

WALKING THE THIN LINE:  
ISHIKAWA SANSHIRŌ AND JAPANESE ANARCHISM

by

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## Abstract

Ishikawa Sanshirō (1876-1956) was a political dissident and social activist during Japan's rapid yet troubled transformation into modern nationhood. Ishikawa believed that one's ideal life and destiny is growth and development in self-disciplined freedom, a conviction he articulated through political and philosophical discourses that emphasized humanistic principles. This view diametrically opposed state efforts to control one's destiny and growth vis-à-vis nation-state authoritarianism, articulated through discourse that emphasized state-endorsed national ethos and conformity. The agent of Ishikawa's opposition to state practice and ideology was 'counter' practice and ideology that simultaneously tried to resist and undermine state authoritarianism. Ishikawa reconciled his 'counter' practice and ideology with state suppression and his desire to fulfill his humanistic commitment, a feat that required him to walk a thin line between the pitfalls that compromised the beliefs or ended the careers of so many of his peers.

Although Ishikawa wrote prolifically all his life, his place in the historical 'web' has been largely disregarded. The task of determining Ishikawa's 'place' is thus contingent upon surveying a few select primary sources (literature from various instances in Ishikawa's career) and secondary accounts of Ishikawa's actions and beliefs. This analysis will reveal the nature of Ishikawa's 'counter' practice and ideology within its socio-political environment from 1900 to 1950.

(Note: Japanese long vowels are designated as follows: ū, ō. )

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## Introduction

When Western encroachment forced the Meiji Restoration in the late 19th century, 'counter' practice and ideology became a by-product of a new state structure that imitated Western-style government and restored the Emperor but only paid lip service to the theoretical foundations of imperial rule and liberal democracy.<sup>1</sup> As Japan navigated the fast but bumpy road to modern imperial power, popular opposition to the gap between state practice and ideology emerged through 'counter' practices and ideologies of socialism, anarchism, ultranationalism, liberalism and others. At times social conditions induced a reactionary stance and suppression of certain kinds of organizations and beliefs. At other times 'counter' elements were tolerated, and in some instances the state incorporated 'counter' ideology into its own practice and ideology. Consequently, the political climate for 'counter' practice and ideology changed frequently and significantly affected individuals devoted to social change.

This study focuses on one individual, Ishikawa Sanshirō (1876-1956), who opposed state practice and ideology during Japan's rapid yet troubled transformation into modern nationhood. Ishikawa believed that ideal life consisted of growth and development in self-disciplined freedom, a conviction he articulated through political and philosophical discourses that emphasized emancipation, egalitarianism, benevolence, mutual aid in society and universal peace. This view diametrically opposed state efforts to control one's destiny and growth vis-à-vis nation-state authoritarianism articulated through discourse that emphasized state-endorsed national ethos and conformity. The agent of Ishikawa's opposition to state practice and ideology was 'counter' practice and ideology that simultaneously tried to resist and undermine state authoritarianism. Like his peers, Ishikawa was active when the socio-

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<sup>1</sup>The Emperor's political authority was nominal. Real power was exercised by Meiji leaders who copied Western institutions but not their value consciousness i.e. the primacy of civil rights.

economic impact of war produced domestic populism that threatened the status quo in late Meiji (1905-1910), the Taishō Democracy interval (1920-1931) and the postwar era (1945-1950). These periods featured heightened government suppression that left activists with three choices: defiance, which usually resulted in arrest; adjustment, which entailed changing one's beliefs or approach; or silence in physical and intellectual withdrawal. Ishikawa reconciled his 'counter' practice and ideology with state suppression to fulfill his humanistic commitment, a feat that required him to walk a thin line between the pitfalls that compromised the beliefs or ended the careers of so many of his peers.

## **I Confrontation: 1900-1913**

### ***Background***

Socialism was one avenue of opposition to over-zealous modernization and authoritarian state power in Meiji Japan. State policy towards dissent was characterized by suppression more than tolerance, a tendency consistent with precedents established during the Tokugawa era and a desire among Meiji oligarchs to protect both their own positions of political power and the integrative, unifying force that was modernizing the nation.<sup>2</sup> The external necessity of the Western threat left in question the internal necessity of the rights and welfare of citizenry.<sup>3</sup> Meiji state architects sought to alleviate the void between the priorities of the state and the well-being of the people by promoting a realm of existence for each. The public realm of imperial rule was a self-justifying entity, exempt from explanatory analysis.<sup>4</sup> In the private

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<sup>2</sup> Richard H. Mitchell, *Thought Control in Prewar Japan*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1976: 20-21.

<sup>3</sup> Matsumoto Sannosuke, "The Roots of Political Disillusionment: 'Public' and 'Private' in Japan," in J. Victor Koschmann (ed.), *Authority and the Individual in Japan*, Tokyo, University of Tokyo Press, 1978: 32-33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid: 45.

realm of the individual, freedoms and rights accorded by the stipulation that they could not transcend the public realm, which itself came to have almost universal dominion over one's life. Excluding private from public required a palatable ideology of Emperor omnipotence for public consumption, *exoteric* ideology, and an elitist belief in a more restricted definition of imperial power, *esoteric* ideology.<sup>5</sup> To a significant degree, conformity and progress were embodied in the concept of *kokutai*, a sublime characterization of Japanese emperor, nation and ethnic identity that became a pliable, one-word justification for social intolerance reflected in a host of laws and ordinances that limited freedom of speech, assembly and the press.<sup>6</sup> Simultaneously, the state ambitiously promoted modernization and nationalism through propaganda, education and policy-making. Meiji socialists faced a difficult task of appealing to individuals immersed in modernization rhetoric, while avoiding draconian laws that limited their 'counter' practice and ideology.

Japan's early socialists combined tenets of Confucianism, the *shishi* samurai tradition<sup>7</sup> and the Japanese emperor system with ideology imported from Europe. In the Confucian tradition of elitism, enlightened individuals saw the working class as something to be helped rather than a potent revolutionary force. Socialist leaders borrowed a belief in virtuous, self-sacrificing, direct action from the samurai *shishi* tradition which resulted in lengthy jail sentences when they refused to balk at state suppression efforts. Western and Eastern ideas were often compatible. For example, the socialist rejection of commodity production fits well

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<sup>5</sup>Exoteric ideology, *kenkyō*, mobilized energy of the people in service of a monarch who they believed had unlimited authority and power. Esoteric ideology, *mikkyō*, placed the authority and power of the emperor in a framework of limitations formed by the constitution and other considerations. Kuno Osamu, "The Meiji State, Minponshugi and Ultrationalism," in *Ibid*: 64.

<sup>6</sup>Mitchell provides five definitions for *kokutai*: national prestige or 'face', ship of state, essence of Japanese society (including the emperor system), emperor is the state (locus of sovereignty), and the Japanese way of life (in the much the same sense as 'the American way of life'.) *Thought Control*: 20.

<sup>7</sup>*Shi shi* samurai were key purveyors of the Meiji Resoration.

with the samurai's disdain of money, even though the rationale in each case stems from two completely different ideologies.

Support of the Emperor was prevalent at this time since a rejection of the Emperor was tantamount to rejection of the *kokutai*. In fact, socialists did not see their ideals as contradictory to the *kokutai*, but rather that the spirit of the *kokutai* had been violated by Meiji leaders. The socialist notion of *kokutai* emphasized Japanese virtues of the organic community, spiritualism over materialism, *jin* (Confucian benevolent love) as the guiding principle of human relations<sup>8</sup> and “ethical concerns in its assumption of the underlying moral cohesion of the community, and in its faith in the moral integrity and regeneration of humankind . . .”.<sup>9</sup> By insisting on this traditional moral interpretation, Meiji socialists were able to reconcile their opposition to the state with the *kokutai*.

### ***Socialists and Christians***

A significant number of early socialists including Ishikawa Sanshirō were Christians. The *Shakai Minshutō* (Social Democratic Party), formed in May 1901 and banned the same day, was organized by Nishikawa Kōjirō, Abe Isoo, Kinoshita Naoe, Kawakami Kiyoshi, Katayama Sen and, the only non-Christian, Kōtoku Shusui. The affinity between socialism and Christianity in Japan existed because both rejected an attachment to private power and property, had an acute sense of evil as either sin or social injustice, predicted the end of the world in its present form, preached self-denial, and looked forward to a form of utopia.<sup>10</sup> Whereas Christianity served to cement the loyalty of man to God and nation in the West, since Tokugawa times in Japan it represented a threat to the state. Japanese socialists became

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<sup>8</sup> Hoston, The State: 139-140.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid: 143.

<sup>10</sup> Maruyama Masao quoted in Victor Koschmann, Authority and the Individual: 56.

alienated when they used gospel to criticize Meiji emperor-ideology and government. State suppression forced Christians to suspend their ideological confrontation with the state while their own beliefs stipulated that they shun emperor-centered nationalistic ethos and other ideologies.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Confronting the state***

Ishikawa gravitated towards Christianity and socialism as outlets for his opposition to the state. Trained as a lawyer at *Tokyo Hōgakuin* (what is now Chuō University), Ishikawa may have had a chance at a career in government but he objected to the duplicity of state practice and ideology. He found an outlet for his beliefs as a journalist and in the *Heimin-sha* (Commoner's society) that met to exchange socialist ideas. However, Ishikawa was frustrated by state law in exposing *exoteric* ideology. Criticizing the emperor-system could carry *lese majesty* charges because the state considered the Emperor and the emperor-system the same. Ishikawa instead concentrated his attack on the governmental organs of imperial-rule and the social establishment. He began writing for *Yorozu chōhō* (Everything Useful) which frequently pointed out the negative consequences of industrialization—poor work conditions, low pay, industrial accidents, pollution—and presented socialism as the solution to these problems.

### ***Energizing socialism***

The Russo-Japanese War and its fallout had a considerable effect on the Japanese socialist movement. Russia's defeat sparked the 1905 Revolution and charged Japanese socialists with enthusiasm; events in Russia were viewed as a spark for world-wide revolution.<sup>12</sup> With the Meiji elite fading from the political picture, the ensuing power struggle over charting the nation's course produced holes in the *exoteric* veneer. The fall 1905 Hibiya

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<sup>11</sup> Victor Koschmann: 57.

<sup>12</sup> Hoston, *The State*: 143-144.

riot toppled the Katsura military-bureaucratic government, belying a mass public energy and potential for change.<sup>13</sup> The political stirring reverberated throughout society, agitating workers<sup>14</sup> and injecting life into the socialist movement.

In what was to become a common occurrence in 'counter' practice and ideology groups, opportunity for progress was preempted by internal division. State-generated nationalism claimed the sympathies of a number of socialists who saw it as an opportunity "to have progress and conquer a decadent past."<sup>15</sup> Jingoism claimed many Christians and socialists, causing them to abandon socialist and Christian ideals to support the nation's war effort. Church officialdom shocked many Christians by abandoning pacifism and internationalism and coming out in full support of the war. This surge of nationalism had more to do with a change in government policy than with any organized decision by Japan's denominations. Christians had long endured a significant degree of stigmatism and state suppression<sup>16</sup> but with the world watching the war with predominantly Christian Russia, Japan switched to a more supportive policy to avoid charges of heathenism or barbarism from the international community.<sup>17</sup>

Ishikawa did not join the pro-war chorus. When *Yorozu chōhō* switched to a pro-war stance, Ishikawa quit and joined the only anti-war paper, the *Heimin Shinbun* (Commoner's Newspaper). In two 1904 articles Ishikawa condemns the dangerous nationalism generated by

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<sup>13</sup>Osamu in Koschmann: 69.

<sup>14</sup>This is evident with the Ashio Mine uprisings which culminated in a 1907 riot.

<sup>15</sup>Hoston: 142.

<sup>16</sup>The Tokugawa Shogunate had long been wary of Buddhism and Christianity as threats to state authority. Answering to God above the Emperor, the Shōgun, or any political power, quite obviously represented a threat to a nation traditionally very sensitive towards ideological dissent. The Meiji constitution of 1890 officially allowed freedom of religion but on the condition it did not contradict declared governmental authority.

