins, who was yet highly critical of trade. Although to an extent advocating policies which the merchant class could have turned to its own advantage, Yamagata was still at root an unambiguous champion of agrarian and samurai values. 'Governing the country', he wrote, 'consists of encouraging the peasants on the one hand, and suppressing manufacture and commerce and weakening the towns on the other. When the towns prosper, the countryside goes into decline. When the countryside prospers, the towns go into decline. It is nature's way.'<sup>16</sup>

The contempt with which the samurai of the Tokugawa period regarded trade can also be conveyed by a few extracts from Fukuzawa Yukichi's autobiography. Born into a samurai family in 1835, Fukuzawa went on to play an important role in introducing Western thought into Japan in the Meiji era. Recalling his childhood, he writes:

I must mention a very important characteristic of our family. My father was really a scholar. And the scholars of the time, different from the Western scholars of today, disdained to spend any thought on money, or even to touch it.<sup>17</sup>

Fukuzawa then tells the story of how his father sent the elder children to a teacher to study calligraphy and for general education:

...having some merchants' children among his pupils, (the teacher) naturally began to train them in numerals: 'Two times two is four, two times three is six, etc.' This, today, seems a very ordinary thing to teach, but when my father heard this, he took his children away in a fury. 'It is abominable,' he exclaimed, 'that innocent children should be taught to use numbers—the tool of merchants. There is no telling what the teacher may do next.'<sup>18</sup>

Finally:

...according to the convention among the warrior class, they were ashamed of being seen handling money. Therefore, it was customary for samurai to wrap their faces with hand-towels and go out after dark whenever they had an errand to do.<sup>19</sup>

Once traditional samurai thinking on money and commerce has been explained, the source of many of the ideas advanced by Kōtoku Shūsui in his apparently socialist article 'Abolish Money!' becomes clear. When Kōtoku argued: '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',<sup>20</sup> he was echoing countless mouth-pieces of the samurai class who had preceded him. As Muro Kyūsō had said more than 150 years before Kōtoku: 'Nothing is more important to the samurai than duty. Second in importance comes life, and then money... When faced with however unpleasant a duty, the way of the samurai consists in regarding his own wishes—even his life itself—as of less value than rubbish. How much less should he value money?'<sup>21</sup> In repeating these sort of sentiments, Kōtoku was writing more as a samurai than as a socialist.

## **Commodity Production**

It is also important to understand that, despite its extravagant title, in ‘Abolish Money!’ Kōtoku was not presenting a criticism of capitalism which penetrated to the heart of the monetary economy. The socialist critique of capitalism—most forcefully expressed in Karl Marx’s *Capital*—proceeds from the analysis of commodity production itself. It endeavours to show that the fundamental problems of capitalism arise from its being a system where production is carried on for the purpose of exchange on markets, rather than for the direct satisfaction of human needs. Rival capitals, which can be anything from petty companies to multinationals or nationally integrated blocs of capital, compete with each other (ultimately at the level of the world markets) to sell their products, and regulate their production according to what the markets can absorb. As a result, production is not under rational, human control—geared to the satisfaction of human needs—but is dictated instead by the blind forces of the world markets, which are a law unto themselves. Production thus slips out of conscious, human control and this gives rise to the problems which everyone is familiar with, such as chronic deprivation and need existing side by side with technically attainable—but economically unrealisable—levels of production.

As Marx put it in *Capital*, the paradox arises that although ‘Commodities are things, and therefore without power of resistance against man’,<sup>22</sup> nevertheless men’s ‘relations to each other in production assume a material character independent of their control and conscious individual action. These facts manifest themselves at first by products as a general rule taking the form of commodities.’<sup>23</sup> Basing itself on this Marxist analysis of capitalism, socialist objections to money have rested not on moral strictures on the corrosive effect of lucre on human morals, but on a fundamental rejection of commodity production. Socialists have seen money as a problem firstly because it is itself a commodity, and secondly because it performs the special function of acting as the essential lubricant for the system of generalised commodity production known as capitalism.<sup>24</sup>

Kōtoku’s objections to money were of an entirely different order to those I have outlined above. Despite the catchword ‘Abolish money!’, Kōtoku was not opposed to money as such but only to the ‘unlimited’/‘omnipotent’<sup>25</sup> power which he felt money had come to have in the world. He spelt this out in a further contribution to the *Yorozu Chōhō* which appeared a couple of

weeks after the original ‘Abolish Money!’ article. Also entitled ‘Abolish Money!’, this second article read in part:

Of course, we do not hate money when it serves simply as a medium of exchange, when it represents prices, or acts as a standard. In fact, if its use were restricted so that it was on a par with weights and measures, railway tickets, doctors’ prescriptions and so on, no-one would see the need for its abolition.<sup>26</sup>

This was the very opposite of the socialist objection to money. To say ‘we do not hate money when it serves simply as a medium of exchange’ etc. was tantamount to accepting commodity production, the economic system of producing articles for the purpose of exchange on markets. Further on, Kōtoku wrote:

The trouble is, however, that money has unlimited power over and above its original use and purpose. Because of this, human nature is degraded, morality is ruined, freedom destroyed and equality overthrown. There will be no end to it until society and the state are driven to their ruin. So what our cry ‘Abolish money!’ signifies is the eradication of the meaning which so-called ‘money’ has nowadays. In other words, it signifies the eradication of the unlimited power which money has.<sup>27</sup>

There were moral strictures aplenty here. Besides which, just as Kōtoku’s previous insistence that honour and duty were more important than money brought to mind Muro Kyūsō, so his contention here that money is harmless providing it is kept in its place as a medium of exchange is reminiscent of the ideas of other Tokugawa scholars such as Miura Baien (1723–89). For Miura, as for Kōtoku, money was an essentially neutral agency:

The function of gold and silver as well as of copper coins is to act as media of exchange and we call them money. They are scarce and small and help the movement of goods. Thus their functions are similar to those of ships and waggons.<sup>28</sup>

Problems occurred only when ‘Money which should serve as a means of moving goods has become a master.’<sup>29</sup> In a similar fashion to Kōtoku, Miura imagined that this trouble arose in a purely voluntaristic fashion—simply

because people arbitrarily attached too great an importance to monetary symbols: ‘When gold and silver are esteemed highly, the Six Essentials<sup>30</sup> are depreciated and the national foundations become weakened.’<sup>31</sup> Instead of seeing market forces as a Frankenstein’s monster outside of the rational control of individuals or classes, Miura—again like Kōtoku—insisted that ‘money being impersonal has no power of itself to cause suffering to humanity’. ‘How can we imagine that gold and silver can harm humanity(?) Alas! It is humanity itself which causes money to do this harm’.<sup>32</sup> This was the tradition from which Kōtoku Shūsui’s attack on money derived and, unfortunately, it did not provide sufficient leverage for a socialist critique which could have cut through to the very roots of the monetary economy.

Yet, however strongly one might be able to criticise this samurai thinking on money as being inadequate from the socialist point of view, it ought to be added that, while its influence lasted, it did at least offer a potential for the development of a current of genuinely socialist thought in Japan. In contrast to the ideological barriers which obstruct the spread of socialist ideas in long-standing capitalist societies—where the aura surrounding money is such that any mention of dismantling the monetary economy strikes most people as preposterous—there existed in Japan in this period a sizable body of opinion that was (up to a point) hostile to money. The tragedy was that the social-democratic and other major, supposedly socialist influences from abroad which were acting on the early socialist movement in Japan were incapable of catalysing this potential. In addition, the opportunity disappeared rapidly anyway, as the social class which was the embodiment of this hostility to money was destroyed.

## **MONEY AND THE PEASANTS**

By way of contrast to some of those early socialists who were of samurai origin, someone like Katayama Sen, who came from a peasant family, had little conception of the need for abolishing money. His book *Wa ga Shakaishugi* (What Socialism Means For Me—Tokyo, 1903) contained no such clear demand and, as far as one can tell, this was an accurate reflection of peasant attitudes towards money both before and after 1868. Although studies such as Shōji, Hayashi and Yasumaru’s *Minshū Undō no Shisō* (The Thought of Popular Movements)<sup>33</sup> and Hugh Borton’s *Peasant Uprisings in*

Japan of the Tokugawa Period<sup>34</sup> disprove Katayama's idyllic representation of peasant life under the old regime,<sup>35</sup> they provide little evidence of peasant hostility to money. The samurai were opposed to the expansion of trade and to the increasingly crucial role which money came to play as the Tokugawa period progressed. For the samurai, this was a matter of 'principle', as it were, since in the long run their position as the ruling class was at stake in the struggle which was taking place throughout the Tokugawa period between a declining natural economy on the one hand and a rising monetary economy on the other. With the peasantry, though, it was different. Naturally, the peasants reacted fiercely against those additional hardships which the monetary economy imposed on them and they hated the merchants who, by their manipulation of the rice market and other devices, were doing better out of the monetary system than themselves. But they knew too well the oppression and the forced expropriation of their crops which the samurai practised to echo the samurai's defence of agrarian values. Incomplete though the evidence is, it suggests that, on balance, the Japanese peasantry favoured the monetary economy, even while lashing out in frequent uprisings at some of its harsher effects.

It is true that much of the violence of the peasants' uprisings was directed against merchants and money-lenders. An anonymous author writing about an uprising which he had witnessed in what is now Fukushima department in north-east Japan in 1866 expressed his antipathy for money-lenders with a true peasant's turn of phrase when he wrote that 'those bastards who raise the interest rates on pawned articles are like the leeches which live in the rice seedling beds'.<sup>36</sup> Yet, strong language though this was, it was far from being a condemnation of the monetary system itself. Indeed, there is nothing to suggest that Miura Meisuke (1820–64)—who was accused by the Nambu fief (modern Iwate department in north-east Japan) authorities of having led an uprising there about 1854—was anything but a typical peasant when he urged his children from his prison cell to 'set their hearts on getting money'.<sup>37</sup> This advice was given in a long letter he wrote home after he had been imprisoned as a rebel by the fief authorities and before he died in captivity. Part of Miura's instructions to his family in a later letter on how to become rich centred on undercutting competitors by selling cheaply in the struggle for economic survival.<sup>38</sup> Likewise, on another occasion, he encouraged them to 'study the art of making money every night'.<sup>39</sup> It would seem, in other words,

that, unlike their samurai contemporaries, peasants such as Miura Meisuke entertained few qualms about the monetary economy.

Even though it is admittedly the views of the richer peasants and village headmen which tend to survive in the records of the Tokugawa period, one is still left with the impression that the Japanese peasantry—faced with the penetration of the money economy into their lives—displayed little opposition to money itself. It seems that by the Tokugawa period money was already too firmly established to provoke such a response from the peasants, that the peasants were already too accustomed to thinking in terms of (at least partial) production for the market to be able to consider the abolition of money as a possibility. Among the samurai, however, there were already even in Tokugawa days significant numbers who—despite the fact that their class as a whole continued to hold political power—economic ally were being driven to the wall. Samurai scholars understood that the relative impoverishment of their class could be traced back to the development of the market economy and the rise of the merchants as an economic force in society—and expressed this conviction in their attacks on money, confused though these often were. Thus one can say that Katayama Sen was remaining true to his peasant background when he wrote *Wa ga Shakaishugi*, just as Kōtoku Shūsui was revealing the samurai influences acting on him when he wrote *Kinsen o Haishi Seyo*. Paradoxically, it was some of those political activists who (like Kōtoku) identified with the impoverished sections of the old ruling class who came closest to genuine socialism in the period extending up to the end of the Russo-Japanese War and not those like Katayama with their roots in the perennially oppressed peasantry.

## CONFUCIANISM

Another constituent element in the thought of the Meiji socialists was Confucianism. Lengthy study of the Confucian classics was, during this period, part and parcel of a normal education but there were those among the early socialists whose familiarity with these texts went far beyond the passages they had been forced to commit to memory during their schooldays. Sakai Toshihiko was said in 1903 still to be ‘someone who regularly loves to read the *Analects of Confucius* and the *Mencius*’<sup>40</sup> and both he and Kōtoku Shūsui referred to the Confucian influence on them in their *Yo wa Ika ni*

shite Shakaishugisha to Narishi ka ('How I Became a Socialist') contributions to Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper).<sup>41</sup> Kōtoku also wrote in a letter to Hayashi Sanjūrokurō: 'I came to socialism from Confucianism',<sup>42</sup> while Sakai in his Jiden (Autobiography) said that it was the Confucian concept of michi o okonau (acting virtuously—literally, 'practising the way') which led him to become a socialist.<sup>43</sup> To the extent that they were saying that an important area of their thought remained rooted in Confucianism, these assertions of Kōtoku's and Sakai's were perfectly correct. Their claims that they had followed a Confucian path to 'socialism', however, need to be treated with a considerable amount of scepticism.

To give them their due, those like Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko did try to apply their Confucianism to the problems of the day and made an attempt to draw conclusions that were both Confucian and socialist. In particular, during the period of the Russo-Japanese War, they did their best—while starting from Confucian premises—to argue for an internationalist and anti-war position. Thus Heimin Shimbun carried an article in January 1904 on Mōshi no Kokusai Kan ('Mencius' International Outlook')<sup>44</sup> and the opening words of an anti-war speech which Sakai made at a public meeting in Tokyo on 8 October 1903 were:

Friends! This morning I sat down quietly by myself and read Mencius in order to gain inspiration for this speech... His clear, concise statement about 'abhorring the killing of people' sunk deep into my brain and impressed me as being indeed the words of a noble and benevolent person.<sup>45</sup>

What followed were numerous references to Confucius and several further quotations from Mencius' writings but, of course, on the basis of this Confucianism, Sakai could develop his case no further in this speech than simple pacifism. There was nothing in Mencius that could provide the inspiration for an analysis of the coming war in terms of social class, showing which classes' interests were at stake in the struggle between Russia and Japan and which classes would pay the price in deaths and general hardship.

If Confucian teachings left a lot to be desired on the question of war, they were downright reactionary in their implications in many other spheres. Confucianism may be a doctrine of 'benevolence' (ren in Chinese; jin in

Japanese) and ‘righteousness’ (yi in Chinese; gi in Japanese) but these and the other Confucian virtues are still to be exercised within the framework of a society that is stratified along class and other lines. Mencius might have asserted that ‘a wise ruler is always modest and respectful to those below him and restricts the amount that he takes from the people’.<sup>46</sup> Yet that same ruler—however ‘wise’ he may be—continues both to rule and to take, no matter how ‘modestly’ and ‘respectfully’ he does so and despite the limitations which he imposes on himself. During the period which is being considered here, which extended up to 1905, the socialists in Japan expressed very few doubts about these Confucian nostrums. On the contrary, Kōtoku Shūsui publicly declared himself in favour of Confucianism as an instrument of ‘moral education’ in Japan<sup>47</sup> and another feature of the article ‘The Prosperity of the State and the Workers’ by Kawakami Kiyoshi, which has already been referred to in relation to the parallel it drew between wage workers and samurai, was its Confucian minponshugi. Minponshuai is a word which the dictionaries choose to translate as ‘democracy’ but what it literally means is ‘making the people the basis’. In practice, minponshugi concerns itself not with the attainment of a democratic condition where all men and women can relate to one another as equals but instead with the problems of ensuring that those in positions of power treat those beneath them with compassion. In his article<sup>48</sup> Kawakami Kiyoshi concentrated his attack not on the existence of political power as such but on the fact that too few politicians in Japan showed sympathy for the workers. As an example of how politicians should behave he offered... Gladstone! Since the people are the basis of the state, one should look after them well, insisted Kawakami. One’s motives for doing so were exactly the same as those of the builder who ensures that a house has good foundations—and, to illustrate the point, Kawakami referred to the semi-mythical fourth century Japanese Emperor Nintoku. Nintoku was supposed to have been a model of benevolence, since he was said to have exempted the people from taxes for three years at one stage during his rule. The example of Emperor Nintoku is one which the early socialists were particularly fond of quoting and it is one which I shall have cause to come back to again below.

Steeped in Confucianism as the pioneer socialists in Japan were, they were quite unable to see the state as the instrument by means of which one social class maintains its rule over other classes, which it oppresses. Mencius and

the Confucian scholars who had followed him had constantly looked back to a golden age of supposedly ‘good government’, when semi-mythical rulers had ‘comforted the people like a timely fall of rain’.<sup>49</sup> Mencius had said that ‘the former kings could not bear to let people suffer and therefore they ruled compassionately. If—not bearing to let people suffer—one ruled compassionately, one could govern the world as easily as turning it over in one’s hand.’<sup>50</sup> Having been brought up on a doctrine of this type, it was perhaps only natural that the early Japanese socialists should have been opposed not to the state and to the institution of government itself, but simply to the way in which the state manifested itself in Meiji Japan and to the corrupt governments of the time. Just as the case argued by Kōtoku Shūsui in his ‘Abolish Money!’ article fell short of what its title suggested, so another contribution to *Yorozu Chōhō*—Hi Seiji Ron (‘Against Politics!’)—which he wrote in January 1899 was not, in the end, the socialist piece it appeared to be. Despite its opening declaration (‘Do not believe in politics!’),<sup>51</sup> taken as a whole, the article was more a criticism of the quality of the Meiji governments than it was of government itself, was more a condemnation of the priorities of Meiji politics than of politics as such and was more a denunciation of the ends to which the autocratic rule of the oligarchs (*genrō*) was directed than it was a protest against authority stifling freedom. In a similar vein, an anonymous article in *Rōdō Sekai*’s regular *Shakaishugi* (‘Socialism’) column, which appeared in the issue for 1 July 1901, blamed what it saw as the deplorable situation in Italy on the government of that country. It commented: ‘There is the proof of Confucius’ saying that tyrannical government is more terrifying than even the tiger.’<sup>52</sup> Due in large measure to their Confucianism, it was tyrannical (as opposed to ‘compassionate’) government and bad (as opposed to ‘good’) government that the socialists of this period were opposed to; not government itself.

## TAOISM

Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko’s attitude towards the Russo-Japanese War and the views of the early socialists on the state were not the only ways in which the influence of Confucianism manifested itself in this period. Confucianism also contributed to the elitist inclinations of the early socialists and to the support they gave to the monarchy. Before going on to consider these other aspects of socialist thought as it emerged in Japan, however, I

want to pursue the question of the state a little further and briefly mention the unrealised potential which Taoism offered the socialists for developing a more critical approach to governmental power.

In China Taoism had a centuries old tradition of opposition to the official Confucian ideology of the imperial regime, although one of the problems encountered in trying to define Taoism at all accurately arises from the fact that there was a tendency in China to apply a ‘Taoist’ label to almost any doctrine that lay outside the pale of Confucian orthodoxy. This is not a problem in the Japanese context, since—unlike China—in Japan Taoism never existed in any organised fashion. Despite Taoism’s lack of an organised following in Japan, however, the Taoist classics were known and were reasonably widely read. Fukuzawa Yukichi mentions in his autobiography how at school he studied Laozi and Zhuang-zi,<sup>53</sup> along with many of the other ancient Chinese philosophers, and the type of early education he received seems to have been common among the samurai of his day. As for the socialists, Kōtoku was probably quite typical when he wrote in 1906 that he too had been reading Lao-zi and Zhuangzi from an early age.<sup>54</sup> It also cannot be without significance that Kōtoku’s assumed personal name of ‘Shūsui’ (‘Autumn Floods’—his real name was Kōtoku Denjirō) was taken from the opening words of Chapter 17 of Zhuang-zi: ‘At the time of the autumn floods...’<sup>55</sup> Indeed, as late as 1974 I found evidence of the former influence of Lao-zi in Japan when I was interviewing some of the oldest surviving anarchist militants, men such as Wada Eitarō<sup>56</sup> and Shirai Shimpei.<sup>57</sup> Both Wada and Shirai were born in the Meiji era and both readily quoted Lao-zi at me—something which I found differentiated them from later generations of militants, anarchist or otherwise.

In contrast to Confucianism, with its emphasis on the need for a wise ruler and compassionate government, the Taoist classics implied that the less government there was the better. Both Lao-zi and Zhuang-zi argued against authority and the imposing of constraints on people and, oblique though their language was, some of their pronouncements sounded remarkably like denunciations of the state. As Zhuang-zi put it at one point:

I have heard of leaving society alone but I have never heard of governing it...  
If society’s natural character is not debased and its natural goodness not

interfered with, will there be any need to rule society?<sup>58</sup>

Yet, taken as a whole, Taoism was not a doctrine of militant opposition to the state. Rather it was a philosophy based on quiescence, characterised by mystical calls for abstention from all action. ‘When people study, day by day they accumulate knowledge, but when one practises the way, day by day one divests oneself of encumbrances’, was what Lao-zi was alleged to have said. ‘One throws off encumbrances and then throws off still more, until a stage is reached where one has nothing to do. One does nothing and yet there is nothing that one leaves undone.’<sup>59</sup> In the final analysis, political rule was not excluded from the Taoist scheme of things but the principle of inaction applied to the rulers as much as (if not more than) it did to anyone else. ‘The best rulers are those whose subjects are unaware of them except for the mere fact of their existence’, one finds in Lao-zi<sup>60</sup> and Zhuang-zi quotes Chi Zhang Man Ji to the effect that ‘In an age of perfect virtue...rulers are no more than the higher branches of the trees while the people are like the wild deer.’<sup>61</sup>

As can be seen, there was an element within Taoism that was anti-state and anti-government, but it was muted by the mystical obscurantism with which it was presented. Because of this, in Japan the writings of Lao-zi and Zhuang-zi were ineffective even in the limited sense of providing a counterbalance to Confucian notions of ‘good government’. How much more inadequate were they, then, as a basis for a socialist analysis of the state? It was only at a later stage, outside of the period being dealt with here, that—following the absorption of anarchist ideas from abroad—the ‘anarchist’ element within Taoism was recognised and Lao-zi and Zhuang-zi were belatedly adopted into the pantheon of ‘anarchist’ thinkers.<sup>62</sup> Until that time, and without the impetus provided by Western anarchist thought, the criticism of the state implicit within Taoism had no effective influence on the early socialists in Japan.

## **ELITISM**

There was nothing surprising in the fact that the early socialists in Japan should have regarded themselves as an elite. On the contrary, it would have been strange had they not done so when one considers the ideas they

inherited from traditional Japanese society. Elitism came naturally to those who identified with the samurai. A common saying of the Tokugawa period declared: ‘Among blossoms, it is the cherry which takes pride of place. Among people, it is the samurai.’ Those socialists who came from samurai families did not easily relinquish this image of themselves as the flower of society. Secondly, as was mentioned before, Confucianism also inclined the socialists towards elitism. The distinction between ‘gentry’ and ‘people’ was crucial to the Confucians and—so the story went—it was not the mere ownership of material possessions which separated the ‘gentry’ from the rest. Again and again one finds in Mencius: ‘It is only the gentry whose hearts can remain constant even when they have no fixed livelihood. In the case of the people, if they have no fixed livelihood, their hearts are not constant either.’<sup>63</sup> The attraction of this teaching for the impoverished samurai of the Meiji era needs no special stressing. In addition, its appeal was bound to be heightened still further if, as well as being of samurai origin, one was also a hard-up intellectual (as so many of the early socialists were) deprived of a secure career in journalism or one of the other professions because of one’s beliefs. There are no prizes for guessing where the distinction between ‘right-minded gentlemen’ and ‘ordinary people’ came from in Sakai Toshihiko’s article *I Shoku Jū no Yoku* (‘The Desire For Food, Clothing and Shelter’) which appeared in the *Yorozu Chōhō* on 24 December 1902:

Right-minded young gentlemen must sternly control their desire for food, clothing and shelter and admonish all thoughts of idleness and luxury. But one certainly should not hope to see such attitudes emerge among the majority of ordinary people, on a scale wider than among what I call ‘right-minded’ people.<sup>64</sup>

Even when Sakai developed this argument further to the point of introducing the concept of what he imagined to be ‘socialism’, he was not straying from Confucianism’s well-worn paths. For had not Mencius constantly urged the rulers of his day to see to it that their subjects’ bellies were full, since only when they were assured of the basic comforts would they prove amenable to improvement? Thus Sakai persisted:

If one wishes to stimulate the ordinary people into desiring something higher than food, clothing and shelter, one must reform the present organisation of

society from its very basis. In other words, one must build a society which guarantees the ordinary people their food, clothing and shelter. One must build a society which achieves equality of food, clothing and shelter for the common people. To put it in a nutshell, one must put socialism into practice. Only after socialism has been put into practice, when food, clothing and shelter have been guaranteed and made equal, should one begin to hope that the ordinary people start to desire something higher than food, clothing and shelter.<sup>65</sup>

In the true elitist Confucian style, society was to be reformed for the 'ordinary people'. Until this had been done for 'them', 'they' could hardly be considered responsible for their actions—let alone for their own emancipation.

A third (and perhaps, in the end, the most compelling) reason for the elitism of the early Japanese socialists was that they were continually haunted by the capitalist revolution of 1868 and by the shishi revolutionaries who had brought it about. In the period which extended up to 1905, the upheaval of 1868 was still an event within living memory for many people and the shishi were popular heroes. For the socialists in particular 1868 was their constant touchstone, a boiling up of resentment against a corrupt regime which they tirelessly referred back to<sup>66</sup> and which they expected to re-occur at any moment—only this time in the form of a 'socialist' revolution. Similarly, the shishi—the relative handful of courageous and self-sacrificing revolutionaries who had been prepared to throw away their lives for what they believed in—were the ideal types on whom the Meiji socialists sought to model themselves. Yet, just because 1868 had been a capitalist revolution, the fascination which its shishi heroes had for the early socialists in Japan became another barrier to the latter's understanding the type of social change that would be needed in order to achieve a socialist society. If socialism is to be a new society, fundamentally different from capitalism, it requires new men and women, who become 'new' by changing themselves as they struggle to change society. With the example of the romantic heroes of Japan's capitalist revolution to haunt them, however, the early socialists looked to elitist action by a small minority instead of to a movement for self-liberation at the base of society.

In November 1898, in yet another of his contributions to the Yoroazu Chōhō (Shakai Fuhai no Genin to Sono Kyūji—‘The Causes of Society’s Decay and Its Cure’), Kōtoku Shūsui maintained that social reconstruction had to come from an elite composed of ‘people of virtue and righteous persons’ (the expression is a Confucian one) who act for the people as a whole.<sup>67</sup> The type of political activist Kōtoku envisaged when he used a phrase like ‘people of virtue and righteous persons’ was the shishi revolutionary Yoshida Shōin. What appealed to Kōtoku and the other early socialists about Yoshida was his spirit of self-sacrifice and his dedication to the revolutionary cause. That Yoshida had also been intensely nationalist and a monarchist into the bargain did not diminish their admiration for him and, interestingly enough, the Japanese socialists were greatly inspired as well by the legend of Ferdinand Lassalle,<sup>68</sup> the German labour leader who had exhibited similar traits to Yoshida’s. In fact, in a book which he wrote on Lassalle, Kōtoku specifically compared the German labour leader with Yoshida Shoin and wrote that among modern revolutionaries Lassalle and Yoshida were the ‘persons who exhibited best of all, without any flaws, the true characteristics of full-blooded men’.<sup>69</sup> It was a fine samurai compliment which Kōtoku paid them. But, precisely for that reason, it failed to criticise the elitist flamboyance which characterised both Yoshida and Lassalle.

Needless to say, the socialists pictured themselves as shishi in the Yoshida and Lassalle moulds. Sakai Toshihiko and Kōtoku Shūsui struck the pose of shishi fulfilling their duty to society in the joint statement which they issued on resigning from the Yoroazu Chōhō when it came out in support of war with Russia in 1903.<sup>70</sup> Sakai also paid both Kōtoku and Kinoshita Naoe the intended compliment of describing them as ‘oriental shishi’ in his Nihon Shakaishugi Undō Shōshi (A Short History of the Socialist Movement in Japan).<sup>71</sup> Yet perhaps it was the Ōsaka Shū Hō (Osaka Weekly News) which best captured the spirit of the times in its references to ‘shishi and people of virtue’. According to an article in its first issue in 1899, the mark of ‘shishi and people of virtue’ was that they made socialism their principle and gave their sympathy to the poor and to the workers.<sup>72</sup> ‘Socialism’ for the Ōsaka Shū Ho was a doctrine of mercy—in other words, of selfless ‘socialists’ coming to the assistance of ‘the poor’ and ‘the workers’. Perhaps understandably (given the weakness of the working class in Japan at that time) the early socialists could envisage ‘socialism’ only as a gospel of elitist

self-sacrifice, never as a means of working class self-liberation.

