

ship); the Ashigara Bank in Ashigara village (Odawara City); the Odawara Commercial Bank in Odawara Township (Odawara City); the Kaneda Industrial Bank in Kaneda village (Atsugi City); the Sakurai Cooperative Bank in Sakurai village (Odawara City); the Kōzu Bank in Kōzu Township (Odawara City); the Nakahara Bank in Nakahara village in Tachibana district (its chief officer was the local wool manufacturer Tomoyama Shimpei); the Takatsu Bank in the village of Takatsu, the Kawasaki Cooperative Bank, the Kawasaki Bank, and the Daishi Bank in Daishigahara village (all Kawasaki City); the Kamakura Bank in the town of Kamakura; the Totsuka Bank in the town of Totsuka; and the Uraga Bank in the town of Uraga. In short, new banks appeared one after the other on a village-to-village and town-to-town basis, most of them small institutions capitalized at thirty to fifty or sixty thousand yen. In the decade between the issuance of the Banking Act in 1893 and the year 1902, 41 of these enterprises were established. Moreover, all these banks had much more money lent out to borrowers than they had in deposits, a fact which speaks of the flourishing demand for credit and capital at that time. This, along with the fact that most of their founders were merchants and entrepreneurs in foreign trade-related businesses, was a reflection of the vigorous activity brought to all sectors of commerce and industry in Kanagawa by the foreign trade conducted at Yokohama.

In 1890 (Meiji 23), the *Yokohama Bōeki Shimbun* (The Yokohama Trade News) was launched, filling a twelve-year gap left by the *Yokohama Mainichi Shimbun's* move to Tokyo. The new paper started publication on February 1, serving as the bulletin of the Yokohama Trade and Mercantile Association (*Yokohama bōekishō kumiai*). The format of the paper was twelve pages, printed in three columns on paper measuring about 22×15 centimeters. Since it was intended as an official report for traders, much of the space in the paper was given over to information concerning market trends in raw silk, silk textiles, tea, marine products, and the like. Traders would buy up numerous copies of the newspaper to distribute to their clients and business contacts all over Japan. The paper ceased publication for a time, but it was revived on August 15, 1894. Severing its ties with the Trade and Mercantile Association, it grew steadily under independent management as Yokohama's only daily business news-

paper, but ceased publication on February 15, 1901, when it was merged with the new and rapidly expanding *Yokohama Shimpō* (which had changed its name from the earlier *Yokohama Maiyū Shimbun*). At the time of the merger, the *Yokohama Bōeki Shimbun* had printed as many as 4,354 issues.

Ten days after the merger, the *Yokohama Shimpō* changed its name once again, this time to the *Bōeki Shimpō* (Trade News), and launched itself as a general interest newspaper, six pages in length, seven columns to a page, with all Chinese characters glossed with the Japanese phonetic pronunciation for ease in reading. However, as the term *Bōeki* (trade) would suggest, the paper put a good deal of emphasis on economic news, such as departures and arrivals of cargo ships at the port of Yokohama, trends in the raw silk market and the like, and its daily circulation rose to some 16,000 copies. In 1906 (Meiji 39), on the occasion of its 2,000th issue, the name of the paper was changed yet again, to the *Yokohama Bōeki Shimpō*. Under this name it continued to grow throughout the Meiji and Taishō eras, reaching a peak circulation of 130,000 copies a day and becoming Japan's most powerful regional newspaper.

As a result of internal disputes within the company in 1935 (Shōwa 10), publication was temporarily halted a number of times, and the paper fell into a rapid decline. In 1942 (Shōwa 17), the government ordered the number of newspapers to be reduced to one per prefecture as a part of its policies for press control. The newspapers in Kanagawa were all merged into a single paper, the *Kanagawa Shimbun*, which had at its core the former *Kanagawa Nichinichi Shimbun* (itself in turn an outgrowth of the *Yokohama Nichinichi Shimbun*). The *Yokohama Bōeki Shimpō*, which despite its decline, had managed to hold onto life until this time, disappeared as a result of this forced merger.

### The Shōnan region revitalized

The shores of Sagami Bay, known to the ancient Japanese as Koyurugi-no-hama and beloved of visitors from the capital at Kyoto, once again in modern times became a topic of conversation among the people of the capital—though this time the capital was, of course, Tokyo.