<sup>17</sup>It stands to reason that Japan wanted all Gods on its side!

the war and suggests that it is really a war of imperialists.<sup>18</sup> Socialists in Russia and Japan have no quarrel, claims Ishikawa. Their real enemy is the state, the “politicians, aristocrats and millionaires” who benefit from the war. Ishikawa asserts his own patriotism but does not see it in conflict with his love of Russia or other countries; in fact he defines this ‘love’ as a single non-discriminating emotion that transcends national boundaries. He vents his anger at his own government who threatens the well-being of the nation by engaging in a foolish war, and at all governments who kill by war. War is the manifestation of the evil potential of man, an evil he vows to fight the rest of his life.

Church officialdom’s support of the war split the *Heiminsha* into two factions, each propagating a similar brand of socialism but with divergent attitudes towards religion. The larger group started publishing the radical bi-monthly journal *Hikari* (Light) in November, 1905, which advocated a separation of politics and religion. *Hikari* frequently attacked organized Christianity, viewing religion as a snare for the working class.<sup>19</sup> Ishikawa and Kinoshita Naoe formed a smaller faction and began publishing the Christian-socialist *Shin Kigen* (New Era) the same month. The journal also criticized organized Christianity but retained a Christian perspective, advocating a highly individualistic, spiritual approach towards socialism.<sup>20</sup> The cover invariably featured an angel holding a shining cross and carried such articles as *Seibo Maria no Kakumei Shisō* (The Revolutionary Thought of Mother Mary).<sup>21</sup>

Ideological differences became less aggravated after the war, allowing the socialist movement to again focus its struggle against the state. Public agitation produced a positive

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<sup>18</sup> “A Letter to the Russian Socialist Party,” appearing March 13, 1904 and “Loving One’s Nation and Loving Another’s Nation,” appearing June 12. From Kitazawa Fumitake, *Ishikawa Sanshirō no shōgai to Shisō* (The Thought and Career of Ishikawa Sanshirō), Tokyo, Kaimeitō, 1974: 126-129.

<sup>19</sup> John Crump, *The Origins of Socialist Thought in Japan*, Kent, England, Croom Helm Ltd., 1983: 296.

<sup>20</sup> This tendency is best personified in Uchimura Kanzō’s *mukyōkai* (non-church movement) .

<sup>21</sup> Crump, *Origins*: 297.

result for socialists on January 6, 1907, when Saionji Kinmochi became prime minister. Saionji exhibited a greater tolerance than Katsura and the left-wing movement immediately benefited. The two factions ignored their comparatively minor differences to renew joint publication of the *Heimin Shinbun*. Ishikawa became editor of the daily but declined any role in the newly created *Nippon Shakai-tō* (Japan Socialist Party).<sup>22</sup>

The rift between socialists and Christians was replaced by dissension between moderates and radicals. The viability of realizing social change through the parliamentary system was shaken by the experience of the Russian Revolutionary Party. This realization prompted Kōtoku Shūsui, the *defacto* leader of the socialist movement, to dramatically change his views on parliamentary politics. When writing for *Shin Kigen*, Ishikawa had engaged in a debate with Kōtoku over the potential for achieving socialism legally through parliamentary elections. Kōtoku pointed to the Russian Social Revolutionary Party in 1905 as a positive example of individuals working together for socialism without succumbing to the lure of parliamentary power. The Social Revolutionaries had succeeded in electing some candidates but, according to Kōtoku, had not been led astray by illusory promises of constitutional politics. Ishikawa believed that a parliamentary system would eventually compromise socialist ideals. Elected socialists would gradually abandon their polices in a *real-politik* power game, subsuming their interests in a 'majority-rules' system that invariably favored the nation's true power brokers. Socialists would then behave as any other elected representative—serving state interests. Kōtoku agreed with Ishikawa on the dangers of a parliamentary system but felt that parties could maintain their integrity. The case of the Russian Social Revolutionary Party eventually

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<sup>22</sup>Ishikawa had also refused involvement in the 1902 socialist party. A rejection of parliamentary politics is consistent with most forms of anarchism; however, Ishikawa is unique in that he supported political organizations but refused to join them.

proved Ishikawa correct. Initially, the Party maintained direct action policies of insurrection, general strikes, and assassination to achieve its political goals, but the appeal of achieving change legitimately through a parliamentary system resulted in an abandonment of direct action policies. When the Tsar moved to suppress political parties, the gains of the revolution were crushed. Kōtoku, who returned from America in 1906 having read and corresponded with Russia's leading anarchist Petr Kropotkin, then announced a change in his views from socialism to anarcho-syndicalism. He urged his colleagues to adopt 'direct action'<sup>23</sup> into the socialist platform and repudiate parliamentary politics. From that period onward, the socialist movement became polarized between social democrats, who advocated socialism through the existing political system, and direct action radicals, who adopted tactics of the earlier Russian Social Revolutionary Party.

'Direct action' became synonymous with violence — and in Japan's case, with Kōtoku and his 10 comrades. Through propaganda by deed it was hoped that the masses would be convinced that salvation lay in participation in social revolution. Despite renowned anarchist Michael Bakunin's insistence that these 'deeds' were supposed to occur only as a flash that would awaken the masses in the initial phases of revolution, not as a planned series of incidents, a few anarchists throughout the world, including Kōtoku, interpreted the use of violence quite liberally and planned campaigns of terror against the state. The Japanese example illustrates the net effect of this strategy—far from motivating the masses, terror

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<sup>23</sup>Japanese 'direct action' has both traditional and imported origins. It is both a samurai virtue and a term for violence, general strikes, protests or demonstrations in European anarchism. Petr Kropotkin and Michael Bakunin, two of the most influential anarchist theorists in Japan, urged readers to organize local revolts and protests as well as individual acts of protest. Ira Plotkin, Anarchism in Japan: A Study of the Great Treason Affair, 1910-1911, Lampeter, Wales, Edwin Mellen Press Ltd., 1990: 146.

alienated and stigmatized anarchists, making them targets of public disdain and state suppression.

Kōtoku's decision to pursue direct action was a watershed event for the socialist movement in Japan. Kōtoku's direct action resolution at the February 1907 *Nippon Shakai-tō* (Japanese Socialist Party) convention proposed that under no circumstances should the party co-operate within the existing state polity. As Ishikawa had predicted, the party vote polarized socialists causing a permanent split between 'statist' moderates and anarchist radicals. And Ishikawa would demonstrate throughout his career, he refused to take sides. He felt that Kōtoku's ideas were extreme, but he obviously applauded Kōtoku's change of heart on political parties. Ishikawa's feeling toward the *Shakai-tō* is demonstrated by his absence at the convention and his willingness to publish details of the convention as co-editor of the *Heimin Shinbun*. For the government, however, the published story and the whole impact of the convention were cause to renew suppression of the left. Socialists thereafter were under constant surveillance, facing stiff penalties for minor offences and suffering police brutality.<sup>24</sup> For publishing Kōtoku's speech, Ishikawa and two other editors of *Heimin Shinbun* were charged under the Public Peace Police Law for 'publishing offensive material to public order and morals'.<sup>25</sup> Ishikawa was sentenced April 25, 1908, and served 13 months in Sugamo prison.

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<sup>24</sup>The 'Red Flag Incident' was a portent of future state response to the left. In celebration of the release from jail of two comrades, a group of socialists took to the streets waving flags emblazoned with 'Anarchy' and 'Anarcho-communism' and singing radical songs. The police set upon the group and arrested them. Stripped naked, suspects were beaten, kicked, dragged by their feet in the police station. The court handed down sentences of 2½ years to nine individuals for waving the flags. John Crump, *The Origins of Socialist Thought*, Kent, Croom and Helm Ltd, 1983:305.

<sup>25</sup>Crump, *Socialist Thought*: 255; also Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Ji Jōden*, Tokyo, Seido-sha, 1977; also Tsuzuki Chushichi, "'My Dear Sanshiro': Edward Carpenter and his Japanese Disciple," in *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies*. (Vol. 6:1) Nov. 1972, :2. Tsuzuki suggests that the prosecution also utilized the contents of Kōtoku's speech which referred to the Ashio Mine Riot (February, 1907).

### *The effects of jail*

Incarceration of socialists often produced the opposite of what the state intended. Far from silencing individuals, jail provided individuals with time to expand their reading of socialist literature and incorporate these ideas into their own writing. Ishikawa's term in Sugamo gave him opportunity read a number of European socialist treatises that had a great influence on his philosophy. Among them was Kropotkin whose essays and books constituted essential reading for anarchists world-wide. Japan's early socialists were aware of Kropotkin but it was not until his translated *Conquest of Bread* appeared in 1906 that he had a noticeable impact. Kōtoku's beliefs changed dramatically after reading Kropotkin and played a crucial role in his pursuit of violence against the state. After reading Kropotkin's seminal *Conquest of Bread* for the first time, Ishikawa agreed with much of what the author said, but felt his arguments on the path to revolution and on life in general were too optimistic.<sup>26</sup> However, as is reflected in Ishikawa's later writing, Kropotkin's influence was substantial.<sup>27</sup>

A second individual that Ishikawa had opportunity to study in jail was English philosopher Edward Carpenter. Ishikawa's introduction to Carpenter had a great impact on his jail experience and the rest of his life. He read a number of Carpenter's books and compiled an anthology edition in Japanese called *Carpenter: Poet and Prophet*. Years later, Ishikawa was able to visit Carpenter at his country-side cottage near Sheffield on numerous occasions. The particular agrarian-based anarchist philosophy that Carpenter lived and espoused is essential to Ishikawa's own physiocratic ideals which he propagated in Japan during the 1920s.

<sup>26</sup> Ishikawa, *Jijōden*. (1956), vol. 1:147 in Tsuzuki, "My Dearest Sanshiro":2.

<sup>27</sup> Kropotkin greatly influenced anarchists in Japan and China. His *Mutual Aid* was a 'bible' for Chinese anarchists. Hoston, *The State*: 150. Also see: 144-169. Kropotkin's contributions to anarchism include the concepts of mutual aid (cooperation) the scientific basis for anarchism (the species with the highest degree of cooperation was the most likely to flourish). Marshall: 309-339.

Jail also gave Ishikawa the opportunity to co-author with Kōtoku *The History of the Western Socialist Movement*, a work that presents some interesting questions about the nature of state suppression. The police ban on this book at the time of its publication contributed to his decision to leave Japan in 1913. However, when it was finally published during his absence, it became popular with Japanese socialists. Considering the notoriety of *The History of the Western Socialist Movement*, it is worth asking why prison officials allowed inmates to receive and produce the kind of literature that was originally responsible for their jailing. There is no definitive answer. One can only speculate that since the prison and police systems were under two different ministries (Justice and Home respectively), prison wardens at this time were not privy to the same intelligence network that allowed police to identify 'dangerous' literature and hence were not sufficiently knowledgeable about, or even sensitive to, the kinds of thought and literature police sought to suppress. Although this phenomenon strikes one as strange considering the severity with which thought criminals were persecuted, it is not all inconsistent with later developments which featured strong intra-ministerial rivalries.<sup>28</sup>

### *Alienation: 'Graveyard'*

The culmination of events in the past three years alienated Ishikawa. Upon his release in April, 1908, Ishikawa, undoubtedly weakened and depressed from the past 13 months,<sup>29</sup> rejoined a socialist movement that was under continuous police surveillance and harassment. He had isolated himself by opposing the War, which was exacerbated by his own Christian and

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<sup>28</sup>During the height of the thought control campaign from the late 1920s, police and state prosecutors frequently withheld information from each other. Police officials often criticized the Justice Ministry's 'soft' rehabilitation programs. In this sense, the Home and Justice ministries viewed thought control as an opportunity to expand their jurisdiction. See Mitchell, *Thought Control, Janus-faced Justice* and Elise Tipton, *The Japanese Police State: The Tokko Interwar Period*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1990.

<sup>29</sup>Ishikawa's and Ōsugi Sakae's autobiographies note the squalid conditions of Sugamo prison.

socialist beliefs, and served a year for printing what someone else said. Now his private realm faced even greater intrusion by the public realm.<sup>30</sup>

This mood is captured eloquently in Ishikawa's July 25, 1909 poem 'Graveyard'<sup>31</sup> which appeared in *Sekai Fujin*<sup>32</sup>. The stark poetic style and less-than oblique criticism of Japanese society as well offers a rare illumination of Ishikawa's anarchist philosophy. Written at a time of particularly heightened sensitivity to seditious literature, 'Graveyard' gives the sense that Ishikawa knew that he was likely to be prosecuted so he went ahead and wrote what he really thought.<sup>33</sup> If the two-month sentence he received for 'Graveyard' is any indication, it was a poignant and evocative piece.