## THE MONARCHY

To cap it all, support for the monarchy was rife among the early socialists in Japan. As with their elitism, the awe with which so many of the socialists regarded the imperial family was, to a certain extent, inevitable. Caught under the spell of a capitalist revolution whose principal rallying cry had been *Sonn Ō Jōi* ('Revere the Emperor and Expel the Barbarians!') and influenced by a philosophy which took its standards of benevolence, righteousness and so on from the supposedly model kings of antiquity, support for the monarchy came all but naturally. On 18 April 1903, for example, the magazine *Shakaishugi* (Socialism) quoted with appreciation a poem by 'her majesty the Empress'.<sup>73</sup> There was also an interesting juxtaposition of remarks on the English page of *Rōdō Sekai* in its May Day issue for 1900. One of the news items read:

On the 10th of May 1900, the Imperial Wedding of the (sic) H.I.H. the Crown Prince and Princess Kujio will take place. The whole nation will rejoice at (sic) this occasion by lighting lanterns and raising the flags. Our laborers, who can not get a Sunday rest will get an opportunity to celebrate this grandest, solemest (sic) and gladdest occasion of the Empire!<sup>74</sup>

The above was in odd contrast to the 'May Day!' editorial, with its confident announcement that 'We are class conscious already'!<sup>75</sup>

There was a glaring contradiction here. Socialism signifies the construction of a classless society and yet here were so-called socialists justifying a blatant symbol of class divisions within society such as the monarchy. The way in which the early Japanese socialists attempted to resolve this contradiction was to argue that oriental monarchies were somehow different from royalty as it existed in the West. Perhaps the best example of this line of argument was *Kōtoku Shūsui's* essay *Shakaishugi to Kokutai* ('Socialism and the National Polity') which was published in the *Rikugō Zasshi* (Universe Magazine) in November 1902. Here *Kōtoku* contrasted a despotic European king such as Louis XIV of France with two proverbially benevolent oriental rulers—the fourth century Japanese Emperor Nintoku (the same emperor as

Kawakami Kiyoshi had praised) and the ancient Chinese King Wen (a byword for virtue among Confucians).<sup>76</sup> Kōtoku's conclusion was that, with a monarch such as Emperor Nintoku or King Wen on the throne, a supposedly socialist society could perfectly well incorporate Japan's imperial institutions. In painfully loyal and patriotic prose, he wrote:

...according to its normal interpretation, in Japan our monarchical form of government is called the kokutai.<sup>77</sup> Nay, rather than a mere 'monarchical form of government', it is our imperial line lasting unbroken for 2500 years which we call the 'kokutai'. This 'imperial line lasting unbroken for 2500 years' is certainly something the like of which has never been heard before—in the past or in the present, in the East or in the West. For we Japanese it can only be something in which we take the greatest pride. It is not without reason that when we hear words such as kokutai all of us alike feel our hearts begin to throb. Yet doesn't socialism really stand in direct contradiction to what is called the kokutai—in other words, to the existence of our imperial line unbroken for 2500 years? Confronted by this question, I can reply emphatically that it does not.<sup>78</sup>

Kōtoku Shūsui was not simply saying here that 'socialism' could somehow be harnessed to monarchical authority. As far as he was concerned, in the Orient at any rate, the great monarchs of the past had all been splendid 'democrats', whose rule had itself amounted to 'a form of socialism'!<sup>79</sup> 'A socialist like King Wen' was one of the phrases Kōtoku used<sup>80</sup> and 'an imperial will like the Emperor Nintoku's... was', he claimed, 'in exact conformity and agreement with socialism'.<sup>81</sup> These were things which 'oriental socialists should be proud of'.<sup>82</sup> Kōtoku believed that the reigns of these largely mythical rulers had been periods of outstanding benevolence but whether this belief bore any relation to historical fact is neither here nor there from the point of view of this study. What it is important to realise is that for Kōtoku 'a form of socialism' could be something bestowed from above onto a grateful and compliant people below. The same went for Yano Fumio in his novel *Shin Shakai* (The New Society). The 'new' society described by Yano was itself a monarchy and Yano gave the 'wisdom' of its emperor as one of the reasons for its having been attained. (Additional reasons were the foresight of its scholars and the altruism of the capitalists!)<sup>83</sup>

Ideas such as these had tenacious roots within the early socialist movement in Japan and, more than that, reflected just how widespread respect for the Emperor and deference towards authority were throughout Japanese society in the Meiji era. A full twenty years before Kōtoku wrote his essay on ‘Socialism and the National Polity’ and Yano Fumio his *Shin Shakai*, the very first political group in Japan which had chosen to call itself socialist had been briefly organised. This was the Tōyō Shakaitō (Oriental Socialist Party) which, as was indicated in [Chapter 2](#), was formed in the Saga/Nagasaki region of south-west Japan on 25 May 1882 and subsequently ordered by the government to disband on 7 July of the same year. In the Tōyō Shakaitō’s case, its plans for ‘socialism’ were based, if not on imperial charity, then at least on the efforts of a former lord of the Nabeshima fief to help impoverished peasants during the final years of the Tokugawa period. Lord Nabeshima was said to have put the lands of the rich at the disposal of poor peasants, free of any charges, and this led Tarui Tōkichi—one of the founders of the Tōyō Shakaitō—to write that Nabeshima’s policy ‘was the first instance of putting socialism into practice in modern times!’<sup>84</sup>

The equating of imperial and aristocratic benevolence with ‘socialism’ was thus well established in the Japanese socialist movement and it continued well beyond the period extending up to the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 which I am concerned with here. To give just one example, it has already been mentioned in [Chapter 2](#) how in 1909 Abe Iso was still referring to the monarchical origins of ‘socialism’ in Japan<sup>85</sup>—and similar claims were to be made even as late as the 1930s. The best that can be said for the socialist movement in Japan is that, under the strain of the war against Russia, and in response to the increasing repression which they suffered, the better elements among the socialists started to perceive the iron fist of the state lurking inside the deceptive softness of the imperial glove. It was exceedingly dangerous to publicly criticise the monarchy but an item which appeared in the English-language column of *Chokugen* (Straight Talking) in March 1905 gave a hint of what some of the socialists were secretly beginning to think by this stage. Under the headline ‘A Lawsuit Between the Imperial Household and the People’, there was a report of a case which had been heard in a district court and which involved land held by the royal family on one of its estates. The article concluded:

It was all nonsense as usual. But the fact—the bare fact of dispute of the Imperial household against the people—means very much in itself. We can not say of this matter more than ‘means very much’.<sup>86</sup>

Presumably, the very fact that this cautiously worded piece appeared in English was significant, since there was less chance of the police grasping its meaning than had it been in Japanese.

Given the views which he had held on the monarchy only a short while before, the impact of the war on Kōtoku Shūsui’s thought was particularly remarkable. Shortly after being released from prison (where he had served five months for offences against the press laws) on 28 July 1905, Kōtoku wrote to the American anarchist Albert Johnson that he wanted to travel abroad. Despite the oddities of the English in which he wrote this letter, Kōtoku’s newly found hostility towards the Emperor was forcefully expressed. One of the reasons he gave for planning to visit the USA was that he wished to ‘criticize freely the position of the (sic) “His Majesty” and the political, economic and institutions (sic) from foreign land where the pernicious hand of “His Majesty” cannot reach’.<sup>87</sup>

Compared to his utterances of only three years before, Kōtoku Shūsui had certainly come a long way by the summer of 1905. Together with some of the other socialists, he had succeeded in shaking off at least one of the most crippling influences from the old society which had been acting on him up till then. The story of what was to happen after he visited the USA belongs to [Part Two](#) of this study.

## NOTES

1. Translated here as Appendix A.
2. Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū (Collected Works of Kotoku Shusui) (Tokyo, 1970), vol. 2, p. 289.
3. Ibid., p. 289.
4. F.G.Notehelfer, Kotoku Shusui: Portrait of a Japanese Radical (Cambridge, 1971), p. 7.

5. Kenneth Strong in his 'Introduction' to Naoe Kinoshita, *Pillar of Fire* (London, 1972), p. 10.
6. Takano Zenichi, *Nihon Shakaishugi no Chichi Abe Isō* (Abe Iso: the Father of Japanese Socialism) (Tokyo, 1970), p. 409.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
9. Arahata Kanson, *Han Taisei o Ikite* (Living My Life Against the System) (Tokyo, 1974), p. 86
10. Takahata Tetsurō (ed.), *Nihon no Kakumei Shisō* (Revolutionary Thought in Japan) (Tokyo, 1970), vol. 5, p. 74.
11. Translated here from Matsuzawa Hiroaki, *Nihon Shakaishugi no Shisō* (Socialist Thought in Japan) (Tokyo, 1973), p. 61.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
13. *Rōdō Sekai*, 15 March 1899, p. 6.
14. *Rōdō Sekai*, 3 April 1901, p. 1.
15. R.Tsunoda et al. (eds.), *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (New York, 1958), p. 441.
16. *Nihon no Kakumei Shisō*, vol. 2, p. 161.
17. *The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi* (Tokyo, 1960), p. 2.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
20. *Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 289.
21. Tsunoda, *Japanese Tradition*, pp. 437–8.

22. Karl Marx, *Capital* (Chicago, 1919), vol. 1, p. 96.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
24. ‘Hence the riddle presented by money is but the riddle presented by commodities; only it now strikes us in its most glaring form.’ (*Ibid.*, pp. 105–6.)
25. *Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū*, vol. 2, pp. 288ff.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 299–300.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 300.
28. Neil Skene Smith, ‘An Introduction to Some Japanese Economic Writings of the 18th Century’ in *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, second series, vol. 11 (1934), p. 84.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
30. Water, fire, wood, metal, soil and grain. Sometimes soil and grain were classified together; sometimes they were classified separately. This gave five or six ‘Essentials’ (‘elements’) accordingly.
31. Smith, ‘Some Japanese Economic Writings’, pp. 84–5.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
33. Shōji Kichinosuke et al. (eds.), *Minshū Undō no Shisō* (Tokyo, 1970).
34. In *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, second series, vol. 16 (1938).
35. ‘In the old days, there was in fact peace of mind in society. Society was happy too.’ (Katayama Sen, *Wa ga Shakaishugi* (Tokyo, 1903), p. 4.)
36. Shōji et al., *Minshū Undo*, p. 284.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

38. Ibid., p. 55.
39. Ibid., p. 65.
40. Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper), 20 December 1903, p. 6.
41. Heimin Shimbun, 3 January 1904, p. 9 and 17 January 1904, p. 5.
42. Undated letter, collected in Shiota Shōbee (ed.), *Kōtoku Shūsui no Nikki to Shokan* (The Diaries and Letters of Kotoku Shusui) (Tokyo, 1965), p. 343.
43. Nishio Yōtarō, *Kōtoku Shūsui* (Tokyo, 1964), p. 13.
44. Heimin Shimbun, 24 January 1904, p. 7.
45. Sakai Kosen (Toshihiko), 'Sensō wa Jinrui no Saidai Zaiaku Nari' ('War Is Humankind's Greatest Crime'), *Shakaishugi* (Socialism), 3 November 1903, p. 1204.
46. Mencius, section Teng Wen Gong, part 1, 3.
47. Heimin Shimbun, 20 December 1903, p. 6.
48. *Rōdō Sekai*, 15 March 1899, p. 6 and 1 April 1899, p. 6.
49. Mencius, section Liang Hui Wang, part 2, 11.
50. Ibid., section Gong Sun Chou, part 1, 6.
51. *Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 165.
52. *Rōdō Sekai*, 1 July 1901, p. 2. I am grateful to Midorikawa Taeko for drawing my attention to the fact that this description of despotic government derives from the Li Ji (section Tan Gong, part 2).
53. Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, p. 8.
54. *Hikari* (Light), 15 December 1906, p. 5.

55. I am grateful to Matsuzawa Hiroaki for pointing out to me that Kōtoku inherited the name Shūsui from his teacher, Nakae Chōmin, who also greatly appreciated Lao-zi and Zhuang-zi.

56. Wada Eitarō was a founder-member of the newspaper printworkers' trade union, the Sei Shin Kai, formed in 1919, and was active in the anarchist trade union movement for many years after that. (See Hagiwara Shintarō, *Nihon Anakizumu Rōdō Undō Shi* (History of the Anarchist Labour Movement in Japan) (Tokyo, 1969), pp. 60, 94, 114, 174.) I interviewed Wada in Tokyo on 28 April 1974.

57. Shirai Shimpei was active in the Kantō Rōdō Kumiai Rengō Kai (Federation of Kanto-district Trade Unions) and in the Kokushoku Seinen Renmei (Black Youth League—black being the traditional colour of the anarchist flag), set up in 1926 and normally referred to as the Kokuren. (See Hagiwara, *Anakizumu Rōdō Undō*, pp. 173 In an interview with Shirai in Tokyo on 29 April 1974, he explained to me that he knew Lao-zi long before he became acquainted with Western anarchist ideas.

58. Zhuang-zi, chapter 11 (Zai You).

59. Lao-zi, chapter 48.

60. *Ibid.*, chapter 17.

61. Zhuang-zi, chapter 12 (Tian Di).

62. For example, as a modern anarchist commentator puts it: 'In the East, anarchism is normally represented by Lao-zi and Zhuang-zi.' (Ōsawa Masamichi, *Anakizumu Shisō Shi* (A History of Anarchist Thought) (Tokyo, 1971), p. 28.)

63. Mencius, section Liang Hui Wang, part 1, 7.

64. Translated here from Matsuzawa, *Nihon Shakaishugi no Shisō*, p. 62.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

66. Examples are legion but see, for example, Abe Iso's *Shakaishugi Ron*

(Socialism) (Tokyo, 1903), p. 7.

67. Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū, vol. 2, p. 155.

68. ‘Lassalle appealed more to Katayama’s romanticism than to his intellect. Many other pioneers in the Japanese social movement were also to be attracted to the German socialist...’ (Hyman Kublin, *Asian Revolutionary* (Princeton, 1964), p.71.)

69. Kōtoku Shūsui, *Rasaaru in Arahata Kanson and Ōta Masao* (eds.), *Meiji Shakaishugi Shiryō Sōsho* (Materials on Meiji Socialism) (Tokyo, 1972), vol. 4, p. 237.

70. Arahata Kanson, *Kanson Jiden* (Kanson’s Autobiography) (Tokyo, 1974), p. 3.

71. Serialised in *Shakaishugi*, 1 December 1920, p. 46.

72. Kimura Tsuyoshi, *Nihon Shakaishugi Shi* (A History of Japanese Socialism) (Tokyo, no date given but probably 1926 or 1927), p. 50.

73. *Shakaishugi*, 18 April 1903, p. 810.

74. Rōdō Sekai, 1 May 1900, p. 8.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

76. Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū, vol. 4, p. 535.

77. Generally translated as ‘national polity’.

78. Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū, vol. 4, p. 532.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 533.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 535.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 535.

82. Ibid., pp. 535–6.

83. Yano Fumio, *Shin Shakai* (Tokyo, 1902), p. 14.

84. Ōkōchi Kazuo, *Reimeiki no Nihon Rōdō Undō* (The Labour Movement in Japan in the Dawn Period) (Tokyo, 1973), p. 30.

85. See Chapter 2, note 1.

86. *Chokugen* (Straight Talking), 12 March 1905, p. 1.

87. Letter to Albert Johnson, 10 August 1905, collected in *Shiota, Nikki to Shokan*, p. 434.

## Chapter 6

# JAPANESE 'SOCIALISM' TO 1905

In this short chapter I shall endeavour to summarise the main points of the discussion so far. In addition, I shall attempt to reach a decision on the nature of 'socialism' as it existed in Japan up till 1905.

It has been shown that this earliest phase in the history of the socialist movement in Japan took place against an economic background the main features of which were a low level of capitalist development and a numerically weak and physically unstable working class. It has also been shown that the socialist thought found in Japan in this period was derived from various sources in the West— principally Russian populism, German social-democracy and the different brands of 'socialism' which were currently popular in a number of English-speaking countries. On the other hand, the ways in which this Western socialist thought was understood by the Japanese socialists depended very much on those traditional influences which continued to act on them as a legacy from the old society of Tokugawa days. Hence it can be said that Japanese 'socialism' was an amalgam of the new and the old, of imported Western and traditional Japanese influences.

By the end of the period extending up to 1905 most socialists in Japan entertained a statist image of 'socialism'. They believed that the way to realise 'socialism' lay through the diet. They also held that socialists must engage in efforts to reform capitalism for as long as that social system lasts. The socialists regarded themselves as an elite and looked upon the working class as an object to be helped, rather than as the subject of a socialist revolution. Christianity had many adherents among the socialists in Japan and this religion coloured many of their attitudes, as also did the philosophy of Confucianism. By 1905 there were signs that some of the socialists had shaken off the illusions they had formerly held about the monarchy. In Japan in the 1880s 'socialism' had tended to be identified with terrorism. Later the influence exerted by the SPD had counter-acted this tendency but, as the Russo-Japanese War drew to a close, there were indications that Kōtoku Shūsui was becoming impressed by the Russian SRs and their tactic of

assassination.

These were the elements from which ‘socialism’ in Japan was made up. Over the years to 1905 groups of socialists formed a number of organisations and also published a variety of journals. The socialist movement remained weak, however. Police estimates that there were 3000 socialists in Japan in 1904<sup>1</sup> were completely unrealistic and were probably deliberately designed to arouse apprehensions. The real figure was more like 200.<sup>2</sup> A majority of these 200 or so appear to have been students<sup>3</sup> and many of the most prominent socialists were journalists. Kinoshita Naoe, Kōtoku Shūsui, Nishikawa Kōjirō and Sakai Toshihiko—to name only the best known—were on the staff of some of the leading newspapers of their day.

Despite the intellectual composition of the movement, there is an important point relating to the socialist movement of this period which needs to be brought out. This is that—at least for some of the socialists like Katayama Sen—the early socialist movement in Japan was a substitute for frustrated trade unionism. The move away from the organisational form of a study circle (the Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai—Society for the Study of Socialism) to a more actively oriented grouping (the Shakaishugi Kyōkai—Socialist Association) coincided with the passing of the ‘public peace police law’ in 1900. Then, the following year, there were two attempts to form a political party (the Shakai Minshutō—Social-Democratic Party—in May 1901 and the Shakai Heimintō—Social Common People’s Party—in June). The ‘public peace police law’ in effect put meaningful trade union activity outside the law and it was significant that Rōdō Sekai (Labour World) should have commented when the law was introduced that the ‘one thing left to the working man to do’ was to ‘carry the battle into the enemy’s camp by changing the labor agitation to the political agitation’.<sup>4</sup> As Katayama put it in later years, ‘There was...more freedom of speech for labor and Socialist politics at public meetings than there was freedom on the subject of trade unions, strikes and the boycott, since the latter were directly concerned with the existing industries of the country.’<sup>5</sup> And again: ‘At the time that propaganda for a pure and simple trade union movement was more and more severely dealt with by the authorities, our labor politics and Socialist agitation had comparative freedom’.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, while on the face of it, it seems little less than absurd that a mere half-dozen socialists should in 1901 have tried to launch an organisation with the grandiose title of the ‘Social-Democratic Party’, it has to be realised that the background to this move was a situation where there was considerable enthusiasm for the idea of fighting the trade union struggle in the political arena. Partly as a result of the efforts of the Rōdō Kumiai Kiseikai (Society for the Promotion of Trade Unions), which had been formed in Tokyo in 1897, trade unions had been organised among certain categories of skilled workers. Engineering workers’ and railway workers’ unions had been established in 1897 and 1898 respectively, and the printing workers had followed suit in 1899. The engineering workers’ union had gone into decline soon after its formation but the railway workers became for a while the heroes of the nascent trade union movement when they carried out a well-coordinated and successful strike in north-east Japan in 1898. Although it came under increasing pressure due to the effect of the ‘public peace police law’, the railway workers’ union battled on until finally it was forcibly disbanded by the government in 1910. What is particularly interesting for us is that there are indications that in 1901 this union had been in touch with the socialists and had promised support, should the attempt to form a political party succeed.<sup>7</sup>

It hardly needs to be added that such trade union support, even had it been forthcoming, would in no way have guaranteed the socialist character of the Shakai Minshutō. Infinitely weaker and less influential than their British counterparts though the embryonic Japanese unions were, they shared the same basic concern for improving the conditions of their members within capitalism—not for doing away with capitalist society. Some writers have placed a great deal of emphasis on the resolution passed at the conference of the railway workers’ union held in the spring of 1901, which called for ‘labour problems to be solved by means of socialism’.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, there is no evidence whatsoever that a sound grasp of socialist principles lay behind this paper commitment of the union to ‘socialism’. Had the Shakai Minshutō not been suppressed by the Japanese government, and had it instead developed with trade union support, there can be no doubt that it would have stood as little chance of becoming socialist as, for example, the Labour Party was to in Britain.

## ‘SOCIALISM’ AS AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF CAPITALISM

This brings me, then, to the vital question of what it was precisely that the ‘socialism’ of this period amounted to.

What I shall argue is that, far from mounting a theoretical assault on capitalism, the socialists in Japan were merely advocating an alternative method of constructing capitalism in that country. Irrespective of what they thought they were doing—and genuinely appalled though they were by many features of the capitalist society that was growing up around them—the option which the socialists presented was not that of a new society which would have been fundamentally different from capitalism. On the contrary, all they could offer by way of an ‘alternative’ to the capitalist policies being pursued by the Meiji governments was an alternative form of the same social system. While it is quite possible that the policies favoured by the socialists might indeed have been relatively more humane than the methods of accumulating capital which in the event were actually put into practice in Japan, it has to be stressed that the end result would have been essentially the same. In other words, quite apart from their excusable inability to organise an effective practical campaign against the development of capitalism in Japan, the socialists failed to pose even a theoretical challenge to the system they imagined themselves to be combating.

What the early socialists disliked most about the particular form of capitalism which they saw being built in the Japan of their days was its feature of *jiyū kyōsō* (free competition). ‘Free competition can only result in economic anarchy’, wrote Kōtoku Shūsui in his *Shakaishugi Shinzui* (The Quintessence of Socialism)<sup>9</sup> and the other socialists echoed this, objecting that it reduced human beings to the level of wild animals. What justifiably disturbed the socialists about ‘free competition’ was the spectacle of the strong preying on the weak but they had no accurate grasp of the mechanics of capitalist exploitation, nor of the Marxist concept of surplus value. Instead, their objection to ‘free competition’ was largely an emotional one. The sight of ‘barbaric free competition and individualism and the weak serving as meat for the strong’<sup>10</sup> repelled them and ‘socialism’ was seen as the remedy for this. As far as it went, this was laudable enough—but it did

not get to the root of what it is about capitalism which compels it, come what may, to function against the interests of the working class. This was because the socialists' denunciation of 'free competition' left untouched the relationship of capital to wage labour which lies at the heart, not just of the 'free enterprise' variety of capitalism, but of any and every form of the capitalist economy.

As an illustration of just how unaware most socialists were of the real significance of wage labour, one can refer to the series of lectures which Abe Isō gave on the subject of 'Wages' at the Kingsley Hall in Tokyo in 1899. Abe's intention—far from being to call the wages system into question—was to help the 'small but earnest (group of) working men' who attended his talks 'in their career as a wage earner'.<sup>11</sup> Abe advised his audience on practical points such as how best to manage their lives on the meagre wages which they received. Food is the highest priority, more essential than even clothing and shelter in preserving one's health, he maintained, and he therefore urged the workers to make sure that they ate well. If you nourish yourselves sufficiently, you will be able to work better, improve and educate yourselves, and hence your wages will naturally rise, he claimed.<sup>12</sup> Needless to say, there was no perspective of socialism—of the abolition of the wages system—in such remarks at all.

Yano Fumio seemed, at first glance, to be taking a more radical stance on the question of wages than those like Abe Isō when he outlined a blueprint for payment to be in kind in his book *Shin Shakai* (The New Society).<sup>13</sup> Yet far from there being anything novel about this aspect of his supposedly 'new society', what Yano was really betraying here was an attachment to the values and institutions of the old society that were already in the process of being abandoned. Yano wanted the bulk of people's wages to be supplied in kind (as food, clothing and shelter) and only a portion (for incidental expenses) to be paid in the form of money. This had precious little to do with the vision of a genuinely new society, based on the principle of free and unrestricted access to articles of consumption, which socialism represented. Rather, Yano was hearking back to the system which had been common among those who had worked for wages in Tokugawa days, when food, clothing and shelter (of a sort) had normally been supplied as part of people's wages. Far from being inspired by any kind of vision of the future, Yano

displayed a lingering nostalgia for the miserable ‘security’ which the archaic wages system of the Tokugawa period had provided—and presented this as ‘socialism’.

The socialists committed a fatal theoretical error when they incorporated wages in any form into their presentation of ‘socialism’. This was because it is wages themselves which signify the continuation of capitalism. The existence of a class of working men and women who, in order to obtain the means of life, are forced to sell as a commodity their ability to work is the very hallmark of capitalism and, once the socialists had introduced wages into their discussions of ‘socialism’, all the other features of capitalism necessarily followed. Thus, even when it came to ‘free competition’, there was a flaw in the socialists’ logic. Although they thought they could overcome competition by the nationalisation measures which they advocated, at most all the socialists could have achieved—had they been able to put those measures into effect—would have been to have shifted the problem to a higher (and more intense) sphere. Instead of having individual entrepreneurs and rival companies competing to sell their goods within Japan, the socialists would have brought all competition to the pitch of united blocs of nationally integrated capital confronting each other and struggling for advantage at the level of the world markets.

The socialists themselves did not often think out their schemes for reorganising society to the point where this type of contradiction became obvious, but here again Yano Fumio’s book-length exposition of the ‘new society’ is revealing. One of the ideas Yano floated in *Shin Shakai* was that wage rates would need to be regulated internationally.<sup>14</sup> Only by enforcing equal rates of pay throughout the world, argued Yano, could the situation be avoided where one country would be able to undercut others by producing commodities more cheaply. He still feared, however, that it would prove impracticable to impose the same wage rates as applied in Western Europe on undeveloped countries such as China or India. Hence it would be necessary for the ‘advanced’ countries (these were to include Japan) to raise tariff barriers against China, India and so on, since the latter had vast supplies of cheap labour power with which to manufacture cut-price commodities.

There was, in fact, a chain reaction involved in this whole line of reasoning.

Having first accepted labour power as a commodity which was to be bought and sold for wages, the socialists were led to accept generalised commodity production. And once production of commodities for sale on the world markets had been countenanced, it was only a step further to depicting—as Yano did—a group of ‘advanced’ countries in league against more ‘backward’ nations. Rail though the socialists might against the horrors of ‘free competition’, even the undoubted sincerity of their criticisms could not save them from drawing patently capitalist conclusions such as Yano Fumio’s. It is true that few of the other socialists in Japan actually spelt out the implications of their theory as frankly as did Shin Shakai but Katayama Sen believed that Yano had ‘work(ed) out the problems of modern socialism thoroughly’<sup>15</sup> and even Kōtoku Shūsui, despite his reservations, wrote that Yano’s policies, if adopted, would make ‘our (sic) Japan in truth the most advanced socialist country in the world’.<sup>16</sup>

In fact, had Yano’s recommendations been adopted, they would have converted Japan not into a ‘socialist country’ (imagining, for a moment, such a contradiction in terms to be possible) at all, but rather into an early model of the kind of state capitalist economy which we have since become familiar with in Russia and elsewhere. At the end of the day, it was state capitalism—and not socialism—which the young socialist movement in Japan had its sights set on. Undeniably sincere and even talented though many of the early Japanese socialists were, they were not able to raise ‘socialism’ to the level where it could have begun to offer a serious challenge to capitalism. This was the case not only in the sphere of concrete political struggle against the forces of the state, but even in the realm of theory and social thought.

## NOTES

1. Heimin Shimbun (Common People’s Newspaper), 28 August 1904, p. 1 (English column).
2. Heimin Shimbun, 12 June 1904, p. 1 (English column).
3. Heimin Shimbun, 28 August 1904, p. 1 (English column).
4. Rōdō Sekai, 1 March 1900, p. 8 (English column).

5. Sen Katayama, *The Labor Movement in Japan* (Chicago, 1918), p. 60.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 62–3.
7. Kimura Tsuyoshi, *Nihon Shakaishugi Shi* (A History of Japanese Socialism) (Tokyo, no date given but probably 1926 or 1927), p. 55.
8. Hagiwara Shintaro, *Nihon Anakizumu Rōdō Undō Shi* (History of the Anarchist Labour Movement in Japan) (Tokyo, 1969), p. 13.
9. *Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū* (Collected Works of Kotoku Shusui) (Tokyo, 1968), vol. 4, p. 478.
10. *Rōdō Sekai*, 1 February 1899, pp. 3–4.
11. Katayama Sen in the English-language columns of *Rōdō Sekai*, 15 December 1899, p. 10.
12. *Rōdō Sekai*, 15 April 1900, pp. 3–4.
13. Yano Fumio, *Shin Shakai* (Tokyo, 1902), pp. 251–3.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 261–8.
15. Katayama, *Labor Movement*, p. 76. Katayama added: ‘He (Yano) showed the most skill in picturing the transition stage from the present capitalist state to a socialist state (sic), adjust(ing) admirably every phase of society and international relations under socialism.’ (p. 77.)
16. *Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū*, vol. 4, p. 101.

