CREATING SOCIALIST WOMEN IN JAPAN, 1900-1937

by Vera Christine Mackie

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ABSTRACT

'Creating Socialist Women in Japan: 1900-1937'

In late 19th century and early 20th century Japan, women were primarily constructed as imperial subjects, whose major contribution to the nation-state was as "good wives and wise mothers". The development of Japanese capitalism also, however, provided the conditions for the emergence of the political discourse of liberalism, and the subsequent development of various strands of socialist and feminist thought.

Women were active in socialist groups from the 1900s. Women also participated in autonomous socialist women's organizations and contributed to journals directed at socialist women. The first of the major labour organizations was established in 1912, and factional splits in the 1920s resulted in the existence of several different union federations. Socialist women tried to reach working women through the women's departments of these union federations and the left-wing political parties which were established after 1925.

In this thesis I examine selected writings of socialist women in Japan between 1900 and 1937. Autobiographical texts, political writings, manifestos, pamphlets, poetry and fictional writings can all tell us something about women as political actors in early twentieth century Japan. In these writings, the relationship between socialism and feminism was worked out through discussion of marriage and the family, the sexual division of labour, women and work, women and politics; and through debates with liberal and anarchist feminists. These discussions, however, were carried out in a context where the dominant representations of women were as wives, mothers, and imperial subjects, and where politics was often defined in terms of nationalist goals. Socialist women attempted to find a speaking position through negotiation of the contradictory identities of "wife", "mother", "worker" and "activist".

It is from this perspective that I explore the speaking positions available to socialist women in early twentieth century Japan, the discursive strategies employed in their writings, and the political strategies they envisaged for changing their society. I argue that the creation of "socialist women" involved not only the creation of organizations to mobilize women, but also involved the creation of a new subjectivity for women, which could include the imagination of the possibilities for political action.
STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

Signed______

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I have presented research papers related to this research at the following venues, and have benefited from comments on these occasions: Research Centre for Women's Studies, University of Adelaide; Asian Law Centre, University of Melbourne; Department of History, University of Melbourne; Gender Studies Research Unit, University of Melbourne; Gender Relations Project, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University; Melbourne Inter-University Feminist History Group; Japanese Studies Association of Australia Biennial Conference; Asian Studies Association of Australia Biennial Conference; Theory West Seminar, University of Western Sydney, Nepean.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In 1904, Fukuda Hideko (1865-1927) published her autobiography Warawa no Hanshôgai "My Life so Far". This book was significant for several reasons. It was the autobiography of a woman who had been involved in the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement (Jiyû Minken Undô), the movement for parliamentary democracy in the nineteenth century. She had also been involved in the Osaka Incident in the eighteen eighties, a plan to send arms to Korea for the cause of Korean Independence; Fukuda's imprisonment on this charge was cut short by the 1889 amnesty on the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution. By the time Fukuda wrote her autobiography in 1904, she had come into contact with the fledgling Japanese socialist movement, through the Heiminsha - the Commoners' Society. Later, she was to edit an important socialist women's paper Sekai Fujin (Women of the World). Fukuda's account of her life encapsulates aspects of the early development of a feminist consciousness in Meiji Japan. Accordingly, I will use this text to consider the connections and disjunctions between liberalism, socialism and feminism in the Japanese context, and to reflect upon it as an important attempt by a woman to write herself as a political agent.

1 Her family name before her marriage to Fukuda Tomosaku was Kageyama, and she was known by this name at the time of the Osaka Incident, but because she published her autobiography under the name of Fukuda Hideko, and used this name for the rest of her life, I will use this name to refer to her below. For biographical details of Fukuda's life, see: Murata Shizuko, Fukuda Hideko, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1959; Itoya Toshio, Josei Kaihô no Senkushatchi, Tokyo: Shimizu Shoin, 1975; Sharon L. Sievers, Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Meiji Japan, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983, Chapters 3 & 6; Sharlie Conroy Ushioda, "Women and War in Meiji Japan: The Case Of Fukuda Hideko, Peace and Change, Volume 4, No 3, Fall 1977, pp9-12; Sharlie Conroy Ushioda, "Fukuda Hideko and the Women's World of Meiji Japan", In Hilary Conroy et al (eds)Japan in Transition: Thought and Action in the Meiji Era, Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1984, pp276-293.

2 I will be referring to the following edition of Fukuda's autobiography: Fukuda Hideko, Warawa no Hanshôgai, Tokyo: Iwanami Bunkô, 1958. Translations are my own unless stated otherwise.

