

Kanagawa Prefecture was held by a labor organization under the leadership of this political party, since its platform was quite nationalistic in tone, calling for respect for the emperor and love and defense of the nation. The following day, May 2, Tokyo's first May Day celebration was held in Ueno Park.

The fading glow of the wartime economic boom lasted until 1921 (Taishō 10), after which the economy sank suddenly into recession. Particularly hard hit were the shipping and shipbuilding industries which had enjoyed such prosperity during the boom. In 1921, shipyard workers conducted a series of strikes in an attempt to win a favorable position for themselves within the general climate of recession. A strike at the Uchida Shipyards in June was followed in September by strikes at the Yokohama Docks, the Yokohama Manufacturing Works, and the Asano Shipyards; a strike in October at the Uruga Docks; and yet another strike at the Yokohama Docks in February of the following year. Precisely because the Uchida Shipyards had grown so rapidly since its founding by the shipping tycoon Uchida Shinya, it was hit earliest by the recession and forced to close, laying off all its employees. The dispute there concerned the severance pay the workers were to receive, and as a result of negotiations conducted by Suzuki Bunji, chairman of Sōdōmei, the dispute was resolved when the company agreed to an increase in the amount of severance pay to be issued. Seeing the result of this dispute, workers at the Yokohama Docks formed the Yokohama Shipyard Workers' Union, affiliated with Sōdōmei. When the company fired the secretary-general and other members of the new union, it went out on strike in protest at this persecution of union members. The strike reached major proportions, involving all the workers at the Yokohama Docks and some 4,650 outside supporters of the striking workers. In the end, the strikers succeeded in winning a wage increase and a doubling in severance pay from the company. The local chapters of Sōdōmei in Kanagawa Prefecture, which had been disappearing one after another, once again came to life. In addition to these developments in the labor movement in Kanagawa, the activities of the Zenkoku Suiheisha (National Society of Levelers—an organization dedicated to struggling for the civil rights of Japan's outcast communities), founded in March 1922 (Taishō 11), also had an impact on the prefecture. Representatives from Kana-

gawa attended the inaugural meeting of the Kantō branch of the Suiheisha, which was held in the town of Ōta in Gumma Prefecture in March 1923. In 1924 (Taishō 13) the Kanagawa prefectural authorities founded an organization called the Seiwakai as a conciliatory body in response to the spread of this movement.

The Great Earthquake strikes Kanagawa

Sixty-eight years after the Great Ansei Earthquake of 1855 (Ansei 2), the Kantō region was struck in 1923 (Taishō 12) by a massive quake registering a seismic intensity of 6 and a magnitude of 7.9. Its epicenter was located in the northwestern part of Sagami Bay, and the Odawara–Nebukawa area was hardest hit. But in Yokohama as well, an initial violent vertical shock was followed by a series of horizontal tremors occurring once every 1.5 seconds, shifting the ground itself as much as 12 centimeters from side to side, making it impossible for people even to stand. The quake struck at 11:58 in the morning, just as lunch was being prepared, and the cooking fires lit in nearly every household caused the major conflagrations which broke out in Tokyo, Yokohama, and elsewhere in the wake of the initial shock, adding immensely to the damage caused by the earthquake itself. Among the most tragic disasters caused by the quake and fires was the fate of 38,000 people who were trapped by a whirlwind of flames and burned to death in a vacant lot in Tokyo's Ryōgoku district, formerly the site of the Army Clothing Warehouse, to which they had fled in hopes of escaping the flames. In Yokohama as well, 95 percent of a total of 99,840 households were damaged, and 62 percent, or 62,608 households, were burned to the ground, a ratio higher than that suffered in Tokyo. Fires broke out in more than 300 separate locations in the wake of the violent shocks of the quake, and everywhere there were drowning victims as people flung themselves into rivers and streams in a vain effort to escape the choking black smoke and intense heat.