## **Part Two**

# **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 July-September 1918. [Table 7.1](#) demonstrates this further development of capitalism by listing the same economic indicators for 1906–18 as were presented in [Table 1.1](#) 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 1906–18 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 7.1](#), 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 ¥511.5 million 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 million 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 7.1](#) 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 more than 1.4 million by

### [Table 7.1: Economic Indicators, 1906–18](#)

1918, the working class remained dwarfed by the peasantry. With a population of 54.7 million in 1918,<sup>1</sup> 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 1906–18. 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 ten 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 1906–18 remained fundamentally unaltered from the earlier period extending up to 1905. Most workers maintained close ties with families living in the countryside and [table 7.2](#) 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 1906–18 (i.e. 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 found in all factories.<sup>2</sup> 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 held by the

### [Table 7.2: Male and Female Factory Workers, 1906–18](#)

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 five 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.<sup>3</sup> 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’.<sup>4</sup> Félicien Challaye also gave details of rest periods 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.<sup>5</sup>

Challaye confirmed the observations of Saitō Kashirō, who had visited a factory in mid-summer where young girl workers of less than twelve years of age were working drenched in sweat in a temperature of 111°F.<sup>6</sup> 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’.<sup>7</sup> 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<sup>8</sup> along with them and set them to work.

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<sup>9</sup> and generally one set of bedding was issued to every two workers, who would use it alternately on the day 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.’<sup>10</sup> The food served to dormitory workers was invariably inadequate too. 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) 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).’<sup>11</sup> 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.’<sup>12</sup> [Table 7.3](#) compares the national average 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 two consecutive years working in the mills,<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> And on the rare occasions when they

### [Table 7.3: Female Death Rates](#)

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.<sup>15</sup> 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 'public peace police law', which remained on the statute books throughout the period 1906–18, 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 ship-building yard) put it in 1914:

he who pays wages is allowed to assume something of the mental attitude of the lord—not in a despotic but in a protectoral<sup>16</sup> sense—toward those who receive them.

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 Yūaikai (Friendship Society), which was formed by Suzuki Bunji and others in 1912. The Yūaikai 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.<sup>17</sup>

## **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 7.4](#) gives the annual figures for the number of labour disputes which occurred between 1906 and 1918, and for the number of workers involved in those disputes. Compared to the earliest period for which figures are available (1897–1905),<sup>18</sup> when there were on average 18 disputes each year, the annual average for the period 1906–18 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 1906–18 there was an enormous variation in the incidence of labour disputes. For the whole of 1910 there were no more than ten 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 1906–18. Even during the peak years of 1917 and 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

#### [Table 7.4: Labour Disputes, 1906–18](#)

a better position to fight back against their employers than were many other

workers.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> They also resisted the increase in unemployment which the downturn in the economy following the war brought with it. Hikari estimated in December 1905 that there would soon be 800,000 unemployed in Japan.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup>

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 Tokyo, Kure and Osaka 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 to 7 February 1906 and again was over a demand 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 to 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 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 Tokyo 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.<sup>23</sup> 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 Tokyo 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.<sup>24</sup>

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.<sup>25</sup>

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 Osaka 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 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.<sup>26</sup> Ashio was an important mine situated approximately 100 kilometres to the north of Tokyo 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 copper,<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> 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 despatched to the mine to quell the rioting 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 arrested<sup>29</sup> and when company officials were eventually able to calculate the damage they found that 116 buildings had been destroyed.<sup>30</sup>

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 Osaka 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.<sup>31</sup> 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 three 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 three days of rioting totalled some ¥2 million,<sup>32</sup> since they had coordinated their attacks with 'a most orderly and military precision using a skillful (sic) tactics!'<sup>33</sup> 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 effect 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 Ashio<sup>34</sup> but there was no question of them having instigated the disturbances at the mine and when Nishikawa Kōjirō went from Tokyo to report on the struggle for the short-lived socialist daily newspaper *Heimin Shimbun* (Common People's Newspaper)<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup>

Yet, although the outbreak of violence at Ashio, Besshi and elsewhere probably took the socialists in Japan as much by surprise as 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.<sup>37</sup> 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 Dozen 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 struggle.<sup>38</sup>

The *Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun* 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.<sup>39</sup>

The socialists grouped around the *Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun* 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 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 five years (1914–18) Japanese shipping companies doubled their naval tonnage from 1.5 million tons to over 3 million tons, while their freighting incomes showed a staggering increase from under ¥40 million in 1914 to more than ¥450 million in 1918.<sup>40</sup> 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<sup>41</sup> they were 47 per cent greater.

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 7.5](#) shows average daily wage rates for different categories of workers over the period 1906–18. As can be seen from this table, there was an average increase in nominal wages of 45 per cent during the five years 1914–18. 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 five years. Although the figures presented in [Table 7.6](#) may not be totally accurate, they do give some indication of how the prices of goods varied from year to year. The Tokyo 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 Tokyo showed a 73 per cent increase during 1916–18. What needs to be noted

[Table 7.5: Average Daily Wage Rates, 1906–18<sup>a</sup>](#)

[Table 7.6: Prices, 1906-18](#)

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 Tokyo) and retail prices of rice more than doubled during the three years 1916–18. [Table 7.7](#) compares in percentage terms the fluctuations in wage rates, the cost of living (in Tokyo) 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.<sup>42</sup>

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 7.4](#). There was an unprecedented rise in the number of disputes, and in the number of workers involved, during 1917/

1918. Even the Yūaikai trade union federation, whose founding platform sounded ‘like the pledge of a Sunday School club’,<sup>43</sup> 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 ‘public peace police law’, the Yūaikai had a membership running into tens of thousands by the end of the First World War.<sup>44</sup> 83 per cent of all labour disputes which occurred in 1917/1918 centred on wage demands<sup>45</sup> and, as before, the greatest militancy 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 Osaka Ironworks. In 1918 there were strikes at the shipyard in Uruga (near Tokyo) 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 7.8](#) 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 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 during the closing years of the First World War.

[Table 7.7: Fluctuations in Wage Rates, Cost of Living and Retail Price of Rice, 1914–18<sup>a</sup>](#)

[Table 7.8: Outcome of Labour Disputes, 1914–18](#)

## **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 July-September 1918 made the insurrections at Ashio and Besshi eleven years before seem like storms in a teacup. The strikes and riots of 1917/1918 once more demonstrated to the socialists 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 Osaka:

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.<sup>46</sup>

The rice riots started in Toyama prefecture, which faces the Sea of Japan, as a protest by fisher-women against the price of rice. Inspired by the women's action, protests and demonstrations spread throughout more than thirty prefectures over the next  $1\frac{1}{2}$  months and took in many of the major cities in Japan, including Kōbe, Kyoto, Nagoya, Osaka and Tokyo. It is difficult to estimate with any confidence the numbers who took part in the riots, but certainly many hundreds of thousands were involved.<sup>47</sup> 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.<sup>48</sup> The authorities reacted with great ferocity, not a few of those

convicted of fire-raising receiving death sentences, for example. More than one hundred demonstrators were killed in the course of the riots themselves.<sup>49</sup>

The bald statistics alone cannot possibly convey the impact which the rice riots had on many of the socialists. In Osaka on 12 August 1918 it actually seemed 'as though a revolution had really come'.<sup>50</sup> On the same day in Kōbe a gigantic crowd of some 50,000<sup>51</sup> 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.<sup>52</sup>

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 two days, troops being used to crush the demonstrations.

The great rice riots of July-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 Mitsubishi contributed millions of yen towards relief work, started various charity schemes, and even opened some of their privately owned parks to the public.<sup>53</sup> All of these moves were gestures to placate a still young working class which had actually done little more than flex its muscles. 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 ideas from abroad might well have been able to exert far less influence than they did on socialist thought in Japan.

## NOTES

1. Japan Statistical Research Institute, *Nihon Keizai Tōkei Shū* (Collected Statistics of the Japanese Economy) (Tokyo, 1968), p. 6.
2. 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 Takahashi Kamekichi, *Meiji Taishō Sangyō Hattatsu Shi* (History of Industrial Development in the Meiji and Taisho Eras) (Tokyo, 1966), pp. 555–6. 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.
3. Félicien Challaye, *Le Mouvement Ouvrier au Japon* (Paris, 1921), p. 38.
4. Kikuye Yamakawa, 'Woman in Modern Japan', *Shakaishugi Kenkyū* (The Study of Socialism), March 1922, p. 15 (English columns).
5. Challaye, *Mouvement Ouvrier*, p. 39.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

7. Kikuye Yamakawa, 'Woman in Modern Japan', *Shakaishugi Kenkyū*, March 1922, p. 16.
8. Challaye, *Mouvement Ouvrier*, p. 51.
9. 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.
10. Kikuye Yamakawa, 'Woman in Modern Japan', *Shakaishugi Kenkyū*, April 1922, p. 17.
11. Kikuye Yamakawa, 'Woman in Modern Japan', *Shakaishugi Kenkyū*, March 1922, p. 16.
12. Kikuye Yamakawa, 'Woman in Modern Japan', *Shakaishugi Kenkyū*, April 1922, p. 18.
13. Kikuye Yamakawa, 'Woman in Modern Japan', *Shakaishugi Kenkyū*, March 1922, p. 16.
14. Ōkōchi Kazuo (in his *Reimeiki no Nihon Rōdō Undō* (The Labour Movement in Japan in the Dawn Period) (Tokyo, 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.
15. 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 twelve 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 for women. (*Hikari*, 15 October 1906, p. 6. See also the English-language article 'A Big Meeting of Workingmen (sic)' in *Hikari*, 5 October 1906, p.1.)
16. Naoichi Masao (ed.), *Japan to America* (New York and London, 1914), p. 105.
17. Arahata Kanson, 'Rōdō Undō no Fukkōki' ('The Period When the

Labour Movement Was Revived’) in *Arahata Kanson Chosaku Shū* (Collected Works of Arahata Kanson) (Tokyo, 1976), vol. 2, p. 15.

18. See Table 1.3.

19. 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. (Ōkōchi, *Reimeiki*, p. 214.)

20. In August 1907 *Shakai Shimbun* (Social News) claimed that, over the previous five years, wages in Tokyo 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*, 18 August 1907, p. 1 (English column).)

21. *Hikari*, 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).

22. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

23. George M. Wilson, *Radical Nationalist in Japan: Kita Ikki 1883–1937* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), pp. 17–18.

24. Challaye, *Mouvement Ouvrier*, p. 67.

25. Sakai Toshihiko, *Nihon Shakaishugi Undō Shōshi* (A Short History of the Socialist Movement in Japan). Serialised in *Shakaishugi* (Socialism), 1 July 1921, p. 36.

26. See, for example, *Hikari*, 25 October 1906, p. 5.

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

28. *Heimin Shimbun* (Common People’s Newspaper), 9 February 1907, p. 3 (English column).

29. Of the more than 300 miners arrested, 73 were later found guilty of various crimes by the courts. (Hagiwara Shintarō, *Nihon Anakizumu Rōdō Undō Shi* (History of the Anarchist Labour Movement in Japan) (Tokyo, 1969), pp. 29–30.
30. Akamatsu Katsumaro, *Nihon Shakai Undō Shi* (History of the Social Movement in Japan) (Tokyo, 1974) p. 119.
31. *Shakai Shimbun*, 16 June 1907, p. 1 (English column).
32. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 1 (English column).
34. Included in a list of members of the *Nippon Shakaitō* (Socialist Party of Japan) published in *Hikari* were four socialists from Ashio. (*Hikari*, 25 September 1906, p. 7.)
35. This was a different newspaper from the weekly journal of the same name which was frequently referred to in earlier chapters.
36. Challaye, *Mouvement Ouvrier*, pp. 59–60.
37. Yamakawa Hitoshi, ‘*Besshi Dozan Sōjō Jiken no Kyōkun*’ (‘Lessons of the Riot at Besshi Copper Mine’), *Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun*, 15 June 1907, p. 13.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
39. *Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun*, 1 July 1907, p. 1.
40. Allen, *Economic History*, p. 98.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
42. Akamatsu Katsumaro gives the indices for wages and prices ‘in the major cities throughout the country’ from 1912–18 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, *Shakai Undō*, pp. 138–9.)

43. Iwao F. Ayusawa, *A History of Labor in Modern Japan* (Honolulu, 1966), p. 99.

44. Sakai Toshihiko claimed in 1917 that the *Yūaikai* had 60,000 members ('Ueberblick über die sozialistische Bewegung in Japan bis 1917', *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 16 (1921), p. 154). Most later writers estimate the *Yūaikai*'s membership as being far fewer. Ōkochi Kazuo says it had 27,000 members in March 1917 (Ōkochi Kazuo, *Kurai Tanima no Rōdō Undō* (The Labour Movement in the Dark Valley) (Tokyo, 1973), p. 7). Sumiya Mikio gives a figure of 30,000 for 1919 (M. Sumiya, *Social Impact of Industrialization in Japan* (Tokyo, 1963), p. 158).

45. Hagiwara, Anakizumu Rōdō Undō, p. 103.
46. Nabeyama Sadachika, Watashi wa Kyosantō o Suteta (I Abandoned the Communist Party) (Tokyo, 1949), p. 31.
47. My own estimate of the minimum number who took part in the riots is 650,000 nationally, and 75,000 in a major centre such as Osaka. (Based on tentative figures in Aoki Kōji, Taishō Nōmin Sōjō Shiryō Nenpyō (Historical Records and Chronology of Peasant Disturbances in the Taisho Era) (Tokyo, 1977), vol. 1, pp. 899–945.) Some contemporary Japanese socialists estimated that many more people than this were involved. Ii Kei suggested that 236,000 people took part in the riots in Osaka alone, and perhaps 10 million in Japan as a whole. (Ii Kei, 'The Struggles of the People in Recent Japan', Shakaishugi Kenkyū, October 1921, p. 13 (English columns).)
48. Hagiwara Shintarō, Anakizumu Undō Nenpyō (Chronological Table of the Anarchist Movement) (Tokyo, 1970), p. 26.
49. George M. Beckmann and Okubo Genji, The Japanese Communist Party, 1922–1945 (Stanford, 1969), p. 17.
50. Ii Kei, 'Struggles of the People', p. 12.
51. Akainatsu, Shakai Undo, p. 152.
52. Ii Kei, 'Struggles of the People', p. 12.
53. Akainatsu, Shakai Undo, p. 154.

## 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.<sup>1</sup> It is not even absolutely certain whether Johnson was himself an anarchist, 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 Workshops*,<sup>2</sup> as well as a picture of Kropotkin<sup>3</sup> and his address in Britain, where he lived in exile.<sup>4</sup> 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 learn many things of the evil of government and the good of Anarchy from it.'<sup>5</sup>

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' and as a 'poison'<sup>6</sup> and, in typical social-democratic style, he had tended to carelessly identify all anarchists with terrorists.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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 to 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'.<sup>9</sup> 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 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'.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup>

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'.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup>

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 six months were to involve Kōtoku in a ceaseless round of meetings and discussions with different sections of the 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 Kōtoku's 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 Tokyo on 28 June 1906 to welcome him back to Japan.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

Given Kōtoku's stature within the socialist movement in Japan,<sup>16</sup> 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 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.<sup>17</sup> 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'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 1905<sup>18</sup> and was soon visiting the local branch of the SPA and sitting in on its discussions.<sup>19</sup> On 6 January 1906 Kōtoku spoke at 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'.<sup>20</sup> By 20 January 1906 a letter from Kōtoku had appeared in *Hikari* (Light) which explained that he had now joined the SPA.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup>

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 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.<sup>23</sup> 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 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, 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:

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.<sup>24</sup> We also ask the American Socialist Party to acquaint us with its opinion as to this question.<sup>25</sup>

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 90,000–100,000<sup>26</sup> 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 USA,<sup>27</sup> an article in the Heimin Shimbun in February 1907 indicated that a reply had still not been received from the American party.<sup>28</sup> 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.’<sup>29</sup>

By the end of March 1907 a further article in the 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.<sup>30</sup>

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’.<sup>31</sup> 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’.<sup>32</sup> Although its resolution was rejected at Stuttgart, the National Executive Committee of the SPA soon reaffirmed its racist 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'.<sup>33</sup> Among those who voted for this resolution was Ernest 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.'<sup>34</sup>

Anti-Asian resolutions were again passed by the SPA national congress in 1910 and its national convention in 1912.<sup>35</sup> 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 which Kōtoku and others sent to the SPA<sup>36</sup> 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'.<sup>37</sup> 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 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 attempting to win converts for their own party, and certainly most politically inclined Japanese immigrants in the USA appear to have had 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.<sup>38</sup> Described by Hikari 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 Japan<sup>39</sup> and contributed ¥10 of his own money in April 1906.<sup>40</sup> When Kōtoku called at the headquarters of the SLP in San Francisco on 19 February 1906,<sup>41</sup> the members of the SLP with whom he talked evidently knew Leopold Fleischmann.<sup>42</sup> As far as one can tell from the letter which Kōtoku wrote to Hikari about this visit, his discussions 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'). 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, 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.<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup> 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.<sup>45</sup>

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 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... 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 (l)anguage, 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 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 argue patiently and tactfully 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*<sup>46</sup> and nothing came of her overture to the group around Kakumei.

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* 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.’<sup>47</sup> 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, 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.<sup>48</sup>

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 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 racist 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.<sup>49</sup> 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 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.<sup>50</sup> 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'.<sup>51</sup> 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 the public schools'<sup>52</sup> 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'.<sup>53</sup>

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 *Chokugen* (Straight Talking) on 27 August 1905,<sup>54</sup> 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.'<sup>55</sup> 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 loss this chance.<sup>56</sup>

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 their meetings.<sup>57</sup> 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).<sup>58</sup> 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.<sup>59</sup> It seems probable that by the 'World Labour League' Oka meant the IWW. Also, the Kakumei group are said to have aided the IWW in translating some of its publications into Japanese.<sup>60</sup>

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. George Speed insisted that the IWW already had its hands full, without devoting its energy to the additional massive task of attempting to bridge the language barrier and unionise workers from Japan.<sup>61</sup> 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, 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.<sup>62</sup>

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.<sup>63</sup>

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 he.
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.<sup>64</sup>

Japanese and Chinese Exclusion...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.<sup>65</sup>

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.'<sup>66</sup> Interviewed in 1974, the old anarchist Wada Eitaro 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.<sup>67</sup> 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 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 from among themselves and

not the proceeds of a mass campaign, as they had originally intended.<sup>68</sup>

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',<sup>69</sup> 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'.<sup>70</sup>

In the speech on 'The Tide of the World Revolutionary Movement' which he made in Tokyo 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'.<sup>71</sup> The IWW must have figured prominently among 'the comrades in Europe and America' whom 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 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.<sup>72</sup>

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 USA<sup>73</sup> 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 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.<sup>74</sup> Two years later he again thanked Johnson for a copy of the Firebrand, an American anarchist publication which Emma Goldman mentioned in her autobiography<sup>75</sup> and which Kōtoku rated as 'a very good magazine'.<sup>76</sup> Another letter which Kōtoku wrote after the Kakumei 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.<sup>77</sup>

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.<sup>78</sup> Mother Earth became one of the most popular anarchist journals from abroad in Japan and was eagerly read by socialists who understood English.<sup>79</sup> Material from it was translated into Japanese<sup>80</sup> 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.<sup>81</sup> 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.<sup>82</sup> 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 Hoffman,<sup>83</sup> 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*.<sup>84</sup> 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 another,<sup>85</sup> but many 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.<sup>86</sup> 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.'<sup>87</sup> Six days later 'Mrs Fritz came and argued strongly for assassinating politicians.'<sup>88</sup>

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 paradises had been created amid the ruins of San Francisco.’<sup>89</sup>

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’<sup>90</sup>), 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 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’.<sup>91</sup> 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.<sup>92</sup> What is known is that while in California Kōtoku lectured to the local Japanese socialists on Peter Kropotkin’s *The State: Its Historic Role*.<sup>93</sup> 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 the USA became oriented towards anarchism.<sup>94</sup>

## **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.<sup>95</sup> 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 on 1 June 1906 to found the Shakai Kakumeitō (Social-Revolutionary Party).<sup>96</sup> They adopted a programme, framed by Kōtoku,<sup>97</sup> 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.<sup>98</sup>

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.<sup>99</sup> 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 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 leaf-lets 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 leaf-lets and the seamen's union much appreciated this act of solidarity by the Shakai Kakumeitō.<sup>100</sup>

When the first issue of the short-lived journal Kakumei appeared in Berkeley in California in December 1906, it announced itself as the 'Central Organ' of the Shakai Kakumeitō.<sup>101</sup> 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, which 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'.<sup>102</sup> 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.<sup>103</sup> 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'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.<sup>104</sup> 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.<sup>105</sup>

Conversely, 'reformism and the parliamentary policy' were 'like trying to

fight a raging fire with a child's water pistol'.<sup>106</sup> Kakumei was prepared to qualify this in countries such as the USA where there was universal suffrage,<sup>107</sup> 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'.<sup>108</sup> 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'.<sup>109</sup>

Yet, for all their paper threats and blood-thirsty 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 Japan<sup>110</sup> and (through its consulate) saw to it that no Japanese printer in the USA would handle the group's material.<sup>111</sup> From the second issue, although the Kakumei group still managed to get its English-language articles printed,<sup>112</sup> 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 press,<sup>113</sup> 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'!<sup>114</sup> 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.<sup>115</sup> The leaflet was entitled *Ansatsushugi* ('The Terrorism')<sup>116</sup> and is said to have been translated into English, French and German and widely distributed.<sup>117</sup> The Japanese version carried an English heading: 'An Open Letter to Mutsuhito the Emperor of Japan from Anarchists-Terrorists'.<sup>118</sup> 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*, 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,<sup>119</sup> 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 details of *Ansatsushugi* to the government in Japan, and the main effect of the document was simply to increase the paranoia of the authorities.<sup>120</sup> 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 Young*<sup>121</sup> and his pamphlet on *The State: Its Historic Role*.<sup>122</sup> The notion of the *Shakai Kakumeitō* 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 eleven 'martyrs' who had been executed by the Japanese state in January 1911.<sup>123</sup>

For many 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* group, for example, eventually found life in the USA unendurable and returned to Japan in May 1913.<sup>124</sup> Other members of the group, such as Takenouchi Tetsugorō and Kuramochi Zensaburō, remained in the USA but were lost to the socialist movement.<sup>125</sup> The American connection was thus increasingly eroded, and certainly Kōtoku's dream of turning the USA into the Japanese socialists' Switzerland was never realised.<sup>126</sup> 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 which the Japanese socialist movement would take during one of the most critical periods of its history.

## NOTES

1. Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), *Zaibei Shakaishugisha Museifushugisha Enkaku* (History of the Socialists and Anarchists Resident in America) (Tokyo, 1964), p. 19.

2. Letter to Albert Johnson, 10 August 1905, collected in Shiota Shōbee (ed.), *Kōtoku Shūsui no Nikki to Shokan* (The Diaries and Letters of Kotoku Shusui) (Tokyo, 1965), p. 433.
3. Letter to Albert Johnson, 25 November 1904, collected in *ibid.*, p. 430.
4. Letter to Albert Johnson, 30 December 1904, collected in *ibid.*, p. 431.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 435–6.
6. ‘Museifutō no Seizō’ (‘The Making of Anarchists’) in *Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū* (Collected Works of Kotoku Shusui) (Tokyo, 1968), vol. 3, pp. 324–5.
7. ‘Museifutō ni tai Suru no Saku’ (‘Measures Against the Anarchists’) in *Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū*, vol. 2, pp. 386–94.
8. ‘Shakaishugi to Seifu’ (‘Socialism and the Government’) in *Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū*, vol. 4, p.132.
9. Shiota, *Nikki to Shokan*, p. 433.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 433–4.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 396.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 131–2.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
14. *Hikari* (Light), 5 July 1906, p. 1.
15. *Heimin Shimbun*, 5 February 1907, p. 1. (This article is translated as Appendix B.)
16. Sakai Toshihiko wrote in the English-language columns of *Shakaishugi Kenkyū* (The Study of Socialism, 1 July 1906, p. 80): ‘Comrade Kotoku is coming back from San Francisco. He is the greatest figure of our socialist movement.’

17. Hikari, 20 January 1906, p. 6.
18. Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, p. 136.
19. Hikari, 20 January 1906, p. 6.
20. Hikari, 20 February 1906, p. 2.
21. Hikari, 20 January 1906, p. 6.
22. Hikari, 5 February 1906, p. 2.
23. Hikari, 20 April 1906, p. 4.
24. The Japanese version of this letter makes it clear that by ‘International Laborers’ Union’ the writers meant ‘international workers’ solidarity’ (bankoku rōdōsha danketsu).
25. Hikari, 15 December 1906, p. 1.
26. Shakai Shimbun (Social News), 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 (Yamato Ichihashi, Japanese in the United States (New York, 1969), p. 64).
27. Ira Kipnis, The American Socialist Movement 1897–1912 (New York, 1968), p. 277.
28. Heimin Shimbun, 13 February 1907, p. 2.
29. Ibid., p. 2.
30. Heimin Shimbun, 31 March 1907, p. 1.
31. Kipnis, American Socialist Movement, p.277.
32. Ibid., p. 277.
33. Ibid., pp. 278–9.

34. Ibid., p. 280.
35. Marc Karson, *American Labor Unions and Politics, 1900–1918* (Carbondale, 1958), pp. 188–9.
36. Kipnis, *American Socialist Movement*, p.277.
37. Karson, *American Labor Unions*, p. 189.
38. Supplement to *Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū*, vol. 8, p. 6 and F.G.Notehelfer, *Kotoku Shusui: Portrait of a Japanese Radical* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 123.
39. *Hikari*, 20 February 1906, p. 1 (English column).
40. *Hikari*, 20 April 1906, p. 7.
41. Shiota, *Nikki to Shokan*, p. 141.
42. *Hikari*, 5 April 1906, p. 7.
43. Ibid., p. 7.
44. *Kakumei*, 1 April 1907 (English columns). Collected in Suzuki, *Zaibei*, p. 478.
45. By ‘Mongolians’ Olive Johnson apparently meant Japanese, Chinese and Korean immigrants to the USA.
46. Co-authored with Arnold Petersen.
47. *Heimin Shimbun*, 9 February 1907, p. 1.
48. *Nihon Heimin Shimbun*, 5 December 1907, p. 11.
49. Ibid., p. 11.
50. Philip S.Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States* (New York, 1964), vol. 3, p. 270.

51. Ibid., p. 270.
52. Ibid., p. 270.
53. Ibid., p. 276.
54. Chokugen, 27 August 1905, p. 3.
55. P.F.Brissenden, *The I.W.W: a Study of American Syndicalism* (New York, 1957), p. 209.
56. Foner, *History*, vol. 4, p. 70.
57. Hikari, 20 January 1906, p. 6.
58. Hikari, 5 March 1906, p. 2.
59. Shakai Shimbun, 18 August 1907, p. 3.
60. Foner, *History*, vol. 4, p. 82.
61. Brissenden, *The IWW*, pp. 208–9.
62. Kakumei, 1 April 1907 (English columns). Collected in Suzuki, Zaibei, p. 485.
63. Ibid., p. 485.
64. Foner, *History*, vol. 4, p. 82.
65. Ibid., p. 82.
66. Nosaka Sanzō, *Fūsetsu no Ayumi* (Persevering Against Hardship) (Tokyo, 1974), vol. 1, pp. 291–2.
67. Interview with Wada Eitarō on 28 April 1974 in Tokyo.
68. Arahata Kansan Chosaku Shū (Collected Works of Arahata Kansan) (Tokyo, 1976), vol. 2, p. 21.

69. Foner, *History*, vol. 4, p. 142.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
71. *Hikari*, 5 July 1906, p. 1.
72. Foner, *History*, vol. 4, p. 141 (emphasis in original).
73. Shiota, *Nikki to Shokan*, pp. 127–46.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 452.
75. Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* (London, 1932), p. 178.
76. Letter to Albert Johnson, 11 April 1910, collected in Shiota, *Nikki to Shokan*, p. 456.
77. Letter to Albert Johnson, 3 May 1907, collected in Shiota, *Nikki to Shokan*, p. 444.
78. *Hikari*, 20 April 1906, p. 4.
79. Ishikawa Sanshirō, for example, was reading *Mother Earth* in prison in 1907. (*Shakai Shimbun*, 29 September 1907, p. 7.) Arahata Kanson was another who read *Mother Earth*. (See Kōtoku Shūsui's postcard to Arahata, 2 February 1908, collected in Shiota, *Nikki to Shokan*, p. 404.)
80. See, for example, *Nihon Heimin Shimbun*, 20 March 1908, p. 13.
81. *Nihon Heimin Shimbun*, 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. (15 July 1907, p. 11 and 5 November 1907, p. 5.)
83. Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), *Jinbutsu Kenkyū Shiryō* (Historical Research Materials Relating to Individuals) (Tokyo, 1964), vol. 1, p. 220.

84. Letter to Fukuda Eiko, 24 January 1908, collected in Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, pp. 260–2. 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 D.D.Egbert and S.Persons, Socialism and American Life (Princeton, 1952), vol. 2, p. 168.)
85. Hikari, 20 January 1906, p. 6.
86. Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, p. 139.
87. Ibid., p. 136.
88. Ibid., p. 137.
89. Hikari, 20 May 1906, p.6.
90. Suzuki, Zaibei, p. 527.
91. Hikari, 5 April 1906, p. 7.
92. Ibid., p. 7.
93. Supplement to Suzuki, Zaibei (pages unnumbered).
94. Suzuki, Zaibei, pp. 94–5.
95. Hikari, 20 January 1906, p. 6.
96. Hikari, 20 July 1906, p. 7.
97. See Kōtoku's letter to Ishikawa Sanshirō in Shin Kigen (New Era), 10 September 1906, p. 36.
98. Hikari, 20 July 1906, p. 7.
99. The two consular agents were Tatsumi Tetsuo and Kawasaki Minotaro.
100. Hikari, 20 July 1906, p. 7 and 20 August 1906, p. 1 (English column).