One of the pioneers of modern medicine in Japan, Surgeon General Matsumoto Jun, recognized that the seashore at Ōiso was an ideal bathing beach, and encouraged the owner of Miyashirokan, an inn at Ōiso, to construct Western-style bathing facilities there. This was in 1885 (Meiji 18). When upon further inspection it proved that the waters off Ōiso were free of bacteria, Matsumoto wrote a tract entitled *An Introduction to the Techniques of Ocean Bathing*, in which he gave a description of Ōiso in addition to outlining the rudiments of swimming techniques. In 1887 (Meiji 20), a railroad line was run through as far as Kōzu, with a station at Ōiso, and it became quite convenient to get there by train from Tokyo or Yokohama. The bathing beach at Ōiso grew livelier and livelier over the years. Inns were opened with brand-new facilities to accommodate those who had come to bathe and swim, and a number of important figures from the worlds of politics and finance built their private retreats in the area. This was largely because the climate at Ōiso remained warm even in winter, making it an ideal winter haven.

Soon after Ōiso, bathing beaches were also opened at Hiratsuka, Chigasaki, Katase (in Fujisawa City), and Kamakura. Collectively, these resort areas came to be known as the Shōnan. This name, given to the southern part of Sagami, is derived from *Shō*, one of the names for the southern portion of Hunan province in China which is famous for its scenic beauty.

The German physician Erwin Bälz, long a resident of Japan, praised the Miura Peninsula and the town of Manazuru as excellent areas for recuperation in winter and for sea bathing in summer. In the 20s of the Meiji era (1887–1896), Bälz built a villa in Hayama, and at his encouragement, the Italian ambassador and the imperial princes Arisugawa and Kitashirakawa also built retreats in the area. The Empress Dowager and the Crown Prince (later the Taishō Emperor) both had occasion to visit at Prince Arisugawa's villa, and this resulted in the construction of an imperial villa in the area in 1894 (Meiji 27), called the Hayama Imperial Residence.

At the opposite end of the Sagami coast in Odawara, perhaps also with Bälz's seal of approval, members of the political and financial elites built villas one after another. Itō Hirobumi, who had composed his draft of the Imperial Japanese Constitution at his retreat



The seashore at Zushi in 1934.

in Natsushima, built a villa, which he named the Sōrōkaku, in Odawara the year after the promulgation of the Constitution, and drafted a portion of the new civil law there. An imperial villa was also constructed at Odawara, and the area became an elite resort to rival Hayama.

Eventually, Itō Hirobumi, who had come to love the Ōiso area, where he frequently stopped for the night on the way to his retreat at Odawara, built another villa in Ōiso in 1896 and sold the one in Odawara, but retaining the name Sōrōkaku.

About the time the Sōrōkaku was moved to Ōiso, the *zaibatsu* families at the pinnacle of Japan's financial elite—Mitsui, Iwasaki, Furukawa, Yasuda, Asano, Sumitomo, and others—began to build villas and retreats along the Tōkaidō.

These villas, though they sometimes served as the eyes of the

storms which occasionally swept through the world of Japanese politics and finance, were something quite remote from the lives of the common people. However, in later years, with faster trains on the Tōkaidō line, the opening of the Yokosuka line splitting off from the Tōkaidō line at Ōfunā, the privately operated Odawara line connecting Tokyo with Odawara and Enoshima, and the Enoshima electric line running between Enoshima and Kamakura, the average person was also able to make a day trip to the seashore to bathe and swim. As a result, beaches flooded with armies of pleasure-seekers have become part of the summer landscape in the Shōnan area. The villas and mansions of the politicians and financiers have now become restaurants, hotels, and retreats for company employees, retaining little of their former character.

The fame of the Shōnan area has been spread throughout Japan by the large number of novels which have taken it as their setting. Among them, perhaps one of the best known is Tokutomi Roka's *Hototogisu*, which was serialized in the *Kokumin Shimbun* from November 1898 to May 1899, bringing tears to the eyes of its enormous readership, men and women alike. This novel's climactic scene, the parting between Takeo and Namiko at the Zushi villa of a certain army general, was especially moving, and the entire country became familiar with the beach at Zushi. Tokutomi also introduced the landscape and atmosphere of Zushi and the rest of the Shōnan area to the readers of the *Kokumin Shimbun* in a series of short essays serialized in that paper beginning in January 1898. These essays were eventually collected into a volume entitled *Shizen to jinsei* (Nature and Humanity), and were widely read. These essays, though not as popular as his novel, impressed the name Shōnan on the minds of the nation's intellectuals.