Ishikawa invokes the dreary and bleak metaphor of Japan and the world as a graveyard of sub-human ghosts and ogres. The ghosts are the working class, the oppressed, malnourished beasts of burden in a world devoid of life and vitality, the hapless farmers, workers and women whose miserable lives are inherited by their children through the ogre-controlled education system. The ogres are the oppressors, the police who strike down ghosts with steel Billy clubs, the capitalists who suck the blood from weary ghosts and the state officials who manage the hellish world from the safety of their office 'graves'. The ogres eternally starve for prosperity, authority, prestige and sexual passion; gamble, speculate, rape and kill; suck the life from

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<sup>30</sup>The average person could not qualify as good Japanese citizens merely by behaving in accordance to their obligations to the Emperor. One could not really be called a loyal citizen unless he held the emperor's authority in utmost regard and gave it high priority even in his inner conscience and subconscious impulses. This left plenty of leeway for the state to declare someone as "un"-Japanese. Osamu in Koschmann: 66.

<sup>31</sup>See 'Appendix A' for a complete translation.

<sup>32</sup>With Fukada Hideko, the celebrated hero of the 1880s *Jiyū Minken undō* (Liberty and People's Rights Movement), Ishikawa published and edited *Sekai Fujin* (World Women), the first socialist paper devoted to the cause of women's emancipation in Japan. Tsuzuki "My Dear Sanshiro": 4.

<sup>33</sup> Writing around the censors was usually the only way to get published, and certainly the only way to avoid being prosecuted. This resulted in a certain style in protest or critical pieces which made use of euphemisms, indirect references and basically 'toned-down' prose. The limits of 'style' no doubt coincided as closely as possible to the permissible level of a given period. Intolerance increased nominally with activism but was particularly severe for anarchists up to and after Kōtoku's arrest, and for everyone following the Manchurian incident.

ghosts, beat them into submission and plunder their labor. The ephemeral ghosts float about in confusion, fatigued from not being able to die; excluded from the world of ogres, but subject to their every whim. Ishikawa pleads to the reader that all is needed is for the ghosts' eyes to be awakened, and the graveyard can be reborn as paradise. But the police with Billy clubs are the ogres' muscle and they strike out to prevent the emancipation of ghosts. If only the ghosts could realize, he laments, that the steel of a Billy club can not touch the soul.

The overpowering imagery in 'Graveyard' conveys Ishikawa's anarchist perspective. His portrayal of Tokyo as a vast lifeless graveyard—dead, impersonal steel contraptions carrying people about, somber morgue-like buildings swallowing half-alive ogres and ghosts—is a provoking critique of modernity in all its de-humanizing urban dimensions. Gone is the "time honored independence of the rural village," "the wonderful old village life," replaced by commercialism, authoritarianism and oppression. His portrayal of equally covetous 'foreign ogres' reflects the 'workers-of-the-world' mentality held by socialists, anarchists and Marxists which transcended national boundaries. Ishikawa's mention of victimized women is consonant with his recent interest in women's issues. His portrayal of ogres who use power and wealth to compel, seduce and sometimes assault women into marriage correlates to Ishikawa's opinions about the Japanese marriage system that appeared on other occasions in *Sekai Fujin*.<sup>34</sup> Ishikawa leaves no question about his hatred of greedy and overbearing bureaucrats, businessmen, police and politicians, or about the desperate and depressing lot of the working class. The exploitation and helplessness of the working class 'ghosts' is a constant motif in 'Graveyard' and is consistent with an anarchist view of the industrial world.

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<sup>34</sup>Ishikawa felt that women should marry for love, not for prosperity, convenience or because they were compelled by prior arrangement. His comments on marriage appeared in *Sekai Fujin*, the women's magazine which he co-edited after the demise of *Shin Kigen*. While women's issues were not central to Ishikawa's philosophy, it is obvious he considered patriarchy another manifestation of authority and domination.

### *The Great Treason Affair*

Ironically, Ishikawa's two-month sentence for 'Graveyard' from March 28 to May 28, 1910, may have saved his life. While Kōtoku and his small band of direct action advocates were formulating tactics that would later see them arrested and executed, Ishikawa and a few other dissidents, including Ōsugi Sakae, were languishing in prison. On May 10 police discovered number of explosives at the residence of Miyashita Takichi, one of Kōtoku's comrades. A campaign of investigations and arrests of all known socialists and anarchists was followed by months of interrogation. In December 1910, 26 anarchists went to trial and in January, 1911, 14 had their sentences commuted while 12 were hanged.<sup>35</sup>

The 'Great Treason Affair' and its fallout resulted in an oppressive environment for socialism known as the 'winter period' (*fuyu jidai*). Two manuscripts Ishikawa wrote in jail were banned, *The Light of Nothingness* and *History of the Western Social Movement*. The hostile atmosphere and disorganized state of socialist organizations contributed to Ishikawa's growing notion to leave Japan. Despite being refused a passport, he was persuaded by the Belgian Vice-consul to go abroad. On March 1, 1913, he boarded a French liner as an attendant for the wife of the Belgian consul and arrived in Marseilles, France, April 7.<sup>36</sup>

### *Summary to 1913*

Ishikawa's 'counter' practice and ideology developed through socialism and Christianity and became radicalized towards anarchism due to state suppression. Urging *Shin Kigen* readers to "pick up the cross and propagate socialism," Ishikawa saw religion as a *sine qua non* for the rise of socialism in Japan; only in rousing people's spirit would widespread social change be

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<sup>35</sup>While there was strong evidence that four individuals—Kanno Suga, Miyashita Takichi, Niimura Tadao and Furukawa Rikisaku—planned a bombing campaign against the Emperor, the case against Kōtoku and seven others was dubious. See Plotkin: 105-115; Notehelper: 272-297.

<sup>36</sup>Tsuzuki: 5. Tsuzuki offers no further details on Ishikawa's departure, nor do primary sources.

possible.<sup>37</sup> Ishikawa regarded the socialist involvement in parliamentary politics disparagingly. Political parties, he maintained, were not to be trusted—they simply lulled people into compliance and servitude. Change could only come about from the hearts of individuals. Thus, the work of socialists lay in propaganda and education, not in organizing political parties. Ishikawa's faith was also reflected in his interpretation of class struggle. He did not oppose the theory of class struggle as *Hikari* did. Instead, he made the qualification that “class warfare opens the way to human liberation only when it is permeated with socialist consciousness.”<sup>38</sup> By ‘socialist consciousness’ he is referring to “socialism totally based on the mutual love of common humanity,”<sup>39</sup> including women, which transcended gender roles and national borders. Socialism for Ishikawa was a faith based on Christian notions of spiritual transformation and attaining political change would require thousands of adherents to this faith.

The surge of socialist activity from 1905 to 1907 initialized a period of heightened state suppression that physically and ideologically marginalized Meiji socialists. By surveillance, intimidation, arrest, abuse or incarceration police seriously reduced the propaganda and educational potential of socialism. Socialists felt that suppression of their activities was a symptom of the sophistry underlying Meiji state practice. The national essence of the *kokutai* had been betrayed: modernization had preserved Japan's sovereignty but soon became rampant, replacing the virtues of traditional society with selfishness and immorality.<sup>40</sup> Socialists incorporated this moral, national prerogative into their platform but the egalitarian, communal and, especially, transformative elements in socialism conflicted with state heterodoxy. As the state more strenuously rejected socialism socialists become more alienated,

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<sup>37</sup>Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Shin Kigen* (August 10, 1906), p.8 in Crump, *Origins*: 297, 299-300.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid: 300.

<sup>39</sup>Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Shin Kigen* (May 10, 1906), p:4-5 in Ibid: 300.

<sup>40</sup>Hoston, *The State*: 140.

a phenomena which is exhibited by Ishikawa and Kōtoku's turn towards anarchism and the retreat from political activism by many socialists.

## **II Retreat: 1913-1920**

While Ishikawa and his biographers have chosen the word 'exile' to describe his sojourn to Europe, the circumstances of his departure can be more accurately described as a 'retreat'. The government banned Ishikawa's *History of the Western Socialist Movement* which opened the way for potential prosecution. Considering his experiences of the past few years, another jail sentence was something Ishikawa dearly wished to avoid. A change in scenery would allow him to study the birthplace of socialism while experiencing none of the limitations produced by the Kōtoku Affair. Equally important, he looked forward with great anticipation to meeting his mentor Edward Carpenter.

### ***Ishikawa's mentor Edward Carpenter***

Carpenter (1844-1929) was one of a small group of intellectuals and activists who rejected the social conventions of Victorian society. Much like his contemporary Oscar Wilde, Carpenter's position as a social outsider and critic was undoubtedly conditioned by his declared homosexuality. Carpenter was an evolutionary anarchist who rejected ". . . Fabians who came to believe in Social Darwinism and the survival of efficient societies and institutions. . . . [L]ove would unite men by linking the finite with the infinite, and society would grow in search of this new ideal by successively throwing off the husks of the old."<sup>41</sup> The transcendental quality of Carpenter's philosophy is consistent with an anarchist version of

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<sup>41</sup>Chushichi Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter: Prophet of Human Fellowship*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1980: 198.

instantaneous social transformation. The search for an ideal existence could repel restrictive forces by virtue of higher moral prerogatives.

Greatly influenced by Buddhism and Christianity, Carpenter's writing reflected a certain mysticism and a disdain for materialism. In his crowning work, *Towards Democracy*, Carpenter delivers an impassioned and poetic plea for readers to follow his road to salvation: reject the trappings of society and live close to the earth and its people. Democracy meant an emotional or spiritual self-reckoning rather than political philosophy. Once men achieved this spiritual understanding by reverting to the land, government, laws and police would fall into their places, the natural law of the earth would reign with "the rabble of unfaithful bishops, priests, generals, landlords, capitalists, lawyers, kings, queens, patronizers and polite elders scuttling into general oblivion."<sup>42</sup> He advocated a pluralistic view towards individual identity and politics. Class and gender division could be overcome by homosexuality; the state could be conquered by socialism, anarchism, syndicalism or any combination thereof. The latter represents what Tsuzuki terms 'double collectivism': resistance to the excesses of the state at a personal and organizational, state-sanctioned level.<sup>43</sup> What form this resistance took mattered little in the grand scheme of things. The important thing was to resist, in any capacity.

### *Carpenter's influence*

Carpenter influenced Ishikawa in two ways. First, Carpenter's pluralistic views on lifestyle and politics encouraged a similar sentiment in Ishikawa. Ishikawa was impressed by Carpenter's lifestyle of sandal-making, farming and writing at his small farm with his partner George Merrill. Carpenter's own non-involvement with popular political debate was also consistent with Ishikawa's beliefs. In later years, when the anarchist movement was

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid: 47.

<sup>43</sup>Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter*: 198-199.

undergoing bitter ideological struggles, Ishikawa always emerged as a pacifying influence, urging anarchists to acknowledge their differences but be reminded that they shared the final goal. Insistence on orthodoxy, he maintained, resulted in unnecessary internal divisions. In times of police suppression the anarchists did not need another force dividing them, especially considering the political distance anarchists had yet to travel in achieving the final result of social revolution. A second influence was Carpenter's plea and example for men to live close to the earth as a grass-roots practitioner of anarchism. On each of Ishikawa's three visits to Carpenter's farm at Millthorpe, near Sheffield, he became more impressed with Carpenter's ideal lifestyle: farming or sandal-making for half the day, then writing or some other intellectual endeavor in the other half. This, along with his expanded knowledge of Carpenter's reasoning for this lifestyle, provided the basis for Ishikawa's *Domin* (People's Democracy)<sup>44</sup> which he propagated in Japan upon his return and led to his involvement in physiocracy.

#### ***Ishikawa's introduction to Paul Reclus***

Ishikawa's status in Europe was that of a political exile, a status resulted in a difficult and unstable lifestyle. Because he did not hold a visa for any of the countries he visited, Ishikawa relied on connections for his survival. He wrote Carpenter from Brussels shortly after his arrival: ". . . I will stay here for some time. Though I am hoping heartily to call on you as soon as I can, I cannot (do so) because I am so poor."<sup>45</sup> Poverty was evidently a bigger

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<sup>44</sup>*Domin* literally translates to 'People's Thought' or 'Native Thought'. *Domin* bears close resemblance to Carpenter's *Towards Democracy* which advocated a pure, simple agrarian lifestyle practiced on an individual basis. As mentioned above, Carpenter suggested this lifestyle allowed men to realize personalized democracy. Essentially, it is an individual version of anarchism's communal and libertarian rural life.

