INTRODUCTION.

At the moment when reaction is ascendant in Japan, when its Imperialism is aggressively triumphant and its proletariat apparently crushed and silent, at this moment, more than any other, is a book on the Japanese Labor Movement of great value. It is of value in picturing a militant proletariat in action and by emphasizing our international spirit without which Socialism cannot conquer.

This book, appearing at this particular time, is, moreover, a symbol to the world of Socialism and Revolution. It is a symbol of the great role that the Japanese proletariat is destined to play in the days to come; it is even more a symbol of the momentous fact washed upon the shores of Time by the Great War—that Labor, and Labor alone, in spite of momentary collapse and a swerving from its historic mission, is the force that must preserve

civilization from total ruin by creating the new civilization of Socialism.

Japan is to-day dominantly reactionary. It is preparing itself to extend the power and influence of its ruling class. As a capitalist nation, Japan is part and parcel of the general imperialistic interests and ambitions that plunged the world into disaster. And in Japan, as in other imperialistic nations, all classes are reactionary, all classes are eager for the spoils of exploitation, all classes are willing to sell humanity and civilization for the mess of pottage of imperialistic aggrandizement. All classes, that is to say, except the proletariat, which is silent under the oppression of a malevolent tyranny, but which has within itself the latent power and inspiration for great deeds, as is amply proven by Comrade Katayama's sketch of the rise of the Labor and Socialist movement in Japan under the most discouraging conditions.

The Japanese government is increasing its repressive measures against the prole-

tariat. Recently, Comrade T. Sakai was imprisoned for propaganda in favor "of an extension of the suffrage." And in its reactionary sweep, the Japanese government is destroying a peculiar instrument it forged for the deception of the workers—the Yu-Ai-Kai. The Yu-Ai-Kai was a "union" organized under government auspices, including in its membership capitalists, professors and officials of the government, its chief activity being the publication of a paper to deceive the workers. Employers often brutally coerced their workers to join this "union," and it became a means of destroying the legitimate organizations of the proletariat. But now the Imperial government itself is persecuting the Yu-Ai-Kai, against the protests of Baron Shibusawa and other magnates of capital, while the workers are rapidly deserting it entirely. This is significant equally of the stupidity of the government and the awakening of the workers.

I have said that Japan is part and parcel of the general imperialistic forces and ambitions that plunged the world into disaster; and this Imperialism is determinant in the recent history and development of Japan.

The Japanese people emerged definitely into the world of modern production and exchange at a time when Capitalism had developed into a new stage of its existence, —the stage of Imperialism. Normally, the development of Capitalism would have produced a bourgeois, democratic revolution in Japan; but the existence of Imperialism altered the course of events. Imperialism is the negation of democracy; It means, historically, the end of bourgeois democracy and the re-introduction of autocracy under a variety of political forms. In nations which completed their bourgeois democratic revolution, as England and France, imperialism develops a reaction against democracy and establishes the autocracy of imperialistic State Cap-

italism; in nations which had not completed their bourgeois revolution, as Germany, or which never had the beginnings of one, as Japan, Imperialism prevents the appearance of the institutions of bourgeois democracy. The feudal class is not destroyed; it becomes capitalistic and is put into the service of Imperialism; autocracy is not abolished, but bent to the uses of Imperialism. This was precisely the development in Japan, as in Germany. Imperialistic Capitalism was developed on the basis of still prevailing feudal conditions and ideology, a situation excellent for the profitmad ruling class, but simply murderous to the workers and peasants, and disastrous to the rise of democratic ideas and institutions. Instead of comprehensively developing the internal market and its corresponding normal conditions of production, the Japanese ruling class embarked upon a policy of export trade and Imperialism, because it was more profitable, and because the develop-

ment of the internal market would have meant the end of low wages and the appearance of a homogeneous, aggressive proletariat.

The role to which Japan aspires, and conspires for, is that of arbiter of the Far East. Its imperialistic interests dictate the establishment of Japanese hegemony on the Asiatic continent, and particularly in succulently-rich and helpless China. Japan has already promulgated a sort of "Monroe Doctrine," which insists upon priority of interest and consideration for Japan in the Far West, just as the American Monroe Doctrine has been perverted into a similar claim for the United States in Central and South America.