In addition, one of the pioneers of modern Japanese literature, Kitamura Tōkoku, was born in Odawara, though the bulk of his activity took place after he left it for Tokyo. However, in the 30s of the Meiji era (1897–1906), such literary figures as Murai Gensai, Saitō Ryokuu, and Kosugi Tengai moved to Odawara, and often received visits from many other literati. Gensai serialized the novel *Shokudōraku* in the *Hochi Shimbun*, while Tengai ran his *Mafu renpū* in the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. During the Taishō era (1912–1926), Tanizaki Jun'ichirō and Kitahara Hakushū also came to live in Odawara. The

fact that writers such as these came there to live naturally gave the Shōnan area a fine reputation for arts and letters as well.

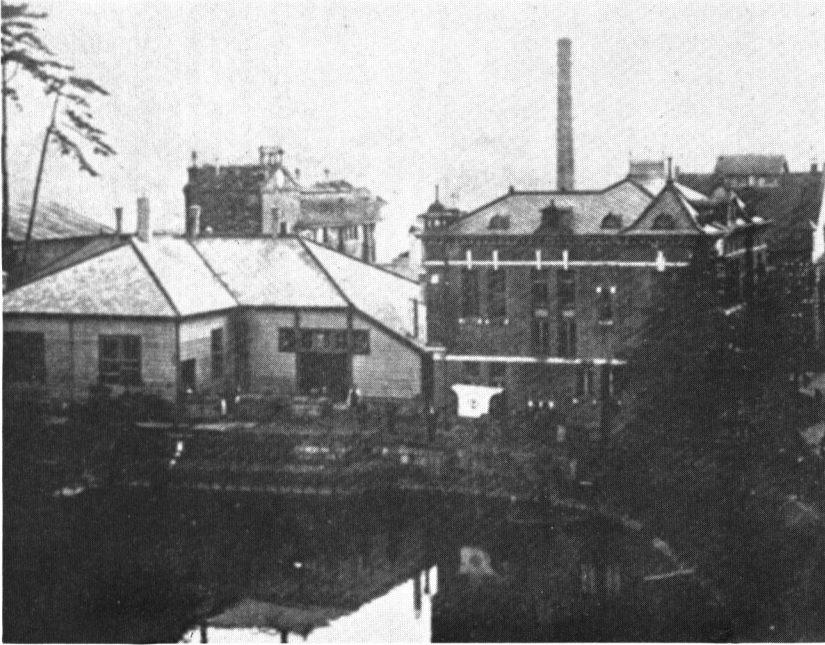
## 7. The People of Kanagawa After the Russo-Japanese War

### **A wave of strikes follows the victory**

Despite Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War, the postwar period was soon visited by economic recession and spiraling prices, a situation similar to the period just after the Sino-Japanese War a decade earlier. There was also an outbreak of labor disputes, rising to 238 separate incidents throughout the country in 1907 (Meiji 40). Of these disputes, 150 resulted in full-scale strikes. A contemporary newspaper, *Yorozu Chōhō*, wrote in its edition of May 12: "At present in Yokohama, various kinds of strikes and walkouts have become a trend of major proportions."

On February 27, 1907, stonemasons in Yokohama went on strike, demanding a twenty-percent rise in wages, and called for support from fellow masons in other parts of the prefecture. An agreement was reached giving them a ten percent wage increase plus a lump sum settlement of 50 yen. On March 8, shipyard carpenters in Yokohama, represented by their union, approached the federation of shipbuilders with a demand for a 20 *sen* (1 *sen*= 1/100 yen) increase in wages, and after a month-long struggle, succeeded in attaining their demand. The same month a thousand workers in sewing factories in Yokohama went on strike for higher wages. On April 12, a state of "unrest" was created at the Uraga dockyard by the firing of 500 workers, and both civil and military police had to be mobilized to quell the disturbance. On the 13th, more than 60 cratemakers at the Kirin Brewery in Yokohama struck for a two *sen* (1 *sen*= 1/100 yen) per crate increase in wages, and after a nine-day walkout, achieved their demands. Late in April, shipyard sawyers in Yokohama walked off the job, demanding a 15 *sen* wage increase in a strike that would continue into late June. About the same time, printers in Yokohama also struck for higher pay. On May 10, 200 nightsoil collectors in Yokohama struck for a monthly salary of 15 yen. On the 29th, 900 customhouse porters also went on strike,