In Yokohama, with a total population of more than 440,000 people, 92 percent suffered injury or property damage in the quake, and 5.7 percent were reported dead or missing. Eighty-three percent of the 11,800 houses were either partially or completely destroyed by the quake and an additional 4,000 destroyed by fire. Nearly the entire town of Uruga was demolished. The towns and villages of the



Yokohama after the Great Earthquake of 1923 and after reconstruction.

Kamakura–Koshigoe area met a similar fate. In Kamakura itself, the Kenchōji and Enkakuji temples were toppled by the shock, and along the seashore a series of tsunami reaching as high as ten meters caused great damage. Seventy percent of the towns of Kawasaki and Tsurumi (now Kawasaki City and Tsurumi Ward, Yokohama), which formed the heart of the Tokyo–Yokohama industrial belt, was destroyed, and the factories of the area, including the Fuji Gas and Textile factory, the Meiji Sugar refinery, and the Tokyo Electric plant suffered enormous damage.

In the western part of the prefecture, closest to the epicenter of the quake, figures for total or partial destruction of property reached as high as 98.5 percent in Ashigarakami district, 99.2 percent in Ashigarashimo, 91.2 percent in Kōza, and 87.5 in Nara district. Figures for Kanagawa Prefecture as a whole reported that 86.5 percent, or 237,338 households out of a total of 274,300 in the prefecture, suffered damage from the disaster. Of the total population of 1,378,000, there were 29,614 dead and 2,245 missing.

In addition to the death and personal injury caused by the disaster, the quake touched off many landslides and rockfalls in the prefecture, damaging or destroying roads and cutting off transportation and communications, thus adding significantly to both the injury and the anxiety which people suffered. In the wake of the earthquake, anxiety was also stirred up by a number of totally groundless rumors which only added to the general confusion. On the evening of September 1, the day the earthquake occurred, rumors spread in parts of Tokyo, Yokohama, and Kawasaki of attacks and assaults by socialists, Koreans, and recently released convicts. Even government officials and the police warned communities in the area to be on their guard against violence by Koreans resident in Japan. From the 2nd to the 3rd of September, rumors of this nature spread throughout the prefecture, and vigilante groups formed and began to take action. A large number of assaults and murders of Koreans at the hands of such vigilante groups took place in Yokohama, Kawasaki, Tsurumi, Totsuka, Chigasaki, Odawara, and elsewhere in the prefecture.

The central government, in an attempt to quell the social disturbance which followed the disaster, declared a state of martial law in Tokyo and five surrounding districts on September 2. Martial

law was also declared in Kanagawa on September 3 and in Saitama and Chiba prefectures on September 4. Kanagawa Prefecture was divided into four disaster relief zones—the Kanagawa area, Yokosuka area, Fujisawa area, and the Odawara area—and the national government began to work in cooperation with local officials and police to restore order and aid the victims of the disaster. National efforts to recover from the earthquake and its aftereffects had begun at last.

The Great Kantō Earthquake had brought damage to five other prefectures in addition to Tokyo and Kanagawa. Of a total of approximately 700,000 households in the affected areas, 175,000 were either wholly or partially destroyed; about 100,000 people were either dead or missing; and some 3,400,000 people had suffered injury or property damage. It was the worst earthquake disaster in Japanese history.