<sup>45</sup>Ishikawa to Carpenter from *Horo-Hachinen-ki*, (Eight Years of Vagabondage), 1922 in Chushichi Tsuzuki, "My Dear Sanshiro: Edward Carpenter and His Japanese Disciple," *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies* (6:1) November, 1972: 5. Ishikawa's own choice of words, 'vagabondage', is apropos.

problem than his illegal status.<sup>46</sup> He almost returned in 1914 before he was rescued by Paul Reclus, the nephew of the famous Belgium geographer and anarchist Elisé Reclus. Reclus landed Ishikawa a job as a decorator to augment his paltry income as a Japanese newspaper correspondent. The German invasion forced him to leave Brussels for France in 1914.<sup>47</sup> During the war Ishikawa obtained jobs in Laincourt and Domme through his Reclus connection.

Ishikawa was influenced by the pacifist anarchism of Elisée Reclus who, like Kropotkin, came to stress the gradual and evolutionary side of social change after the failure of the anarchist induced violence in the 1880s.<sup>48</sup> Central to Reclus's anarchist philosophy is the concept of evolution and revolution as successive acts of the same phenomena; evolution as the natural course of events and revolution as the sudden change which occurs once the organism—whether society or a species—becomes limited and insufficient. Ishikawa incorporated Reclus's theory on revolution into his own philosophy.<sup>49</sup>

### *The 'Winter Period' in Japan*

The high degree of police sensitivity towards political activism subsided after the Kōtoku affair but the left could not overcome its radical and violent image. Nevertheless, the lull provided an environment for a quiet reconstruction of the movement. Since populist socialism in the form of political parties or societies was still dangerous, the anarcho-syndicalist strain of the socialist movement which addressed individual growth experienced significant advancement under Kōtoku's successor, Ōsugi Sakae. A number of anarchist

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<sup>46</sup>Ishikawa's activities were also monitored, as much as possible, by Japanese embassy personnel, though Ishikawa seemed unaware and unaffected by it. Reel 27, Japanese Government Documents and Censored Publications (A checklist of the microfilm section), Library of Congress, Washington, 1992.

<sup>47</sup>His proximity to the war seems to have caused him to abandon his pacifist principles, at least for the moment. As with Kropotkin, Reclus and many other anarchists, Ishikawa favored fighting the Germans to the finish. While this appears to make Ishikawa a hypocrite, if one considers his pacifistic views on achieving revolution, which he held all his life, it is easier to excuse this inconsistency as a product of exceptional circumstances.

<sup>48</sup>Marshall: 343-344.

<sup>49</sup>This had implications with Ishikawa's differences with Hatta Shūzo. See Chapter IV.

publications sprung up in the 'winter period' including Ōsugi's own *Kindai shisō* (Modern Thought). By 1914 Ōsugi established a syndicalism study society and with other anarcho-syndicalists directed their energies to a mixture of criticism and encouragement of the struggling labor movement.<sup>50</sup>

Syndicalism is a strain of anarchism that aimed at harnessing the revolutionary potential of trade unions which had grown with industrialization in Europe. The French Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) adopted the principle that emancipation of the workers was a task of the workers themselves.<sup>51</sup> In theory syndicates were to reflect the organization of the anarchist society—federal and autonomous, each body exercising the right of self-determination. Workers were to be organized by trade or industry into syndicates in a given locality. These groups next established a local federation by aligning themselves horizontally, then vertically with syndicates of the same industry or craft. These federations were to form a national confederation to co-ordinate their efforts. The CGT was formed in 1895, divorced itself from political parties in 1902 and staged a series of dramatic strikes in 1906, culminating in a campaign for a shortened 8-hour workday. After 1914 it became largely a reformist union and was forced to re-form as the CGT Unitaire in 1921 after the communists infiltrated and seized control. However, the legacy of the CGT was the organizational model it provided for similar organizations in other countries, including the 1927 *Zenkoku Jiren* (All-Japan Labor Federation).

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<sup>50</sup>Hoston, *The State*: 146.

<sup>51</sup>Marshall: 441.

### III Apex: 1920-1931

A number of factors caused Japanese 'counter' practice and ideology to reach its apex of influence and development during the 1920's and after the end of the decade experience cataclysmic decline. The World War I economic boom rejuvenated the universal suffrage movement and stimulated labor activism. After years of power struggles, the *hanbatsu* governing clique was at last forced to pass the mantle of power to the parliamentary system. The first elected cabinets began to appear, signaling a trend towards true democracy. In particular, Yoshino Sakuzō's *Minponshugi* (Government based on the people) seemed prepared to claim political power for the people. Meiji traditions were also assaulted in industry. The state was unable to counter the overwhelming surge in trade unionism rising from increased demands on workers and massive profits incurred by industry. Though unions were still not legal, in practice the state was forced to tolerate their existence. Thus, the onset of post-war depression produced an unprecedented wave of strikes and labor unrest. Probably the most telling signs of a people's movement were visible in popular culture. It was the era of *moga* (modern girl), radio, dance halls, Western clothes and hairstyles—a growing self-consciousness that often flew in the face of tradition and, not surprisingly, alarmed the ruling elite.

#### ***'Domin': People's democracy***

In 1920 Ishikawa sensed an improvement in the political climate and returned home charged with the influences of Carpenter and radical social changes in Europe. Ishikawa gave a lecture at Tokyo Imperial University in 1921 entitled *Domin* which advocated an anarchist vision similar to Edward Carpenter's *Towards Democracy* whereby 'democracy' was spiritual

emancipation by the individual accessible through a simple agrarian-based, uncluttered life.<sup>52</sup> Ishikawa's notion of *Domin* was reinforced by Carpenter's own adherence to this idyllic lifestyle.

The political result of *Domin* was physiocracy. Ishikawa became more engrossed in the agrarian aspects of *Domin* which resulted in his involvement in Japan's agrarian problems. Farmers believed they had borne the brunt of the post-war depression.<sup>53</sup> A grass-roots movement developed among tenant farmers who blamed cities as the primary cause of economic hardship. Ishikawa lectured and provided leadership to the Farmer's Self-Government Organization (*Nōmin Jichikai*). On December 1, 1925, the *Nōmin Jichikai Zenkoku Rengō* (All Japan Farmers' Federation) and the *Nōmin Rōdō-tō* (Farmers-Workers Party) was established by Ishikawa, Shimonaka Yasaburō, Nakanishi Inōsuke, Shibuya Teisuke, Takeuchi Kunie and Kawai Hitoshi.<sup>54</sup> The Farmers' Federation issued a declaration of their grievances which stated that farmers were directly exploited by landlords and indirectly exploited by cities,<sup>55</sup> and to be liberated from these constraints they needed their own economic organizations.<sup>56</sup> The Federation sought to establish self-government to control their own lives, especially their own economic affairs. Economic autonomy would be achieved through regional self-government consisting mainly of tenant farmers. Again, Ishikawa warned of the dangers inherent in political organizations and declined an official role. The most important issue, Ishikawa maintained, was for members to deny themselves any kind of

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<sup>52</sup>Carpenter's 'democracy' is not just a political democracy but a "personal democracy of feeling". Tsuzuki, *Carpenter*: 196.

<sup>53</sup>Thomas Havens, *Farm and Nation in Modern Japan: Agrarian Nationalism, 1870-1940*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1974: 185-190; Crump, *Hatta*: 118-123.

<sup>54</sup>Hirashima Toshiyuki, "Ishikawa Sanshirō no Shakai Tetsugaku (The Social Philosophy of Ishikawa Sanshirō)," in *Gakushūin Shigaku* (34) March, 1994: 37.

<sup>55</sup>'Cities' refers to urban wholesalers organized in trading cooperatives who controlled prices. Farmers felt that city dwellers benefited from this unfair arrangement.

<sup>56</sup>Hirashima: 37.

temptation to obtain political power. “Although you are a farmer, you are not *Domin* if you are interested in politics or try to exploit other people for your profit. The ideal of *Domin* is not success in the world but freedom of oneself and his group. It means freedom of equality.”<sup>57</sup> The Farmer’s party was banned within 30 minutes of its formation<sup>58</sup> so Ishikawa continued to propagate physiocratic ideals by organizing nation-wide groups and lectures through the auspices of *Zenkoku Rōdō Kumiai Jiyū Rengōkai* (All-Japan Libertarian Federation of Labor Unions (*Jiren*)). The *Nōmin Jichi-kai* dissolved in 1928 after a deadlock over policy, whether the organization should pursue its goals through political parties or through rural libertarian organizations.

Nevertheless, or perhaps related to problems with the *Jichikai*, in 1927 Ishikawa took steps to realize his vision of agricultural life as outlined in *Domin*. He rented a small plot of land near Chitosei-mura, in the Hachiman region outside of Tokyo and began a life of *hannō* (‘half-farming’). Ideal communal agricultural life propagated by Kropotkin saw each individual performing four or five hours of work in the fields and spending the remainder of the day engaged in intellectual or artistic activity. Ishikawa took to rice farming with some difficulty but his intellectual activity flourished. He envisioned artisans, workers and theoreticians like himself living in the neighborhood, independent and self-governing, engaged in semi-agricultural life. This small commune would lead to others, eventually forming a network across Japan. If independent, the communes would federate freely and a nation-wide network would form by itself.

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<sup>57</sup> Ishikawa, “*Nōhon Shugi to Domin Shisō*,” in *Ishikawa Sanshirō Chosakushū Vol. 3* quoted in Ōhara Ryokuhyo, *Ishikawa Sanshirō*. Tokyo: Riburopoto, 1987: 196.

<sup>58</sup> This proved to be quite a blow to activists who had, with growing hints of a Universal Suffrage Bill passing in the Diet, planned since 1923 to form a Proletarian Party. The passage of the Bill in March of 1925 was met with great enthusiasm, but the response of the state to socialist parties was what it had always been.

*Problems with 'Domin'*

Ishikawa's dream was ruined the day he moved to his new house on the farm. A colleague began questioning him about how the network would form, how it would be maintained, and, specifically, how the question of ownership and hierarchy would be decided.<sup>59</sup> The ensuing argument characterized Ishikawa's life-long problem in converting people to his faith: how to change the ideals of individuals who were thoroughly indoctrinated with state and society endorsed capitalism and private property ownership. Ishikawa was unable to convince his critics that they could transcend values and laws implicit in nation-state authoritarianism. In a country with limited land space, where all property was 'owned' and one viewed his own well-being in direct relation to private property, how could an individual see that property title was irrelevant? In a country where government, business and bureaucracy competed for power through elitist organizations, how could one envision society without hierarchy?<sup>60</sup> Ishikawa had seen, and would continue to see, this dilemma manifest throughout society, even within anarchist and socialist organizations which sought to rectify such issues. Ishikawa continued to emphasize that the road to anarchism lay in the educational and ideological, if not spiritual, transformation of the individual, not in anarchist groups which were susceptible to self-destructive tendencies inherent in political organizations. The ideal anarchist federation would have to be formed by individuals who had successfully expunged popular ideologies ingrained in their psyche by their own society. Ishikawa spent the rest of his days as an activist and writer addressing this issue. As the sole practicing anarchist at Chitosei-

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<sup>59</sup> Ōhara: 192.

<sup>60</sup> When one considers the success of the military in cultivating support among farmers in the 1930s, it may be suggested that it was necessary to appeal to the stomach rather than the brain. However, the biggest problem 'counter' practice and ideology faced was legitimacy. Considering the reputation of anarchism in Japan it is not surprising that farmers would ultimately throw in their lot with the organization most likely to meet their needs—without committing acts of treason against the state!

mura he criticized anarchists and antagonistic ideologies in the anarchist periodical *Kokushoku Sensen* (Black Battlefront). More significantly, through his literary magazine *Dynamic* Ishikawa constructed a philosophy he hoped would enlighten individuals to his ideal anarchism.

### ***The rise of Marxism and the anarchist response***

Marxist-Leninism superseded anarchism as the leading 'counter' practice and ideology in post-World War I Japan. The post-war instability that saw anarchism flower and die in the Russian Revolution forced many Japanese anarchists to recognize that Marxist-Leninist communism succeeded because, unlike anarchist theory, it propounded a specific means to revolution. Many anarchists joined the Communist International, some rejected Bolshevism totally while others became part of an anarchist-Bolshevik collaboration known as *Ana-boru*. This union was short-lived, however, as the ideological differences between the two groups proved insurmountable. In fact, the popularity of Bolshevism plagued anarchists and the drive to exorcise Marxist influences diverted their energies.