demanding a fifty percent wage increase. They set up picket lines, but the pickets were arrested by the police, and three days after the strike started, they settled for a wage increase half that of their original demand. On June 1, 40 customhouse carters joined the customhouse porters in a strike, which was resolved four days later with an eight *sen* wage hike. On June 7, foremen of the porters and rickshaw men at Yokohama Station and other public places demanded a ten percent wage increase. On June 8, four thousand workers at the Yokosuka Naval Arsenal staged a wage increase petition movement against the proposed discontinuance of overtime work, and in August they received a wage hike. On June 16, the porters and rickshaw men at Yokohama Station went on to demand a 25 percent raise, and elected fifty committeemen to represent them in negotiations. On July 29, 90 dressmakers in Yokohama (70 Chinese and 20 Japanese) began a strike protesting an extension of the working day. On August 1, they attacked the residence of their foreman, resulting in 40 arrests and the defeat of the strike. On August 8, 24 boatmen for the Yokohama Ship's Water Supply Company struck for higher wages, but 14 of them were fired and the strike broken. In the middle of August, conductors and engineers on the Tokaidō railway line began planning a strike, and on August 26 conductors and drivers of the Enoshima Electric Railway Company held a meeting to protest firings, but the meeting was broken up by the police. On September 9, 144 canning workers at the Uraga docks struck to protest the elimination of overtime and holiday work. The next day, with the police acting as intermediaries, a continuation of the overtime and holiday work system was agreed upon. On November 15, more than 800 Yokohama harbor bargemen went on strike for a thirty percent wage increase. On the 18th, 64 male workers, 46 women, and 43 children employed by the Yokohama Electric Wire Company struck for a raise in wages, the strike being resolved the next day by an accession to their demands. On December 3, one hundred laborers at Nippon Seitō, a sugar manufacturer in Kawasaki, held a meeting to protest the dismissal of a number of apprentices, but the meeting was dispersed by police and an agreement was reached. On the 7th, regularly employed laborers at the same company met to protest a company proposal to adopt a subcontracting system for employing laborers, and though the



The Kirin Brewery at the turn of the century.

(*The First 50 Years of the Kirin Brewery*)

meeting was broken up by the police, the dispute was resolved by the withdrawal of the proposal on the company's part. On December 4, printers at an English-language newspaper, *The Japan Herald*, struck to protest non-payment of increased wages for overtime work, and the next day workers at *The Japan Advertiser* also went out on strike. And finally, around the middle of the month, some ten or more prostitutes at a brothel, Iroha, in Yokosuka demanded the dismissal of the women (called *yarite*) who supervised them.

The incidents listed above represent the general trend of labor disputes in Kanagawa during 1907 (Meiji 40). The largest number of them involved military and civilian shipbuilding or dockyard and harbor work, such as the dispute at the Yokosuka Naval Arsenal, followed by disputes and strikes in other modern industrial enterprises. Other important aspects of these disputes were the fact that



women and child laborers joined in the struggle, and that a dispute or strike involving one group of workers frequently brought other workers of the same trade out on strike as well. This indicates a growing solidarity among the trade unions, which had become increasingly organized since the period following the Sino-Japanese War. Another important point is the notable degree of police interference and repression brought to bear in these disputes. Yet the fact that workers' demands were often met, however inadequately, is probably a sign that even the authorities had to acknowledge the wretchedness of the working conditions that prevailed at this time.