101. Suzuki, Zaibei, p. 462 (English columns).

102. Ibid., p. 485 (English columns).

103. Suzuki, Jinbutsu, vol. 2, p. 120.

104. Suzuki, Zaibei, p. 462 (English columns).

105. Ibid., p. 467.

106. Ibid., p. 467.

107. Ibid., p. 470 (English columns).

108. Ibid., p. 470 (English columns).

109. 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) okohaina.' (Heimin Shimbun, 20 January 1907, p. 1 (English columns).)

111. Suzuki, Zaibei, p. 13.

112. According to Kōtoku Shūsui, the English-language material in Kakumei was printed by a publishing company associated with the SPA. (Heimin Shimbun, 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'

(Notehelfer, Kotoku Shusui, p. 139.)

114. Suzuki, Zaibei, p. 24.

115. Although anonymous, Iwasa Sakutarō claimed in later years that this leaflet was the handiwork of Takenouchi Tetsugorō. (Suzuki, Jinbutsu, vol. 2, 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 Hagiwara Shintarō, *Nihon Anakizumu Rōdō Undō Shi* (History of the Anarchist Labour Movement in Japan) (Tokyo, 1969), pp. 32–3.)

116. ‘The Terrorism’ was Ansatsushugi’s own rendering of its title into English.

117. Suzuki, Zaibei, p. 24.

118. Quotations from Ansatsushugi are all taken from the Japanese version as it appears in the supplement to *ibid.* (pages unnumbered).

119. 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.

120. Notehelfer, Kotoku Shusui, pp. 152ff.

121. 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, 15 March 1910, collected in Shiota, *Nikki to Shokan*, 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) (Tokyo, 1963), vol. 5, p. 664.)

122. Suzuki, Zaibei, p. 25.

123. Supplement to *ibid.* (pages unnumbered).

124. Suzuki, Zaibei, p. 28.

125. Ibid., p. 28.

126. Nonetheless, some financial assistance from American sources was received by the socialists in Japan during the difficult years early in the Taishō period. (See *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 16 (1921), p. 152 and *Shakaishugi Kenkyū* (The Study of Socialism), 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 Tokyo launched a new journal in November 1905, they at first considered calling it Denkō (Spark)—in imitation of the Bolshevik-turned-Menshevik organ, Iskra.<sup>1</sup> 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 (i.e. concerning) 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.<sup>2</sup>

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’.<sup>3</sup>

During the time he spent in the USA, Kōtoku Shūsui met a number of Russian revolutionaries living in exile in California, among them Maievsky—who for several months during 1905 published a short-lived magazine known as the Russian Review.<sup>4</sup> 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, ‘the whole of Europe will enter an era of workers’ revolution’.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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 the following month. In addition to quoting the New York Worker on the effects of the Russo-Japanese War,<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup> Kōtoku conceded that there were those who maintained that the revolution in Russia had virtually been subdued, but what they did not realise, he argued, 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 Japan<sup>10</sup> and Japanese socialists urged one another to go 'to the people' in the populist style.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> Yet there was another more modern side 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 countryside,<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> A lead article on Rokoku Kakumei no Keisei (‘The State of the Russian Revolution’), which appeared in the 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.<sup>15</sup>

## 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 passed through Japan as he headed for Western Europe in 1861.<sup>16</sup> 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 ships which plied between Nagasaki and the Asian mainland.<sup>17</sup> Evidently the Volya group also tried to infiltrate its emissaries into Siberia, since the Heimin Shimbun announced in February 1907 that one of Volya’s correspondents had been arrested while engaged in such a mission.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup>

Kutsumi Kesson wrote a profile of one of the Volya group—A.V.Wadezki—in Hikari in May 1906,<sup>20</sup> but the most prominent figure among the Nagasaki Russians was Nicholas Russel.<sup>21</sup> 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 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 1907,<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup>

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, the audience of more than 500 included 25 Russians, who probably represented virtually the entire Russian colony in Nagasaki at the time.<sup>24</sup> Russel contributed an article to the Heimin Shimbun in February 1907,<sup>25</sup> 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 Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review).<sup>26</sup> Kakumei Hyōron was a bimonthly which was published in Tokyo from September 1906 to March 1907 by a group of latter-day shishi who were anxious to foment revolution in China and Russia.<sup>27</sup> 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 terminology<sup>28</sup> with denials that it stood for socialism,<sup>29</sup> 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.’<sup>30</sup>

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.’<sup>31</sup> 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 that 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.<sup>32</sup>

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 sweep 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 sooner or no later, it will inevitably come (ab)out in reality.

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 Jozef Klemens Pilsudski, the leader of the Polish Socialist Party and future ruler of Poland. Jozef 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.<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup> During his time in Japan he established contacts with the Christian socialists who published *Shin Kigen* (New Era)<sup>36</sup> and with the Kakumei Hyōron group.<sup>37</sup> 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 four hours, enquiring about their 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.<sup>38</sup> Whether anything ever came of these plans it is impossible to say, although an item which appeared in the *Heimin Shimbun* the following year did report that Bronislas Pilsudski had returned to Krakow in Poland.<sup>39</sup>

Grigorii Gershuni, who escaped from Siberia to Japan in November 1906, was once described by Victor Chernov as ‘perhaps the greatest revolutionary of all’.<sup>40</sup> 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 journals,<sup>41</sup> while Kakumei Hyōron published his photograph and several articles relating to him.<sup>42</sup> A meeting was also arranged on the evening of 15 November 1906 between Gershuni, members of the Kakumei Hyōron group and 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.<sup>43</sup>

Gershuni must have been surprised by the naivety of some of the questions which were put to him at this meeting.<sup>44</sup> 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 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.<sup>45</sup> 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 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.<sup>46</sup>

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 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 nature of his passage through Japan, Gershuni's visit in 1906 was still being recalled by Japanese socialists several years later.<sup>47</sup>

## 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<sup>48</sup> and he was unstinting in his praise of 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 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 had not been led astray by the illusory promise of constitutional politics, claimed Kōtoku.<sup>49</sup>

Throughout the years which followed, this admiration felt by many socialists in Japan for the Russian SRs was never entirely eroded. On the out-break of the First World War, an anarchist like Ōsugi Sakae still felt enough sympathy for the SRs to write in an article Ōshu no Tairan to Shakaishugisha no Taido ('The Upheaval in Europe and the Attitude of the Socialists') that 'the heroic Russian Social-Revolutionary Party will certainly not let this opportunity (for revolutionary action provided by the war) pass by'.<sup>50</sup> Yet, although the SRs were never entirely written off by Kōtoku and others in the way in which they came totally to 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. 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 in February 1907 and has already been referred to.<sup>51</sup> The lesson which this article drew from the insurrection of 1905 was that, if all the various forces opposed to tsarism had 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, 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 Shimbun 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.'<sup>52</sup>

## **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 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 had published a set of six 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.<sup>53</sup> By the following year Kōtoku Shūsui had twice read the copy of Kropotkin’s Fields, Factories and Workshops which Albert Johnson had sent him<sup>54</sup> and Yamaguchi Koken was referring to Kropotkin with great respect. In the issue of Kaben 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.<sup>55</sup> 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 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.<sup>56</sup> This was accompanied by Kutsumi Kesson’s piece on Kuropotokin no Tokushoku (Kropotkin’s Characteristics)<sup>57</sup>—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.<sup>58</sup>

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'.<sup>59</sup> 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 tell us a great deal about Kōtoku's political development at that time. Kōtoku did see to it, however, that after he had returned to Japan Kropotkin's reply was published in Japanese translation in Hikari 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 on libertarian propaganda. 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.<sup>60</sup>

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 on anarchism to study.<sup>61</sup> 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* 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”’,<sup>62</sup> 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 that 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.’<sup>63</sup>

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 1907,<sup>64</sup> 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 translation of Chapter 13 of The Conquest of Bread (‘The Wages System’) was serialised in the first five issues of the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (later renamed translate [Chapter 11](#) (‘Free Agreement’) in January the Nihon Heimin Shimbun) and Ōsugi started to 1908, but was arrested after only two instalments had appeared.<sup>65</sup> Eventually, in 1909, a translation of the whole book was completed and one thousand 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 Jiyu Shiso (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)’.<sup>66</sup> 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 one thousand 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 sixty years.<sup>67</sup>

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 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'.<sup>68</sup> 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* 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 Tolstoyan's advice amazes me.<sup>69</sup>

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. 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) 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 plundering of the people is carried to an extreme.<sup>70</sup>

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'.<sup>71</sup> At their best, the most perceptive of the Japanese socialists followed Kropotkin here. 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* 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'.<sup>72</sup>

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 to flourish within the interstices of the local intracommunal society as well.

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 'petty-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.<sup>73</sup>

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:

we must send the land robbers (i.e. the landlords) 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.<sup>74</sup>

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'<sup>75</sup> 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’.<sup>76</sup>

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 criticism 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 Kropotkin,<sup>77</sup> but to argue that ‘Marx always idealised the wages system and taught the need for labour vouchers etc.’<sup>78</sup> was to flagrantly misrepresent Marx’s position. Far from idealising the wages system, Marx had stood for its abolition.<sup>79</sup> 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 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’.<sup>80</sup>

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 which society was then capable of 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 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<sup>81</sup>

What Kōtoku neglected to say was that free baths were a practicable proposition in the Beppu locality just because the town was endowed with 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 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.<sup>82</sup> Kropotkin frequently enclosed in his letters copies of anarchist newspapers and pamphlets and it is clear that an arrangement was made to exchange the *Heimin Shimbun* and the London-based *Freedom*.<sup>83</sup> Kōtoku was sometimes criticised by other socialists in Japan for his habitual use of the title *sensei* ('teacher' or 'master') when referring to Kropotkin,<sup>84</sup> but his admiration and respect for Kropotkin remained undiminished to the last. In his prison cell, prior to his 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) regard as an authority'.<sup>85</sup> 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 never recovered. 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'.<sup>86</sup> 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'.<sup>87</sup> 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, since it falls almost entirely outside 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 Tokyo-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.<sup>88</sup>

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.<sup>89</sup>

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 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.

## NOTES

1. Hikari (Light), 15 November 1906, p. 4.
2. Hikari, 20 August 1906, p. 1.
3. Ibid., p. 1.
4. Hikari, 20 April 1906, p. 4.
5. Hikari, 5 February 1906, p. 2.
6. Hikari, 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.' (Hikari, 20 March 1906, p. 1.)
8. Ibid., p. 1.
9. Ibid., p. 1.
10. Hikari, 20 July 1906, p. 5 and 5 August 1906, p. 4.
11. Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper), 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'.

13. Heimin Shimbun, 2 March 1907, p. 1.

14. Heimin Shimbun, 1 February 1907, p. 1.

15. Heimin Shimbun, 27 February 1907, p. 1.

16. Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review), 5 September 1906, p. 6.

17. Hikari, 20 June 1906, p. 2.

18. Heimin Shimbun, 17 February 1907, p. 2.

19. 'We are told that the explosives Wang Chingwei intended for the Prince Regent in 1909 were made from photographic supplies by the Russians in Nagasaki.' (Marius B.Jansen, *The Japanese and Sun Yat-sen* (Stanford, 1970), p. 124.)

20. Hikari, 5 May 1906, p. 5.

21. Unless otherwise indicated, the following details on Nicholas Russel are taken from the chapter on him in Kimura Tsuyoshi, *Gonin no Kakumeika* (Five Revolutionaries) (Tokyo, 1972), pp. 131–58.

22. Heimin Shimbun, 30 March 1907, p. 3.

23. Tokubetsu Yō Shisatsunin Jōsei Ippan (Outline of the Situation of Persons Requiring Special Observation) (Tokyo, 1962), vol. 4, pp. 302–3.

24. Hikari, 25 November 1906, p. 7.

25. Heimin Shimbun, 13 February 1907, p. 2 and 14 February 1907, p. 2.

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

27. In the introduction to the collected edition of *Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun* and

Kakumei Hyōron (Tokyo Social News and Revolutionary Review) (Tokyo, 1962) Hayashi Shigeru quotes from Kayano Nagatomo's Chuka 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.

28. 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, 5 September 1906, p. 1.

29. Kakumei Hyōron, 20 September 1906, p. 4.

30. Kakumei Hyōron, 25 March 1907, p. 8.

31. Kakumei Hyōron, 20 September 1906, p. 4.

32. Kakumei Hyōron, 5 October 1906, p. 2.

33. Kakumei Hyōron, 10 November 1906, p. 1 (English column).

34. G.D.H.Cole, A History of Socialist Thought (London, 1956), vol. 3, p. 494.

35. There is a chapter on Bronislas Pilsudski in Kimura, Gonin no Kakumeika, pp. 234–67.

36. Shin Kigen, 10 April 1906, p. 23.

37. Suzuki Mosaburo (ed.), Jinhutsu Kenkyū Shiryō (Historical Research Materials Relating to Individuals) (Tokyo, 1966), vol. 2, p. 107.

38. Kaben, 10 March 1906, p. 32.
39. Heimin Shimbun, 29 January 1907, p. 2.
40. Victor Chernov, *The Great Russian Revolution* (New York, 1966), p. 393.
41. See, for example, Hikari, 25 November 1906, p. 1 (English column) and Heimin Shimbun, 15 February 1907, p. 2.
42. Kakumei Hyōron, 25 November 1906, pp. 4–5 and 25 January 1907, pp. 1, 3, 6.
43. Kakumei Hyōron, 25 January 1907, p. 6.
44. The following account of the meeting with Gershuni derives from Kakumei Hyōron, 25 November 1906, pp. 4–5 and 25 January 1907, p. 3.
45. 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'. (Theodore Dan, *The Origins of Bolshevism* (London, 1964), p. 269.)
46. Kakumei Hyōron, 25 January 1907, p. 3.
47. Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought), December 1913, p. 2.
48. See Chapter 2.
49. 'Seitō ni tsuite' ('On Political Parties'), Shin Kigen, 10 September 1906, pp. 35–6.
50. Ōsugi Sakae Zenshu (Collected Works of Ōsugi Sakae) (Tokyo, 1964), additional volume, p. 58.
51. Heimin Shimbun, 27 February 1907, p. 1.

52. Heimin Shimbun, 28 March 1907, p. 1.
53. Heimin Shimbun, 19 June 1904, p. 4; 26 June 1904, p. 5; 25 September 1904, p. 5; 16 October 1904, p. 5.
54. See Chapter 8.
55. Kaben, 10 November 1905, pp. 9, 35.
56. Shakaishugi Kenkyu, 15 April 1906, pp.1–23.
57. Ibid., pp. 30–3.
58. Ibid., p. 53.
59. Letter to Ishikawa Sanshirō, dated 10 May 1907, collected in Shiota Shōbee (ed.), Kōtoku Shūsui no Nikki to Shokan (The Diaries and Letters of Kotoku Shusui) (Tokyo, 1965), p. 246.
60. Hikari, 25 November 1906, p. 3.
61. See, for example, Kōtoku'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, Nikki to Shokan, pp. 259, 407, 411, 415 respectively.
62. Heimin Shimbun, 5 February 1907, p. 1.
63. Heimin Shimbun, 24 March 1907, p. 2.
64. Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, p. 250.
65. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 1 January 1908, pp. 6–7 and 20 January 1908, p. 6.
66. Jiyū Shisō, 25 May 1909, p. 4.
67. Mukai Kō, Yamaga Taiji Hito to Sono Shōgai (Yamaga Taiji: the Man and His Life) (Tokyo, 1974), p. 27.

68. Kakumei Hyōron, 25 February 1907, p. 5.
69. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 20 March 1908, p. 4.
70. Ibid., p. 4.
71. Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (London, 1913), p. 245.
72. Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 1 August 1907, p. 7.
73. Meiji Bunka Shiryō Sōsho (Series on Materials Relating to the Culture of the Meiji Era) (Tokyo, 1960), vol. 5, p. 287.
74. Ibid., p. 294.
75. Ishimaki Kōsei, 'Museifushugi Keizai Ron' ('On Anarchist Economics'), Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 20 December 1907, p. 11.
76. Ishimaki Yoshio, 'Rōdō Setsuyaku no Rinri' ('The Ethics of Labour Saving'), Kumamoto Hyōron, 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. I am grateful to Matsuzawa Hiroaki for confirming this supposition in a personal communication to me.)
77. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 5 December 1907, p.10.
78. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 20 December 1907, p. 11.
79. 'Instead of the conservative motto: "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!" they (the working class) ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword: "Abolition of the wage system!"' (Karl Marx, 'Value, Price and Profit' in Karl Marx, *Selected Works* (London, 1947), vol. 1, p. 275. Emphases in the original.)
80. Karl Marx, 'Critique of the Gotha Programme' in Marx, *Selected Works*, vol. 2, p. 564.
81. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 5 December 1907, p. 5.

82. Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 1 August 1907, p.13.
83. Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 1 July 1907, p. 13.
84. Kumamoto Hyōron, 20 June 1908, p. 12.
85. Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, p. 162.
86. Ōsugi Sakae, 'Iwayuru Shin Gunkokushugi' ('The So-Called New Militarism'), Kindai Shisō, October 1915, p. 24.
87. Kindai Shisō, January 1916, p. 11.
88. Gendai Shi Shiryō (Materials on Modern History) (Tokyo, 1964), vol. 14, p. xxi.
89. Ibid., p. xxi.

## 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 *Chokuen* (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.<sup>1</sup> 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').<sup>2</sup> 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 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'.<sup>3</sup>

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* 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.<sup>4</sup>

Although 'The Change in My Thought' became the best-known statement of Kōtoku's new attitude towards the SPD and its electoral strategy, there were many earlier indications that his ideas were developing along such lines. In the speech which he made at the public meeting held in Tokyo on 28 June 1906 to welcome him back from the USA, Kōtoku 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'.<sup>5</sup> Yet, although some in his audience were quick to note the anarchist implications of Kōtoku's speech,<sup>6</sup> he did not categorically commit himself on this occasion. Two months later, however, Kōtoku was making no attempt to hide his anarchist sympathies<sup>7</sup> and by the end of 1906 he was arguing passionately for direct action. In a letter which he wrote to Hikari 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.'<sup>8</sup> 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 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.<sup>9</sup> Whereas one year earlier he had been prepared 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 incentive for all the European socialist parties to change their policy.<sup>10</sup>

It has already been shown in previous chapters how the ideas which Kōtoku came in 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 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.'<sup>11</sup>

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'.<sup>12</sup> 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.'<sup>13</sup> 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'.<sup>14</sup> Hence Roller believed that not only was the general strike 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?) the social future, but also the embryos of produ(c)tion and reorganization after the death of capitalism.<sup>15</sup>

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 is 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.<sup>16</sup> 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 syndicates (although in Europe many anarchosyndicalist 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’ is required for the revolution nonetheless indicates one of the basic differences between anarcho-syndicalism as it was understood in Japan and in countries such as France.

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 is 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.<sup>17</sup>

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.<sup>18</sup>

Again, this drawing of parallels between ‘strikes’, ‘assassinations’ and ‘violence’ suggests 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.<sup>19</sup>

Once Ōsugi's interest in European anarchop-syndicalism was aroused by Kōtoku, however, he had the considerable advantage over many of his 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 Ōsugi is a young Anarchist student and a best friend of mine.'<sup>20</sup> Kōtoku's 'The Change in My Thought' appeared in the Heimin Shimbun 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 syndicates 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 syndicates. 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.<sup>21</sup>

Ōsugi's long article continued over several issues of the Heimin Shimbun and he examined in some detail the recent conferences of the French, German and Italian social-democratic parties.<sup>22</sup> 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 in the USA in order to suggest that the same trend was at work in that country too.<sup>23</sup> Not only that, but now that Kōtoku's declaration 'The Change in My Thought' had been issued in Tokyo, 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.<sup>24</sup>

Imprisoned on 29 May 1907 for offences against the press laws,<sup>25</sup> he used 5½ months of enforced idleness which followed to read a wide variety of anarchist literature from Europe, including such works of Bakunin, Kropotkin, Elisée 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.<sup>26</sup> While in prison he also found himself reflecting on Lao-tzi 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 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 Lao-tzi's writings the description of a 'tranquil anarchist society'.<sup>27</sup>

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.<sup>28</sup> By December 1907, Kōtoku was recommending those who contacted him for information about anarchism to talk to either Ōsugi or Yamakawa,<sup>29</sup> 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.

Yamakawa expressed his views on the parliamentary strategy of the SPD in a number of articles which were carried in the Heimin Shimbun 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.'<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup> 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 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.<sup>33</sup>

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’<sup>34</sup> with an enduring interest in Marxism and a series of articles on Marx’s Capital which he wrote for the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun between August and October 1907 is worth noting.<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> 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 Shusui was away in the USA and its conference held in Tokyo 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 predecessors,<sup>38</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup> and, when it was seen that the authorities made no move to crush this organisation, Sakai Toshihiko and Fukao Shō announced in their turn that they were launching a Nippon Shakaitō. 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'.<sup>40</sup> Like the Nihon Heimintō, Sakai and Fukao's Nippon Shakaitō 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 was adopted by the new party and its founding conference, attended by 35 delegates, was held in Tokyo 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'.<sup>41</sup>

When more than 60 members of the Nippon Shakaitō assembled in Tokyo a year later on 17 February 1907, they were meeting just ten 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.
- \* 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 public peace police law.

(b) the universal suffrage movement.

(c) the anti-militarist movement.

(d) the secular movement.<sup>42</sup>

The executive committee's resolution represented an attempt to formulate a number of points of general agreement which would bridge the gap between pro- and anti-parliamentarians which was rapidly widening during 1907. 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 insert an additional clause, which would have read:

Our party recognises that a parliamentary policy is an effective method for the movement.<sup>43</sup>

On the other hand, the amendment which Kōtoku put forward sought to delete approval 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.<sup>44</sup>

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.’<sup>45</sup>

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’,<sup>46</sup> 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 illusions entertained by those such as Katayama Sen, who actually thought that parliament and cabinet government would persist within a socialist society.<sup>47</sup> 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.<sup>48</sup>

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 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 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 usually 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.<sup>49</sup>

As with Kōtoku Shūsui and Tazoe Tetsuji, Sakai Toshihiko had also expressed his ideas in print shortly before the conference of the Nippon Shakaitō. 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',<sup>50</sup> Tazoe had said that 'My ideas are almost identical to Comrade Sakai's.'<sup>51</sup> 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 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.'<sup>52</sup> 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. Even Kōtoku was perhaps surprised 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 Yosojiō) 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.<sup>53</sup> As for Tazoe Tetsuji, the mere two 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.<sup>54</sup> Ishikawa Sanshirō had thus been correct when he wrote 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.<sup>55</sup>

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',<sup>56</sup> but it

prosecuted Ishikawa Sanshirō and Fukao Shō for publishing in the Heimin Shimbun 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!<sup>57</sup> Plain-clothes police tails started to shadow the movements of various socialists<sup>58</sup> 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.<sup>59</sup>

## THE WIDENING RIFT

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

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.<sup>60</sup>

By 'our paper' Kōtoku meant the Heimin Shimbun, the daily newspaper which the socialists launched 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 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.<sup>61</sup>

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 many of the younger activists among the socialists were deeply excited by the prospects which they believed were, opened up by this upsurge of the working class. A short article, which also appeared in the issue of the *Heimin Shimbun* for 23 February 1907, suggested that 1907 would be a critical year. Referring to the miners' riot at Ashio in the east of Japan and to the 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'.<sup>62</sup> One week later *Heimin Shimbun* was asserting that Japan had entered 'an era of strikes'<sup>63</sup> and—in view of the wage increases achieved by some workers—'an era of victory for labour'.<sup>64</sup> 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.'<sup>65</sup> 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 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.<sup>66</sup>

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 of the Italian syndicalists against their social-democratic adversaries appeared on 28 February 1907<sup>67</sup> and in a letter which Kōtoku wrote from Kainakura on 10 April 1907 he drew 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.<sup>68</sup>

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.

Katayama Sen had been away in the USA when the conference of the Nippon Shakaitō 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 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.<sup>69</sup>

Five years earlier when Kōtoku Shūsui had written with glowing pride about the kokutai (national polity),<sup>70</sup> 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.<sup>71</sup> But now in 1907, when it was seen that Katayama's 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 'A Word to the Workers' had appeared, a reply signed 'a worker' was published in the Heimin Shimbun 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 rickshaw-man called Morioka Eiji.<sup>72</sup> 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!<sup>73</sup>

Similarly, a letter from a provincial reader in the Heimin Shimbun 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.<sup>74</sup>

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'.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, for Katayama, Kōtoku's

influence had now become ‘a conflicting factor in the socialist movement’.<sup>76</sup> Katayama therefore had little reason to be sorry when the 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, 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’,<sup>77</sup> 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.<sup>78</sup>

Instead of the Tokyo-based Shakai Shimbun, Kōtoku, Yamakawa and the other advocates of direct action looked towards a bi-monthly called the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun which Morichika Umpei started to edit in Ōsaka from 1 June 1907.

The fact that the daily Heimin Shimbun should have been replaced by two separate journals, based in 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.<sup>79</sup> The Shakai Shimbun also carried an article on 21 July 1907 by an anarchist-inclined doctor, Ōishi Seinosuke, who 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.<sup>80</sup>

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.<sup>81</sup> Another example of the will to cooperate was a summer school which was held in Tokyo from 1 to 10 August 1907 and which was made possible by the combined efforts of the whole movement. Classes were held for about three 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'.<sup>82</sup>

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* 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.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, at the *Nippon Shakaitō* conference Sakai had moved a resolution that Katō Tokijirō (a doctor whom Kōtoku described as 'a Social Democrat, or rather Social-Reformer'<sup>84</sup>) should represent the Japanese socialists at the International Congress and this had been accepted unanimously amid applause.<sup>85</sup> An editorial in the first issue of the *Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun* made it clear that the socialists grouped around that paper expected the Stuttgart Congress to produce important new developments,<sup>86</sup> while the *Shakai Shimbun* 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) open for our political activity, at the present time.<sup>87</sup>

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 so vague that virtually everyone could agree with it, and which G.D.H.Cole has described as ‘innocuous’.<sup>88</sup> ‘Innocuous’ or not, the direct actionists in Japan were disappointed at the failure of the social-democratic Congress to provide any convincing answers to the problems which were agitating the Japanese socialist movement, especially 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.<sup>89</sup> 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.<sup>90</sup>

Katayama’s estimate of Hardie was totally at odds with some comments which Sakai Toshihiko had made in the *Shakai Shimbun* 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 Federation (SDF)—Hardie chose to cooperate ‘with antisocialist Labour MPs to organise the

Labour Party'.<sup>91</sup>

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 Tokyo 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 'expoun(d) the aims and principles of socialism' to Count Ōkuma at a longer meeting with that worthy.<sup>92</sup> In addition, Hardie talked to a group of socialists who gathered in Tokyo on 21 August 1907 and spoke for 1½ hours to an audience of 150 at a public meeting in Tokyo 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',<sup>93</sup> whereas it was plain to him that the ILP 'does not have the social revolution as its objective'.<sup>94</sup> 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'.<sup>95</sup> 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.'<sup>96</sup>

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'.<sup>97</sup> 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...<sup>98</sup>

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 Tokyo 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.<sup>99</sup> 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-free socialism (museifuteki shakaishugi).<sup>100</sup>

Both Kōtoku and Sakai identified Hardie’s politics with the stand taken by the group which brought out the *Shakai Shimbun*—and they had good reason to do so.<sup>101</sup> The speech which Hardie made in Tokyo on 22 August 1907 ardently defended the use of parliament by socialists and was printed at length in the *Shakai Shimbun*,<sup>102</sup> 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’.<sup>103</sup> 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.’<sup>104</sup> 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 Tokyo 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).<sup>105</sup>

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 racist 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'.<sup>106</sup> 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 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!'<sup>107</sup>

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 on 8 September 1907:

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, Chokugen and Hikari 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, which we organised last year, and the old Shakaishugi Kyōkai. But this spring, when we came to issue the daily Heimin Shimbun, 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.<sup>108</sup>

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!<sup>109</sup>

In the bitter polemics which now ensued, Katayama's constant refrain was that only he and his supporters had the right to be considered '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.'<sup>110</sup> Conversely, he thought the worst accusation which 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'<sup>111</sup> 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.<sup>112</sup>

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.'<sup>113</sup> Similar expressions of loyalty to the International (and to 'Marxian socialism') appeared regularly in the Shakai Shimbun<sup>114</sup> 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, whenever possible, one or more columns of English-language material in the *Shakai Shimbun* and he wrote frequent letters to the leaders of the SPD and other parties. Any replies which 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.<sup>115</sup> 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* 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*.<sup>116</sup> 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 to Jaurès and the 'soft-liners' within the International. 'We are not revisionists!', he insisted,<sup>117</sup> 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.<sup>118</sup> 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.’<sup>119</sup>

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 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* 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.<sup>120</sup>

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’<sup>121</sup> 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’,<sup>122</sup> 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).’<sup>123</sup>

During the entire period of the Shakai Shimbun's existence from 1907 to 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'.<sup>124</sup>

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.<sup>125</sup>

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, 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.<sup>126</sup>

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.<sup>127</sup>

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 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 group. Katayama and his comrades' 'state socialism' was not socialism at all, insisted the Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper,<sup>128</sup> 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.<sup>129</sup> 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.<sup>130</sup>

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 the *Shakai Shimbun* during 1908. Katayama was adamant that *Shakai Shimbun* should follow a policy of ‘rigid exclusion of anarchists from the group’<sup>131</sup> and, when he tried to enforce this rule against Akaba Hajime, it led in February 1908 to the secession of a majority of the members of the *Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai* in Tokyo, who thereupon set up their own rival newspaper—the *Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun* (Tokyo Social News).<sup>132</sup> 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 seven months it survived during 1908,<sup>133</sup> the political position of Nishikawa personally is 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 Kōtoku 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* on 17 November 1907.<sup>134</sup> 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.<sup>135</sup> 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 explained that he therefore had to choose between losing one friend (Katayama) or many (the majority of the members of the Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai in Tokyo) and that he took the former course.<sup>136</sup> 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 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.<sup>137</sup> 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 which Katayama remained blissfully unaware of.<sup>138</sup> 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. 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'.<sup>139</sup> 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.<sup>140</sup> In Japan, as in Europe,

Tazoe favoured a policy of reforms because only reformism offered any prospects of rapid realisation.<sup>141</sup> 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 eleven of his comrades in 1911. With Tazoe dead and Nishikawa having turned his coat, Katayama struggled on hopelessly but was eventually forced into exile in 1914.