Anarchists regrouped after Ōsugi Sakae's 1923 murder<sup>61</sup> to intervene at the *Nōmin Rōdō-tō* (Farmers-Workers Party) December 1925 inaugural meeting in Tokyo. The new party was seen simply as an opportunity for political power-brokers to take advantage of newly enfranchised farmers and workers. Encouraged by the effectiveness of their joint action, anarchists began plans to form the *Kokushoku Seinen Renmei* (*Kokuren* [Black Youth League]). Six slogans were presented at a public meeting attended by over 700 delegates to announce the formation of *Kokuren* on January 31, 1926: "(1) Emancipation of the workers

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<sup>61</sup>In the aftermath of the 1923 Kantō earthquake police and military officials, fearing activists would take advantage of the disorder, rounded up political radicals. Ōsugi, a female companion and his nephew were murdered by military police and dumped into a well. Stanley: 155-165.

must be carried out by the workers themselves; (2) We insist on libertarian federation;<sup>62</sup> (3) Destroy the political movement; (4) Reject the Proletarian Party Movement; (5) Get rid of professional activists; and (6) Down with all oppressive laws and ordinances.<sup>63</sup> *Kokuren* members were also instrumental in forming *Zenkoku Jiren* (All-Japan Labor Federation) in May, 1926, an organization that included over 25 unions and 8300 workers and grew to 16,000 by 1931.<sup>64</sup> *Kokuren* supported workers at a number of strikes where they engaged in pitched battles with police. A strong syndicalist inclination was apparent in *Kokushoku Seinen*, the organization's periodical: "We believe that the means of revolution in Japan have to be collective action centered on labor unions."<sup>65</sup>

Many anarchists perceived the syndicalist trend an influence of Bolshevism and moved to expel syndicalist ideas and advocates. *Kokuren* and *Zenkoku Jiren* became more bellicose towards syndicalist ideas and after considerable verbal confrontation in March 1928, syndicalists either left or were excluded from both organizations.<sup>66</sup> The most vocal departing members invariably came out in full support of the Communist Party, an action that supported anarchist claims that their opponents sympathized with Bolshevism. The crucial distinction between the two factions was that syndicalists envisioned unions surviving as basic units of organization after social revolution while anarchists saw unions only as a means to revolution—afterwards unions would dissolve into autonomous communal federations along the lines advocated by Kropotkin. Pure anarchists argued that in concentrating on class struggle

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<sup>62</sup> 'Libertarian federation' represents a crucial distinction between reformist-anarchist and conventional anarchist organizations. Anarchist and Anarcho-syndicalist unions rejected centralized control permitted by reformists. This stipulation was also adopted by *Zenkoku Jiren*.

<sup>63</sup> *Kokushoku Seinen* (1) April 5, 1926 in Crump, *Hatta*: 70.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*: 75, 92.

<sup>65</sup> *Kokushoku Seinen* (2) May 5, 1926 in *Ibid*: 72.

<sup>66</sup> Anarcho-syndicalists formed the *Zenkoku Rōdō Kumiai Jiyū Rengō Kyōgikai* (All-Japan Libertarian Federal Council of Labor Unions (*Zenkoku Jikyō*)) in July of 1928 and continued fighting against companies, capitalists and police.

syndicalists neglected to attack capitalism or propagandize the anarchist alternative.<sup>67</sup> The survival of unions, and hence the survival of specialized industry, was at odds with pure anarchists who advocated decentralized industry.

Hatta Shūzo was the driving force behind 'pure anarchism' which emerged as the dominant anarchist theory in the late 1920s. Because of the infiltration of Marxism, Hatta constructed 'pure anarchism' as an orthodox ideology which rejected syndicalism.<sup>68</sup> Hatta's main criticism of syndicalism was that it drew eclectically from two opposing philosophies, anarchism and Marxism, and thus was doomed to decay into reformism. He maintained that syndicalism combined the Marxist theory of class struggle and ambition by workers to take over the means of production with the anarchist theory of creative violence by a minority.<sup>69</sup> He regarded "unions as merely one field of many which offered anarchists opportunities for promoting revolution."<sup>70</sup> Exploited tenant farmers were considered a more potent source of revolution.<sup>71</sup> Hatta also identified 'division of labor' as another shortcoming of contemporary syndicalism. When division of labor exists, he argued, labor becomes mechanized and degenerates into mechanical activity with workers becoming cogs in a great machine. Workers tied to one occupation perpetuates a sense of disunity in society because parochial interests associated with that way of life are reinforced. Industries engaged in vital production would ultimately hold power over lesser industries, providing another divisive force in society. Division of labor would not be conducive to a communal society. Hatta proposed instead a

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<sup>67</sup>Crump, Hatta: 98.

<sup>68</sup>Although syndicalism became a constituent element of mainstream anarchist theory from the turn of the century, Hatta felt unions tended to attract Bolsheviks.

<sup>69</sup>'Creative violence by a minority' is a concept developed by Bakunin for the masses to awaken. However, the failed 1880s campaign of terror in Europe prompted most anarchists to revise their thinking. The image of mad, fire-bombing cadres creating havoc and chaos has yet to be fully lived down by anarchists. Ibid: 102-103.

<sup>70</sup>Crump, Hatta: 91.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid: 91.

theory of 'division of work' whereby the sum of labor within each commune could be divided but necessarily shared and rotated.<sup>72</sup> Hatta's biggest criticism of syndicalists was their advocacy of class struggle as a means of revolution. Pure anarchists believed that class struggle tended to sustain authoritarian power relations and was contradictory to the ultimate goal of society-wide revolution. One class struggling and gaining victory over another class would result in a reversal of exploitation and a condition of continuous, self-defeating competition akin to social Darwinism.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, Hatta attacked physiocracy for advocating rural versus urban struggle. Although Hatta acknowledged that urban exploitation of farmers was a serious problem, he argued that physiocratic aims of forming political and economic organizations to oppose exploitation could only result in an aggravation of tensions between the two groups. He viewed capitalist exploitation as the source of class struggle and agrarian unrest, and argued that any effort not directed against this mutual problem was in vain. "Instead, the pure anarchists sought to bring about a revolution which would be jointly executed by the farmers in the villages and the wage-earning workers in the cities. The aim of revolution would be to dissolve the cities and convert the villages into the communes which the pure anarchists anticipated would form the constituent elements of an anarcho-communist society."<sup>74</sup>

The anti-urban theme of 'pure anarchism' gives it a traditional flavor that reminds us of Meiji anarchists. Rampant modernization and industrialization were two criticisms of Japanese society embraced by Kōtoku and Ishikawa. This tendency is underscored 25 years later by

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid: 146.

<sup>73</sup>As well, Hatta argued that the traditional class division between bourgeoisie and proletariat did not necessarily apply to Japan. A designation of proletariat more appropriate for Japan would be 'property-less masses' (*Musan taishū*) composed of tenant farmers, small traders, petty officials and artisans. Ibid: 115.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid: 119.

Hatta's pure anarchist denunciation of science and Ishikawa's criticism of science in *Dynamic*.<sup>75</sup> Hatta viewed science and capitalism as inextricably linked and it was through science that industrialization enslaved a growing number of workers who toiled at the machines of steel and textile mills. Science enhanced class divisions because the ruling class took care to monopolize knowledge, which included science, as instruments of social control.<sup>76</sup> ". . . (O)ne of the ways in which science reflects capitalism's priorities is that it operates on the principle of universality (*fuhensei*). Just as the bottom line for capitalism is inevitability the mathematical calculation of profit and loss, science too is based on mathematics, in the sense that it relies on methods such as quantitative assessment and in establishing numerically derived norms which are to be enforced with scant regard for local conditions and circumstances."<sup>77</sup> Far from refuting science altogether, 'pure anarchism' advocated a relative application of science which emphasized a localized geographical perspective sensitive to practical application within each commune.<sup>78</sup>

### *Ishikawa's response to anarchist developments*

Ishikawa's response to dissolution of the anarchist movement and the influences of 'pure anarchism' can be discerned in his writing towards the end of the 1920s. After the split in the anarchist movement in 1928, syndicalists published the monthly periodical *Kokushoku Sensen* (The Black Battlefront). This dissolved in late 1929 and was replaced in February, 1930 with *Kokusen* (Black Front). In three articles he wrote for *Kokusen*, Ishikawa attempted to clarify syndicalist doctrine by providing a history of anarchist thought and pointing out syndicalism's compatibility with mainstream anarchist ideology. These articles also indicated Ishikawa's

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<sup>75</sup>For Ishikawa's criticism of science see page 38 of this paper.

<sup>76</sup>Crump, Hatta: 125.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid: 126-127.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid: 127.

standpoint vis-à-vis 'pure anarchism' and addressed his belief that pure anarchists were misinformed in attributing syndicalist ideas to Marxism.

In "Aligning towards Kropotkin: Malatesta and the Worker's Alliance,"<sup>79</sup> his article in the inaugural edition of *Kokusen*, Ishikawa identifies specific problems and suggests solutions for the syndicalist movement in the Taishō period. In building his case for the necessity of syndicalism to cause revolution, Ishikawa cites two prominent anarchists, Kropotkin and Erico Malatesta, who did not ignore the importance of the industrial workplace in their anarchist vision.<sup>80</sup> Ishikawa refers to Kropotkin's *Letter to the Workers of the West* (1921) where he argues for a world-wide association of unions and communes to foment social revolution. While taking the example of the Bolsheviks in recognizing the importance of working class agitation, Kropotkin also warns of the excesses of socialist revolution, a point he debated with Lenin. Kropotkin believed Russia was on the road to totalitarianism and warned anarchists of the Bolshevik threat. Besides noting the bitter struggle consumer unions waged against takeover by the state following the Revolution, he gives the example of syndicalist struggle in France at the same time. The young syndicalists in the Confédération Générale du Travail faced not only suppression by the state but also a difficult internal struggle with Bolsheviks. The battle consumed their energy, preempting their efforts to build and expand CGT influence.

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<sup>79</sup> "Kuropotokin narabi ni: Maratesuta to Rōdō Kumiai," in *Kokusen* (1) February, 1930. p:12-14.

<sup>80</sup> Kropotkin had recognized early that industrialization would have to be accounted for in any comprehensive anarchist theory. Although focusing on the agricultural commune, he left room for the incorporation of industry. He called for the co-ordination of agriculture and industry, in a decentralized form, whereby each person could choose an occupation according to their inclination. He saw industry as part of the same equation: as people would control the production and distribution of agricultural products, so too would they control industrial products. The Russian Revolution thrust this issue to the forefront, not only as to the importance of the factory worker in the final anarchists vision but his role in bringing about revolution. As reflected in his writing, Kropotkin was impressed by the way the Bolsheviks utilized worker agitation in overthrowing the regime. Marshall: 330-1. Kropotkin provides greater detail for the place of industry in *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (1899).

“Social Mutation”<sup>81</sup> provides a sense of how Ishikawa thought revolution would occur. In rejecting historical materialism, most anarchists maintained revolution could be achieved spontaneously. Hatta envisioned a simultaneous and immediate revolution by a minority occurring in the cities and countryside that would at once break the shackles of capitalism and state authoritarianism. Ishikawa portrays revolution in more subtle terms, noting Kropotkin’s change of opinion at the turn of the century.<sup>82</sup> Ishikawa believed that, if anything, violence against the state had stigmatized anarchists, making them vulnerable to police retaliation and earning a reputation of ‘terrorists’ in the public eye. In Ishikawa’s vision of non-violent revolution borrowed from Reclus, the ‘shell’ of state and capitalist authority crumbles and the ‘chicken’ of anarchism forms inside, eventually pecking its way through to freedom.<sup>83</sup> Accordingly, this ‘new life’ has to be committed to freedom and libertarianism or it would begin to struggle against other ‘new lives’ and repeat the pattern of authoritarianism embodied in the state.