These actions on the part of labor also encouraged the development of citizens' movements among the rest of the population. On January 9, 1907, the residents of Yoshida-chō in Yokohama appealed to the prefectural government to control the noise produced by a crate-making factory in the neighborhood. At the village of Koyasu in Tachibana district (now Kanagawa Ward, Yokohama), an intense protest movement on the part of local fishermen took place on May 20 against an application by Asano Sōichirō to reclaim land along the shoreline of the village and build a cement factory there. Slightly before, on May 2, some forty residents from Koyasu petitioned the prefectural government to span the tracks for a projected Yokohama railway line with an overpass, while in July, residents of Urashimachō (now in Kanagawa Ward, Yokohama) complained of the acute discomfort caused by the stench emanating from a trash incineration plant located in the neighborhood. In October, residents of Aoki-chō (Kanagawa Ward, Yokohama) protested against the noise, stench, vibration, and threat of fire caused by the nearby Iwai Oil Refinery, delivering a petition with over a hundred signatures to the prefectural government. There are many examples from earlier eras of peasant petition campaigns, but citizens' movements of this kind, addressing problems of the urban environment, can be said to have their origins in this period.

### **Planning for local improvement**

The postwar recession also struck the rural areas of the prefecture. As a result of the recession, the number of households failing to pay their taxes dramatically increased, and the indebtedness of municipal governments burgeoned as well. In response to this situa-

tion, the prefectural authorities took forcible measures against tax delinquency, including the attachment and sale of the property of farmers who fell into arrears. At the same time, they promoted a Local Improvement Movement (*chihō kairyō undō*), which encouraged diligence, enterprise, and self-help efforts on the part of the rural population. A Prefectural Local Improvement Association was created, with the governor as its chairman and the director of the prefectural department of internal affairs as its vice-chairman. Local branches of the association were created in each district, town, and village, drawing their membership from local government officials and employees, including schoolteachers, from the ranks of local Shintō and Buddhist clergy, and from among the wealthy and prominent members of these the communities. In short, the movement was one created from the top, with the goal of revitalizing rural areas. In concrete terms, the main objects of the Local Improvement Movement were to increase the basic financial resources available to the villages, to better their record of tax payment, to increase the number of children attending elementary schools, to implement agricultural improvements, and to reform local youth associations (*seinenkai*). For these purposes, in Ōiso Township, a number of public service bodies were organized, such as an adults' association founded "to work for the achievement of mutual benefit and the advancement of the community"; a youth association founded "to instill good morals and work for the public welfare"; and a taxpayers' association committed to "expeditious payment of taxes."

The thought of Ninomiya Sontoku was taken up as the model for the spirit of the movement, and the various Hōtokusha (Societies for the Return of Benevolence) which had been founded by his followers, largely in the area around Odawara, were reconstituted in a new form as a semi-official, semi-private organization called the Hōtokukai, whose membership was filled with officials from the Home Ministry and the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, as well as politicians, financiers, and academics. The first lecture series held under the auspices of the Hōtokukai in August 1908 (Meiji 41) is said to have been attended by more than two thousand individuals from all over the country.

In Kanagawa Prefecture, enthusiasm for the Local Improvement Movement was fanned by awarding public honors to towns, villages,

and individual members of the Local Improvement Association who showed a superb record of performance in the movement. Minami-Ashigara village in Ashigarakami district (now Minami-Ashigara City) and Kyōwa village (now Yamakita Township) were both promoted as model villages for the movement, while Hayama village in Miura district, Samukawa in Kōza district, and Yoshihama in Ashigarashimo district were officially honored for their meritorious service in the first prefectural local improvement projects.

## II. The Waves of Taishō Democracy

### 1. Democracy and Kanagawa Prefecture

#### **New waves break against the shore**

The promulgation of the Public Order and Police Law of 1900 (Meiji 33) struck the labor movement a massive blow, and labor activists came to realize that they must develop it into a *political* movement by organizing a working class political party. It began to be argued that in order for legislation protecting the rights and interests of workers to be passed in the Diet, it would first be necessary to institute universal suffrage, with no limitations on eligibility to vote based on the financial criterion of the amount of taxes paid by the individual. In 1899 (Meiji 32) the League for Universal Suffrage (*Futsū senkyō kisei dōmeikai*) was founded in Tokyo, and socialists and democratic liberals throughout the country united in a mass movement to achieve this goal.

In 1901 (Meiji 34) the newspaper *Niroku Shimpō* sponsored a mass rally called the First Fraternal Assembly of Japanese Workers, which was attended by more than 30,000 people. The principal organizers of the assembly were the executives of the League for Universal Suffrage, and the rally served as the point of departure for a popular universal suffrage movement. Nine hundred people from Yokohama, Yokosuka, Uruga, and other parts of Kanagawa Prefecture participated in the Assembly, carrying matching flags and banners and wearing similar uniforms. After this first major rally, similar meetings were held in other parts of the country, such as Hakodate, and the suffrage movement expanded and grew.