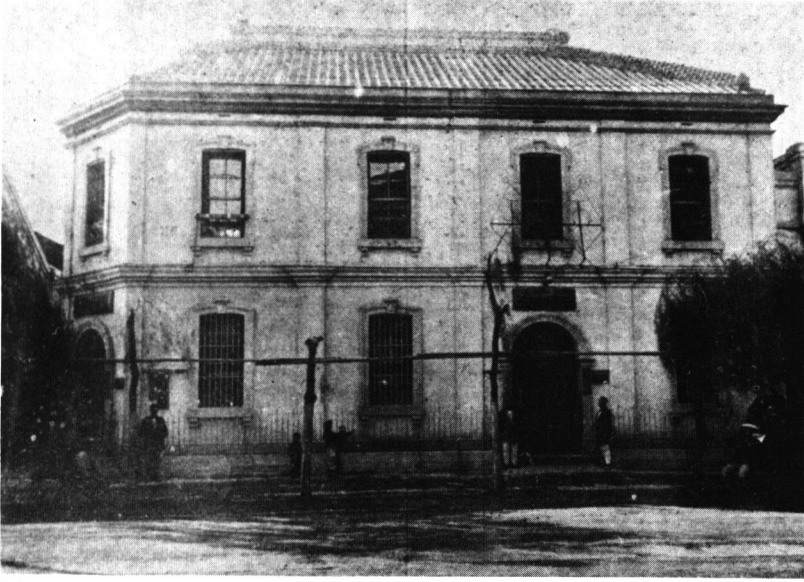
III. The Road to the Pacific War

1. Widening Aggression Against China

The vortex of the Shōwa Panic

With the industrial recovery of the warring nations, the growth economy which Japan had enjoyed during and immediately after World War I began to grind to a halt as exports fell off drastically and even goods previously produced domestically began to be imported into the country. Before long, Japan fell back into the position of importing more goods than it exported. Furthermore, since, the Great Kantō Earthquake had struck directly at Japan's industrial heartland, the blow to the nation's economic and financial circles was very nearly fatal.

At this time in the rural areas of Kanagawa Prefecture a dramatic series of bank mergers was being played out in response to the post-war recession. In 1923 (Taishō 12), the year of the earthquake, the Matsuda Bank of Ashigarakami district absorbed the Sakata Bank (Sakata village, Ashigarakami district) and the Sakurai Cooperative Bank (Sakurai village) in May, the Kyōgō Bank (Minami-Ashigara village) in December, and the Mariko Bank (Yaga village) in the following year. However, due to unfavorable assessments of land and buildings on which it held mortgages and an inability to support a number of bad loans, the Matsuda Bank was forced, in turn, to allow itself to be absorbed by the Suruga Bank, which was eager to extend the scope of its operations in Kanagawa from its home base in neighboring Shizuoka Prefecture. In fact, the Suruga Bank's move into Kanagawa had begun much earlier with the opening of branch offices in Atsugi and Fujisawa toward the end of the Meiji era, and its purchases of the Yoshihama Bank in 1917 (Taishō 6) and the Japan



Main offices of the Sōda Bank.

Industrial Bank in Kamakura the following year. Of course, in buying up these banks the Suruga Bank took advantage of the managerial problems they had been experiencing.

The Industrial Bank of Odawara was a bank that resulted from a series of mergers undertaken for similar reasons in the period after the Great Earthquake. This bank was created through the merger of the Odawara Bank, the Commercial Bank of Odawara, the Soga Bank, and the Kōzu Bank, but even after the mergers it was unable to dispose of bad assets, and had to close until its reorganization as the Meiwa Bank in 1927 (Shōwa 2), with assistance from the Kawasaki Bank.

This crisis in banking circles was rendered even more serious by the rediscounting of banknotes and the discounting of the commercial paper known as “earthquake bills” (*shinsai tegata*) in the areas affected by the Great Earthquake, primarily the Tokyo–Yokohama region, steps taken to give relief to those areas. A careless remark by Finance Minister Kataoka Naoharu during the Diet deliberations concerned with redressing the problem of the so-called “earthquake

bills” exposed the gravity of the banking crisis and touched off a nationwide run on the banks. This financial crisis is known as the Shōwa Panic.