## THE SYNDICALIST FACTION

The opponents of Shakai Shimbun 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 readily admitted that it stood for direct action, but denied that direct action could be equated with anarchism.<sup>142</sup> 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 Tokyo in September 1907 as a rival to Katayama's Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai. To some members of the Kinyō Kai it was important to reject as a 'meaningless resolution' the declaration of loyalty to the Second International which the Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai 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.<sup>143</sup> On the other hand, there were other elements within the syndicalist camp who, instead of disputing the Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai'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 revolutionary<sup>144</sup> 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.<sup>145</sup>

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 subject,<sup>146</sup> 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 (presumably Neue Zeit). 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 larger 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?<sup>147</sup>

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 strictures,<sup>148</sup> 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'<sup>149</sup> and hence were the enemies of the working class.

As the Second International's star waned among those in Japan who were inclined to syndicalism, 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 of documents relating to its discussions occupied many pages of the *Nihon Heimin Shimbun* and *Kumamoto Hyōron* during 1907/1908,<sup>150</sup> 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* 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.<sup>151</sup>

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’.<sup>152</sup> The International itself did not long outlast its short-lived 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:

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.<sup>153</sup>

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 attention to these.<sup>154</sup> 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 was expressed in the jeer that it was ‘a mild Marxian monthly’.<sup>155</sup>

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.<sup>156</sup> He explained something about the differences which divided 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 in February 1908,<sup>157</sup> 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 syndicalists:

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.<sup>158</sup>

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 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.',<sup>159</sup> his reference to the non-existent 'Japanese trade union movement' underlining how sorely in need of reliable information on Japan the European 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, but the Bulletin International did exert some intellectual influence within Japan as Syndicalist ideas spread among the socialists there.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> 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 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.<sup>162</sup> As for the Sanjikirizumu Kenkyū Kai, the organisation and tactics of the syndicalist movement associated with Tom Mann in Britain<sup>163</sup> and, above all, of the French CGT were studied with keen interest at its meetings.<sup>164</sup> 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) on which they could base themselves'.<sup>165</sup> 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.<sup>166</sup>

In sharp contrast to *Shakai Shimbun*'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.<sup>167</sup> 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 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.<sup>168</sup>

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 worker is completed.<sup>169</sup>

One of the theoretically most mature presentations of the syndicalist position during this entire period came in an article by Arahata on Rōdō Kumiai Und Ō 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. 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".'<sup>170</sup> 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<sup>171</sup> advocate, would still be issues which would be bound to arise.<sup>172</sup>

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.<sup>173</sup> 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 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.<sup>174</sup>

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 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.<sup>175</sup>

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’?<sup>176</sup> 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',<sup>177</sup> 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.

## NOTES

1. Hikari, 20 November 1905, p. 5.
2. Hikari, 15 November 1906, p. 1.
3. Hikari, 20 March 1906, p. 1.
4. Heimin Shimbun, 5 February 1907, p. 1.
5. Hikari, 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, 5 July 1906, p. 8 (English column).)
7. Hikari, 5 August 1906, p. 1.
8. Hikari, 15 December 1906, p. 5.

9. 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	% 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

(Jacques Droz (ed.), *Histoire Générale du Socialisme* (Paris, 1974), vol. 2, p. 34.)

10. Kōtoku Shūsui, 'Doitsu Sōsenkyo to Ōshū Shakaitō' ('The German General Election and the European Socialist Parties'), *Heimin Shimbun*, 1 February 1907, p. 1.

11. Akiyama Kiyoshi, *Nihon no Hangyaku Shisō* (The Rebellious Thought of Japan) (Tokyo, 1972), p. 32.

12. Arnold Roller, *The Social General Strike* (Chicago, 1905), p. 16.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

16. Kumamoto Hyōron, 20 March 1908, p. 2.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

18. Letter to Niimi Uichirō, 10 June 1908, collected in Shiota Shōbee (ed.), *Kōtoku Shūsui no Nikki to Shokan* (The Diaries and Letters of Kotoku Shusui) (Tokyo, 1965), p. 410.

19. *Shakaishugi Kenkyū*, 1 August 1906, p. 38.

20. Letter to Albert Johnson, 18 December 1906, collected in Shiota, *Nikki to Shokan*, p. 440.

21. Heimin Shimbun, 6 February 1907, p. 2.
22. The conferences of the French, German and Italian social-democratic parties were dealt with respectively on 7/8 February 1907, pp. 2; 9 February 1907, p. 2; and 10 February 1907, p. 2.
23. Kaneko Kiichi, 'Shikago Dayori' ('Letter from Chicago'), Heimin Shimbun, 9 February 1907, p. 1.
24. Heimin Shimbun, 12 February 1907, p. 2.
25. Ōsugi served  $1\frac{1}{2}$  months for his translation of Kropotkin's An Appeal to the Young, which had appeared in the Heimin Shimbun between 8 and 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 on 25 November 1906.
26. Shakai Shimbun (Social News), 22 September 1907, p. 6.
27. Shakai Shimbun, 25 August 1907, p. 7 and Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 5 September 1907, p. 14.
28. Yamakawa was sentenced to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years imprisonment for insulting the imperial family and was released on parole in June 1904. (Takahata Tetsurō (ed.), Nihon no Kakumei Shisō (Revolutionary Thought in Japan) (Tokyo, 1970), vol. 5, pp. 130–1.)
29. Letter to Yoshikawa Morikuni, 23 December 1907, collected in Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, p. 259.
30. Yamakawa Hitoshi, 'Ōshū no Kakumei Undo' ('The Revolutionary Movement in Europe'), Heimin Shimbun, 1 March 1907, p. 1.
31. Yamakawa Hitoshi, 'Doitsu Shakaitō no Chii' ('The Situation of the German Socialist Party'), Heimin Shimbun, 9 March 1907, p. 1.
32. See Chapter 3.
33. Yamakawa, 'Doitsu Shakaitō no Chii', Heimin Shimbun, 8 March 1907,

p. 1.

34. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 20 December 1907, p. 4.

35. Yamakawa Hitoshi, 'Marukusu no Shihonron' ('Marx's Capital'), Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 20 August 1907–5 October 1907, pp. 6–7.

36. See Kishimoto Eitarō's introduction to the collected edition of the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Tokyo, 1962), p. viii.

37. Asukai Masamichi, 'Meiji Shakaishugi no Kiketsu' ('The Conclusion of Meiji Socialism'), Shisō (Thought), no. 524 (February 1968), p. 277.

38. Commenting on the newly formed Saionji government, the English-language column of Hikari 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, 20 January 1906, p. 1.)

39. Akamatsu Katsumaro, Nihon Shakai Undō Shi (History of the Social Movement in Japan) (Tokyo, 1974), pp. 111–2.

40. Sakai Toshihiko, Nihon Shakaishugi Undō Shōshi (A Short History of the Socialist Movement in Japan). Serialised in Shakaishugi (Socialism), 1 July 1921, p. 38.

41. Hikari, 5 March 1906, p. 6.

42. Heimin Shimbun, 19 February 1907, p. 3.

43. Ibid., p. 3.

44. Ibid., p. 3.

45. Heimin Shimbun, 5 February 1907, p. 1 (Kōtoku's emphasis).

46. Ibid., p. 1.

47. Shakai Shimbun, 14 July 1907, p. 5.
48. Heimin Shimbun, 19 February 1907, p. 2.
49. Heimin Shimbun, 14 February 1907,
50. Sakai Toshihiko, 'Shakaitō Undō no Hōshin' ('The Course of the Socialist Movement'), Heimin Shimbun, 10 February 1907, p. 1.
51. Heimin Shimbun, 14 February 1907, p. 1.
52. Heimin Shimbun, 10 February 1907, p. 1.
53. Heimin Shimbun, 15 February 1907, p. 1.
54. Heimin Shimbun, 19 February 1907, p. 2.
55. Heimin Shimbun, 16 February 1907, p. 1.
56. The revised party rules simply stated that 'This party takes as its objective the realisation of socialism.' (Heimin Shimbun, 19 February 1907, p. 3.) According to Yamakawa Hitoshi, no-one present at the conference objected to this revision of the party rules. (Heimin Shimbun, 20 February 1907, p. 1.)
57. Heimin Shimbun, 21 February 1907, p. 3. and 19 March 1907, p. 2.
58. Heimin Shimbun, 28 February 1907, p. 1.
59. Heimin Shimbun, 23 February 1907, p. 2.
60. Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, p. 441.
61. Heimin Shimbun, 23 February 1907, p. 1.
62. Ibid., p. 2.
63. Heimin Shimbun, 3 March 1907, p. 2.
64. Ibid., p. 2.

65. Heimin Shimbun, 14 April 1907, p. 2.
66. Ibid., p. 2.
67. Heimin Shimbun, 28 February 1907, p. 2.
68. Heimin Shimbun, 12 April 1907, p. 1.
69. Heimin Shimbun, 5 March 1907, p. 1.
70. See Chapter 5.
71. Hikari, 20 May 1906, p. 6.
72. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 20 February 1908, pp. 5, 13.
73. Heimin Shimbun, 7 March 1907, p. 2.
74. Heimin Shimbun, 4 April 1907, p. 3.
75. Sen Katayama, *The Labor Movement in Japan* (Chicago, 1918), p. 116.
76. Ibid., p. 116.
77. Shakai Shimbun, 2 June 1907, p. 5.
78. Letter to Albert Johnson, 28 May 1907, collected in Shiota, *Nikki to Shokan*, p. 446.
79. Shakai Shimbun, 21 July 1907, p. 7.
80. Ibid., p. 4.
81. Shakai Shimbun, 28 July 1907, p. 1.
82. Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 20 August 1907, p. 7 (English column).
83. Heimin Shimbun, 19 February 1907, p. 2.
84. Letter to Albert Johnson, 6 December 1907, collected in Shiota, *Nikki to*

Shokan, p. 450.

85. Heimin Shimbun, 19 February 1907, p. 3.

86. Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 1 June 1907, p. 1.

87. Shakai Shimbun, 7 July 1907, p. 1 (supplement.)

88. G.D.H.Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought* (London, 1956), vol. 3, p. 73.

89. Shakai Shimbun, 6 October 1907, p. 1. (See also Shakai Shimbun, 15 September 1909, p. 5.)

90. Shakai Shimbun, 18 August 1907, p. 1 (English column).

91. Shakai Shimbun, 7 July 1907, p. 4.

92. Shakai Shimbun, 1 September 1907, p. 1 (English column).

93. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

94. Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 5 September 1907, p. 3.

95. Shakai Shimbun, 1 September 1907, p. 3.

96. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

97. Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 5 September 1907, p. 8.

98. Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 20 September 1907, p. 2.

99. Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 5 September 1907, p. 8.

100. *Ibid.*, p. 8. (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.)

101. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 5 November 1907, p. 11.

102. Shakai Shimbun, 1 September 1907, p. 4.

103. Ibid., p. 1.

104. Shakai Shimbun, 25 August 1907, p. 3.

105. Ibid., p. 3.

106. K.O.Morgan, Keir Hardie (London, 1975), p. 189.

107. ‘Hādē Shi no Nihonjin Haiseki Ron’ (‘Mr Hardie’s Argument for Expelling Japanese’), Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 20 September 1907, p. 2.

108. Shakai Shimbun, 8 September 1907, p. 1.

109. Shakai Shimbun, 15 September 1907, p. 1.

110. Ibid., p. 4.

111. Shakai Shimbun, 10 November 1907, p. 1 (English column).

112. Shakai Shimbun, 25 May 1908, p. 2.

113. Shakai Shimbun, 10 November 1907, p. 5. (Katayama’s slightly inaccurate rendering of this resolution into English appears on p. 1.)

114. ‘The principles which we members of the International advocate are Marxian socialism and are scientifically based.’ (Katayama Sen, ‘Shakaishugi no Honryo’ (‘The Real Character of Socialism’), Shakai Shimbun, 15 March 1909, p. 1.)

115. Shakai Shimbun, 1 March 1908, p. 3.

116. Sakai seems to have first made this classification of the Japanese

socialists at a meeting of the Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai held on 16 June 1907. (See Shakai Shimbun, 23 June 1907, p. 3 and 15 September 1907, p. 4. Also Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 5 November 1907, p. 10.) Sakai was still making a broadly similar classification 7 years later. (See Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought), September 1914, pp. 2–4.)

117. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 5 November 1907, p. 10.

118. Shakai Shimbun, 15 September 1907, p. 2.

119. Shakai Shimbun, 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 Kikue and Sakisaka Itsurō (eds.), Yamakawa Hitoshi Jiden (Yamakawa Hitoshi’s Autobiography) 1970), pp. 283–4.)

120. Shakai Shimbun, 8 September 1907, p. 5.

121. Shakai Shimbun, 3 August 1911, p. 2.

122. Katayama Sen, ‘Shakaishugi no Katsu Rekishi’ (‘The living history of Socialism’), Shakai Shimbun, 15 November 1909, p. 1.

123. Shakai Shimbun 15 November 1910, p. 1.

124. Shakai Shimbun 15 January 1911, p. 1.

125. Shakai Shimbun, 10 November 1908, p. 8.

126. Ibid., p. 8.

127. Ibid., p. 8.

128. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 20 January 1908, p. 2.
129. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 5 February 1908, p. 11.
130. Letter to Takashima Beihō, 15 March 1908, collected in Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, p. 268.
131. See the document signed by Katayama Sen, Tazoe Tetsuji and Shiratori Takeshi on 14 March 1908. (Shakai Shimbun 15 March 1908, p. 1.)
132. According to Akaba Hajime, 25 out of 30 members of the Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai in Tokyo met at Nishikawa Kōjirō's house on 16 February 1908 and unanimously resolved to expel Katayama. (Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun, 15 March 1908, p. 4.)
133. The paper's motto read: 'We take socialism as our woof and chivalry as our warp'!
134. Shakai Shimbun, 17 November 1907, pp. 4–5.
135. Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun, 15 March 1908, p. 5.
136. Ibid., p. 5.
137. Shakai Shimbun, 27 October 1907, p. 4.
138. Shakai Shimbun, 15 September 1907, p. 5.
139. Shakai Shimbun, 27 October 1907, p. 4.
140. Ibid., p. 4.
141. Tazoe's commitment to reformism is well stated in his Kinsei Shakaishugi Shi (History of Modern Socialism), collected in Kishimoto Eitarō (ed.), Nihon Shakai Undō Shisō Shi (History of the Thought of the Japanese Social Movement) (Tokyo, 1971), vol. 5. See especially pp. 257–63.

142. ‘There are two parties of socialists in Japan, one maintains Direct-actionism and the other Parliamentaryism (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, 5 October 1907, p. 7 (English column).)
143. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 5 December 1907, p. 7 (English column).
144. Sakamoto Kassui (Seima), ‘Gikai ni Iku no Hitsuyō Aru ka’ (‘Is There a Need to Go to Parliament?’), Kumamoto Hyōron, 20 June 1908, p. 6.
145. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 5 November 1907, p. 12.
146. Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 5 October 1907, p. 1.
147. Kindai Shisō, December 1915, p. 13.
148. Ōsugi Sakae, ‘Sensō ni tai suru Sensō’ (‘The War Against the War’). Collected in Ōsugi Sakae Zenshū (Collected Works of Osugi Sakae) (Tokyo, 1964), additional volume, pp. 68–9. (This article first appeared in the Heimin Shimbun, 15 October 1914.)
149. Ibid., p. 71.
150. See, for example, Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 20 December 1907, pp. 6–7; 5 March 1908, pp. 8–9; 20 March 1908, pp. 8–9; 5 April 1908, p. 8 and Kumamoto Hyōron, 5 December 1907, pp. 2, 7; 20 December 1907, p. 7; 1 January 1908, p. 9; 20 January 1908, pp. 2, 7; 5 February 1908, p. 6; 20 February 1908, p. 6; 5 March 1908, p. 6.
151. Nihon Heimin. Shimbun, 20 March 1908, p. 9.
152. George Woodcock, Anarchism (London, 1963), p. 251. (Woodcock claims (p. 249) that Japan was represented at the Amsterdam conference, but this was not so.)
153. Jiyū Shisō, 25 May 1909, p. 2.
154. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 5 April 1908, p. 8.

155. Jiya Shisō, 25 May 1909, p. 4 (English column).
156. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 5 April 1908, p. 8.
157. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 5 February 1908, pp. 6–7 and 20 February 1908, pp. 6–7.
158. Ōsugi Sakae Zenshu, additional volume, p. 84.
159. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 20 April 1908, p. 11.
160. See, for example, Kindai Shisō, June 1914, pp. 2–3.
161. 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.
162. As Ōsugi put it, Kindai Shisō ‘disseminated among young students revolutionary ideas under a scientific, literary and philosophical form’. (Ōsugi Sakae Zenshū, vol. 4, p. 19 (Esperanto section).) It was largely the same young intellectuals who frequented the meetings of the Sanjikirizumu Kenkyū Kai: ‘the workers were still totally unconscious and those who attended were principally literary youths’. (Rōdō Undō (Labour Movement), February 1924, p. 4 (Esperanto section).)
163. Arahata Kanson Chosaku Shū (Collected Works of Arahata Kanson) (Tokyo, 1976), vol. 2, pp. 90–4.
164. See Arahata Kanson’s commentary on the reprinted edition of Kindai Shisō (Tokyo, 1963), vol. 5, p. 3.
165. Ōsugi Sakae, ‘Rōdō Undō to Kojinshugi’ (‘The Labour Movement and Individualism’), Kindai Shisō, December 1915, p. 7.
166. Ōsugi Sakae, ‘Beruguson to Soreru’ (‘Bergson and Sorel’) in Ōsugi Sakae Zenshū, vol. 1, pp. 408–11 and Arahata Kanson, ‘Roku Zasshi Bekken’ (‘A Glance at Six Magazines’), Kindai Shisō, October 1913, p. 31.
167. ‘In Japan, the conditions of workers are very bad, especially those who

(are) hired by the greatest capitalist, the Government.’ (Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 20 March 1908, p. 7 (English column).)

168. Arahata Kanson, ‘Boku Jishin’ (‘I Myself’), Kindai Shisō, February 1914, p. 17.

169. Arahata Kanson, ‘Rōdō Undō to Seiji’ (‘The Labour Movement and Politics’) in Arahata Kanson Chosaku Shū, vol. 2, p. 99. (This article first appeared in the Heimin Shimbun, 15 December 1914.)

170. Ibid., p. 116.

171. ‘new trade unionist’ was a synonym for ‘syndicalist’.

172. Arahata Kanson Chosaku Shū, vol. 2, p. 124.

173. Arahata Kanson, Kanson Jiden (Kanson’s Autobiography) (Tokyo, 1974), vol. 1, p. 222.

174. Ōsugi Sakae, ‘Sei no Sozo’ (‘The Creation of Life’), Kindai Shisō, January 1914, p. 5.

175. Ōsugi, ‘Rōdō Undō to Kojinshugi’, p. 4.

176. Arahata, ‘Roku Zasshi Bekken’, p. 31.

177. Arahata, ‘Boku Jishin’, 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!<sup>1</sup>

In Part One 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 '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, 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, Ishikawa Sanshiro, Abe Isō, Kinoshita Naoe and their supporters started to publish from 10 November 1905 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.

The rivalry between these two journals was sometimes presented as though it were a case of a 'materialist'<sup>2</sup> (or even a 'Marxist'<sup>3</sup>) faction grouped around Hikari opposed to the Christian Socialism of Shin Kigen. Yet, in fact, the differences between the two factions were less clearly cut than this. Shin Kigen certainly preached that Christianity and 'socialism' were inseparable—that, while 'Socialism is materialistic Christianity', 'Christianity is spiritualistic socialism'.<sup>4</sup> 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'.<sup>5</sup> 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 is not enough. Individuals too have to be changed and only religion, it believed, could achieve this.<sup>6</sup>

For its part, Hikari stood for the separation of religion and politics. Sakai Toshihiko's position was representative when he wrote in Hikari in an article on Kirisutokyo ni tai suru Yo no Taido ('My Attitude Towards Christianity') that religion is 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.<sup>7</sup> As well as insisting that religion should be left to each individual and not intruded into the political arena, Hikari also differed from Shin Kigen with regard to the gusto with which it attacked established religion. While Shin Kigen went little further than urging a change of heart on its coreligionists, Hikari 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 Kyokai ('The Christian Churches Which Curry Favour with the Military'), Fugū 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').<sup>8</sup> 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 might have been the attacks launched by Hikari on Christianity, 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 denouncing the Christian clergy in Japan as 'intellectual prostitutes',<sup>9</sup> still wrote in Hikari about 'Humanity's first socialist and the representative of the common people, Jesus of Nazareth'.<sup>10</sup> To take another example, in the paper's first editorial, Hikari declared that 'we do not necessarily look upon literature, morality and religion as being entirely useless'.<sup>11</sup>

The fact that the rivalry between Shin Kigen and Hikari was 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 Shimbun in January 1907. When the two journals first appeared, Hikari rather patronisingly acknowledged Shin Kigen'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.<sup>12</sup>

Hikari's own version of 'socialism' was 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',<sup>13</sup> but it nevertheless felt that what distinguished it from the other groups in Japan which claimed to be 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 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.<sup>14</sup>

Although Yamaji Aizan declared '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.<sup>15</sup> 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* in June 1906, Sakai Toshihiko polemized against Yamaji Aizan and his *Kokka Shakaitō*, as he also did against Ishikawa Sanshirō and the journal *Shin Kigen*. 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 directed at a political opponent, whereas Sakai conceded that *Hikari*'s differences with *Shin Kigen* 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.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps the furthest that the contributors to *Hikari* went in distancing themselves from *Shin Kigen* 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'.<sup>17</sup> Nine months later, however, when the decisions were taken to discontinue both *Hikari* and *Shin Kigen* so that the 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 in conflict till then, they were 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.<sup>18</sup>

*Hikari* and *Shin Kigen* sunk such differences as they had in order to bring the daily *Heimin Shimbun* into existence, whereas the *Kokka Shakaitō* 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 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 over 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 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 in a little more detail the ideas of some of those who were associated with Shin Kigen.

## JAPANESE CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM

The socialists who were grouped around Shin Kigen 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.<sup>19</sup> 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').<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the religious twists which were given to even the most mundane 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.<sup>21</sup> It was no mere figure of speech when Ishikawa Sanshirō talked about 'taking up the cross and propagating socialism'<sup>22</sup> and some of Shin Kigen's statements have to be read to be believed. One, under the title Kanto 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.<sup>23</sup>

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’.<sup>24</sup>

As for the Christian Socialists:

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!<sup>25</sup>

It was small wonder that those socialists who were associated with Hikari, even though by no means all of them totally dismissed religion, were still unable to stomach Shin Kigen’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 answer, left the group organised around Shin Kigen and dropped out of political activity altogether in the summer of 1906.<sup>26</sup> 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 Tokyo in May 1905<sup>27</sup> 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 Shakai<sup>ō</sup> and by July 1906 he had withdrawn from the socialist movement and taken himself off to the Ikaho mountains to the north-west of Tokyo to live the life of a recluse. Although he returned to Tokyo 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 been due to his dismay at what he regarded as the Japanese people's lack of idealistic fervour.<sup>28</sup> A sense of frustration, resulting from the general 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 did 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 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 1905,<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> Abe Is<sup>ō</sup>, 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. Although he contributed the occasional article to the daily Heimin Shimbun, and subsequently to the Shakai Shimbun too, it was sport which he mainly turned to for many years after 1906. The principal debt which the working class incurred to Abe Is<sup>ō</sup> was the pioneering work he did 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—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 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.<sup>31</sup> His broader argument, directed at all political parties in general, asserted that the party form of organisation was useless for the purpose of rousing the 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 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'.<sup>32</sup> In later years, Ishikawa admitted that his position during the Shin Kigen 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.<sup>33</sup>

Ishikawa's Christian beliefs were decisive in determining his views on social classes. He rejected the approach of the Hikari faction and claimed that in Shin Kigen he 'advocated a...theory of class struggle which was opposed to the Marxist theory of class struggle'.<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup>

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'.<sup>36</sup> 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 13 months of imprisonment, he studied the Bible daily,<sup>37</sup> 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.<sup>38</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup> 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, Elisée Reclus). Ishikawa did not leave Europe to return to Japan until 1920.<sup>40</sup>

## **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).<sup>41</sup> 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 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.<sup>42</sup> 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 to 7 February 1907 and by 8 February an article in the Heimin Shimbun was already carrying the headline Hakugai Kitaru ('Persecution Has Come'). As the Heimin Shimbun explained, Nishikawa Kōjirō (who had been despatched 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.<sup>43</sup> When the Heimin Shimbun ceased publication and was followed by the Shakai Shimbun 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) ...prosecution. Eleven of them (are) in prison awaiting for the trial.<sup>44</sup>

As it turned out, this was only a foretaste of what was to come. As well as the Shakai Shimbun, print after the Heimin Shimbun had disappeared, but several other socialist journals struggled into 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). The employers are glad to do so and order the 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. 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.<sup>45</sup>

In spite of Shakai Shimbun'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 until August 1911, when 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 founded 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 gave 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.<sup>46</sup> 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 okujō 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. 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, nine socialists received prison sentences of up to 2½ 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 was given a term of 3¼ years.<sup>47</sup>

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.<sup>48</sup> 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 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.<sup>49</sup> 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.<sup>50</sup>

In another letter, written in English to Albert Johnson on 11 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.<sup>51</sup>

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 Tokyo gradually lost their jobs and their houses. All were threatened by hunger.<sup>52</sup>

The police openly boasted that, when it came to controlling the socialist

movement, they did not consider themselves bound by the Constitution<sup>53</sup> 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’.<sup>54</sup> After the government ordered the dissolution of the Nippon Shakaitō 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 (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’.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, the Heimin Kyokai (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.<sup>56</sup>

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.

## **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.<sup>57</sup>

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.'<sup>58</sup> 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?<sup>59</sup>

When would-be terrorists did emerge from the socialists' ranks during the period 1908–10, they were motivated by various considerations. 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.<sup>60</sup>

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.<sup>61</sup> 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.<sup>62</sup> In the document *Gokuchū yori Boryoku Kakumei o 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 continue for another 3 to 5 years and assumed a condition where those who had starved to death were strewn along the waysides',<sup>63</sup> 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.<sup>64</sup>

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.<sup>65</sup>

Elitism and desperation thus combined to produce what Arahata Kanson has called 'the individual terrorism or putschism of Kanno and others'.<sup>66</sup>

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.<sup>67</sup> 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.'<sup>68</sup> Arrested in May 1909, Uchiyama was found to be in possession of bomb-making equipment and was sentenced to twelve years' hard labour.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Shigeki maintained that even Kōtoku held this view, 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<sup>71</sup> proviso) that it did not seek to oppress others.

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 Kemuriyama Sentarō's work Kinsei Museifushugi (Modern Anarchism) which was published in 1902. The Russian populists had themselves practised regicide but 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 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 the realisation of a socialist society would remain impossible as long as the people stood in awe of the monarchy. 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.<sup>72</sup>

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 Toru 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*, 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 Tokyo 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 Heishiro, Niimi Uichiro, 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 by left-wing commentators in Japan since the Second World War 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 indisputable,<sup>73</sup> 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 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.<sup>74</sup> Kanno as good as admitted the involvement of herself and four or five 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. <sup>75</sup>

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, 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. <sup>76</sup> 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 sentence and execution 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. <sup>77</sup>

Between the two extremes represented by Kanno and Morichika, there is a greyer area into which those such as Kōtoku fall. Kōtoku's case 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. <sup>78</sup> In this respect, a letter he wrote to Niimi Uichiro 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 is different from a mere political revolution, in that 'it is a revolution of the vast majority of the people (jinmin dai tasū no kakumei)'. <sup>79</sup> 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 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... 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<sup>80</sup> out by the common people themselves.