On April 21, 1901, six men—Katayama Sen, Kōtoku Shūsui, Kinoshita Naoe, Abe Isoo, Ishikawa Kōjirō, and Kawakami Kiyoshi—gathered at the headquarters of the Steelworkers' Union in Tokyo

and planned the formation of a Social Democratic Party, registering it with the government, as required by law, on May 18. This was the birth of Japan's first socialist party, but it was immediately ordered to disband, becoming the first organization to which the Public Order and Police Law was applied.

Although the party was disbanded, labor unions continued to pass resolutions calling for the institution of universal suffrage, and the League for Universal Suffrage continued to grow in strength. In July, Yokohama Local 41 of the Steelworkers' Union joined the League, and in September, more than seventy members of the three major unions in Yokohama, the Commercial Union, the Industrial Union and the Steelworkers' Union, convened a meeting to set up a Yokohama branch of the League. Through the good offices of Makiuchi Mototarō, president of the commercial newspaper *Naigai shōji tsūhō* (Domestic and Foreign Commercial Bulletin), the headquarters of the Yokohama branch were set up at this newspaper company. The paper also lent its pages to publicizing the League's activities. On September 28, a lecture meeting attended by 3,000 people was held at the Kumoi Theater in Yokohama, featuring speakers such as Katayama, Kinoshita, Kōtoku, and the Sei'yūkai Dietman Kōno Hironaka. However, the repression directed against the movement by the authorities was severe.

The fact that a proposal for the Universal Suffrage Law was brought before the Lower House of the Diet for the first time in 1900 (Meiji 33) reflected the pressure brought to bear by the climate of the times. The proposal was defeated this time, but the League for Universal Suffrage revised its platform, regrouped, and prepared for further action. The Yokohama branch continued its activities more or less unaffected by developments at the center. Arahata Kanson and other members of the Yokohama Heiminsha (Society of Commoners) were at the center of the suffrage movement in Yokohama, and the authorities ordered the Heiminsha to disband. However, it soon emerged in different guise as the study group "Akebonokai" (Society of the Dawn), and continued its activities. In 1906 (Meiji 39), seizing the opportunity provided by the advent of the relatively liberal Saionji Cabinet, the Nihon Heimintō (Japan Commoners' Party) and the Nihon Shakaitō (Japan Socialist Party) were formed, both joining the League for Universal Suffrage and holding out the

promise that the movement would soon make even greater strides forward. However, in 1907 (Meiji 40) the government, employing the Public Order and Police Law, banned the Japan Socialist Party and ordered the daily *Heimin Shimbun* to cease publication. The Akebonokai was undeterred by these events, and continued to hold weekly study meetings. It also sponsored a series of lectures and speeches at the Fukujikan in Nigiwai-chō (now Naka Ward) in Yokohama on March 3 and 17, May 3, and October 23, with attendance ranging from a few dozen to more than 200 people. The activities of the Akebonokai continued into the following year. According to an official survey, at around this time there were said to be thirty socialists in Kanagawa Prefecture, and Tanaka Sa'ichi and other members of the Akebonokai strove to maintain and expand the group. Tanaka became chairman of the Akebonokai, and maintaining close ties with comrades in Tokyo, he sponsored periodic lectures and speeches, arguing for the necessity of universal suffrage and debating the labor question.

Meanwhile, in 1911 (Meiji 44) a third universal suffrage bill was introduced before the 36th Session of the Diet. It passed in the House of Representatives, but was rejected by the House of Peers and thus was not enacted into law. Moreover, the League for Universal Suffrage was ordered to register as a political society. If it did, it would become the object of police supervision, and it was clear that police authority would be used to suppress the movement. Thus, the League was forced into disbanding for a time.

The labor unions, whose activities had constantly been shackled by pressure from the authorities, were in a similar plight. Particularly in the wake of the "Great Treason Incident" in which Kōtoku Shūsui and 23 others were sentenced to death in January 1911 (Meiji 44), the unions found their ability to act almost completely stifled.