The Sōda Bank, which was known as one of the most distinguished financial institutions in Kanagawa Prefecture, had lent out twice the amount of money it had in deposits, and finding itself unable to recover the loans, was forced to merge with the Yokohama Credit Bank. The following year, the Second National Bank (*Daini Ginkō*), the Yokohama Trading Bank, the Totsuka Bank, and other institutions also found themselves being absorbed by the Yokohama Credit Bank. The government enacted a new Bank Law and actively promoted the reorganization and liquidation of the smaller banks. In Kanagawa, the series of mergers carried out by the Yokohama Credit Bank was followed by the merger of the Ashigara Agricultural and Commercial Bank with the Kawamura Bank, the closing of the Kōshin Bank (renamed the Kōeki Trading Company), the merging of the Kamakura Bank with the Sagami Industrial Bank, the dissolution of the Tamagawa Bank, and the merger of the 74th National Bank with the Savings Bank of Yokohama. Between 1927 and 1930, about ten banks in the prefecture ceased to exist. Even so, there were still as many as 21 banks left in Kanagawa, some in shaky financial condition, and the wave of mergers continued until an unwritten policy of one bank per prefecture began to look like the eventual result.

The financial crisis continued apace, with smaller banks closing their doors and the more powerful institutions expanding rapidly. The medium and small businessmen who were the principal depositors and financial clients of the smaller banks were unable to avoid the predicament in which they suddenly found themselves. Large enterprises carried out a drastic reduction in their operations, and in industries such as silk, rayon, paper, cement, and coal, new cartels were formed or existing cartels strengthened, as companies desperately tried to maintain price levels through agreements to limit production. Smaller businesses were absorbed by the large enterprises, and a system of monopoly capital controlled by the large corporations began to be firmly established. In addition, in the wake of the Great Earthquake, tax revenues suddenly dropped as a result of non-payment, and local governments found themselves without

operating funds. Disaster relief and recovery was conducted entirely under the direction of the central government. While this was connected to general economic recovery, this kind of total dependence on the central government opened the path toward a state-controlled economy.

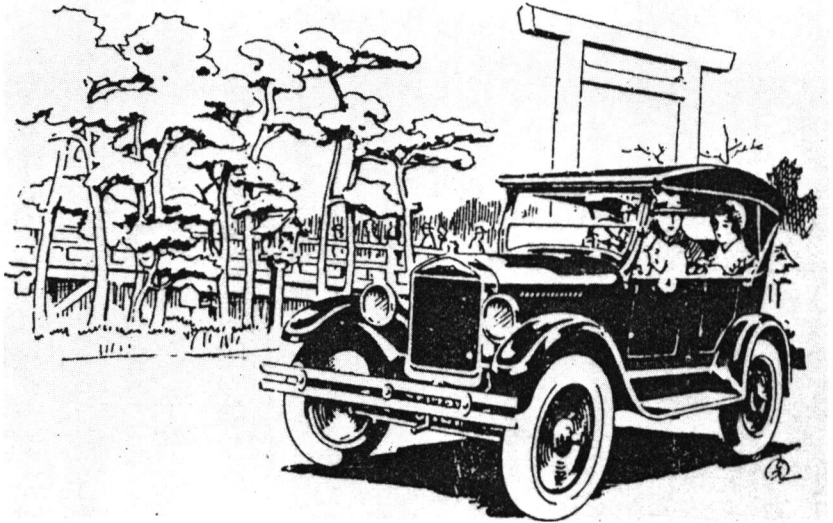
The Great Depression which plunged the entire world into the depths of economic distress began on October 24, 1929 (Shōwa 4), in New York, but this had already been anticipated in Japan by the depression touched off by the Great Kantō Earthquake and its aftermath.

The reorganization of the Keihin industrial belt

The Great Kantō Earthquake reduced to rubble the prosperity that had been carefully built up in Yokohama over the sixty years since the opening of the port. People who had been burned out of their homes relocated in Tsurumi, Kawasaki, Hodogaya, and other surrounding areas where the damage had been comparatively light, and the distribution of population in the Yokohama area was immediately altered. The various factories which comprised the Keihin (Tokyo–Yokohama) industrial belt suffered heavy damage in the earthquake, but those which required special sites and facilities, such as the Yokohama Dock Co., the Asano Shipyards, and the Uraga Dock Co. set about the task of reconstruction in their original location. Many other enterprises decided to relocate and rebuild on newly created sites in the Kawasaki area, changing the structure of the Keihin industrial region.