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.<sup>81</sup> 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'.<sup>82</sup> 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 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.<sup>83</sup>

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 ensnared and, at the same time, reject violence too...’<sup>84</sup> 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’.<sup>85</sup>

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 1908–10. 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 de-politicised and withdrawing from activity, those who were inclined to terrorism exposed not only themselves but the entire movement to a 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’.<sup>86</sup> 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.<sup>87</sup> Akaba Hajime, who was jailed for having published *Nōmin no Fukuin*, died in Chiba prison on 1 March 1912 from what the authorities called ‘stomach disease’.<sup>88</sup> It was claimed that he had

been on hunger strike.<sup>89</sup>

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 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.<sup>90</sup> 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.<sup>91</sup>

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’.<sup>92</sup> 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.’<sup>93</sup> 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.

## NOTES

1. Letter to Albert Johnson, 18 December 1906, collected in Shiota Shōbee

(ed.), *Kōtoku Shūsui no Nikki to Shokan* (The Diaries and Letters of Kotoku Shusui) (Tokyo, 1965), pp. 440–1.

2. Shin Kigen, 10 November 1905, p. 15.

3. Hikari, 20 November 1905, p. 5.

4. Shin Kigen, 10 August 1906, p. 21.

5. Shin Kigen, 10 November 1905, p. 4.

6. Shin Kigen, 10 March 1906, p. 5.

7. Hikari, 5 September 1906, p. 6.

8. Hikari, 20 August 1906, p. 2.

9. Hikari, 20 December 1905, p. 3.

10. Hikari, 5 December 1905, p. 1.

11. Hikari, 20 November 1905, p. 1 (emphasis added).

12. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

13. Hikari, 20 June 1906, p. 1 (English column).

14. Itoya Hisao and Kishimoto Eitarō (eds.), *Nihon Shakai Undō Shisō Shi* (History of the Thought of the Japanese Social Movement) (Tokyo, 1971), vol. 2, p. 424.

15. Yamaji Aizan, ‘Genji no Shakai Mondai oyobi Shakaishugisha’ (‘Today’s Social Problems and Socialists’) in *ibid.*, p. 388.

16. Hikari, 5 June 1906, pp. 1, 6.

17. Hikari, 20 January 1906, p. 7.

18. Hikari, 25 October 1906, p. 1.

19. Shin Kigen, 10 March 1906, p. 5.
20. Shin Kigen, 10 February 1906, p. 42.
21. Shin Kigen, 10 August 1906, p. 8.
22. Ibid., p. 21.
23. Shin Kigen, 10 November 1905, p. 1 (English columns).
24. Ibid., p. 1.
25. Ibid., p. 2.
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 until 10 October 1906, pp. 17–20.
27. See Chapter 3.
28. See Matsuzawa Hiroaki, *Nihon Shakaishugi no Shisō* (Socialist Thought in Japan) (Tokyo, 1973), p. 68.
29. Shin Kigen, 10 December 1905, pp. 29–31.
30. Shin Kigen, 10 May 1906, p. 34.
31. Shin Kigen, 10 August 1906, p. 19.
32. Ibid., p. 20.
33. Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Nihon Museifushugi no Yurai' ('The Origins of Anarchism in Japan') in Ōshima Eisaburō, *Nihon Museifushugi Undo Shi* (History of the Anarchist Movement in Japan) (Isezaki, 1970), part 1, p. 9.
34. Ibid., p. 11.
35. Shin Kigen, 10 May 1906, pp. 4–5.

36. Shin Kigen, 10 July 1906, p. 39.
37. See the letter from Ishikawa published in Shakai Shimbun, 2 June 1907, p. 8.
38. For Ishikawa's views on Kropotkin, see the letters from him published in Shakai Shimbun on 2 June 1907, p. 8; 16 June 1907, p. 7; and 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, Nikki to Shokan, pp. 276–7.)
39. 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 Chushichi Tsuzuki, "My Dear Sanshiro": Edward Carpenter and His Japanese Disciple', Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies, November 1972, p. 5.)
40. Ibid., p. 8.
41. Ōsawa Masamichi, Anakizumu Shisō Shi (A History of Anarchist Thought) (Tokyo, 1971), p. 201.
42. 'Ōshū Kakumei no Taisei' ('The General Situation of the European Revolution'), Kakumei Hyōron, 5 September 1906, p. 2.
43. Heimin Shimbun, 8 February 1907, pp. 2, 3.
44. Shakai Shimbun, 2 June 1907, p. 1.
45. 'Intimidation the Way of Oppressing Socialist Movement', Shakai Shimbun, 26 April 1908, p. 1.
46. S.J.Katayama, 'Russianized Police System For Socialists!', Shakai Shimbun, 15 June 1908, p. 6 (English columns).
47. Arahata Kanson, Kanson Jiden (Kanson's Autobiography) (Tokyo, 1974), vol. 1, pp. 162ff.
48. R.H.Mitchell, Thought Control in Prewar Japan (London, 1976), pp. 24–5.

49. Letter to Matsumoto Sugako, 14 February 1909, collected in Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, p. 291.
50. F.G.Notehelfer, Kotoku Shusui: Portrait of a Japanese Radical (Cambridge, 1971), p. 174 (note).
51. Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, p. 456.
52. Akiyama Kiyoshi, Nihon no Hangyaku Shisō (The Rebellious Thought of Japan) (Tokyo, 1972),
53. Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 1 August 1907, p. 7 p. 37. (English column).
54. Ishikawa Kyokuzan (Sanshirō) and Kōtoku Shūsui, Nihon Shakaishugi Shi (A History of Japanese Socialism) in Meiji Bunka Zenshū (Collected Works on the Culture of the Meiji Era) (Tokyo, 1929), vol. 21, p. 370. (See also Heimin Shimbun, 14 April 1907, p. 2 (English column).)
55. Shakai Shimbun, 30 June 1907, p. 2; 7 July 1907, p. 1 (English column); 10 November 1907, p. 5.
56. Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 5 February 1908, p. 11.
57. Arahata Kanson, Yanaka Mura Metsubō Shi (A History of the Destruction of Yanaka Village) (Tokyo, 1907), p. 111.
58. Letter to Albert Johnson, 6 December 1907, collected in Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, pp. 449–50.
59. Postcard to Arahata Kanson, 2 February 1908, collected in *ibid.*, p. 404.
60. Arahata, Yanaka Mura, p. 172.
61. Arahata, Kanson Jiden, vol. 1, p. 190.
62. Nishio Yōtarō, Kōtoku Shūsui (Tokyo, 1964), pp. 225–6.
63. Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, p. 175.

64. Ibid., p. 175.

65. Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun, 20 September 1907, p. 8.

66. Arahata, Kanson Jiden, vol. 1, p. 191.

67. Shakai Shimbun, 15 July 1910, p. 3.

68. Akiyama, Hangyaku Shiso, p. 33.

69. Uchiyama was subsequently accused of more serious crimes and was executed with Kōtoku in 1911.

70. 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. (Nobutaka Ike, 'Kotoku: Advocate of Direct Action', Far Eastern Quarterly, May 1944, p. 225.)

71. Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, pp. 167–8.

72. Akiyama, Hangyaku Shisō, p. 41.

73. 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...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, Kotoku Shusui, pp. 185–6.)

74. ‘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, Anakizumu Shisō Shi, p. 201.)

75. Arahata, Kanson Jiden, vol. 1, p. 192.

76. Ibid., p. 192.

77. Ibid., p. 192.

78. See, for example, Nihon Heimin Shimbun, 20 January 1908, p. 5.

79. Letter to Niimi Uichirō, 10 June 1908, collected in Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, p. 408.

80. Ibid., pp. 408–9.

81. Arahata, Kanson Jiden, vol. 1, p. 191. (See also Notehelfer, Kotoku Shusui, pp. 175–6.)

82. Arahata, Kanson Jiden, vol. 1, p. 193.

83. Itoya Toshio, Kanno Suga (Tokyo, 1970), p. 162.

84. Shiota, Nikki to Shokan, p. 162.

85. Ibid., p. 164.

86. Arahata, Kanson Jiden, vol. 1, p. 199.

87. ‘Kamaradoj en Malliberejo’, Ōsugi Sakae Zenshū (Collected Works of Osugi Sakae) (Tokyo, 1964), vol. 4, pp. 21–2 (Esperanto section).

88. Tokubetsu Yō Shisatsunin Jōsei Ippan (Outline of the Situation of Persons Requiring Special Observation) (Tokyo, 1957), vol. 1, p. 94.

89. Suzuki Mosaburō (ed.), Jinbutsu Kenkyū Shiryō (Historical Research Materials Relating to Individuals) (Tokyo, 1966), vol. 2, p. 131.

90. Arahata, Kanson Jiden, vol. 1, pp. 195–8.

91. Kindai Shisō, July 1913, p. 20.

92. Mukai Kō, Yamaga Taiji Hito to Sono Shōgai (Yamaga Taiji: the Man and His Life) (Tokyo, 1974), p. 58.

93. Ibid., pp. 58–9.

## Chapter 12

# JAPANESE 'SOCIALISM' TO 1918

In this short chapter I shall endeavour to draw together the threads of the discussion in Part Two of this study. As in [Chapter 6](#), an effort will be made to reach a decision on the nature of 'socialism' as it existed in Japan during the period under consideration here.

Between 1906 and 1918 capitalism developed forcefully in Japan and the size of the working class roughly doubled. Yet the economic and social environment in which the socialists operated 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 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 Shusui 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 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 provided 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 Christianity's influence on them 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 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',<sup>1</sup> 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 Shusui. Indeed, he denounced Kōtoku as 'the destroyer of our group'.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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 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<sup>4</sup> 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 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 1906–18, 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 is hardly surprising that Sakai 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

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, 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 Kōjirō 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 1906–18 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 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, towards the end of the period under consideration here unions of a type did start to

emerge within Japan. When the Yūaikai (Friendship Society) was organised in 1912 it had barely 15 members, but 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.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup>

Clearly, workers' organisations which would allow their spokesmen to make pronouncements of this kind were aeons removed from the type of 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 socialists who were 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 Hiko no Hanashi ('A Discussion of the General Strike'), which Yamakawa Hitoshi wrote for the Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) during 1907 and 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.<sup>9</sup>

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 over-throw 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 existing society is the history of class struggles',<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup>

In so doing, of course, the very precise meaning which Marx and Engels 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 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

Throughout the period 1906–18, the socialist movement remained small and weak. Although the Heimin Shimbun estimated in February 1907 that there were 30,000–40,000 socialists in Japan<sup>12</sup> and the Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun spoke a few months later of ‘tens of thousands of comrades throughout the country’,<sup>13</sup> 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 the organised socialist movement. In addition, during the period of the Nippon Shakaitō’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, Shinto shinkan<sup>14</sup>, women and people under age to join the party.<sup>15</sup> Yet legal sanctions alone could not have scared away all of the alleged tens of thousands of sympathisers and reduced the Nippon Shakaitō’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.<sup>16</sup> 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 were strongly represented, Nishikawa Kōjirō, Sakai Toshihiko and Tazoe Tetsuji all having practised this profession.<sup>17</sup> 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 three of the defendants were Buddhist priests (Uchiyama Gudō, Takagi Kenmei and Minao Setsudo). A factory worker

such as Miyashita Takichi was the exception rather than the rule.<sup>18</sup>

## **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 1906–18 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 1906–18, 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 Shimbun* 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.<sup>19</sup>

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.<sup>20</sup>

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 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.<sup>21</sup> 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 is that set forth by Sakamoto Seima (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 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.<sup>22</sup>

Sakamoto Seima's outline of a new society is certainly infinitely more attractive than the social-democrats' plans for (state-) capitalist business as usual, but its imprecision and Sakamoto's numerous unsupported assertions are evidence of the lack of theoretical rigour which was characteristic of the

anarchists/syndicalists. The holes which can be shot in Sakamoto's arguments are countless. To take a few examples: phrases such as 'the happiness and advantage of everyone' and 'the progress and improvement of humankind' are vague enough to mean virtually anything, and for that very reason are the normal stock-in-trade of the bourgeois politician. If 'mutual aid' is 'a natural law of humankind', why has it not asserted itself sufficiently to put an end to class societies, which have existed (presumably 'unnaturally') for thousands of years? What are the preconditions which would permit 'the sum total of production (to) increase tenfold and a hundredfold over what it is today, even with only a limited effort'? What, again, are humankind's 'economic bonds'? And what is it exactly about the 'present capitalist system (in other words, the private property system)' which prevents '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 1906–18 is 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 unashamed 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 is 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 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 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.

## NOTES

1. See, for example, *Shakai Shimbun*, 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) (Tokyo, 1962).

3. Ibid.

4. See Chapter 3, note 66.

5. See Chapter 3.

6. See Akamatsu Katsumaro, *Nihon Shakai Undō Shi* (History of the Social Movement in Japan) (Tokyo, 1974), p. 150 and Arahata Kanson, *Kanson Jiden* (Kanson's Autobiography) (Tokyo, 1974), vol. 1, pp. 227–8. (The number of votes Sakai received is variously reported as 25, 35 and 45.)

7. Quoted in Byron K. Marshall, *Capitalism and Nationalism in Prewar Japan* (Stanford, 1967), p. 79.

8. Ibid., p. 79.

9. *Nihon Heimin Shimbun*, 20 December 1907, p. 4.

10. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in *Karl Marx, Selected Works* (London, 1947), vol. 1, p. 110.

11. Akaba Hajime, 'Pan no Tetsugaku' ('The Philosophy of Bread'), *Tokyo Shakai Shimbun*, 15 May 1908, p. 1.

12. *Heimin Shimbun*, 17 February 1907, p. 2.

13. *Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun*, 1 June 1907, p. 1.

14. Shintō priest.

15. *Hikari* (Light), 20 April 1906, p. 7.

16. See p. 305.

17. See *Hikari*, 20 April 1906, p. 1 and *Shakaishugi Kenkyū* (The Study of Socialism), 15 March 1906, p. 88 (English columns). n

18. Sakai Toshihiko, 'Ueberblick über die sozialistische Bewegung in Japan bis 1917', *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 16 (1921), pp. 151–2.

19. Shakai Shimbun, 14 July 1907, P. 5.

20. Ibid., p. 5.

21. See Chapters 8, 9, 10.

22. Sakamoto Seima, 'Nyūsha no Ji' ('A Word on Joining the Group'), Kumamoto Hyōron, 20 May 1908, p. 1.

# Appendix A

## ABOLISH MONEY!

Kōtoku Shūsui

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.

(Article in the Yorozu Chōhō (Morning News), 9 February 1900.)

# Appendix B

## THE CHANGE IN MY THOUGHT (ON UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE)

Kōtoku Shūsui

### 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.<sup>1</sup> Then, during my travels last year,<sup>2</sup> 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 Sakai<sup>3</sup> 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 Hikari,<sup>4</sup> 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 organ<sup>5</sup> and also because my illness has made writing difficult,<sup>6</sup> 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.

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.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup> 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 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 Jiyūto (Liberal Party)<sup>9</sup> 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 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 Jiyūto and one would have to say that the way ahead was

fraught with danger.

Nor is it only the Jiyūto 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)<sup>10</sup> 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 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 thirty 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?<sup>11</sup>

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 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. Bebel<sup>12</sup> 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 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'.<sup>13</sup> 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 inspection, tenants' problems, labour protection and poor relief. Or the benefits to them of amending or repealing the public peace police 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 with-in 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.

(Article in the Heimin Shimbun, 5 February 1907, p. 1.)

## NOTES

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 Shimbun (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 Shimbun, 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.

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.' (Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (London, 1972), p. 175.)

8. This refers to the British general election of 1906.

9. The Jiyūtō 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'.

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.

11. ‘...the deaths which have occurred in Manchuria’ is an obvious reference to the Russo-Japanese War, 1904–5.

12. August Bebel, a leader of the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) from its inception in 1869 till his death in 1913.

13. A reference to Kropotkin’s famous book of the same name.

# SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

## JOURNALS IN JAPANESE

近代思想 (Modern Thought) (Reprinted Tokyo, 1960–3), 5 vols.

國民之友 (The Nations's Friend) (Reprinted Tokyo, 1966–8), 28 vols.

明治社會主義史料集 (Collected Historical Material on Meiji Socialism) (Tokyo, 1960–3), 20 vols.

Vol. 1 適言 (Straight Talking)

Vol. 2 光 (Light)

Vol. 3 新紀元 (New Era)

Vol. 4 日刊平民新聞 (Daily Common People's Newspaper)

Vol. 5 大阪平民新聞 (Osaka Common People's Newspaper)

Vols. 6, 7 週間社會新聞 (Weekly Social News)

Vol. 8 東京社會新聞 (Tokyo Social News) and 革命評論 (Revolutionary Review)

Additional Vol. 1 熊本評論 (Kumamoto Review)

Additional Vol. 2 世界婦人 (World Woman)

Additional Vols. 3, 4 週刊平民新聞 (Weekly Common People's Newspaper)

Supplementary Vol. 1 社會主義研究 (The Study of Socialism)

Supplementary Vols. 2–4 勞働世界 (Labour World)

Supplementary Vols. 5–7 社会主義 (Socialism)

Supplementary Vol. 8 火鞭 (Fire Whip)

労働世界 (Labour World) (Reprinted Tokyo, 1960)

労働運動 (Labour Movement) (Reprinted Isezaki, 1973), vol. 1

社会主義研究 (The Study of Socialism). (1920 onwards)

## BOOKS AND ARTICLES IN JAPANESE

安倍磯雄 (ABE Isō), 社会主義論 (Socialism) (Tokyo, 1903)

赤羽一 (AKABA Hajime), 農民の福音 (The Peasant's Gospel) in  
明治之二世紀叢書 (Series on Materials Relating to the Culture of the Meiji  
Era) (Tokyo, 1960), vol. 5

赤松克彦 (AKAMATSU Katsumaro), 日本社会運動史 (History of the Social  
Movement in Japan) (Tokyo, 1974)

秋山清 (AKIYAMA Kiyoshi), 日本の反逆思想 (The Rebellious Thought of  
Japan) (Tokyo, 1972)

アナキズム (Anarchism) (Tokyo, 1965) (This is vol. 16 of 現代日本思想大系  
(Outline of Modern Japanese Thought).)

荒畑寒村 (ARAHATA Kanson), 荒畑寒村著作集 (Collected Works of  
Arahata Kanson) (Tokyo, 1976–7), 10 vols.

——反体制の生き方 (Living My Life Against the System) (Tokyo, 1974)

——平民社時代 (The Heiminsha Period) (Tokyo, 1973)

——寒村自伝 (Kanson's Autobiography) (Tokyo, 1974), 2 vols.

——谷中村滅亡史 (A History of the Destruction of Yanaka Village) (Tokyo,

1907)

飛鳥井雅道 (ASUKAI Masamichi), 「明治社会主義の帰結」 ('The Conclusion of Meiji Socialism') in 思想 (Thought), no. 524 (1968)

——「ロシア第一次革命と幸徳秋水」 ('The First Russian Revolution and Kotoku Shusui') in 思想 (Thought), no. 520 (1967)

現代史資料, 社会主義運動 (Materials on Modern History, the Socialist Movement) (Tokyo, 1964–8), vols. 14–20

萩原晋太郎 (HAGIWARA Shintarō), アナキズム運動年表 (Chronological Table of the Anarchist Movement) (Tokyo, 1970)

——日本アナキズム労働運動史 (History of the Anarchist Labour Movement in Japan) (Tokyo, 1969)

林茂と西田長寿 (HAYASHI Shigeru and NISHIDA Taketoshi—eds.), 平民新聞論説集 (Collected Editorials of the Common People's Newspaper) (Tokyo, 1974)

平民社 (HEIMINSHA), 社会主義入門 (Introduction to Socialism) (Tokyo, 1904)

石川三四郎と幸徳秋水 (ISHIKAWA Sanshiro and KŌTOKU Shūsui), 日本社会主義史 (A History of Japanese Socialism) in 明治文化全集 (Collected Works on the Culture of the Meiji Era) (Tokyo, 1929), vol. 21

板垣退助 (ITAGAKI Taisuke), 自由党史 (History of the Liberal Party) (Tokyo, 1910), 2 vols.

伊藤野矢 (ITOYA Toshio), 菅野幸次 (Kanno Suga) (Tokyo, 1970)

守山潜 (KATAYAMA Sen), 自伝 (Autobiography) (Tokyo, 1964)

——我が社会主義 (What Socialism Means For Me) (Tokyo, 1903)

河上肇 (KAWAKAMI Hajime), 河上肇著作集 (Collected Works of Kawakami Hajime) (Tokyo, 1964–5), 12 vols.

木村毅 (KIMURA Tsuyoshi), 五人の革命家 (Five Revolutionaries) (Tokyo, 1972)

——日本社会主義史 (A History of Japanese Socialism) (Tokyo, c. 1926–7)

木下尚江 (KINOSHITA Naoe), 火の柱 (The Pillar of Fire) (Tokyo, 1904)

木山熊二郎 (KIYAMA Kumajirō), 社会主義運動史 (A History of the Socialist Movement) (Tokyo, 1908)

近藤憲二 (KONDŌ Kenji) 私の見た日本アナキズム運動史 (A Personal History of the Anarchist Movement in Japan) (Tokyo, 1972)

幸徳秋水 (KOTOKU Shūsui), 幸徳秋水全集 (Collected Works of Kotoku Shusui) (Tokyo, 1968–72), 9 vols.

老子 (LAO-ZI), 老子新釋 (A New Interpretation of Lao-Zi) (Tokyo, 1929)

牧野和春 (MAKINO Kazuharu), 「日本におけるウィリアム・モリス」 ('A Bibliography of William Morris in Japan') in 『モリスの文献』 (Misuzu), no. 202 (1976)

ますた (MATSUZAWA Hiroaki), 松沢弘陽 (Socialist Thought in Japan) (Tokyo, 1973)

日本社会主義の思想 (Materials on Meiji Socialism) (Tokyo, 1972–4), 6 vols.

明治社会主義資料叢書 (MENCIUS), 孟子 (A New Interpretation of Mencius) (Tokyo, 1929), 2 vols.

孟子新釋 (The Thought of Popular Movements) (Tokyo, 1970) (This is vol. 58 of 民衆運動の思想 (Outline of Japanese Thought).)

日本思想大系 (MUKAI KŌ), 向井孝 (Yamaga Taiji: the Man and His Life) (Tokyo, 1974)

山鹿泰治 人とその生涯 (NABEYAMA Sadachika), 鍋山寛親 (I Abandoned the Communist Party) (Tokyo, 1949)

私は共産党をすてた (Collected Statistics of the Japanese Economy) (Tokyo, 1968)

日本経済統計集 (Revolutionary Thought in Japan) (Tokyo, 1969–70), 6 vols.

日本の革命思想 (History of the Thought of the Japanese Social Movement) (Tokyo, 1971), 6 vols. on the Meijiera,

日本社会運動思想史 (NISHO Yōtarō), 西尾陽太郎 (Kōtoku Shūsui) (Tokyo, 1964)

幸徳秋水 (NOSAKA Sanzō) 野沢文三 (Persevering Against Hardship) (Tokyo, 1974), vol.1

労働のちから (OKAMOTO Hiroshi), 恩太子 (Tazoe Tetsuji) (Tokyo, 1971)

暗黒谷 (ŌKŌCHI Kazuo), 大河谷一男 (The Labour Movement in the Dark Valley) (Tokyo, 1973)

——暗い谷間の労働運動 (The Labour Movement in Japan in the Dawn Period) (Tokyo, 1973)

黎明期の日本無政府運動 (ŌSAWA Masamichi), 大澤三造 (A History of Anarchist Thought) (Tokyo, 1971)

日本無政府思想史 (ŌSHIMA Eisaburō), 大島英三郎 (History of the Anarchist Movement in Japan) (Isezaki, 1970)

日本無政府主義運動史 (ŌSUGI Sakae), 大島英三郎 (Collected Works of Osugi Sakae) (Tokyo, 1963–4), 11 vols.

大島英三郎全集 (RŌYAMA Masamichi), 現代政治 (Collected Works on Modern Politics) (Tokyo, 1930 vol. 11)

現代政治学全集 (SAKAI Toshihiko), 螺動卷 (The New Society a Hundred Years On—an abbreviated translation of Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward) (Tokyo, 1904)

——百年後の新社会 (A Short History of the Socialist Movement in Japan), serialised in Shakaishugi (Socialism), September 1920 onwards

——日本社会主義運動小史 (An Ideal Country—an abbreviated translation of William Morris' News From Nowhere) (Tokyo, 1904)

理想郷 (Lectures on Socialism) (Tokyo, 1956–7), 8 vols.

社会主義証言 (SHIOTA Shōbee—ed.), 梅田庄兵衛 (The Diaries and Letters of Kotoku Shūsui) (Tokyo, 1965)

金尾秋水の日記と (SUZUKI Mosaburō—ed.) 著録 (Historical Research Materials Relating to Individuals) (Tokyo, 1964–6), 2 vols.

——鈴木辰三郎 (History of the Socialists and Anarchists Resident in America) (Tokyo, 1964)

人物研究史料 (TAKAHASHI Kamekichi), 在米社会主義者無政府主義者沿革 (History of Industrial Development in the Meiji and Taisho Eras) (Tokyo, 1966)

高橋亀吉 (TAKANO Zenichi), 明治大正産業発達史 (Abe Isō—the Father of Japanese Socialism) (Tokyo, 1970)

高野善一 (Outline of the Situation of Persons Requiring Special Observation) (Tokyo, 1957–62), 4 vols.

日本社会主義の父 安部磯雄 (TOKUTOMI Kenjirō), 特別要視察人状勢一斑 (Black Current) (Tokyo, 1952)

徳富健次郎 (YAMAKAWA Hitoshi) 黒潮 ('Memories of Mr Katayama Sen') in 山川詞 (Reconstruction), vol. 15, no. 12 (1933)

——「片山潜氏の懇話会」(Yamakawa Hitoshi's Autobiography) (Tokyo,

1970)

改造 (YANO Fumio), 山川出版社 (The New Society) (Tokyo, 1902)

支那之証 (ZHUANG-ZI), 新社会 (A New Interpretation of Zhuang-Zi)  
(Tokyo, 1930–1), 2 vols.

## **JOURNALS IN WESTERN LANGUAGES**

International Socialist Review

Die Kommunistische Internationale

La Revue Socialiste

## **BOOKS AND ARTICLES IN WESTERN LANGUAGES**

ALLEN, George C., A Short Economic History of Modern Japan (London, 1972)

ARIMA, Tatsuo, The Failure of Freedom (Cambridge (Mass.), 1969)

AYUSAWA, Iwao F., A History of Labor in Modern Japan (Honolulu, 1966)

BARDOUX, J. et al., Le Socialisme à l'Étranger (Paris, 1909)

BECKMANN, George M. and OKUBO, Genji, The Japanese Communist Party, 1922–1945 (Stanford, 1969)

BELL, Daniel, Marxian Socialism in the United States (Princeton, 1967)

BELLAMY, Edward, Looking Backward (London, 1893)

BERDYAEV, Nikolai A., The Origin of Russian Communism (London, 1937)

BERNAL, Martin, Chinese Socialism to 1907 (London, 1976)

BLISS, William D.P., A Handbook of Socialism (London, 1895)

- BORTON, Hugh, Peasant Uprisings in Japan of the Tokugawa Period in Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, 2nd series, vol. 16 (1938)
- BRAISTED, William R. (ed.), Meiroku Zasshi (Harvard, 1976)
- BRISSENDEN, Paul F., The I.W.W: a Study of American Syndicalism (New York, 1957)
- CARPENTER, Edward, Civilisation: Its Cause and Cure (London, 1903)
- CARY, Frank, History of Christianity in Japan (Tokyo, 1959)
- CHALLAYE, Félicien, Le Mouvement Ouvrier au Japon (Paris, 1921)
- CHERNOV, Victor, The Great Russian Revolution (New York, 1966)
- COLE, George D.H., A History of Socialist Thought (London, 1953–60), 5 vols.
- DAN, Theodore, The Origins of Bolshevism (London, 1964)
- DAWSON, William H., German Socialism and Ferdinand Lassalle (London, 1899)
- DROZ, Jacques (ed.), Histoire Générale du Socialisme (Paris, 1974), 2 vols.
- EGBERT, Donald D. and PERSONS, Stow, Socialism and American Life (Princeton, 1952), 2 vols.
- ELISON, George, 'Discussion of Violent Revolution, From a Jail Cell' (a translation of Kotoku Shusui's 'Gokuchu yori Boryoku Kakumei o Ronzu') in Monumenta Nipponica, vol. 22 (1967)
- 'Kotoku Shusui: the Change in Thought' in Monumenta Nipponica, vol. 22 (1967)
- ELY, Richard T., French and German Socialism in Modern Times (New York, 1883)

FONER, Philip S., *History of the Labor Movement in the United States* (New York, 1947–65), 4 vols.