In “Concerning the Theory of Class Struggle”<sup>84</sup> Ishikawa attempts to reclaim ‘class struggle’ from Marxism. He begins by reiterating his long-standing and continuing opposition towards Marxism then goes on to clarify the genealogy of class struggle. “It is a big mistake (to suggest) that class struggle theory is a creation of Marx. This idea had already been common sense among radical ideologists in France fifty years before the Communist Manifesto.”<sup>85</sup> This is noteworthy considering that most Japanese probably associated class

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<sup>81</sup> “Shakai Myutashon (Social Mutation),” in *Kokusen* (9) September, 1930: p: 16-17. Here, ‘Mutation’ gives the connotation of rapid transformation.

<sup>82</sup> This is consistent with Count Leo Tolstoy who had argued that violent means could not possibly bring about peaceful ends. But, as mentioned, anarchists could not lose the moniker of ‘violent radicals’.

<sup>83</sup> ‘Social Mutation’: 17.

<sup>84</sup> “Kaikyū Tōsō Setsu ni Tsuite (Concerning Class Struggle),” in *Kokusen* (4) April, 1930: 1-3.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*: 1.

struggle with Marx.<sup>86</sup> More significantly, class struggle was the primary point of disagreement between pure anarchists and syndicalists. Hatta criticized class struggle more for the inhibitive effect he suggested it would have on revolution. Ishikawa seems sensitive to this point. “This process of development (class struggle) cannot be avoided. If in the class struggle between bourgeoisie and the proletariat a feeling of justice or friendship (is maintained), it is good. But in this struggle of the labor classes’ greed should not be encouraged—it would be a dangerous situation.”<sup>87</sup> Unlike Hatta however, Ishikawa viewed class struggle more as a tension between the governed and those who govern that could be avoided.<sup>88</sup> Ishikawa believed class struggle to be only one feature of an anarchist vision of social transformation. “In order to achieve a real human liberation movement we have to by every means of organization and education recognize class struggle as part of the process—unlike Marxists who see it as the whole process.”<sup>89</sup>

Ishikawa echoed some of Hatta’s criticisms of the larger anarchist movement. As noted, Ishikawa disagreed with Hatta on the notion of class struggle but like Hatta he rejected the materialist view of history. This had been a source of antagonism between anarchists and Marxists from the days of the first Communist International in 1870. Whereas Marxists perceived capitalism as a stage towards communism, anarchists rejected capitalism outright: it should never be allowed to flourish. Thus, no material pre-conditions were viewed necessary for the achievement of anarchist society.<sup>90</sup> Ishikawa’s attacks on Marx became more vocal

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<sup>86</sup> Crump, *Hatta*: 103. Through the 1920s many Japanese anarchists and communists, including Hatta, did not have access to banned Marxist literature. Their interpretation of Marx invariably was affected by Bolshevism, which was the most common interpretation of Marxist theory.

<sup>87</sup> “Concerning the Theory of Class Struggle,” in *Kokusen*: 1.

<sup>88</sup> It would be interesting to look at Ishikawa’s writing from his *Nōmin Jichi-kai* days to see whether his assessment rural-urban tensions is consistent with this view.

<sup>89</sup> ‘Class Struggle’: 3.

<sup>90</sup> This represents a common analytical shortcoming of anarchism. As demonstrated in Spain and the Ukraine, considerable economic, social and political instability were preconditions for successful anarchist movements.

towards the end of the 1920s and included a pamphlet criticizing dialectical materialism in 1928. But more significantly, he shared Hatta's opinion that anarchism needed an injection of creative energy to provide a theoretical challenge to Marxism and other political ideologies that were undermining the anarchist movement.

### *Proletarian literature*

The appearance of a new 'counter' ideology in the literary magazine *Dynamic* signals a significant departure by Ishikawa from his earlier approach towards anarchism. Ishikawa's previous writing criticized Japanese society and debated with other theoreticians. The anarchism he developed in *Dynamic*, a magazine he launched in 1929, abrogates the boundaries of anarchist discourse and the wider social trend of proletarian literature. Writing until the magazine's end in 1932 Ishikawa presented a theoretical, abstract and spiritual philosophy represented by two main ideas: *Shakai Rikigaku* ('Social Dynamics') and *Shakai Bigaku* ('Social Aesthetics'). 'Social Dynamics' carries the connotation of 'power-through-society' or 'The School of Understanding How Power is Exercised in Society'. 'Social Aesthetics' sprung from 'Social Dynamics' and advocated that aesthetic sense could develop universal consciousness necessary for rapid social change.

The search for identity by Ishikawa reflects a similar trend among Japanese intellectuals of this period. The process of probing the nature of self and then attempting to locate that self in a larger social context was a common theme among intellectuals.<sup>91</sup> In their quest for models of society these individuals sought to reconcile the discontinuities of traditional thought in the modern age with imported ideologies.<sup>92</sup> In 'Social Dynamics' and 'Social Aesthetics' Ishikawa

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<sup>91</sup>Thomas Rimer (ed.), *Culture and Identity: Japanese Intellectuals during the Interwar Years*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1990: 59. Rimer identifies this theme in the work of writers Abe Jirō and Kurata Hyakuzō.

<sup>92</sup>Nozuma Kawamura, "Sociology and Socialism in the Interwar Period," in Rimer: 61.

completely removes himself from the 'traditional' basis of Meiji socialism by urging individuals to immerse themselves in ego-based consciousness of themselves and their surroundings. At the same time, the emphasis on the contemporaneous ego is consistent with a Buddhist world view apparent in the philosophy of Nishida Kitarō and with the 'creativity of ego' perspective of Ishikawa's anarchist predecessor Ōsugi Sakae.<sup>93</sup> Ishikawa's link of social change and collective consciousness, while having a basis in anarchist discourse, is another motif among Taishō intellectuals, Abe Isoo in particular.<sup>94</sup> Although Ishikawa may not have viewed himself like Ōyama Ikuo, as a "... social engineer mobilizing his superior intellectual skill to advance the cause of the working class,"<sup>95</sup> his positivist attitude displays a similar hubris and naiveté.

#### ***'Social Dynamics' and 'Social Aesthetics'***

Ishikawa believed that 'Social Dynamics' and 'Social Aesthetics' could instill the mass self-consciousness necessary for instantaneous anarchist revolution. Besides an elaboration of *Domin*, both theories also intended to address dissolution in the anarchist movement towards the end of the 1920s as well as 'pure anarchism' which emerged as a result. 'Social Dynamics' and 'Social Aesthetics' addressed what Ishikawa saw as the major shortcoming of Hatta's 'pure anarchism': the theory of revolution. According to Hatta, revolution would occur by 'the creative violence of the minority' spurring the majority into the practice of natural anarchism.<sup>96</sup> To avoid revolution degenerating into localism, a mass understanding of the nature and purpose of new society would have to exist. Ishikawa aimed to create this mass

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<sup>93</sup>The resemblance to Nishida's *Study of Good* in particular is remarkable. The only real difference is the political end which Ishikawa hoped would come about through Zen-like consciousness.

<sup>94</sup>Peter Duus in Silberman, Bernard S. and H.D. Harootunian (eds.), *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taishō Democracy*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1974: 433.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid: 432.

<sup>96</sup>Crump, *Hatta*: 202.

understanding by criticizing social science, particularly Marxism, and proposing an antithetical scientific perspective. It is through these developments that we can discern Ishikawa's major contribution to anarchist theory in Japan.

'Social Dynamics' can be characterized as knowledge of political, social and economic power arrangements within society, the individual's particular place in that power matrix and the ways in which one could use their knowledge of 'Social Dynamics' to resist the power structure. In the first issue of *Dynamic*, February, 1929, Ishikawa introduces 'Social Dynamics' as an essential element of human liberation. "To reform living society towards liberation, . . . each individual must have knowledge of general 'Social Dynamics' and practice it."<sup>97</sup> The active element in 'Social Dynamics' is an idea Ishikawa described as '*Idea Forusu* (Idea Force)'. 'Idea Force' is independent, spontaneous power created and maintained by individual free will to realize anarchist society. 'Idea Force' can develop independently of external power and likewise be used against external power. It can therefore be seen as a means of transcending power relations in society and as a latent force in resisting power relations.<sup>98</sup> Thus, with 'Idea Force' as its operative strength, Ishikawa hoped 'Social Dynamics' could liberate the human spirit and pave the way to anarchism.

'Social Dynamics' presented a theoretical challenge to Marxist social science. Ishikawa's criticism of dialectical materialism entailed three main points: (1) with respect to the labor theory of value and mode of production, Marx regarded human beings as machines; (2) contemporary Marxists erroneously ascribe qualities inherent in limited sectors of society as representative of society as a whole; and (3) Marxists assume that actual physical existence is

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<sup>97</sup>Ishikawa, "Kaihō no Rikigaku (Liberation of 'Social Dynamics')," *Dynamic* (1) February, 1929. Tokyo: Kokushoku Sensen sha, 1976 (reprint) in Hirashima: 41.

<sup>98</sup>Hirashima: 41-43.

determined through metaphysical dogma.<sup>99</sup> 'Social Dynamics' sought to shed these limitations by viewing humans as eclectic beings to which no steadfast behavioral norms could apply. 'Idea Force' and 'Social Dynamics' could tap the potential of human endeavor through recognition of the forces that curtailed human development and a willingness to change them. Ishikawa viewed 'Social Dynamics' as science only in that it identified the obstacles and solutions to human liberation. The true value of 'Social Dynamics' was its potential to circumvent 'real' world social hegemony through 'other' world universality.<sup>100</sup> Marxism and social science was grounded in materialism, the physical environment of society and the atavistic pursuits of humans. 'Idea Force' addressed the spirit, the triumph of will and the dreamer in all of mankind. For Ishikawa, the attainment of ego-consciousness included the whole universe and this very act could transform mankind's material existence.

'Social Aesthetics' looked at social phenomena as subjects of aesthetic observation which supported Ishikawa's notions of enlightened human consciousness.<sup>101</sup> The constituent elements of an ideal anarchist society would be evaluated on the basis of aesthetic judgment and, at the same time, aesthetical inspiration could provide a motivating force. Ishikawa devoted much of his attention to defining the nature of aesthetics in this specific application. "There must be an object of a sense; and when the motion of life or the feature of life in the object is fixed to our own basic observation and creates vibration, aesthetic observation is achieved."<sup>102</sup> Ishikawa described the principle of aesthetics as discerning 'one taste among different tastes'; "(I)t is necessary that one taste above all is clear and the individuality of each element is obvious."<sup>103</sup> As such, aesthetics is composed of static observation, which appraises

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid: 41.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid: 41.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid: 42.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid:43.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid:43.

the way things are composed, and active observation, which assesses the way things change. Applied to social phenomena this yields a critique of current society and inspiration towards ideal society.<sup>104</sup>

‘Social Aesthetics’ provided Ishikawa a mechanism to criticize modern science. In much the same way as Hatta, he viewed scientific analysis as inadequate to gauge universal phenomena. To characterize an object or subject, Ishikawa argued that modern science selects certain aspects and arranges them to equate to human understanding thereby ignoring the relation of subject and object to the larger universe.

We accept the common similarity among different things and we name the collection of similarities and accept the conceptual principle. However, any kind of small subject in the universe shares various kinds of endless relations with any kind of other subject. By these various relationships this small subject can come into existence. Therefore, the subject has countless characteristics. However, human spirit does not have the ability to consider these kinds of things in totality. Therefore we have to conceptualize by very small qualities. Carpenter calls it a way of ignoring because we identify some qualities and cut them away from our perception. The concept of science is created in this way. It cuts the truth of the subject away and takes (analyzes) the shade. Modern scientists call this kind of illusion ‘reality’ and tend to ascribe this reality its value. In this way we have made a tragic mistake.<sup>105</sup>

Ishikawa regarded aesthetics as a much more basic principle than science and thus more capable of recognizing ‘totality’. However, he maintained that science should not be abolished altogether since it did have its merits. To provide a solution to this dilemma Ishikawa proposed ‘human science’ as an alternative based upon ‘Social Aesthetics’. In this scenario, artistic intuition would be used to recognize every phenomena surrounding the ego in much the same way proposed by Nishida Kitarō in *Study of Good*. Thus, Ishikawa claimed the result

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid: 43.