In addition to enterprises such as Nippon Kōkan, the Tokyo Electric Company, and Asano Cement, which rebuilt facilities they had operated in Kawasaki, there were enterprises such as the Shibaura Engineering Works (later the Toshiba Corporation) which moved both their headquarters and factories to Tsurumi. Tokyo Electric, in addition to manufacturing light bulbs, various types of lamps, and thermometers, also produced a wide range of consumer electric goods, while the Shibaura Engineering Works specialized in the manufacture of electrical equipment, heavy electrical machinery in particular.

There were also new factories such as the one built in 1925 (Taishō 14) on 48,000 *tsubo* (one *tsubo*=3.3 square meters) of land in Kawa-



Advertisement for Ford automobile in 1927.

saki by Furukawa Electric. This company had watched the expansion of electric power companies during World War I and had decided to enter the field of electric machinery and equipment, a field closely connected to the Furukawa group's other interests in copper mining, and had founded Fuji Electric as a joint venture with the German firm Siemens. The Yokohama Electric Wire Company, another company in the Furukawa *zaibatsu* group, which had a factory in Hiranuma-chō (Nishi Ward) in Yokohama, linked up with the American company B.F. Goodrich, changed its name to Yokohama Rubber, and began the manufacture of tires and rubber belts for machines. The factory was completely destroyed in the earthquake, however, after which the company built a new belt and hose factory and a new tire factory on reclaimed land in Tsurumi.

A new industry—the automobile industry—was also born in this period. The practicality and usefulness of the automobile came to be recognized in the process of recovery from the Great Earthquake, and cars began to spread throughout the country. Taking note of this, America's Ford Motor Company leased a warehouse belonging to the Yokohama Dock Co. in Midori-chō (Nishi Ward) in Yokohama

in 1925 (Taishō 14), and established the Ford Motor Company (Japan) Ltd., later building a new factory on the Koyasu landfill and moving its operations there. Then, in 1927 (Shōwa 2) General Motors built an assembly plant and began producing Chevrolets in Japan. These two companies dominated the Japanese automobile market. The government, however, in an effort to promote domestic production, encouraged the merger of several of the first domestic auto companies. In 1933 (Shōwa 8) the Ishikawajima Automobile Factory merged with Datto Motors to form the Automotive Industry Company, Ltd. (*Jidōsha Kōgyō*), which in turn absorbed several other smaller companies. In 1934 the company built a huge factory in Tsurumi to begin production of standard model passenger cars built according to Ministry of Commerce and Industry specifications, and the company's original factory in Tsukishima at Tokyo was also relocated to the Tsurumi site. This firm eventually became today's Isuzu Motors.

In 1928 (Shōwa 3), the Japan Industrial Corporation, which had been founded with Ayukawa Yoshisuke as its president, closed an agreement for a joint venture with the Tobata Foundry Company, which had acquired the production rights for Datsun compact cars from Automotive Industry, Ltd. Production began in 1933 in Yokohama in a factory complex equipped with the latest technology and facilities which had been built on reclaimed land along the shore at Shinkoyasu in Yokohama. In addition to making parts for Ford and Chevrolet, the venture was expected to produce 5,000 Datsuns a year, and in 1934 the name of the company was changed to Nissan Motor Co., Ltd. In 1936 (Shōwa 11) the Automotive Manufacturing Industries Law was promulgated with the intent of promoting domestic mass production of cars. The automotive division of the Toyoda Automatic Loom Works (the precursor of the Toyota Motor Corporation) and Nissan Motors became officially designated companies under the Law, laying the foundations for the Japanese automotive industry which has today challenged and won so much of the world market.