FUJII, Jintaro (ed.), *Outline of Japanese History in the Meiji Era* (Tokyo, 1958)

FUKUZAWA, Yukichi, *The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi* (Tokyo, 1960)

GEORGE, Henry, *Social Problems* (London, 1884)

GETZLER, Israel, *Martov* (Cambridge, 1967)

GOLDMAN, Emma, *Living My Life* (London, 1932)

GRAHAM, William, *Socialism New and Old* (London, 1891)

HENDERSON, Philip (ed.), *The Letters of William Morris* (London, 1950)

HILLQUIT, Morris, *History of Socialism in the United States* (New York, 1910)

ICHIHASHI, Yamato, *Japanese in the United States* (New York, 1969)

IKE, Nobutaka, *The Beginnings of Political Democracy in Japan* (New York, 1969)

——— ‘Kotoku: Advocate of Direct Action’ in *Far Eastern Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1944)

ISHIKAWA, Sanshirō, Letter to Edward Carpenter, 27 March 1910, in the Carpenter Collection, Sheffield City Libraries, MSS 380–22

JANSEN, Marius B., *The Japanese and Sun Yat-sen* (Stanford, 1970)

KARSON, Marc, *American Labor Unions and Politics, 1900–1918* (Carbondale, 1958)

KATAYAMA, Sen, *The Labor Movement in Japan* (Chicago, 1918)

- KAUTSKY, Karl, *The Social Revolution* (Chicago, 1902)
- KAWAKAMI, Karl Kiyoshi, *The Political Ideas of Modern Japan* (Tokyo, 1903)
- KINOSHITA, Naoe, *Pillar of Fire* (London, 1972)
- KIPNIS, Ira, *The American Socialist Movement, 1897–1912* (New York, 1968)
- KIRKUP, Thomas, *An Inquiry into Socialism* (London, 1907)
- KŌSAKA, Masaaki (ed.), *Japanese Thought in the Meiji Era* (Tokyo, 1958)
- KŌTOKU, Shūsui, ‘Discussion of Violent Revolution, From a Jail Cell’ (translated by ELISON, George) in *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 22 (1967)
- KROPOTKIN, Peter, *The Conquest of Bread* (London, 1913)
- Kropotkin’s Revolutionary Pamphlets* (New York, 1968)
- KUBLIN, Hyman, *Asian Revolutionary: the Life of Sen Katayama* (Princeton, 1964)
- ‘The Japanese Socialists and the Russo- Japanese War’ in *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 22, no. 4 (1950)
- ‘The Origins of Japanese Socialist Tradition’ in *Journal of Politics*, vol. 14, no. 2 (1952)
- LICHTHEIM, George, *Marxism* (London, 1964)
- LINDSAY, Jack, *William Morris* (London, 1975)
- MAO Tse-tung, ‘The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party’ in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Peking, 1967), vol. 2.
- MARSHALL, Byron K., *Capitalism and Nationalism in Prewar Japan* (Stanford, 1967)

MARX, Karl, *Capital* (Chicago, 1919), 3 vols.

———*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Chicago, 1911)

———*Early Texts* (Oxford, 1972)

———*The Poverty of Philosophy* (Moscow, no date)

———*Selected Works* (London, 1942–7), 2 vols.

MASAOKA, Naoichi (ed.), *Japan to America* (New York and London, 1914)

MITCHELL, Richard H., *Thought Control in Prewar Japan* (Ithaca and London, 1976)

MORGAN, Kenneth O., *Keir Hardie* (London, 1975)

MORRIS, William, *News From Nowhere* (London, 1970)

NITOBE, Inazo et al., *Western Influences in Modern Japan* (Chicago, 1931)

NORMAN, E. Herbert, *Japan's Emergence as a Modern State* (New York, 1940—Reprinted 1973)

NOTEHELPER, Fred G., *Kotoku Shusui: Portrait of a Japanese Radical* (Cambridge, 1971)

OKOCHI, Kazuo, *Labor in Modern Japan* (Tokyo, 1958)

ŌKUMA, Shigenobu, *Fifty Years of New Japan* (London, 1909), 2 vols.

POWLES, Cyril H., 'Abe Isoo and the Role of Christians in the Founding of the Japanese Socialist Movement: 1895–1905' in *Papers on Japan* (Cambridge (Mass.), 1961), vol. 1

RAE, John, *Contemporary Socialism* (London, 1901)

ROLLER, Arnold, *The Social General Strike* (Chicago, 1905)

SAKAI, Toshihiko, 'Ueberblick über die sozialistische Bewegung in Japan bis 1917' in Die Kommunistische Internationale, no. 16 (1921)

SCALAPINO, Robert A., Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan (California, 1962)

SCHÄFFLE, Albert, The Quintessence of Socialism (London, 1890)

SCHIFFRIN, Harold and SOHN, Pow-Key, 'Henry George on Two Continents' in Comparative Studies in Society and History, vol. 2 (1959/60)

SHAW, George Bernard (ed.), Fabian Essays in Socialism (London, 1889)

SIMCOCK, Bradford L., 'The Anarcho-Syndicalist Thought and Activity of Osugi Sakae, 1885–1923' in Papers on Japan (Cambridge (Mass.)), 1970, vol. 5

SMITH, Neil Skene, 'An Introduction to Some Japanese Economic Writings of the 18th Century' in Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, 2nd series, vol. 11 (1934)

SMITH, Thomas C., The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan (Stanford, 1959)

STEAD, Alfred, Great Japan (London, 1906)

———Japan by the Japanese (London, 1904)

STEPNIAK (i.e. KRAVCHINSKY, S.M.), Underground Russia (London, 1883)

SUMIYA, Mikio, Social Impact of Industrialization in Japan (Tokyo, 1963)

TORR, Dona (ed.), Correspondence of Marx and Engels (London, 1941)

TOTTEN, George O., The Social Democratic Movement in Prewar Japan (New Haven and London, 1966)

TSUNODA, Ryusaku et al. (eds.), Sources of Japanese Tradition (New York, 1958)

TSUZUKI, Chushichi, “‘My Dear Sanshiro’: Edward Carpenter and His Japanese Disciple’ in *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1972)

VELLI, Michael, *Manual for Revolutionary Leaders* (Detroit, 1972)

WALLACE, Alfred Russel, *Land Nationalisation* (London, 1882)

WILSON, George M., *Radical Nationalist in Japan: Kita Ikki 1883–1937* (Cambridge (Mass.), 1969)

WOODCOCK, George, *Anarchism* (London, 1963)

# 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 to 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 quasiparental 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 to 1926 which coincided with the reign of the Taishō Emperor.

Tokugawa (徳川) The family name of the hereditary shogun (将軍—commander-in-chief; general) who held effective power from 1603 to 1868 (the Tokugawa period).

# INDEX

Abe, Isō [43–4](#), [64](#), [75](#), [90](#), [94](#), [99](#), [107](#), [115](#), [135](#), [145](#), [292](#), [297](#), [299](#)

Abe, Shirō [200](#)

agriculture [14](#), [104–5](#), [117–18](#), [166](#), [263](#)

Ainu [xxvi–xxvii](#), [217](#)

Akaba, Hajime [228–9](#), [271](#), [310](#), [317](#), [329](#)

akahata jiken see ‘red flag incident’

Akamatsu, Katsumaro [98](#)

Akselrod, Pavel B. [45](#)

Alden, Percy [101–3](#)

American Federation of Labour [194](#)

anarchism [xxv–xxvi](#), [108](#), [136](#), [185](#), [190](#), [192](#), [197](#), [199–201](#), [220–32](#), [242–9](#), [258](#), [263–4](#), [275–8](#), [302](#), [323–4](#)

in Japan [xxiii](#), [42](#), [108](#), [128–9](#), [166–7](#), [175](#), [177](#), [182–3](#), [185–6](#), [191](#), [192](#), [199–201](#), [203–5](#), [220–32](#), [239–82](#), [299–302](#), [305](#), [308–9](#), [311](#), [314](#), [316](#), [323–9](#), [332–6](#)

anarcho-communism [200–1](#), [222](#), [224](#), [229](#), [242](#), [256](#), [305](#), [308](#), [310](#), [324](#), [333](#)

Arahata, Kanson [53n44](#), [77–8](#), [232](#), [274](#), [278–80](#), [305](#), [307–8](#), [310](#), [314–5](#), [317](#)

artisans [13–14](#), [23](#), [80](#), [117](#), [228](#), [330](#)

Ashio [163–7](#), [175](#), [245](#), [251](#), [257](#), [302–3](#), [307](#), [326–7](#)

Asukai, Masamichi [39](#), [249](#)

Bakufu [3–4](#), [29](#), [36](#)

Bakunin, Michael [183](#), [190](#), [192](#), [200](#), [214](#), [223](#), [245](#), [247](#), [260](#), [276–7](#)

Ballance, John [105](#)

Bebel, August [44](#), [49](#), [74](#), [241](#), [246](#), [274](#)

Belgium [56](#), [63](#), [301](#)

Bell, Daniel [93](#)

Bellamy, Edward [90](#), [107–8](#)

Beppu [231](#)

Berkman, Alexander [185](#), [199](#)

Bernstein, Eduard [70](#), [71](#)

Besshi [164–7](#), [175](#), [245](#)

Bismarck, O. von [58](#), [59](#), [61](#), [65](#), [70](#), [71](#)

Blade [199](#)

Blanqui, Auguste [56](#)

Blatchford, Robert [107](#)

Bliss, W.D.P. [89](#), [91–3](#)

Bogolepov, N.P. [51](#), [218](#)

Bolshevism [25n1](#), [54n44](#), [212](#), [233–4](#), [335](#)

influence in Japan [xxiii](#), [167](#), [175](#), [233–4](#), [332](#), [335–6](#)

see also Leninism

Booth, William [94](#)

bourgeoisie see capitalist

Britain [56](#), [63](#), [104](#), [143–4](#), [182](#), [186](#), [196](#), [239](#), [241](#), [245](#), [262–3](#), [272](#), [274](#), [279](#), [282](#), [296](#)

Buddhism [76](#), [292](#), [310](#), [330](#)

Bulletin de l'Internationale Anarchiste [276](#)

Bulletin International du Mouvement Syndicaliste [278](#)

Burakumin [xxvi](#)

Burns, John [103–4](#)

Capital xxvii, [6](#), [7](#), [11](#), [15](#), [20](#), [59–60](#), [61](#), [68](#), [94](#), [97–8](#), [114](#), [119](#), [145–6](#), [158](#), [168](#), [177](#), [187](#), [202](#), [310](#), [313](#), [331–2](#)

accumulation of [25n1](#), [144](#), [310](#), [335](#)

Capital (by Karl Marx) [57](#), [76–7](#), [119–20](#), [249](#), [334](#)

capitalism [xxvi](#), xxvii, [25n1](#), [65](#), [67](#), [70](#), [71](#), [80](#), [90](#), [99](#), [101](#), [102](#), [119–20](#), [122](#), [131](#), [143](#), [145–6](#), [166](#), [186–7](#), [198](#), [200](#), [227](#), [233](#), [243–4](#), [277](#), [279](#), [281–2](#), [300](#), [301](#), [329](#), [331](#), [333–6](#)

definition of [xx](#)

in Japan [4–11](#), [15–16](#), [22–3](#), [25n1](#), [79](#), [81](#), [141](#), [144–5](#), [147](#), [151–3](#), [159](#), [168](#),

[177](#), [253](#), [270](#), [323](#), [331](#)

see also state capitalism

capitalists [3](#), [15–16](#), [37](#), [49](#), [60](#), [79–81](#), [94–5](#), [97](#), [135](#), [156](#), [158–9](#), [161](#), [163–5](#), [167](#), [177](#), [186–7](#), [203](#), [212](#), [226–7](#), [229–30](#), [233](#), [242](#), [243](#), [246](#), [254](#), [265](#), [268](#), [275](#), [279–80](#), [292](#), [303](#), [306](#), [327](#), [328](#), [329](#), [331–2](#), [335](#)

Carpenter, Edward [301](#)

CGT [244](#), [277](#), [279](#), [282](#)

Challaye, Félicien [155–6](#), [164](#)

Chernov, Victor [218](#)

Chertkov, Vladimir G. [225–6](#)

chian keisatsu hō see public peace police law

child labour [20](#), [69](#), [155–7](#)

China [xxii](#), [32](#), [105](#), [127](#), [147](#), [190](#), [194–6](#), [202](#), [215–7](#), [264](#)

Chokugen (Straight Talking [45–6](#), [51](#), [72–3](#), [76](#), [77](#), [105](#), [107](#), [135](#), [194](#), [239](#), [265](#), [292](#)

Chōshū [3](#), [36](#)

Christianity [32](#), [35](#), [43](#), [76](#), [89–97](#), [141](#), [155](#), [201](#), [291–301](#), [310](#), [316](#), [324](#)

Christian Socialists [43–4](#), [62](#), [89–96](#), [106](#), [141](#), [217](#), [255](#), [292–301](#), [316](#)

class struggle [56](#), [57](#), [93–5](#), [98](#), [165](#), [167](#), [172](#), [175](#), [263](#), [294–5](#), [300](#), [329](#)

Cole, G.D.H. [106](#), [261](#)

commodity production [25n1](#), [60](#), [101](#), [119–22](#), [146–7](#), [200](#), [227–8](#), [230–1](#)

communism [61–2](#), [224](#)

definition of [xxviii](#)<sup>1</sup>

Katō Hiroyuki on [33–5](#)

see also anarcho-communism

Communist Manifesto [34](#), [40](#), [77–81](#), [223](#), [329](#)

Communist Party [34–5](#), [315](#)

Communist Party of Japan see Nihon Kyōsantō

Confucianism [29](#), [94](#), [124–34](#), [142](#), [293](#)

Cornelissen, Christian [278](#)

council communists [xxi](#)

Crooks, Will [103–4](#)

Dawson, W.H. [58](#), [61–2](#)

Debs, Eugene V. [189](#)

Deich, Lev [45](#)

De Leon, Daniel [185](#), [192–3](#)

Deutsch, Leo see Deich, Lev

direct action [162](#), [166–7](#), [175](#), [177](#), [214](#), [220–1](#), [224](#), [232](#), [241](#), [246–50](#), [252–6](#), [258](#), [260–2](#), [266](#), [271](#), [273–4](#), [279](#), [281–2](#), [308](#), [324–5](#), [327](#)

Elitism [40](#), [41](#), [45](#), [127](#), [129–33](#), [141](#), [309–10](#), [325](#)

Ely, R.T. [58](#), [61–2](#), [89–93](#)

emperor (Japanese) [4](#), [24](#), [41](#), [74](#), [127](#), [132](#), [133–6](#), [142](#), [183](#), [203–5](#), [248](#), [258](#), [295](#), [305](#), [310–13](#), [316](#), [324–5](#)

Engels, Frederick [44](#), [64](#), [75–81](#), [89](#), [223](#), [246](#), [329](#), [334](#)

Fabianism [31](#), [64](#), [89](#), [99–103](#), [106](#)

Firebrand [199](#)

First International [48](#), [183](#), [190](#), [276](#), [280](#)

First World War [74](#), [168–75](#), [197](#), [220](#), [232–3](#), [256](#), [274–5](#), [282](#), [317](#)

Fleischmann, Leopold [190](#)

France [56](#), [63](#), [133](#), [205](#), [228](#), [244–7](#), [257–8](#), [268](#), [279](#), [281–2](#), [301](#)

Franco-Prussian War [48](#), [49](#)

Frantz, Gustav [34](#)

Freedom [232](#)

French revolution [32](#), [37](#), [41](#), [305](#)

Fritz, Mrs [185](#), [200](#), [223](#)

Fukao, Shō [250](#), [255](#), [268](#)

fukoku kyōhei [4](#)

Fukuda, Eiko [200](#)

Fukuzawa, Yukichi [34](#), [118](#), [128](#)

Furukawa, Rikisaku [312–3](#)

Garst, Charles [96–9](#)

general strike [56](#), [165–7](#), [198](#), [212](#), [214](#), [218](#), [221](#), [240–5](#), [249](#), [256](#), [257](#), [261](#), [266](#), [273](#), [277](#), [308](#), [325](#), [328–9](#), [333–4](#)

George, Henry [96–9](#)

German Social-Democratic Party see SPD

Germany [32](#), [56](#), [63](#), [64](#), [65](#), [67](#), [70](#), [72](#), [74](#), [132](#), [186](#), [239–44](#), [247–9](#), [258](#), [262](#)

Gershuni, Grigorii [218–20](#)

Gladden, Washington [92–3](#)

Gladstone, William E. [126](#)

Glasgow [102](#)

Goldman, Emma [185](#), [199](#)

Gompers, Samuel [194](#), [197](#)

Graham, William [57](#)

Hagiwara, Shintarō [20](#)

Hara, Kei [163](#)

Hardie, Keir [262–5](#)

Hayashi, Sanjūrokurō [124](#)

Haywood, Bill [197](#)

Heimin Kyōkai (Common People's Association) [307](#)

Heimin Shimbun (Common People's Newspaper) (daily) [164](#), [184](#), [188](#), [192](#), [214–5](#), [218](#), [221–2](#), [224](#), [232](#), [240–1](#), [246–8](#), [253](#), [255–60](#), [265](#), [294](#), [296](#), [299](#), [303](#), [324](#), [330](#)

Heimin Shimbun (monthly) [281](#)

Heimin Shimbun (weekly) [42–4](#), [45–7](#), [58](#), [60](#), [61](#), [62](#), [74–5](#), [76](#), [77](#), [92](#), [95](#), [97](#), [100](#), [103](#), [106](#), [124](#), [125](#), [222](#), [239](#), [265](#), [292](#)

Herron, George [89](#), [91](#), [93](#)

'high treason case' [312–18](#), [327](#), [331](#), [333](#)

Higuchi, Den [250](#)

Hikari (Light) [158](#), [161](#), [185](#), [188](#), [190–1](#), [201](#), [202](#), [212–3](#), [215](#), [223](#), [239](#), [241](#), [265](#), [292–6](#), [298](#), [300](#)

Hillquit, Morris [188–9](#)

Hizen [3](#), [36](#)

Hoffman, Julius [199–200](#)

Holland [32](#), [56](#), [275–7](#)

Horonai [164](#)

hours of work [17](#), [155](#), [158](#), [161](#), [254](#)

Hyndman, H.M. [106](#), [262](#), [267](#)

Ichikawa, Tōichi [201](#)

Ikuno [164](#)

ILP [262–4](#)

imperialism [4](#), [41](#), [291](#)

India [147](#)

industrialisation [4](#), [6–11](#), [25n1](#), [102](#), [151–3](#)

state's role in [6](#), [25n1](#)

Ishikawa, Sanshirō [99](#), [220–1](#), [224](#), [255](#), [292](#), [295](#), [297](#), [299–301](#), [303](#)

Ishikawa, Takuboku [214](#)

Ishimaki, Kōsei [229–30](#), [237n76](#), [274](#)

Ishimaki, Yoshio [237n76](#)

Ishiwara, Dr [156](#)

Iskra [46](#), [49](#), [212](#)

Itagaki, Taisuke [36](#), [102](#)

Italy [56](#), [127](#), [196](#), [247](#), [257](#)

Iwasa, Sakutarō [200](#), [203](#), [206](#)

IWW [185](#), [190](#), [192](#), [193–8](#), [324](#)

Jacobins [314–5](#)

Japanese revolution (1868) [3–5](#), [25n1](#), [30](#), [35–6](#), [40](#), [115](#), [131](#), [133](#), [291](#), [302](#)

Jaurès, Jean [241](#), [267](#)

jiyū minken undō see people's rights movement

Jiyū Shisō (Free Thought) [225](#), [276](#), [304](#) [312](#)

Jiyūtō (Liberal Party) [36](#)

Johnson, Albert [136](#), [182–4](#), [190](#), [198–9](#), [223](#), [246](#), [255](#), [260](#), [291](#), [306](#), [308](#)

Johnson, Olive [191–2](#), [195](#)

Kaba-san insurrection [41–2](#)

Kaben (Fire Whip) [217](#), [223](#)

Kakumei (Revolution) [191–2](#), [195](#), [196](#), [199](#), [202–4](#), [206](#)

Kakumei Hyōron (Revolutionary Review) [216–9](#), [225–6](#), [302](#)

Kanai, Nobu [71](#)

Kaneko, Kiichi [192–3](#), [196](#), [247](#)

Kanno, Suga [304](#), [309–10](#), [312–14](#), [331](#)

Katayama, Sen [xxiv](#), [24](#), [46](#), [65–6](#), [70–2](#), [75](#), [90–2](#), [95](#), [98](#), [102](#), [105](#), [122](#), [124](#), [142](#), [147](#), [250](#), [253](#), [258–62](#), [264–73](#), [281](#), [304](#), [306–7](#), [325–7](#), [332](#)

Katō, Hiroyuki [33–5](#)

Katō, Tokijirō [261–2](#)

Katsura, Tarō [317](#)

Kautsky, Karl [64](#), [65–6](#), [70](#), [71](#), [267–8](#), [274](#)

Kautsk Luise [267](#)

Kawakami, Kiyoshi [xxvii](#), [76](#), [90](#), [94](#), [100–1](#), [116–7](#), [126](#),

Kawashima, Tadanosuke [39](#)

Kelso, John R. [182](#)

Kemuriyama, Sentarō [311](#)

Kindai Shisō (Modern Thought) [278–9](#), [317](#)

Kingsley, Charles [296](#)

Kinoshita, Naoe [72–3](#), [95–6](#), [115](#), [132](#), [142](#), [292](#), [298–9](#), [327](#)

Kinyō Kai (Friday Association) [274](#), [304](#)

Kirkup, Thomas [58](#), [61](#), [65](#)

Kita, Ikki [258](#)

Knudsen P. [267](#)

Kōbe [172](#), [176–7](#), [215](#)

Kojima, Ryūtarō [78](#)

Kokka Shakaitō (State Socialist Party) [294–6](#), [299](#)

Kokumin no Tomo (The Nation's Friend) [43](#), [55](#), [57](#), [97](#)

kokutai [133–4](#), [258–9](#),

Kōtoku, Shūsui [xxiv](#), [42](#), [43](#), [45](#), [50–1](#), [59](#), [61](#), [66](#), [74–5](#), [77–81](#), [90](#), [92](#), [98](#), [99](#), [101](#), [114–15](#), [119–21](#), [124–8](#), [131–2](#), [133–6](#), [142](#), [144](#), [147](#), [182–4](#), [188–9](#), [198–200](#), [203](#), [206](#), [214](#), [220–6](#), [231–2](#), [240–3](#), [246–8](#), [251–61](#), [263–4](#), [267](#), [269–71](#), [273–8](#), [291](#), [299](#), [303–6](#), [308–9](#), [311](#), [313–6](#), [324](#), [326](#), [331](#)

in the USA [182–91](#), [195](#), [197–201](#), [206](#), [212–3](#), [223](#), [239–40](#), [242–3](#), [246](#), [250](#), [323–4](#)

Kozaki, Hiromichi [75](#)

Kravchinsky, S.M. [39–41](#), [42](#)

Kropotkin, Peter [xxv–xxvi](#), [40](#), [42](#), [44](#), [182–3](#), [200](#), [201](#), [205–6](#), [242](#), [247](#), [248–9](#), [257](#), [260](#), [278](#), [295](#), [301](#), [302](#), [306](#), [317](#), [324](#)

Kublin, Hyman [90](#)

Kumamoto Hyōron (Kumamoto Review) [225](#), [244](#), [275](#), [304](#), [333](#)

Kuramochi, Zensaburō [206](#)

Kure [161](#), [162](#)

Kusakatei, Ujirō [75](#)

Kutsumi, Kesson [215](#), [223](#)

Kuwada, Kumazō [71](#)

Kyoto [4](#), [176](#)

Labour Disputes [20–2](#), [27n22](#), [56](#), [57](#), [105–6](#), [143](#), [158–67](#), [172–5](#), [202](#), [244–5](#), [254](#), [256–7](#), [278](#)

Labour Party (Britain) [101](#), [144](#), [186](#), [239](#), [241](#), [262–3](#), [272](#)

landlords [37](#), [97–8](#), [226–7](#), [229](#), [310](#), [327](#)

Lassalle, Ferdinand [44](#), [57](#), [61](#), [75](#), [76](#), [132](#), [185](#), [246](#), [259](#)

leadership [167](#), [219](#), [246](#), [253](#), [274](#), [280–2](#), [309](#), [324–5](#)

Learned, Dwight W. [35](#)

Lenin, Vladimir I. [53n44](#), [233](#)

Leninism

in Japan [xxiv–xxv](#), [233](#)

see also Bolshevism

Lewis, Austin [195](#)

Liberal Party (Britain) [101–2](#), [103](#)

Liberal Party (Japan) see Jiyūtō

Lichtheim, George [30](#)

Liebkecht, Karl [275](#)

Liebkecht, Wilhelm [49](#), [64](#), [66](#), [185](#), [239](#), [246](#)

London [102](#), [103](#)

Luxemburg, Rosa [248](#), [275](#)

MacDonald, Ramsay [101](#)

Malatesta, Errico [247](#), [277](#)

Mann, Tom [274](#), [279](#), [282](#)

Mao, Tse-tung [5](#)

Marshall, Byron K. [17](#)

Martov, Julius [54n44](#), [74](#)

Marx, Karl [xxv–xxvi](#), [15](#), [23](#), [44](#), [48](#), [56](#), [57](#), [60](#), [61](#), [64](#), [65](#), [75–81](#), [89](#), [94](#), [99](#), [119–20](#), [183](#), [185](#), [188](#), [190–1](#), [223](#), [227](#), [230–1](#), [246](#), [249](#), [277](#), [295](#), [329](#), [334](#)

on communism [xxviii](#)

Marxism [xxv–xxvi](#), [56](#), [66](#), [76](#), [78](#), [92](#), [99](#), [114](#), [120](#), [145](#), [183](#), [192](#), [201](#), [248–](#)

50, [259](#), [263](#), [266–7](#), [276–7](#), [280](#), [293](#), [300](#), [334](#)

Matsukata, Kōjirō [158](#)

Matsuo, Uichita [313](#)

Matsuzawa, Hiroaki [116](#)

May Day [56](#), [133](#)

Meiji restoration see Japanese revolution (1868)

Menshevism [45](#), [54n44](#), [74](#), [212](#)

merchants [3](#), [80](#), [115](#), [116](#), [117–8](#), [122–4](#)

Michel, Louise [56](#)

Millerand, Alexandre [63](#), [268](#)

Minao, Setsudō [331](#)

miners [163–7](#), [172](#), [196–7](#), [302](#), [326](#)

Miura, Baien [121](#)

Miura, Meisuke [123](#)

Miyashita, Takichi [311–13](#), [315](#), [331](#)

Miyazaki, Muryū [38](#), [39](#)

monarchy see emperor

Monatte, Pierre [277](#)

money [xx–xxi](#), [65–6](#), [101](#), [114](#), [117–24](#), [145](#), [200](#)

Morgan, K.O. [264](#)

Morichika, Umpei [260](#), [273](#), [313–15](#)

Morioka, Eiji [259](#)

Morris, William [xxi](#), [107–8](#), [263](#)

Most, Johann [200](#)

Mother Earth [199](#)

municipalisation [68](#), [93](#), [101](#), [102–3](#), [186–7](#), [268](#)

Murai, Tomoyoshi [75](#), [91](#)

Muro, Kyūsō [117](#), [119](#), [121](#)

Nabeshima [135](#)

Nabeyama, Sadachika [175](#)

Nagasaki [32](#), [39](#), [135](#), [161](#), [172](#), [214–6](#), [257](#), [317](#)

Nagoya [155](#), [176](#)

Nakae, Chōmin [55](#)

Narodnism see Russian populism

Naruishi, Heishirō [313](#), [331](#)

nationalisation see state capitalism

Naudeau, Ludovic [162](#)

New Zealand

Lib-Labs [31](#), [104–6](#)

Nieuwenhuis, Domela [74](#)

nihilists [38](#), [39](#), [42](#), [48](#), [49](#), [218](#)

Nihon Heimin Shimbun (Japan Common People's Newspaper) [193](#), [225–6](#), [231](#), [270](#), [275](#), [277](#), [304](#), [329](#)

Nihon Heimintō (Common People's Party of Japan) [250](#)

Nihon Kyōsantō (Communist Party of Japan) [175](#), [197](#)

Nihon Shakai Heimintō (Social Common People's Party of Japan) [307](#)

Niimi, Uichirō [245](#), [313–14](#)

Niimura, Tadao [309](#), [312–13](#)

Nintoku [126](#), [133–4](#)

Nippon Shakaikō (Socialist Party of Japan) [23](#), [188](#), [250–6](#), [258](#), [261](#), [265](#), [272](#), [298](#), [299](#), [306](#), [324](#), [326](#), [330](#)

Nishikawa, Kōjirō [57](#), [67](#), [76](#), [78](#), [98](#), [103–4](#), [142](#), [164](#), [188](#), [222](#), [239](#), [250](#), [259–61](#), [271–3](#), [292](#), [303](#), [326–7](#), [331](#)

Nitta, Tōru [312](#)

Nosaka, Sanzō [197](#)

Notehelfer, F.G. [306](#), [320n73](#)