<sup>105</sup>Ishikawa, “Anakizumu no Kagaku,” in *Dynamic* (3) 1932 in Hirashima: 44.

was the unification of ego corresponding to one universe; ego-consciousness achieved through ‘Idea Force’ and the external environment understood through ‘Social Aesthetics’.<sup>106</sup>

‘Social Dynamics’ and ‘Social Aesthetics’ together provided Ishikawa with a conceptual foundation that supported his anarchist philosophy. ‘Idea Force’ urges free, spontaneous action by the individual and completes the expansion of self-consciousness.<sup>107</sup> Aestheticism liberated as a primal instinct becomes a motivating, uniting force in social existence and encourages social evolution. Ishikawa envisioned that individuals reaching this higher level of consciousness would join forces, their spiritual connection resonating in tune to a sublime universal vibration.<sup>108</sup> More precisely, ‘Social Aesthetics’ can be seen as a check on the highly individualistic potential of ‘Idea Force’. Presumably, expansion of ego to the extent that Ishikawa suggests would do nothing in the way of uniting anarchists to a particular mindset or course of action. ‘Social Aesthetics’ implies that enlightened individuals could assess their particular physical environment and conclude that mutual aid through libertarian anarchism represented the most ‘tasteful’ option.

***Summary: 1920-1931***

The positive environment for ‘counter’ practice and ideology in Taishō surpassed late Meiji but ended with the same result—suppression. The anarchist movement reached its most active period but seemed more obsessed with its ideological differences with Marxism than confronting the state. ‘Pure anarchism’ was perhaps the only outlet of creative energy for anarchists since they could not directly confront the state in print.<sup>109</sup> One could not simply call

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid: 45.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid: 43.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid: 43.

<sup>109</sup>Ironically, a large proportion of anarcho-syndicalists of this period worked at printing presses, the industry most sensitive to state suppression.

for the masses to rise and revolt so theorizing and squabbling was a method of keeping the ideology alive. However, considering the 'ultra-democratic' character of anarchism, was not an alignment towards the potent *Minponshugi* a more logical step? This union was preempted by anarchism's natural distrust of parliamentary politics even though democracy may have represented the expedient method towards breaking down political hegemony.<sup>110</sup> Democracy and radical socialism (including anarchism and Marxist-Leninism) worked against each other in their mutual battle against authoritarianism.

Ishikawa's physical and intellectual withdrawal allowed him to live close to his ideal anarchist lifestyle. Suppression almost completely cut off the public realm for Ishikawa which contributed to the development of a highly abstract philosophy. Suppression in this instance seems to have caused Ishikawa to construct an ideology so oblique in its approach that it may have been of little practical use to anyone. Nevertheless, the popularity of this approach became sealed with the rise of fascist nationalism. The collectivist ethic of exoteric imperial ideology was more acute than during Meiji. "The state was likened to the family, with the emperor *pater familias*; the enterprise was a pseudo-family; family-like unity was the ideal state of the harmonious village; even army officers were spoken of as 'mothers' to the other ranks who were their 'children'. So all-pervasive was this ideal that, even though Japan had acquired many of the political and economic forms of an individualistic democracy, individualism remained a sin . . ."<sup>111</sup> Ironically, the public realm had intruded to such an extent

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<sup>110</sup>Most anarchists including Ishikawa were uncompromising in their view of party politics. Their mistrust of parties is not unfounded considering the Taishō example. However, anarchists languished under the aegis of Marxism in that they continued to argue for revolution when in hindsight their goal would have been easier to obtain through democracy.

<sup>111</sup>R.P. Dore and Tsutomu Ōuchi, "Rural Origins of Japanese Fascism," in James W. Morley (ed), *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1971: 202.

that introspection became the only safe technique for Ishikawa to propagate his philosophy, which itself was antithetical to state endorsed ideology absorbed by most individuals.

#### **IV Withdrawal: 1932-1945**

The anarchist vision dissipated in the specter of the oncoming Pacific War which befell Japan in the early 1930s. The Home Ministry responded to political and social developments of the Taishō era, especially the growth of Marxism, with a re-worked Peace Preservation Law (1925) that contained specific language prohibiting anarchism and communism.<sup>112</sup> Again the pattern of increased police suppression of leftists was repeated only this time it was taken to new heights. The 1931 mixture of poor economic conditions, the Manchurian Incident and unstable political conditions expanded the range and intensity of thought control. The already narrow range of permissible left-wing ‘counter’ practice and ideology narrowed even more, resulting by 1935 in campaigns to impugn liberal and socialist thought.<sup>113</sup> The thought control campaign silenced left-wing journals and sent many anarchists into seclusion. “The only remaining alternative for the dissatisfied was to abjure all pretense of organizational rationality in favor of either expressive violence or political seclusion. . . . Free from the corrosive effects of communal authoritarianism that dominated the public realm, the individual found new outlets for his dissident impulses in private pursuits such as literature and the arts.”<sup>114</sup> Hatta Shūzo’s outlet was tragic: facing the rapid demise of his life’s work, he drank himself to death in early 1932. With *Kokusen* and *Dynamic* both banned by 1932, Ishikawa devoted his

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<sup>112</sup>Mitchell, *Thought Control*: 63; *Janus-faced Justice*: 36.

<sup>113</sup>The military destroyed the last vestiges of Itō Hirobumi’s government system with the ‘Movement to Clarify the National Polity’ thereby paving the way to ultranationalism. Osamu in Koschmann: 65.

<sup>114</sup>Koschmann: 57.

energies to ancient history and education. Again he managed to sneak out of Japan, this time to teach a year at the Beijing National Labor University from 1932 to 1933. Remaining anarchists and syndicalists managed to reunite in 1935 only to be arrested en masse after an aborted bank robbery.

Through the late 1930s and Pacific War, Ishikawa eked out a living growing vegetables as the sole practicing anarchist on his half-acre farm. There is limited evidence concerning his political activities. Ishikawa edited the *Nihon Gakujitsu Shinbun* (Japan Students' Art Newspaper) during the war and refused to conform to state policy in his opinions, advocating desertion from military service and non-violent methods of sabotage.<sup>115</sup> A second source corroborates this but suggests Ishikawa in large maintained a passive mode of resistance in which perfect silence was maintained.<sup>116</sup> Evidently, he lived by the good graces of his neighbors, for only a whisper to the thought police could have landed him in jail.<sup>117</sup>

## V Utopia (1945-1956)

The elderly Ishikawa witnessed the last and best chance for anarchist society in the aftermath of the Pacific War. Conditions in Japan after the war were as close to ideal for anarchists as they had ever been: mass destruction from Allied bombing, unstable economic conditions and a general fear of revolution in Japan's national polity.<sup>118</sup> The 18 months from

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<sup>115</sup>Tsurumi Shinsuke, *An Intellectual History of Wartime Japan, 1931-1945*, London, Routledge, 1980: 121. Tsurumi quotes Itani Ryuichi's *Hisen no shisō*, Kinokuniya Shoten, 1967. Ishikawa's war-time activities are not well-known and would be an interesting topic of study but are unfortunately beyond the resources of the present work.

<sup>116</sup>Ienaga Saburo, *Taiheiyō Sensō (The Pacific War)*, Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 1968: 143, 236, 245. Ienaga cites a 1939 incident in Singapore where soldiers deserted, it seems, under Ishikawa's advice. However, by and large Ishikawa seems to have been silent as his concentration on ancient studies would suggest.

<sup>117</sup>Ōhara: 195.

<sup>118</sup>John Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954*, Cambridge, Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1979: 273-303.

the August 1945 surrender to the February 1, 1947 banned general strike was a crucial period in Japan's history. War and occupation created a situation of flux—democratization efforts by SCAP froze the old order and temporarily freed the working class.<sup>119</sup> Opposition by big business to democratization caused a catastrophic economic breakdown: industrial production failed to meet the minimum of goods needed to feed, clothe and house the populace. Workers confronted the old guard and seized control of production at many factories, flouting private property rights. By midwinter 1946 farmers followed the workers example, and by spring the movement coalesced with a fledgling intra-industry exchange system.<sup>120</sup> Social needs assumed first place in the priority of operations; production and consumption was reintegrated through worker control. By April the combined mass movement brought down the Shidehara cabinet and by May forced General MacArthur to threaten suppression of the popular movement.<sup>121</sup> MacArthur's speech signaled the government and business counter-attack, the true beginning of the 'reverse-course'.<sup>122</sup>

The production control movement seems to have revived Ishikawa's anarchist activities.<sup>123</sup> In April, 1946 he accepted a position as 'advisor' for the post-war *Anakisuto-renmei* (Anarchist League).<sup>124</sup> Ishikawa wrote his utopian vision of Japanese society entitled

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<sup>119</sup>Joe Moore, *Japanese Workers and the Struggle for Power*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1983: xiv-xvii. SCAP officials desired a strong union movement as a political counterweight to the entrenched presurrender elites, and they were initially willing to tolerate some Communist Party influence within organized labor. To their shock, union membership soared from 5000 in October 1945 to 5,000,000 in December 1946; and to their ignorance, communists had nothing to do with the thousands of workers who engaged in production control. Sheldon Garon, *The State and Labor in Modern Japan*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1987: 238.

<sup>120</sup>The agreement between workers and farmers transferred rice, coal, ammonium sulfate, methanol, cash, and formalin in a barter network. Involved were: Farmer's Association of Tōhoku and Hokkaidō, National Agricultural Association of Tokyo, Edogawa Manufacturing (Tokyo), Coal Mine Workers of Japan Union, Tōyō Gōsei (Niigata), Niigata Farmers' Association and Niigata coal miners. Moore: 160.

<sup>121</sup>Joe Moore, "Production Control: Workers' Control of Early Postwar Japan," in E. Patricia Tsurumi (ed), *The Other Japan: Post war Realities*, Armonk, New York, M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1988: 15.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid: 15.

<sup>123</sup>There is not a direct correlation but anarchist Japan in "50 years Later" got its start in the immediate postwar in much the same manner as production control.

<sup>124</sup>*Nihon Shakai Undō Jiten (Bibliographical Dictionary of Japanese Socialist Movements)*, 1979: 45.

“Go-jū nen ato no Nihon (Japan 50 Years From Now)”<sup>125</sup> based upon conditions in the immediate postwar era. The Japan of the year 1996 embodies qualities of Ishikawa’s anarchist philosophy he developed all his life. Ishikawa casts himself as the character of an old man (120 years-old!) discussing how anarchist revolution had been achieved in Japan so many years ago. In a scenario from “Social Mutation”, the 1930 *Kokusen* article, anarchist society grew within the crumbling postwar capitalist-state system, eventually establishing itself as the predominant form of social organization. In typical anarchist fashion, communes were loosely amalgamated in federations which featured non-capitalist, non-authoritarian, non-elitist ‘departments’ of culture and economics. The divisions in these departments were manned by volunteers on a rotational basis, since the wage-system was a thing of the past. The Emperor remained as the spiritual figure-head which augmented a sense of cooperation and community throughout society. Gone were private property, usury, government and corruption; wars, crime, and disease. Human competition existed only in art and creation. Individuals had returned to a state preceding original sin and met to discuss their affairs at hot springs in the nude.<sup>126</sup> Most significantly, this anarchist society featured complete freedom of individuality and artistic expression.

Postwar populism and its mirror-image in “50 Years” touch upon both the dreams and ironies of Ishikawa’s career. Like real life, a small group kick-starts an autonomous cooperative in a stagnant regime. But whereas the farmers in Niigata and steelworkers at Edogawa viewed production control as temporary, the workers in Ishikawa’s story are able to

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<sup>125</sup>Ishikawa Sanshirō, “Go-jū Nen ato no Nihon [Japan After 50 Years],” reprinted in *Shisō no Kagaku*, December 1966: 74-89. Originally appearing in *Kurohata* [Black Flag] (19) 1956. Written by Ishikawa in 1946.