In this fashion, the Keihin industrial belt, which had first grown up as a site for trade-related light industry, changed its character during the process of recovery from the devastation of the Great Kantō Earthquake. Light industry gradually disappeared in the area, and



A Nissan-built bus, circa 1938. (Nissan Motor Co.)

the industrial belt centered on Kawasaki and Tsurumi came to be dominated by major corporate complexes such as the Asano Shipyards and Nippon Kōkan, which were already located in the area, by the various factories which moved from Tokyo and Yokohama in the wake of the earthquake, and by new industries such as the automotive industry which had recently sprung up in the area. Moreover, food processing industries such as beer breweries, flour processing plants, artificial seasoning factories, and cake and candy manufacturers began to be concentrated in the Tsurumi-Kawasaki area. The Keihin industrial belt became home for almost every variety of new industry, and thus a kind of microcosm of Japan's modern industrial development, especially in the chemical and heavy industrial sectors.

Expansion of the revitalized labor unions and growing protest

As a result of the Great Kantō Earthquake, factories were de-

stroyed, workers laid off, the ranks of the unemployed swelled, and the labor unions temporarily suspended their activities. Eventually, however, in the year following the earthquake, Yokohama Local No. 1 of the Kanto Steelworkers' Union, the Yokohama Outdoor Laborers' Union, and the Youth Study Group at the Fuji Gas and Textile plant in Hodogaya joined to form the Yokohama Amalgamated Labor Union, which affiliated itself with Sōdōmei (the Japan Federation of Labor). At this time, Sōdōmei, which had developed out of the old Yūaikai, was riven internally by a clash between right- and left-wing factions. The Yokohama Amalgamated Labor Union stood with the left-wing faction in Sōdōmei, and when the leftist unions were all expelled from the organization in 1926 (Taishō 15), the Union participated in the founding of the Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Hyōgikai (All-Japan Council of Labor Unions). Virtually all of the unions in Kanagawa Prefecture affiliated with Hyōgikai, and the only one to remain in Sōdōmei was the Yokohama local of the Kantō Brewery Workers' Union.

In 1925 (Taishō 14), more than seventy workers at the Kawasaki plant of Fuji Gas and Textile organized a local chapter of the Kantō Textile Workers' Union. The company responded to this move by firing more than ten of the local's executive officers. The union went out on strike, presenting four demands: better treatment for female workers living in company dormitories, reinstatement of all dismissed workers, improvement of cafeteria facilities, and the freedom to join a union. The Kantō Federation of Sōdōmei threw its full support behind the strike, and clashed repeatedly with Hyōgikai members who had also come to support the striking workers. The governor of the prefecture acted as arbitrator in the strike, and while the fired workers were not reinstated, the dispute was resolved when all the other demands of the strikers were met.

The victory in the Fuji Textile strike led to a rapid revival of the Sōdōmei organization in the area centering on Kawasaki and Tsurumi. A Kanagawa Petroleum Workers' Union was formed, principally among workers at Rising Sun Petroleum and Nippon Oil; a Kanagawa Steelworkers' Union was organized, with its core of support among the workers at Nippon Kōkan; and a cement workers' union was established at Asano Cement. In March 1926 the Kanagawa Federation of Sōdōmei was inaugurated. Union representatives



Female workers at the Fuji Gas and Textile plant in Kawasaki.

(From *Fuji Gas Bōseki Kawasaki Kōgyō shashin chō*, in the collection of the Nakahara Municipal Library, Kawasaki City)

participating in the founding of the Federation numbered 52 from the Kantō Steelworkers' Union, 23 from the Kanagawa Petroleum Workers' Union, 16 from the Kawasaki local of the Kantō Amalgamated Labor Union, 12 from the Tokyo Steelworkers' Union, 22 from the Cementworkers' Union, 12 from the Tokyo Electric Employees' Union, 6 from the Keihin local of the Kantō Brewery Workers' Union, and 34 from the Kawasaki local of the Kantō Textile Workers' Union. The Federation's membership was officially announced to be 7,500 workers.