In order to break out of this stalemate, a meeting was held at a Christian church in the Mita district of Tokyo on August 1, 1912 (Taishō 1), only two days after the death of the Meiji Emperor, and the Yūaikai (Friendly Society), which served as the predecessor to the Nihon Rōdō Sōdōmei (Japanese Federation of Labor), was founded with fifteen initial members. Those in attendance consisted of electricians, machinists, matmakers, dyers, milkmen and waterers, one police constable, and Suzuki Bunji, a lawyer. The

constable had joined, not to conduct official surveillance, but as a worker.

The Yūaikai, which modeled itself on the friendly societies of the early British labor movement, had as advisers Kuwata Kumazō, professor at Chuō University, lecturer at Tokyo Imperial University, and one of the founders of the Social Policy Association in Japan; and Ogawa Shigejirō, also a lecturer at Tokyo Imperial University, who held a seat in the House of Peers by virtue of the amount of national taxes he paid. The ten-member board of trustees of the organization counted among its members such figures as the Keiō University professor Horie Kiichi, the pastor Uchigasaki Sakusaburō (later professor at Waseda University), and Viscount Gotō Morimitsu. The names of these advisers and trustees did much to soften the pressure of the authorities on the labor movement and were quite useful in publicizing the Yūaikai and its activities.

In his remarks at the inaugural meeting of the Yūaikai, Chairman Suzuki Bunji said that while the advancement of the working class and the formation of labor unions were inevitably linked, at present public understanding was meager, pressure from the authorities severe, and that it would be very difficult to organize labor unions immediately. Therefore, he urged his listeners to be satisfied for the time being with an organization that would be based on fraternity, mutual aid, and study. The Yūaikai advocated cooperation between labor and management, concluded agreements with hospitals, barbers, and drugstores to give discounts to its members, established cooperative enterprises such as a legal counseling center and a savings fund, and published an organization newspaper. Yūaikai membership soon spread among workers in the major enterprises in the Tokyo area, and within a year of its founding numbered 1,326 members. The following year its membership had rapidly grown to 3,184 and local chapters had been established in many areas.

In Kanagawa Prefecture, the first local chapter to be established was the Kawasaki Chapter, founded in June 1913 (Taishō 2), the year after the Yūaikai had come into being. At the inaugural meeting of the chapter, the hall was filled with more than 110 members, 20 honored guests, and 50 or 60 spectators. The chapter's executive committee was comprised of three members each from the Kawasaki plants of the Tokyo Electric Company (later merged into the

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“The Labour and Industry” a Yūaikai Journal



Toshiba Corporation) and the Nippon Gramophone Company (later Nippon Columbia), and congratulatory speeches were delivered by such guests as the administrator of Tachibana district, the factory manager of the Tokyo Electric plant in Kawasaki, the head of the shipping department of the Tokyo–Yokohama Railway Company, the mayor of Kawasaki, the principal of the Kawasaki Elementary School, and the head of the general affairs department of the Nippon Gramophone Company.

The Kawasaki branch of the Yūaikai held regular meetings once a month, with addresses by officials from the organization's headquarters or by leading members of the local community and five-minute speeches or entertainment by the chapter members. However, not long after its founding, the Kawasaki Chapter found itself embroiled in a dispute with the Nippon Gramophone Company. Yūaikai Chairman Suzuki Bunji, after winning the agreement of the chief of police, entered into negotiations with the general director of the company, and succeeded in reaching an agreement favorable to the employees. However, the next year, a dispute once again broke out at the company. There had been a slump in trade, which resulted in overproduction, and the dispute centered around the amount of severance pay to be received by 37 workers dismissed from the machine division. Suzuki Bunji once again took up the task of negotiation, and the dispute was resolved. With these successes, the membership of the Yūaikai swelled, and in 1915 (Taishō 4) three new local chapters were established in Kanagawa: the Hodogaya Chapter, the Yokohama Chapter, and the Yokohama Seamen's Chapter. That year the membership rose to 293 in the Kawasaki Chapter, 544 in the Yokohama Chapter, and 438 in the Seamen's Chapter, figures which rapidly grew by the following September to 551 in Kawasaki, 843 in Yokohama, 1,493 in the Seamen's Chapter, and 370 in the Hodogaya Chapter, with new locals set up in Uruga and Hiratsuka as well. As many as 4,000 people flocked to the lecture assembly jointly sponsored that autumn by the Yokohama Chapter and the Seamen's Chapter. At the end of the year the Yokohama Chapter was split into the Yokohama, Zemma, Irifune, Kanagawa, and Yamate chapters, which were organized into the Yokohama Federation. Among the federation's activities were employment counseling, speech and lecture meetings, training sessions for its executive

officers, savings funds and mutual aid, legal counseling, medical discounts, personal counseling, a consumers' union, clubs for the members, and family recreational activities. One after another, new local chapters were established at Taura, Tokiwa, Tsurumi, and Chiwaka, and the working class of Kanagawa Prefecture became one of the Yūaikai's most powerful bases of support.