<sup>126</sup>Christian-based innocence and the connection of purity and bathing in Japanese tradition strike an interesting parallel here, not to mention the symbolism of nudism! Ishikawa certainly shared the common anarchist belief that men are good, or can be taught to be good.

expand the movement envelop the whole country. This is perhaps the biggest irony of Ishikawa's career: Japanese citizens were so conditioned to defer to authority that they could not seize the chance to emancipate themselves. The production control participants viewed their radical actions as temporary measures to fulfill immediate needs and attain long-term security. Short-term needs were met by taking over factories and food distribution which gave them something to trade. Their actions improved future prospects by forcing the government to devote resources into stabilizing production, if only out of fear that workers would take over everything. Peaceful, productive existence occurred in "50 Years" because the government was unable to reassert its authority. Obviously, Ishikawa did not account for SCAP, the 'foreign ogres', but despite the understandable gap between Ishikawa's utopia and real postwar events, the production control movement bears a striking resemblance to how peaceful anarchist revolution was supposed to occur. Production control began spontaneously in the weakened shell of capitalist nation-state order without significant leadership by any political group or individual<sup>127</sup> just as self-consciousness and commitment to action were to lead anarchist revolution. The ultra-democratic organization of struggle groups and workers who literally shoved company managers aside to start production is ideal anarcho-syndicalist organization yet it is highly unlikely that the idea for production control came from anything other than the notion of 'democratization' promoted by SCAP. Perhaps there was an old *Kokusen* pamphlet laying around somewhere, but the driving force behind production control was simply workers' and farmers' desperation to feed their families. Gradually the old guard regrouped to guide reconstruction and quell public agitation. SCAP took away the main antagonists in

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<sup>127</sup>The SCAP assertion that communists lead the movement has since been refuted. Like most other left-wing groups, their organizational structure and ranks had been so decimated by 15 years of suppression that they were unable to provide effective leadership.

Ishikawa's life—the *tokkō* (thought police), military and *zaibatsu*—but was unwilling to let freedom decide the shape of postwar Japan. As the 1940s waned, Ishikawa had to reconcile both the death of anarchism and his own mortality.<sup>128</sup>

## VII Conclusion

Ishikawa's 'counter' practice and ideology reconciled deep-seated humanism with the constant threat of state suppression. Early in his career Ishikawa objected to Meiji elitist rule that exploited citizens in the name of modernization and imperialism. State persecution and hegemony turned Ishikawa against social and political forms such as parliamentary politics to propagate a philosophy that emphasized radical political change through universal egalitarianism and good will. His quest for emancipation brought him to Europe where he adopted Edward Carpenter's personal-democracy approach and Elisé Reclus's peaceful revolution theory. The Taishō democracy allowed Ishikawa to return to Japan in 1920 where he advocated physiocratic and personal-democracy ideals through '*Domin*'. When the hammer of state suppression was poised to strike again Ishikawa constructed a transcendental anarchist theory where a Zen-like approach to universal enlightenment would lead individuals to anarchist revolution but avoid direct conflict with the state. Virtual silence and complete retreat at his farm near Tokyo allowed Ishikawa to avoid the thought control campaign of Japan's 'dark valley' years and re-emerge in the postwar to again present his anarchist vision.

The historical significance of Ishikawa cannot be measured in the usual way. He did not as his peers Kōtoku Shūsui and Ōsugi Sakae leave his mark on the historical record as a bright flash, a notorious character who flew in the face of authority. Ishikawa bided his time and

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<sup>128</sup>Ishikawa became incapacitated in 1950 with hydro-encephalitis and died in 1956.

adjusted his activities to stay just one step ahead of the state. His contributions to ‘counter’ practice and ideology can be measured by his life-long efforts to educate the disadvantaged. He was a conduit for Western socialism and anarchism and a behind-the-scenes supporter to a variety of social movements. His impact on feminism is one such example. Besides his contribution to the Meiji women’s movement, Ishikawa’s translations of Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin were read by Takamure Itsue, a leader of the 1920s and 30s women’s movement and editor of *Fujin Sensen* (Women’s Front).<sup>129</sup> Ishikawa lived and worked with Mochizuki Yuriko, a regular contributor to *Fujin Sensen*.<sup>130</sup> Ishikawa undertook a monumental task in promoting a philosophy antithetical to state interests and unable to match the resources and legitimacy of groups more closely aligned to state ideology. With this it seems his efforts were guaranteed to fail, which raises the question: why bother writing about a doomed philosophy? The significance of Ishikawa’s philosophy is not found in what it accomplished but rather in what it proposed: its utopian value, which is less concerned with realizing ends than visualizing possibilities.<sup>131</sup> Ishikawa believed in a much better world and hoped that in telling and living his ideal lifestyle, society could move towards this better world. In this we find Ishikawa’s most significant accomplishment: his practice and ideology were consonant—he lived as he wished others to live.

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<sup>129</sup>Rose Gail Carter, “Takamure Itsue: Social Activist and Feminist Theorist 1921-31,” M.A. Thesis, Department of Asian Studies, 1982: 56-57.

<sup>130</sup>They had a daughter, Eiko, together.

<sup>131</sup>Northrop Frye, “Varieties of Literary Utopia,” in Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*, (Translated by Robert Adams), New York, W.W. Norton, 1992: 210.

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## Appendix A

Ishikawa Sanshirō “Graveyard,” in *Sekai Fujin* (July 25, 1909)

—*The world is a graveyard*—

The ogre is leaving quickly in the wagon.  
 The ghost is walking away with a hoe over his shoulder.  
 The electric train passes.  
 The locomotive passes.  
 The ship passes . . . but not even one person goes by.

The place we call Tokyo is quite large,  
 but you won't encounter one living person.  
 Well, I don't know, but if you walked around Japan  
 you'd know it is pretty small,  
 small enough that you would meet one living person.

Tokyo is a graveyard.  
 Japan is a graveyard.  
 The world is a graveyard.  
 Every single person everywhere;  
 they're all dead.  
 Only ogres and ghosts exist.

—*Gaki*<sup>132</sup> *and ghosts*—

Graves stand as a forest,  
 each inscribed with its name;  
 this bank, that ministry, so-and-so institution, yonder government office . . .  
 In the middle of this graveyard called Japan  
 is the most precious original tomb.  
 Continuing on, there are the graves of this company and that trading business . . .  
 further on, if we look at another area, the tombs of this university, that school, so-and-so  
 factory, and yonder assembly.<sup>133</sup>

A graveyard is the place where the dead are buried,  
 not where one would expect a living person should live.  
 If we now look at the communal graveyard called Japan  
 it is filled with ogres and ghosts.  
 Those able to die become ogres,  
 those not able to die become ghosts floating about in confusion.  
 Ogres are carried about in wagons and carriages—  
 but where the tens of thousands of ogres running around in circles are going,

<sup>132</sup> ‘Gaki’ is a Buddhist demon who covets, but cannot realize the object of his greed.

<sup>133</sup> Ishikawa is obviously referring to Japan's parliamentary system, specifically the lower house, or diet.

I do not know.

If you look at the center of Tokyo city,  
these ogres are frantically bustling about;  
they are all starving—

starving for prosperity, starving for affluence, starving for vainglory, starving for authority and  
the power that money buys; starving for prestige and sexual passion.

Even considering the high social rank obtained after many years,  
even considering they hold the wealth of the Tens of Thousands<sup>134</sup>,  
they still starve.

They starve even for *our own* covetousness.

They starve for eternity.

Indeed, they are *gaki*, the demons who vicariously hunger and thirst.

Innumerable ghosts are wandering aimlessly,  
fatigued from not being able to die.

The ogres have a wish,  
they are planning on getting rich,  
while ghosts are usually the losers.

If ghosts are not hustling more than toiling,  
it is because they have lost all hope in freeing themselves.

The name of this building or rank of that employee  
each ghost holds as his *kaimyo*<sup>135</sup>.

They are not people.

Those *gaki* and ghosts,  
when morning comes,

go to the graveyards of this ministry, that bank, so-and-so company, and yonder factory;  
and in the evening return to the graveyard called their home.

Meanwhile, the ogres move about, affiliating themselves,  
sometimes playing the stock market,  
gambling,

buying prostitutes . . .

These places  
are the hell in the center of the graveyard.

—*The future of ghosts*—

All the minions of ghosts . . . their number is large.

Of course they can't ride in carriages.

Most can't ride in electric trains either.

Most just go to the factory every day.

Even now they wander aimlessly  
for not being able to die.

<sup>134</sup>The English notion of the 'masses' or 'everyday people' is conveyed in Japanese and Chinese as the 'Tens of Thousands'

<sup>135</sup>'*Kaimyo*' is a Buddhist term for the special name given to the dead.

But, at the instant of resuscitation  
 surely they would go back to being human,  
 their eyes awakening . . . No!— determined to awaken.  
 Right now they weaken, as dogs without a master  
 wandering around crying  
 because we don't have a home the world.<sup>136</sup>  
 However, if one morning our eyes could awaken,  
 what could possibly become?

The children of ghosts are as many as hundreds of ten-thousands,  
 accumulating, without collectivizing, in the graveyard  
 of this university, and that school, . . .

They are the future ghosts.

Most of them graduate from the graveyard called school  
 and become adolescent ghosts.

When they leave school  
 they throw themselves in with the ogre herd  
 pushing themselves hard, running around  
 spurred by their own heart,  
 but without very much skill.

They are kicked over by the senior ogres  
 and stagger around in the center of the graveyard.

—*Ogres with Billy-clubs*—

Ogres are fiendish only as ogres can be . . .  
 using their wealth and power to compel,  
 to seduce [women into] marriage;  
 . . . sometimes through rape or assault.

Taking bribes.

Killing people.

Especially when we fight the foreign ogres,  
 where tens of thousands die at once.

And returning to our graveyard,  
 the fatigued ghosts have their blood rung from them.

There is not much blood in a young ghost  
 but in total, there is quite enough.

In the end, ghosts are weakened even more,  
 and ogres become even more evil.

However, ogres only oppress the ghosts by wielding Billy clubs,  
 objects which they do not produce.

That which ghosts stagger about, sweating and toiling to produce  
 they are forced, by the steel of the rod, to offer as plunder for ogres.  
 While ghosts feel sorry for themselves,

<sup>136</sup> It is difficult to say whether Ishikawa was referring to pro-imperialist/pro-expansionist rhetoric.

they have nothing like such a tool of compulsion.  
 They have no choice but to submit to the tyranny;  
 and because they cannot stop living in the graveyard,  
 they suffer the abuse of the Billy club.  
 Their state of affairs is really quite miserable.  
 Although ghosts work without rest  
 ogres plunder almost all that they produce  
 leaving ghosts flat broke.<sup>137</sup>  
 Ghosts never have power or influence  
 and can never get their feet planted firmly into the ground —  
 hanging in mid-air . . . carried around by the wind  
 at once there, then gone . . . ephemeral ghosts.

—*The resurrection of ghosts*—

However, ghosts have not yet reincarnated as evil.  
 They still wander aimlessly in space.  
 Now, if you resuscitate them they will immediately return to humans again . . .  
 No!— actually they have already raised their revitalized heads.  
 In the dawn of this revitalization,  
 when the ogres are driven off and packed into the center of hell,  
 in this graveyard reborn people can make a paradise.  
 It's that simple.  
 All that needs to be done is the ghosts eyes to be awakened.

But ogres know the future well.  
 Because ogres have now made it a point to accumulate knowledge  
 they have become agitated, striking out to defend  
 against the awakening of the ghosts' eyes.  
 Particularly, with the special weapon of the Billy club  
 ghosts are oppressed.  
 Now!— it is truly time for the clans of ghosts to fight back.  
 When all is said and done, the Billy club cannot touch the soul.  
 Although the ghosts look weak, in truth they are strong.  
 Steel can certainly be destroyed by the spirit.  
 The future belongs to ghosts.

—*Commercialism*—

Since Columbus discovered America,  
 and Vasco deGama discovered the route to India,  
 local native industry became integrated with factories of the cities  
 and the whole world began breathing the air of commercialism.  
 Since the beginning to the 20th century  
 we have become fixed upon industry and commerce.

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<sup>137</sup> 'sekihin'; "red poor", in the red.

Company co-operatives<sup>138</sup> engage in commerce.  
 Government offices are administered to engage in commerce.  
 The nation engages in commerce.  
 That's why we have terms like 'imperialism' and 'commercial *kaiser-ism*'

This imperialism has killed people throughout the world.  
 It has made the 20th century world a lonely graveyard.  
 Everyone has become either a *gaki* or ghost.  
 One person becomes poor,  
 then a fatigued, malnourished ghost.  
 Another becomes rich,  
 then a starving, covetous ogre.

Commercialism has destroyed feudalism and established constitutionalism,  
 but at the same instant destroyed the time-honored independence of the rural village.  
 Almost all traces of the wonderful old village life  
 have been replaced by the graveyard.  
 The former farmer  
 now holds a spade or hoe and has basically become a merchant . . .  
 become a ghost . . .  
 or become an ogre.  
 The 20th century world  
 is just a world of crazed and fatigued ogres and ghosts.

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<sup>138</sup> Probably Ishikawa is referring to 'zaibatsu'.