3 Sekai Fujin appeared from 1907 to 1909. This publication will be analysed in more detail in Chapter Three below.

4 The Meiji period spans the years from 1868 to 1912.
My analysis of Fukuda's text introduces this study of the writings of socialist women in Japan from the 1900s to the 1930s. Such works include manifestos, pamphlets and fictional as well as political writings, all generated by an array of movements, groups and personalities. I will analyse the ways in which the generic constraints of these different types of texts shaped the political messages that can be found in them. My principal concern, though, will be to show how these texts were attempting to create a new female political subjectivity which could include political activism.

The predominant representations of women in Japan in this period, when politics was often defined in terms of nationalist goals, were as wives, mothers and imperial subjects. Socialist women's understandings of themselves and of the place of women in an industrializing nation in the twentieth century were, inevitably, shaped by these representations, just as were those of other women. But socialist women also contested the confinement of women's lives within the limits of these representations, and in doing so also explored possible connections and disjunctions between socialist politics and feminist political activism through discussion of the topics of marriage and family, the sexual division of labour, women and work, and women and politics. They were not the only women to challenge the dominant representations of women at this time. Their discussions include debates with liberal feminists on the one hand and anarchist feminists on the other. Through these, socialist women sought to imagine a different and better world from the one they inhabited, a world that their political activism would help bring into being.
1.1 The Autobiography of a Socialist Woman

Warawa no Hanshōgai is often referred to as "the first woman's autobiography" in modern Japan. Although there is room for discussion about the definition of autobiography in early twentieth century Japan, we can take the point that this was considered to be an important and distinctive text in the Japan of 1904. Fukuda's writing is highly literary, revealing her own classical education, and implying a highly literate readership. But her acknowledged reference points do not lie within the Japanese literary heritage, which includes women's poetic diaries of the Heian period, the autobiographies of such Meiji intellectuals as Fukuzawa Yukichi, or the blurring of autobiography and fiction in modern Japanese novels. Rather

5 c.f. Mikiso Hane, Reflections on the Way to the Gallows, Berkeley: University of California, 1988; p29: "This was the first woman's autobiography to be written in Japan."

6 Other feminist activists refer to reading Fukuda's autobiography: c.f. Nishikawa Fumiko, Heiminsha no Onna; Nishikawa Fumiko Jiden, Tokyo: Aoyamakan, 1984, edited by Amano Shigeru; p184. Fukuda's autobiography was obviously popular as it ran to several editions. A publisher's advertisement in Sekai Fujin in 1907 notes that the book is already in its fifth reprinting, and describes the book in the following terms: "The heroic woman Kageyama Hideko, who participated in the famous Osaka Incident with Ōi Kentarō and others, is the author of this book. How did she become renowned in her youth as a literary woman in her home town? How did she come to be involved in the Osaka treason trial? How did she spend her three years in prison? How did she part from her lover and come to know her husband? What kind of life did she lead as a wife in extreme poverty, as a loving mother in grief, and as a widow with many regrets? This book describes the vicissitudes and changes, the complications and entanglements of this great tragedy." Sekai Fujin, No 3; p8 (Facsimile edition, Tokyo: Ryûkei Shōsha; p74).

7 She uses a literary style of writing, which employs grammatical endings derived from classical Japanese - a style removed from spoken language. However, the use of furigana to provide readings for Chinese characters made this writing somewhat more accessible. For an account of the transformations of literary language in the Meiji period, see: Masao Miyoshi, Accomplices of Silence: The Modern Japanese Novel, Berkeley: University of California, 1974, Chapter 1.


10 c.f. the discussion in Livia Monnet, ' "In the Beginning Woman was the Sun": Autobiographies of Modern Japanese Women Writers', Japan Forum, Vol 1, no 1, April 1989; and Volume 1, No 2, October 1989. Monnet is sensitive to the fact that women's "self-writing" as she calls it, must be placed in the context of a long tradition of poetic diaries, and the
she refers to Benjamin Franklin's autobiography, a translated biography of
Joan of Arc, and the Russian Nihilists. However, it may be more fruitful
to place Fukuda's autobiography in the context of other genres of socialist
writing. For example, the publications of the early socialist group, the
Heiminsha (Commoners' Society), with which Fukuda was acquainted by
the time she wrote Warawa no Hanshōgai, regularly ran statements by
socialists on their awakening to socialist ideals, under the generic title "How
I Became a Socialist".