This rapid expansion of the Yūaikai was made possible by the fact that in order to escape official repression on the basis of the Public Order and Police Law it billed itself as an organization whose goals were education and mutual self-help among the workers, and because its advocacy of cooperation between labor and capital was welcomed by employers and won the enthusiastic support of powerful local figures. Of course when there were labor disputes, the Yūaikai stood on the side of the workers and attempted to resolve the issues in their favor, but usually the agreements were compromises that preserved the atmosphere of harmony between labor and management. Because of this, as the consciousness of the workers became more developed, the local chapter organizations themselves began to fall into a decline. By the time of the sixth annual convention of the Yūaikai, the Irifune, Zemma, Taura, and Tokiwa chapters that had been organized by the Yokohama Federation had ceased to exist, and the only local chapters in Kanagawa to send representatives to the seventh annual convention were the Seamen's Chapter, the Yokohama Chapter, and the Uraga Chapter. Although in the same year the Tokyo-Yokohama Glassworkers' Union and the Shiota Chapter were organized, at the eighth annual convention, there was not a single representative from Kanagawa Prefecture to be seen in the hall.

Under the heavy burden of the Public Order and Police Law, the activities of the Yūaikai, while taking the form of a workers' self-help organization, had done much to show workers the way to unity and solidarity, and to develop their own consciousness of their rights. When the Yūaikai tried to go a step further and begin actual union organization, it found itself faced with repression on the part of the authorities and the capitalists, and also found itself unable to adapt to the new labor movement that had sprung up under the influence of the Russian revolution. As a result its chapter-based mode of organization was driven into a decline. However, with the growth in

the number and scale of labor disputes which eventually took place, the Yūaikai's organization made a comeback, and in 1919 (Taishō 8) the Dai Nippon Rōdō Sōdōmei Yūaikai was established, changing its name in 1921 (Taishō 10) to the Nihon Rōdō Sōdōmei, or Japanese Federation of Labor. The labor unions in Kanagawa Prefecture became one of the supporting pillars of this new organization.

### **World War I and the nouveaux riches**

In 1914 (Taishō 3), as Japan still labored under the burden of the post-Russo-Japanese War economic slump and the foreign debts incurred financing the prosecution of the war, World War I broke out. Japan, seeking to enlarge its sphere of interest in China, declared war on Germany in August as a member of the Allied nations on the basis of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, invaded the German concession at Qingdao, and seized Germany's scattered island possessions in the South Pacific. Japan also dispatched warships as far as the Mediterranean to convoy Allied transport ships.

With the outbreak of the war, the export industries directed at the European market suffered from an increasing accumulation of dead stock and a dramatic fall in prices, while industries which depended upon the import of both raw and processed materials from Europe were hurt by shortages of imports and rising prices. This drove the economy even further into recession, and there was a run on the Kitahama Bank in Osaka and the Nagoya, Meiji, and Aichi Banks in Nagoya.

The price of raw silk, the mainstay of Japanese exports, which had stood at ¥990 before the outbreak of hostilities, dropped at once to ¥210, and the Yokohama Association of Silk Traders suspended financing for the purchase of the summer and fall cocoon production. Since it had announced a reduction in operations to the silk reeling industry, both farm families raising silkworms and the silk reeling plants themselves fell into a state of near inactivity. In addition, the price of rice, which had been between ¥16 and ¥18 per *koku* before the war fell to ¥13 to ¥14, further fueling the agricultural recession. The Ōkuma Cabinet, heeding the appeals of Hara Tomitarō and other influential members of the Yokohama financial community, used ¥5,000,000 of government funds to create the Imperial Silk Company for the purposes of buying up accumulated