At the same time, Hyōgikai was also forming a series of new organizations throughout the prefecture, including a Kawasaki local of the Tokyo Amalgamated Labor Union centered at the Ajinomoto plant in Kawasaki; a Kawasaki local of the Kantō Steelworkers' Union; a Kawasaki local of the Kantō Metalworkers' Union, a Shō-

nan Amalgamated Labor Union organized among workers at the Hiratsuka factories of the Sagami Textile Mills and the Kantō Textile Mills; and an Odawara Amalgamated Labor Union centering on workers for the Odakyū Electric Railway.

Moreover, since the government had designated labor organizations with a membership of over one thousand at factories with over one thousand workers as the basic units for the selection of Japanese representatives to the International Labor Organization, the Kōyūkai at the Yokosuka Naval Arsenal, the Kōshinkai at the Yokohama Docks, and the Kōaikai at the Uraga Docks, which had primarily operated as workers' mutual aid organizations, now formed the Busō Labor League. They, along with such organizations as the Kyōwakai, comprised of workers in the Yokohama City Railways, made clear their transformation into full-fledged labor unions, adding to their bylaws clauses concerning the maintenance and improvement of working conditions.

In this fashion, in the years leading up to the early 1930s, labor unions in Kanagawa formed affiliations with larger leagues and federations such as Sōdōmei and Hyōgikai, establishing a system which supported and strengthened labor activism. With the passage of the Universal Manhood Suffrage Act, labor also won the right to vote, forming the base of support for a number of proletarian political parties. Better organization also meant that strikes became a more powerful and effective tactic than they had been in the past. In 1929 (Shōwa 4) there were 576 labor disputes nationwide, a number which came close to doubling the following year to 908, among which were massive strikes that left an important mark on the history of the labor movement in Japan. In Kanagawa Prefecture, the Yokohama City Railways strike of 1929, the strikes at the Yokohama Docks and the Fuji Gas and Textile plant in Kawasaki in 1930, and the strikes in 1931 at General Motors, the Toshiba Corporation, and Nippon Kōkan are particularly noteworthy. In the midst of the 1930 strike at Fuji Gas and Textile, one of the strikers climbed to the top of a forty-meter smokestack, unfurling a red flag when he reached his goal and causing quite a stir among the press and public as "The Smokestack Man."

The violent elimination of democracy

Farmers were hit even harder by the depression than urban workers. The fall in agricultural prices was drastic, with conditions made even worse by bad harvests. Particularly in the farming villages of eastern Japan, many families fell into such dire straits that they resorted to the premodern practice of selling daughters into prostitution, and town and village officials had to struggle to prevent this. Certain groups of young military officers, hearing of the awful conditions in the countryside from draftees from rural areas under their command, and learning more from articles in the press, involved themselves with civilian right-wing groups and competing factions within the military establishment itself. They began to call vociferously for a “Shōwa Restoration” (*Shōwa ishin*) which would initiate a program of national reconstruction much as the Meiji Restoration had done several generations before. Seeing rural distress as the responsibility of the party politicians and the *zaibatsu*, these young men carried out a campaign of terrorist assassinations against leading political figures and industrialists.

In September 1931 (Shōwa 6), they touched off the Manchurian Incident, aiming at complete Japanese occupation of Manchuria, and lit the fuse for Japan’s invasion of China itself. With the beginning of Japan’s invasion of mainland China, the factories of the Keihin industrial belt converted to military production, realizing enormous profits. However, this industrial boom fueled inflation, and the poverty of the rural villages, which did not derive any benefit from military spending, became more critical. As many as 89 tenant disputes occurred in Kanagawa during 1934.

Terrorism on the part of young officers calling for national reconstruction reached its peak with the February 26th Incident of 1936 (Shōwa 10). The violence connected with the incident reached Kanagawa Prefecture as well, when a group involved in the uprising attacked the prominent statesman Makino Nobuaki at the Kōfūsō, an annex of the Itōya Inn in Yugawara where he was vacationing. Makino only very narrowly escaped with his life. In Tokyo, the principal scene of the terrorist uprising, Prime Minister Okada Keisuke, Home Minister Saitō Minoru, Superintendent of Education Watanabe Jōtarō, Grand Chamberlain Suzuki Kantarō, and Finance

Minister Takahashi Korekiyo were all subjected to assaults, some of them dying at the hands of their assailants, while others escaped miraculously from harm's way.