The war has definitely converted Japan into a dominant imperialistic nation. From a debtor nation, Japan has become a creditor nation, with large masses of capital that must be exported for investment. In January, 1918, Finance Minister Shoda in his budget speech said that imports since

the beginning of the war had aggregated 2,623,000,000 yen (a yen is equivalent to almost half a dollar), and exports, 3,799,-000,000 yen, the resulting favorable balance of 1,175,000,000 yen being increased by 700,000,000 yen "from other sources." The accumulation of capital from this favorable balance of trade is increasing rapidly as the months go by. Moreover, industry has expanded to gigantic proportions, including the shipping industry. Industry and trade are increasing, not in mathematical, but in geometrical progression. Japanese Capitalism is entrenching itself firmly in all sections of Asia, and particularly in China, where economic and political "penetration" proceed simultaneously. Japan's great need until recently was the import of raw materials, including iron and cotton; the enormous expansion of industry has made this need still more imperative, and it has been supplemented by the urgent need for investment markets to which Japanese Capitalism can export

its surplus capital. All this means a feverish impetus to Imperialism; and the field for Japanese Imperialism is Asia.

It is just at this point that antagonism develops between Japan and the other imperialistic powers in general, between Japan and the United States in particular, an antagonism latent with the threat of war, a war that would ultimately involve all the other great powers to protect their own Imperialism. Economically and financially, the United States is being affected by the war in precisely the same way as Japan, only more so. The Far East, and particularly China, is a great, capitalistically-untapped reservoir; it can do two things indispensable to an imperialistic nation,—provide practically unlimited sources of raw materials and absorb vast amounts of investment capital. This import of raw material and the export of capital are the nerve-centers of Capitalism to-day, and the source of the great antagonisms which may again produce a

catastrophe,—unless the proletariat acts decisively in the performance of its historic mission.

In this situation latent with catastrophe, the workers of the two nations must understand each other, must assist each other, must unite to avert the impending menace.

For the workers of the two nations alone and decisively, in co-operation with the workers of the world, can prevent a conflict. No dependence can be placed upon the words of the representatives of the ruling classes; understandings and agreements are converted into scraps of paper when they clash with dominant imperialistic interests. The proletariat alone can act; and it is the function of the New International now in process of becoming to prepare the revolutionary proletariat to act when the crisis comes, aye, to *prevent the coming* of the crisis.

The fomenting of race prejudice and hatred is exactly what the ruling classes desire. Hatreds of race against race con-

stitute the ideologic dynamo of Imperialism. It is the task of the Socialist to break down these hatreds. And when the American Federation of Labor foments racial hatred against the Japanese, it is betraying the interests of the workers. The Japanese workers in this country are part and parcel of our proletariat; they have proven that they are organizable, that they can fight the industrial oppressors, that they are excellent material for the militant proletarian movement. It is sheer suicide for the American proletariat to indulge in race hatred against the Japanese, or against any other racial element of our people.

The American proletariat, moreover, must understand precisely what are the real forces of labor and progress in Japan. It must not play into the hands of the Imperial government. Some years ago, the Yu-Ai-Kai sent a fraternal delegate to a convention of the American Federation of Labor, a Mr. Susuki, secretary of Baron

Shibusawa. Mr. Susuki was accepted as a bona-fide representative of the Japanese workers, Messrs. Gompers and Scharrenberg solemnly accepting the invitation to go to Japan to "teach" the workers there how to organize. Operabouffe! Many Socialists also made this gross error, in spite of Comrade Katayama's expose in the New York *Call* of the real character of Susuki and his "labor" organization.

In the coming great work of reconstruction, the Socialist Party should recognize and emphasize the vital importance of the Japanese-American issue, and make it a central feature of its agitational and educational propaganda. Indeed, this is all the more necessary considering the temporary weakness of the Japanese movement, a weakness due to definite historical circumstances. Why could not the Party make an appropriation to assist our Comrades in Japan? Why not more intimate contact between the two movements? And, surely, the Party could make use of an ap-

propriation for special propaganda among the Japanese in this country, could avail itself of the services of a Sen Katayama.