Ōishi, Seinosuke [260](#), [309](#), [313](#), [331](#)

Oka, Shigeki [183](#), [195](#), [311](#)

Okabayashi, Toramatsu [317](#)

Ōkōchi, Kazuo [17](#)

okujō enzetsu jiken see ‘roof speeches incident’

Ōkuma, Count [263](#)

Okumiya, Kenshi [313](#), [315](#)

Oriental Socialist Party see Tōyō Shakaitō

Osaka [20](#), [155](#), [161](#), [162](#), [164](#), [172](#), [175–6](#), [260](#)

Ōsaka Heimin Shimbun (Osaka Common People’s Newspaper) [165–6](#), [225](#), [227](#), [247](#), [249](#), [260–1](#), [265](#), [273](#), [296](#), [314](#), [330](#)

Ōsawa, Masamichi [39](#), [301](#)

Ōsugi, Sakae [220](#), [225](#), [232](#), [246–9](#), [251](#), [255](#), [277–9](#), [281–2](#), [299](#), [305](#), [317](#)

Pacifism [43](#), [48](#), [50](#), [67](#), [68](#), [125](#), [202](#)

Pannekoek, Anton [xxi](#)

Paris Commune [35](#), [38](#), [309](#)

parliamentarism [63](#), [72–3](#), [103](#), [141–3](#), [166–7](#), [184](#), [186–7](#), [191](#), [203](#), [218](#), [220–4](#), [240–2](#), [246–55](#), [258–61](#), [264–6](#), [268](#), [272](#), [274](#), [279](#), [298](#), [324–8](#), [332](#)

peasants [xxiii](#), [7](#), [14–16](#), [37](#), [38](#), [39](#), [45](#), [50](#), [56](#), [80](#), [98](#), [116–18](#), [122–4](#), [135](#), [153](#), [166](#), [177](#), [214](#), [215](#), [224](#), [226](#), [228](#), [270](#), [312](#), [323](#), [329–30](#)

peasant uprisings [29](#), [122–3](#)

people’s rights movement [36–41](#), [55](#), [58](#), [98](#), [102](#), [214](#), [315](#)

Perovskaya, Sophia [214](#)

Pilsudski, Bronislas [217–8](#)

Pilsudski, Jozef K. [217](#)

Plekhanov, George [45](#), [46](#), [75](#)

Poland [217–8](#)

police [46](#), [63](#), [72–3](#), [76](#), [78](#), [115](#), [136](#), [142](#), [153](#), [158](#), [159](#), [161–4](#), [176](#), [182](#), [200](#), [201](#), [203](#), [215](#), [225](#), [255](#), [303–7](#), [310](#), [312](#), [327](#), [330](#)

prices [161](#), [165](#), [168–75](#)

Proudhon, Pierre J. [223](#)

public peace police law [20–2](#), [65](#), [69](#), [95](#), [142–3](#), [158](#), [172](#), [251](#)

Pyburn, Dr [200](#)

Racialism [68](#), [186](#), [188–95](#), [202](#), [205–6](#), [261](#), [264–5](#)

Rae, John [57](#)

Reclus, Elisée [247](#), [301](#)

Reclus, Paul [301](#)

‘red flag incident’ [305](#), [310](#)

Reeves, William [106](#)

reformism [24](#), [56](#), [66–72](#), [93](#), [100](#), [102](#), [105](#), [141](#), [158](#), [166](#), [186–7](#), [189](#), [203](#), [248](#), [261–2](#), [263](#), [268–70](#), [272–3](#), [281](#), [324](#)

rice riots (1918) [xxiii](#), [151](#), [175–7](#), [335](#)

Rodbertus, Karl [61](#)

Rōdō Sekai (Labour World) [62](#), [63](#), [65](#), [66](#), [77–71](#), [76](#), [91](#), [92](#), [95](#), [98](#), [102](#), [116–17](#), [127](#), [133](#), [142](#), [230](#)

Roller, Arnold [242–4](#), [324](#)

‘roof speeches incident’ [304–5](#)

Roosevelt, Theodore [194](#), [204](#)

Rousseau, Jean J. [41](#), [55](#)

Rühle, Otto [xxi](#)

Russel, Nicholas [215](#)

Russia [xxii](#), [30](#), [31](#), [37–51](#), [74–5](#), [185](#), [195](#), [200](#), [201](#), [205](#), [212–23](#), [228](#), [239](#), [249](#), [335](#)

Russian populism [30](#), [31](#), [37–42](#), [45](#), [56](#), [58](#), [141](#), [214](#), [215](#), [217](#), [302](#), [311](#), [325](#)

Russian revolution (1905) [45–6](#), [50](#), [212–14](#), [221–2](#), [226](#)

Russian revolution (1917) [xxii](#), [4](#), [25n1](#), [232–4](#)

Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) [xxiii](#), [22](#), [42–3](#), [44–50](#), [73–5](#), [76](#), [77](#), [96](#), [125](#), [127](#), [132](#), [135](#), [142](#), [151](#), [159](#), [161–2](#), [163](#), [164](#), [166](#), [175](#), [182](#), [190](#), [212–13](#), [214–15](#), [217](#), [220](#), [222](#), [225](#), [239](#), [256](#), [291–2](#), [325](#), [327](#)

Saga [39](#), [135](#)

Saionji, Kinmochi [250–1](#), [326](#)

Saitō, Kashirō [155](#)

Sakai, Toshihiko [43](#), [61](#), [62](#), [64](#), [74–5](#), [76–81](#), [92](#), [96](#), [99](#), [107–8](#), [115–16](#), [124–5](#), [127](#), [130–2](#), [142](#), [162](#), [188](#), [223](#), [233](#), [246](#), [250–1](#), [254](#), [261–4](#), [267–8](#),

[271](#), [273](#), [293](#), [295](#), [301](#), [303](#), [305](#), [327](#), [331](#)

Sakai, Yūzaburō [55–7](#)

Sakamoto, Seima [225](#), [274](#), [333–4](#)

samurai [3–5](#), [11–13](#), [29](#), [36–7](#), [41](#), [114–24](#), [126](#), [128](#), [129–30](#), [132](#)

San Francisco [71](#), [182–5](#), [190–1](#), [193–5](#), [199–200](#), [202](#), [223](#)

Sanjīkarizumu Kenkyū Kai (Association for the Study of Syndicalism) [279](#)

Satō, Satoru [305](#)

Satsuma [3](#), [36](#)

Schäffle, A. [58–61](#), [63](#), [65](#), [70](#), [99](#)

Second International [30–1](#), [55](#), [64](#), [67](#), [70](#), [76](#), [189](#), [266–8](#), [272](#), [274–5](#)

Amsterdam Congress (1904) [46](#), [71](#), [75](#), [266–7](#)

Brussels Congress (1891) [55](#)

Stuttgart Congress (1907) [189](#), [261–2](#), [272](#), [275](#)

Seddon, Richard [105–6](#)

Shakai Heimintō (Social Common People's Party) [142](#)

Shakai Kakumeitō (Social Revolutionary Party) [201–3](#), [205–6](#)

Shakai Minshutō (Social Democratic Party) [64](#), [67–70](#), [72](#), [90](#), [91](#), [100](#), [142–4](#), [248](#)

Shakai Mondai Kenkyū Kai (Society for the Study of Social Problems) [98](#)

Shakai Seisaku Gakkai (Society for the Study of Social Policy) [70–1](#), [270](#)

Shakai Shimbun (Social News) [195](#), [247](#), [259–62](#), [264–71](#), [273](#), [277](#), [279](#), [296](#), [299](#), [303–4](#), [325](#), [331](#)

Shakaishugi (Socialism) [67](#), [74–5](#), [76](#), [105](#), [107](#), [133](#)

Shakaishugi Dōshi Kai (Socialist Comrades' Association) [266–7](#), [271–2](#), [274](#)

Shakaishugi Kenkyū (The Study of Socialism) [61](#), [65](#), [77](#), [78](#), [108](#), [223](#), [246](#)

Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai (Society for the Study of Socialism) (1898–1900) [64](#), [75](#), [91](#), [99–100](#), [142](#)

Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai (1907) [260](#)

Shakaishugi Kenkyū Kai (in California) [201](#)

Shakaishugi Kyōkai (Socialist Association) [99–100](#), [142](#), [265](#)

Shaw, George B. [101](#)

Shin Kigen (New Era) [217](#), [220](#), [292–300](#)

Shin Seikatsu (New Life) [298](#)

Shin Shakai (New Society) [197](#), [280](#)

Shintō [292](#), [330](#)

Shirai, Shimpei [128](#)

Shirayanagi, Shūko [223](#)

shishi [40](#), [131–2](#), [216–7](#), [219](#), [302](#), [325](#)

Simons, A.M. [189](#)

Sino-Japanese War (1894–5) [7](#)

Sipyagin, D.S. [51](#), [218](#)

Smith, T.C. [14](#)

social-democracy

European [30](#)–1, [55](#)–[81](#), [93](#), [99](#), [114](#), [122](#), [227](#), [232](#), [239](#), [242](#), [246](#)–7, [256](#), [257](#)–8, [261](#)–2, [266](#), [268](#), [275](#), [279](#)–80, [282](#), [323](#)

see also Second International, SPD

in Japan [xxiii](#), [30](#), [48](#), [55](#)–[81](#), [182](#), [184](#), [220](#), [244](#), [246](#), [250](#), [252](#), [255](#), [259](#), [261](#), [265](#)–74, [277](#), [278](#), [281](#), [294](#), [304](#), [308](#), [324](#)–7, [331](#)–2, [334](#)

Russian [38](#)–9, [42](#), [45](#)–[51](#), [218](#)–19, [220](#)–2, [233](#)

Social-Democratic Federation (Britain) [106](#), [262](#)–3

social-gospellers see Christian Socialists

socialism [xix](#)–[xxviii](#), [5](#), [40](#)–1, [44](#), [47](#), [49](#), [57](#)–[62](#), [65](#)–6, [70](#), [81](#), [93](#), [99](#), [100](#), [101](#), [107](#)–8, [114](#), [131](#), [133](#), [141](#), [145](#), [185](#), [186](#)–7, [189](#), [219](#), [230](#)–1, [243](#)–4, [249](#), [262](#)–4, [267](#)–8, [273](#), [281](#), [307](#)

definition of [xx](#)–[xxi](#)

in Japan [xix](#), [29](#), [37](#)–[41](#), [43](#)–4, [56](#)–[66](#), [67](#), [70](#)–1, [91](#)–6, [99](#), [100](#)–1, [102](#)–3, [105](#)–6, [107](#)–8, [121](#)–2, [124](#), [130](#)–2, [134](#)–5, [141](#)–7, [177](#), [182](#), [186](#)–7, [198](#), [216](#), [222](#), [227](#), [229](#)–31, [248](#), [250](#), [252](#), [253](#), [258](#), [260](#), [263](#), [266](#), [268](#)–70, [272](#)–3, [279](#), [281](#), [292](#)–4, [296](#)–7, [300](#)–1, [307](#), [312](#), [315](#), [316](#), [324](#), [330](#)–6

first news of [31](#)–5

Socialist Labour Party (USA) [185](#), [190](#)–3, [197](#)

Socialist Party of America [184](#)–93

Socialist Party of Great Britain [xxi](#)

Socialist Party of Japan see Nippon Shakaito

socialists

samurai among [5](#), [115–17](#)

Social Revolutionary Party (Russia) or SRs [51](#), [142](#), [192](#), [218–22](#), [233](#), [256](#), [325](#)

Somata, Sakutarō [38](#)

sonnō jōi [4](#), [133](#)

Sorel, Georges [279](#)

Spain [56](#), [74](#), [302](#)

SPD [31](#), [45](#), [48](#), [50](#), [57](#), [59](#), [63](#), [64–73](#), [74](#), [76](#), [93](#), [99](#), [108](#), [141–2](#), [184](#), [186](#), [239–43](#), [246–9](#), [254](#), [267](#), [274–5](#), [282](#), [323](#)

Speed, George [195–6](#)

Stalin, Joseph [24](#)

state [34–5](#), [36](#), [59–60](#), [61](#), [62](#), [66](#), [68](#), [71](#), [95](#), [101](#), [126–9](#), [135](#), [141](#), [147](#), [158](#), [161](#), [163](#), [166–7](#), [172](#), [175](#), [268–9](#), [273](#), [278](#), [291–2](#), [302–8](#), [316–17](#), [325–7](#), [335](#)

oppression by [17–24](#), [48–9](#), [51](#), [63](#), [65](#), [70](#), [72–3](#), [78](#), [135](#), [158](#), [197](#), [204–6](#), [221](#), [225](#), [244](#), [251](#), [255](#), [256](#), [257](#), [268–9](#), [273](#), [278](#), [291–2](#), [302–8](#), [316–7](#), [325–7](#), [335](#)

state capitalism [xxii](#), [11](#), [34](#), [59–60](#), [65–6](#), [90](#), [93](#), [97–9](#), [101](#), [106](#), [108](#), [146–7](#), [151](#), [186–7](#), [257](#), [263](#), [268](#), [270](#), [279–81](#), [294](#), [295](#), [324](#), [331–2](#), [334–5](#)

in China [xx](#)

in Russia [xx](#), [34](#), [147](#)

state socialism see state capitalism

Stepniak see Kravchinsky, S.M.

strikes see labour disputes

see also general strike

Sudzilovski, Nikolai K. [215](#)

Sun, Yat-sen [218](#)–9

Suzuki, Bunji [158](#), [328](#)

Switzerland [56](#), [201](#), [206](#)

syndicalism [165](#)–7, [175](#), [177](#), [197](#), [198](#), [232](#), [242](#)–9, [256](#)–8, [273](#)–82, [302](#), [304](#), [323](#)–30, [332](#)–6

Taigyaku Jiken see ‘high treason case’

Tajima, Shōji [38](#)

Takabatake, Motoyuki [327](#)

Takagi, Kenmpi [317](#), [331](#)

Takenouchi, Tetsugorō [204](#), [206](#)

Takenouchi, Yosojirō [255](#), [295](#)

Tanzei, Tarō, [97](#)

Taoism [127](#)–9, [247](#)

Tarui, Tōkichi [39](#), [135](#)

Tazoe, Tetsuji [251](#), [253](#)–5 [271](#)–3, [306](#), [309](#), [331](#)

terrorism [38](#)–41, [48](#), [49](#)–50, [142](#), [165](#)–6, [182](#), [192](#), [200](#), [203](#)–5, [215](#), [218](#)–9,

[221](#), [232](#), [245](#), [277](#), [296](#), [299](#), [301–2](#), [307–18](#), [325](#)

textiles [6](#), [16](#), [17](#), [20](#), [153–8](#), [159](#), [168](#), [335](#)

Tokutomi, Roka [299](#)

Tokyo [24](#), [62](#), [72–3](#), [75](#), [90](#), [98](#), [100](#), [114](#), [125](#), [143](#), [145](#), [155](#), [161](#), [164](#), [168–72](#), [176](#), [184](#), [198](#), [212](#), [216](#), [233](#), [250](#), [260](#), [262–4](#), [271–2](#), [274](#), [298](#), [306](#), [313](#)

1905 riots [161–2](#)

Tōkyō Shakai Shimbun (Tokyo Social News) [271](#), [304](#), [329](#)

Tolstoy, Leo [42–4](#), [225–6](#), [263–4](#), [299](#)

Tosa [3](#), [36](#)

Tōyō Shakaitō (Oriental Socialist Party) [39](#), [135](#)

trade unions [20](#), [56](#), [69](#), [71](#), [95](#), [106](#), [117](#), [142–4](#), [158](#), [159](#), [166](#), [172](#), [190](#), [191](#), [194–8](#), [202](#), [241–7](#), [253–4](#), [256–7](#), [263](#), [264](#), [270](#), [277–8](#), [280–2](#), [325](#), [327–9](#)

Turgenev, Ivan S. [49](#)

Uchida, Rona [39](#)

Uchiyama, Gudō [310–11](#), [313](#), [331](#)

unemployment [161](#), [162](#), [270](#), [330](#)

universal suffrage [69](#), [185](#), [200](#), [203](#), [240](#), [249–52](#), [258](#), [261](#), [270](#), [271](#), [332](#)

Untermann, Ernest [188–9](#)

USA [31](#), [56](#), [63](#), [89–94](#), [96](#), [97](#), [100](#), [107](#), [136](#), [155](#), [182–206](#), [212–13](#), [214](#), [220](#), [240](#), [245](#), [247](#), [250](#), [254](#), [258](#), [323–4](#), [326](#)

Velli, Michael [25n1](#)

volya [214–7](#)

Wada, Eitarō [128](#), [197](#)

Wadezki, A.V. [215](#)

Wage labour xxvii, [4–5](#), [11](#), [13](#), [14](#), [60](#), [80](#), [99](#), [101](#), [145](#), [187](#), [196](#), [227–8](#), [230](#), [254](#), [280](#), [282](#), [301](#), [331–2](#)

wages [15–16](#), [20](#), [60](#), [94](#), [101](#), [102](#), [106](#), [145–7](#), [153–5](#), [158](#), [159](#), [161](#), [164](#), [165](#), [168–5](#), [253](#), [256](#), [257](#), [279](#), [282](#), [323](#)

wage slavery [279–80](#)

wages system

abolition of [xxv](#), [65](#), [114](#), [145](#), [186–7](#), [227](#), [230](#), [252](#), [272](#), [280–2](#), [301](#), [333](#), [336](#)

Wagner, Adolf [58](#), [70](#), [71](#)

Waldeck-Rousseau, Pierre [63](#)

Wallace, Alfred R. [97](#)

Wen (king of China) [133–4](#)

Williams, George [185](#)

Winkelblech, Professor [57](#)

Woodcock, George [276](#)

women [xxvi](#), [16–17](#), [20](#), [27n22](#), [69](#), [153–8](#), [159](#), [175](#), [330](#), [335](#)

working class

origins of [5](#), [11–20](#)

working conditions [16](#), [20](#), [26n18](#), [155–6](#), [161](#), [163](#), [282](#)

Yamaga, Taiji [225](#), [317](#)

Yamagata, Bantō [117–18](#)

Yamaguchi, Koken [98](#), [223](#), [239](#), [292](#), [294](#), [305](#)

Yamaji, Aizan [295](#)

Yamakawa, Hitoshi [23–4](#), [165](#), [225](#), [227](#), [248–50](#), [251](#), [257](#), [260–1](#), [270](#), [305](#), [328–9](#)

Yamakawa, Kikue [155–6](#)

Yamazaki, Kesaya [327](#)

Yanagida, Izumi [38](#)

Yano, Fumio [61](#), [105](#), [134–5](#), [145–7](#)

Yorozu Chōhō (Morning News) [114](#), [115](#), [120](#), [127](#), [130](#), [131](#), [132](#)

Yoshida, Shōin [132](#)

Yoshikawa, Morikuni [327](#)

Yūaikai (Friendship Society) [158](#), [172](#), [328](#)

Zasulich, Vera [38–9](#), [40](#), [45](#), [214](#)

Table 1.1: Economic Indicators, 1880-1905

Year	No. of 'Factories'	No. of Power-Equipped 'Factories'	No. of 'Factory' Workers	No. of Joint-Stock Companies	No. of Banks (with paid-up capital)		Capital Invested in Private Railways
1880					39	(¥6.3m)	
1881					90	(¥10.4m)	
1882	2033		61,025		176	(¥17.2m)	
1883					207	(¥20.5m)	
1884					214	(¥19.4m)	
1885		487			218	(¥18.8m)	¥ 11.8m
1886	1097		112,779 <sup>a</sup> 193,940 <sup>b</sup>		220	(¥18.0m)	
1887							¥ 12.1m
1888	1694		123,327 <sup>a</sup> 212,604 <sup>b</sup>				
1889	2259		220,138				
1890	2284		346,979				¥ 47.4m
1891	24-80		321,624				
1892	2767	987	294,425				
1893	3019	1163	285,478 <sup>c</sup> 381,390 <sup>a</sup>		545	(¥30.6m)	¥ 73.1m
1894	5985	2409	381,390 <sup>d</sup> 381,393 <sup>e</sup> 418,140 <sup>a</sup>		700	(¥37.4m)	
1895	7154	2758	418,140		792	(¥49.8m)	
1896	7640 <sup>f</sup> 7672 <sup>g</sup>	3069	434,832 <sup>f</sup> 436,616 <sup>e</sup> 441,616 <sup>d</sup>	2577	1005	(¥87.9m)	¥121.1m

1897	7287 <sup>f</sup> 7327 <sup>e</sup>	2950	437,254 <sup>f</sup> 439,549 <sup>e</sup>	3169	1223	(¥147.8m)	
1898	7085	2964	412,205	3474	1444	(¥189.4m)	
1899	6699	2305	408,029 <sup>e</sup> 423,171 <sup>f</sup>	3685	1561	(¥210.0m)	
1900	7284	2388	403,474 <sup>e</sup> 422,019 <sup>f</sup>	4254	1802	(¥239.4m)	
1901	7349	2764	433,813	4336	1867	(¥251.7m)	
1902	7749 <sup>h</sup> 7821 <sup>g</sup>	2991	488,277 <sup>h</sup> 498,891 <sup>e</sup>	4306	1841	(¥258.1m)	
1903	8274	3741	483,839	4382	1754	(¥253.0m)	
1904	9234	4000	526,215	4240	1708	(¥248.8m)	
1905	9776	4335	587,851	4214	1697	(¥252.7m)	

Sources: Figures are from Takahashi Kamekichi, *Meiji Taishō Sangyo Hattatsu Shi (History of Industrial Development in the Meiji and Taishō Eras)* (Tokyo, 1966), pp. 79, 163, 175, 238, 303, 547; Japan Statistical Research Institute, *Nihon Keizai Tōkei Shū (Collected Statistics of the Japanese Economy)* (Tokyo, 1968), pp. 55, 128, 204; Akamatsu Katsumaro, *Nihon Shakai Undo Shi (History of the Social Movement in Japan)* (Tokyo, 1974), pp. 31-2; M. Sumiya, *Social Impact of Industrialization in Japan* (Tokyo, 1963), pp. 33-4; Kazuo Okochi, *Labor in Modern Japan* (Tokyo, 1958), p. 5; Hyman Kublin, *Asian Revolutionary* (Princeton, 1964), p. 108.

Notes: a. Takahashi, p. 238.

b. Sumiya, pp. 33-4.

c. Okochi, p. 5.

d. Akamatsu, pp. 31-2.

e. Japan Statistical Research Institute, p. 55.

f. Kublin, p. 108.

g. Takahashi, p. 547. h. Takahashi, p. 303.

Table 1.2: Male and Female Factory Workers, 1880– 1905

Year	No. of 'Factory' Workers	No. of Women	No. of Men
1880			
1881			
1882	61,025	35,535 <sup>a</sup>	16,654 <sup>a</sup>
1883			
1884			
1885			
1886	193,940		
1887			
1888	123,327 212,604		
1889	220,138		
1890	346,979		
1891	321,624		
1892	294,425		
1893	285,478 381,390		
1894	381,390 381,393 418,140	239,476	141,917
1895	418,140	248,625,	169,515 <sup>b</sup>
1896	434,832 436,616 441,616	261,218 <sup>b</sup> 261,960 <sup>c</sup>	173,614 <sup>b</sup> 174,656 <sup>c</sup>
1897	437,254 439,549	234,462 <sup>b</sup> 255,305 <sup>c</sup>	182,792 <sup>b</sup> 184,244 <sup>c</sup>
1898	412,205	234,573 <sup>c</sup>	177,632
1899	408,029	256,763 <sup>c</sup>	151,266 <sup>c</sup>

	423,171	264,378 <sup>b</sup>	158,793 <sup>b</sup>
1900	403,474 422,019	248,617 <sup>c</sup> 257,307 <sup>b</sup>	154,857 <sup>c</sup> 164,712 <sup>b</sup>
1901	433,813	265,909 <sup>d</sup>	167,904 <sup>d</sup>
1902	488,277 498,891	305,842 <sup>d</sup> 313,269 <sup>c</sup>	182,435 <sup>c</sup> 185,622 <sup>c</sup>
1903	483,839	301,435	182,404
1904	526,215	318,264	207,951
1905	587,851	347,563	240,288

Sources: Figures are from Japan Statistical Research Institute, *Tōkei Shū*, p. 55; Kublin, *Asian Revolutionary*, p. 108; Takahashi, *Sangyō Hattatsu Shi*, p. 303; Sumiya, *Social Impact*, p. 33. Notes: a. These figures are from Sumiya, p. 33. The figures for women (35,535) and men (16,654) do not add up to the total number of 'factory' workers (61,025). This is because, in addition to men and women, there were 9,863 children under 15 years old (whose sex we are not told) working in the 'factories'. Even when these children are taken into account, however, there is still a discrepancy in our figures - since  $35,535 + 16,654 + 9,863 = 62,052$  and not the figure given (61,025). This is an illustration of the inaccuracy of these early statistics.

b. Kublin, p. 108.

c. Japan Statistical Research Institute, p. 55.

d. Takahashi, p. 303.

Table 1.3: Labour Disputes, 1897–1905

Year	No. of Labour Disputes	No. of Workers Involved
1897 <sup>a</sup>	32	3517
1898	43	6293
1899	15	4284
1900	11	2316
1901	18	1948
1902	8	1849
1903	9	1359
1904	6	879
1905	19	5013

Source: Figures are from Japan Statistical Research Institute, *Tōkei Shū*, p. 296.

Note: a. Figures for 1897 are for the latter half of this year only.

Table 7.1: Economic Indicators, 1906–18

Year	No. of Factories	No. of Power-Equipped Factories	No. of Factory Workers	No. of Joint-Stock Companies	No. of Banks (with paid-up capital)
1906	10,361	4656	612,177	4289	1670 (¥256.5m)
1907	10,938	5207	643,292	4637	1658 (¥286.3m)
1908	11,390	5617	649,676	4728	1635 (¥295.5m)
1909	15,426	6723	692,221	4836	1617 (¥311.4m)
1910	13,523	6731	717,161	5025	1618 (¥315.3m)
1911	14,228	7756	793,885	5253	1613 (¥327.2m)
1912	15,119	8710	863,447	5827	1621 (¥369.4m)
1913	15,811	9403	916,252	6562	1614 (¥391.8m)
1914	17,062	10,334	853,964	7053	1593 (¥401.2m)
1915	16,809	10,688	910,799	7200	1440 (¥357.2m)
1916	19,299	12,612	1,095,301	7500	1424 (¥373.8m)
1917	20,966	14,310	1,280,964	8474	1395 (¥436.2m)
1918	22,391	15,632	1,409,196	10,636	1372 (¥511.5m)

Sources: Figures are from Japan Statistical Research Institute, *Nihon Keizai Tōkei Shū* (Collected Statistics of the Japanese Economy) (Tokyo, 1968), pp. 55, 128, 204.

Table 7.2: Male and Female Factory Workers, 1906–18

Year	No. of Factory Workers	No. of Women	No. of Men
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

Source: Figures are from Japan Statistical Research Institute, *Tōkei Shū*, p.55.

Table 7.3: Female Death Rates

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

Source: Figures are from Kikuye Yamakawa, 'Women in Modern Japan', *Shakaishugi Kenkyū* (The Study of Socialism), April 1922, p. 18 (English columns).

Table 7.4: Labour Disputes, 1906–18

Year	No. of Labour Disputes	No. of Workers Involved
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

Source: Figures are from Japan Statistical Research Institute, *Tōkei Shū*, p. 296.

Table 7.5: Average Daily Wage Rates, 1906–18<sup>a</sup>

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

Source: Figures are from Japan Statistical Research Institute, *Tōkei Shū*, pp. 284-5. Note: a. These average daily wage rates are average national rates unless otherwise stated.

Table 7.6: Prices, 1906-18

Year	Tokyo Wholesale Price Index <sup>a</sup>	Tokyo Cost of Living Index <sup>b</sup>	Price of Rice	
			Wholesale (Tokyo)	Retail
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 <sup>d</sup>
1918	212.6	174.3	32.75	38.49 <sup>d</sup>

Sources: Derived from Figures given in Japan Statistical Research Institute, *Tōkei Shū*, pp. 252, 254, 258, 262.

Notes: a. 1906 = 100.

b. 1914 = 100.

c. Prices given are for 1 koku of rice (1 koku = 180 litres).

d. Kondo 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. (Kondo Kenji, *Watashi no Mita Nihon Anakizumu Undo Shi* (A. Personal History of the Anarchist

Movement in Japan) (Tokyo, 1972), p. 22. )

Table 7.7: Fluctuations in Wage Rates, Cost of Living and Retail Price of Rice, 1914–18<sup>a</sup>

Year	Silk Worker	Ship's Carpenter	Agricultural Worker		Carpenter (Tokyo)	Printworker (Tokyo)	Cost of Living (Tokyo)	Retail Price of Rice
			Male	Female				
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

Note: a. 1914 = 100 in each case.

Table 7.8: Outcome of Labour Disputes, 1914–18

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

Source: Figures are from Hagiwara Shintarō, *Nibon Anakizumu Rōdō Undo Shi* (History of the Anarchist Labour Movement in Japan ) (Tokyo, 1969), p. 102.