Participating in the series of attacks and the uprising itself were 22 Army officers and some 1,400 non-commissioned officers and troops. They were eventually suppressed by order of the emperor; however, after this incident the military's voice in the affairs of state became absolute.

The institutions of democratic and party government which had gradually been established after enormous effort during the Meiji, Taishō, and early Shōwa eras were reduced to an empty shell, and the police and bureaucracy became tools of the military, flaunting their tyrannical power. The democracy of the Taishō era had become nothing more than a fleeting dream. As the labor movement grew in scope and influence toward the end of the Meiji era, the police had already begun to employ the Public Order and Police Law as their authority to interfere with popular movements. With the passage of the Universal Manhood Suffrage Act a new Peace Preservation Law was also enacted and employed to suppress left-wing movements, making the powers of the police even more absolute. In Kanagawa Prefecture, leftist political figures were branded traitors to the nation, and police bragged that "even if you kill one of those traitors the matter can be settled for 50 yen; we'll write it off as a heart attack." It was said at the time that the attitude of the police was the same as that of the despotic government of the Tokugawa shogunate.

The reality of the situation found its purest expression in the Yokohama Incident of 1942 (Shōwa 17). The incident began with an article by Hosokawa Karoku, entitled "Trends in World History and Japan," which was published in the magazine *Kaizō* (Reconstruction), then highly regarded as a progressive journal of opinion. Hosokawa was arrested on the grounds that his article was a piece of communist propaganda. Then, when a photograph of a party attended by members of the editorial staffs of *Kaizō* and *Chūō Kōron* (The Central Review) at Hosokawa's home village was found among the confiscated belongings of an individual arrested in connection with a separate incident, the police claimed that it was a photograph of a secret meeting convened for the purpose of reconstituting the

suppressed Japanese Communist Party. As a result, seven members of the editorial staffs of the two journals were arrested, a move which was followed soon after by the arrest and imprisonment of more than thirty other employees of the *Chūō Kōronsha*, the *Kaizōsha*, the *Nihon Hyōronsha*, and *Iwanami Shoten*. Those arrested were indicted under the Peace Preservation Law, and both *Chūō Kōron* and *Kaizō* were ordered to cease publication. Three of the people arrested died under interrogation, but World War II was to end before any of them were brought to trial.

Japan's reckless entry into the Pacific War

The Japanese military, which had begun its aggression against China at the Marco Polo Bridge on July 17, 1937 (Shōwa 12), soon entered into a state of total war with China. Then, in 1940, the army occupied northern French Indochina (now part of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam) in the hope of cutting off aid to China from Europe and the United States. The southern part of French Indochina was occupied the following year. In order to counter Japan's relentless advance southward, the United States embargoed the export of scrap iron to Japan, froze Japanese assets in the United States, and completely suspended all oil exports to Japan. Scrap iron was an indispensable material for the Japanese steel industry, and oil was essential for the continued operations of the Army and Navy; since Japan was dependent on the United States for both these resources, the blow was a critical one as far as Japanese military activity was concerned. Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro attempted to break the deadlock through diplomatic negotiations, but fierce opposition by the military led him to dissolve his cabinet. Now firmly in control, the military launched a surprise attack on the United States Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, commencing the Pacific War. Japan seemed to dominate the early stages of the conflict, bringing most of the eastern Pacific under its control, but it was unable to withstand the counterattack of the American forces with their vastly superior material resources.

On April 18, 1942, Japan was subjected to its first air raid, carried out by carrier-launched bombers. In that raid, thirteen B-25s attacked the Tokyo-Yokohama region; one of the planes dropped incendiary bombs and strafed Yokohama, while three others at-