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Comrade Sen Katayama is an interesting personality. At sixty years of age, he retains the enthusiasm and idealism of youth; forced to make a living for himself and his daughter, as an ordinary worker, he devotes all his spare time to the Cause to which he has dedicated his life. Katayama is unpretentious and democratic; the fan-fare of heroics makes no appeal to him. He is a worker in the workers' movement, accepting the worker's lot—that is all; but that is *all* a man can do.

It was at the Amsterdam Socialist Congress in 1904 that Katayama participated in a symbolic act. Japan and Russia, the Russian and Japanese autocracy, were at war. The chairman of the Congress was speaking, when Katayama and Plekhanov arose, and in full view of the audience,

shook hands,—symbol of that international proletarian solidarity which will yet prove mightier than cannon and chauvinism.

Sen Katayama was born December 7, 1858, of peasant parentage, and the story of his life is the story of the Japanese labor and Socialist movement. He worked on a farm, studying at home, with only short intervals of school education. In 1882 Katayama went to Tokyo, working in a printing plant ten hours a day at 7 1-2 cents a day; by working overtime, he could earn $2.50 a month. The ordeal of these days made Katayama a permanent proletarian with the aspirations of the militant proletariat.

For a time, Katayama worked as a janitor in a Chinese university, and studied the Chinese classics in his spare time; then he came to the United States to study—not subsidized by the Imperial government, as so many Japanese students are, but entirely upon his own resources, which consisted of exactly one dollar upon his ar-

rival in California in 1884. Katayama studied English in a Chinese Mission in Alameda, entered John Hopkins Academy at Oakland, from there went to Maryville College, Tennessee, and in 1889 entered Grinnell College, graduating in 1892. Two years at Andover and one year at Yale were spent in the study of social problems. And during all these years Katayama had to work for his living and his tuition, the ordeal of it all preparing him for the activity of a militant rebel.

About this time, Katayama began to study Socialism, starting with Ferdinand Lassalle, who inspired him with a love for the practical work of organization. After a short stay in England studying social problems, Katayama returned to the United States on his way to Japan, where he immediately became active in the developing labor movement, and soon became its central figure. In 1904 he went as a delegate to the Amsterdam Congress, and after a tour of the United States returned

to Japan, to find the movement dominated by *petit bourgeois* intellectuals and persecuted bitterly by the authorities. His activity in a big strike in Tokyo caused his arrest and nine months' imprisonment, which greatly impaired his health; and upon his release, his every move was interfered with, detectives were always with him wherever he went, and he was compelled to leave Japan, again coming to the United States. This persecution was largely due to the intrepid attitude against the war with Russia adopted by the Japanese Socialists.

But in America the Japanese Consuls and detectives, upon instructions from the Imperial government, persecuted Katayama, making his life unpleasant and his organizing work impossible. His friends were intimidated by the Consuls, who possess great power. The Japanese Day Laborers' Union, of which Katayama was an officer, was compelled to denounce him; one of his friends was actually kidnapped,

sent to Japan, and imprisoned for eighteen months. Katayama was compelled to leave California and come to New York, where he has since been publishing a paper in Japanese and English, *The Heimin.*

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The central characteristics of Katayama's activity and personality are an uncompromising class consciousness and internationalism. He greeted with joy the proletarian revolution in Russia, as did his comrades in Japan; and he is firmly convinced that the revolutionary Socialism of the Bolsheviki must become the basis of the New International. At sixty years of age, Sen Katayama looks to the future, and not to the past—to the immediate future of the Third International, the International of revolutionary Socialism, of the final, unconquerable struggle against Capitalism, initiated by the proletarian revolution in Russia.

History, says Trotzky, is a mighty engine promoting our ideals. And con-

temporary history is preparing the way feverishly and swiftly for our final struggle. In this struggle the international solidarity of the proletariat is an indispensable requirement. May Sen Katayama's book on the Japanese Labor Movement prove a factor in promoting this solidarity! May Sen Katayma's revolutionary conception of Socialism prove a factor in the revolutionary reconstruction of Socialism!

LOUIS C. FRAINA.

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