After an introduction which explains her reasons for writing this
autobiography, the autobiography proper commences with an account of
Fukuda as an exemplary student. However, we soon realise that her
girlhood was marked by an intense ambivalence about the conventions of
femininity, and this is a theme which is to recur in her text. Although she was

blurring of autobiography and fiction in modern Japanese novels. However, I would argue that
the generic conventions of the Heian poetic diaries were not appropriate to the writing of a
political life in Meiji Japan. Bowring, in 'The Female Hand', argues that the genre of poetic diary
involves a central trope of "waiting", with the woman as passive centre. On the other hand,
Fukuda's autobiography involves a life of action. While the poetic diaries are cyclical in
structure, Fukuda's autobiography is much closer to the "quest" novel - mainly linear in
structure, but allowing flashbacks and other temporal manipulation for dramatic and textual
effect. As I will discuss below, Fukuda's autobiography is a carefully constructed text, drawing
on novelistic and melodramatic conventions.

11 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p11. That is, she refers to Benjamin Franklin's autobiography in the
first line of the preface to her own autobiography.

12 Warawa no Hanshōgai, pp.46-7.

13 Several books dealing with the heroic exploits of the Russian Nihilists appeared in Japan in
the eighteen eighties. John Crump, The Origins of Socialist Thought in Japan, Beckenham,
Kent: Croom Helm, 1983, p38.

14 Several of these statements from the weekly Heimin Shinbun are collected in Odagiri
Susumu (ed) Mejii Bungaku Zenshū 84: Mejii Shakai Shugi Bungaku Shū 2, Tokyo: Chikuma
Shobō, 1965; pp389-392. For some later statements by women in the journal Chokugen,
Nishikawa Fumiko, Heiminsha no Onna; pp209-10. These statements will be discussed in
Chapter Three below. Such statements were also found in British socialist writing, and the
genre can perhaps be traced back to the tradition of narratives of religious conversion. See
Stephen Yeo, 'A New Life: The Religion of Socialism in Britain, 1883-1896', History
Workshop, No 4, Autumn, 1977, pp11-12; Carolyn Steedman, 'Women's Biography and
Autobiography: Forms of History and Histories of Form', in Helen Carr (ed) From My Guy to Sci-
praised by parents and educational authorities for her scholarly achievements, her classmates scorned her because of her tomboyishness:

On the way to school, I was always taunted by the naughty brats: "Here comes the fake!" "Here comes the fake!" Only now can I see how appropriate their taunt was. I really was strange in those days. If we understand "fake" to mean something which appears to be what it is not - to make horses' hoof look like tortoiseshell, or to make the new "rubber" look like ivory - we can see how witty it was to call me by that name. Although it embarrasses me now, at that time I was known as a lively child. It goes without saying that I behaved like a tomboy in everyday life, and while studying I could not even spare the time to put my hair up. I liked reading books so much, that until the age of sixteen I wore my hair short and parted in the middle. Even my clothes were like boys' clothes, although I used to go to school with the girls. When the other children saw this, they found it strange, that there was someone who was not quite male and not quite female, and so they taunted me, saying "Here comes the fake". Whenever I look back on this, I can still feel my back soaked with sweat. Eventually, when I started to grow up, I became embarrassed to wear men's clothes, and it was in the summer of my seventeenth year that I started to grow my hair long, and started to wear my hair up like other women.

In her account of this incident, Fukuda presents the ambivalence of the young woman who found scholarship more important than the conventions of femininity, but we also see that Fukuda eventually conforms with the expectations placed on her, and submits to the disciplines of tea ceremony and flower arranging prescribed by her mother. This doubled perspective recurs throughout the autobiography, with the mature author positioned at a distance from her younger self. In the passage quoted above, femininity is

15 The word used here is magai, or magaimono, which has the meaning of "fake" or "artificial". In this situation it refers to a woman pretending to be a man.

16 Fukuda uses the word gomu "rubber".

17 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p13-14.

18 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p14. This is not to suggest that Fukuda's mother simply pressured her to conform. Fukuda's mother was a respected teacher and scholar in her own right, and was largely responsible for Fukuda's education - the means by which Fukuda was able to gain a measure of independence.
portrayed as something natural (but also beautiful and valuable?) through the metaphors of ivory and tortoiseshell. For a woman to appear "mannish" is fakery - like attempting to replace ivory and tortoiseshell with plastic or horse's hoof. However, while Fukuda now appears to identify with the children who are unsettled by the blurring of gender boundaries - "someone who was not quite male and not quite female" - she also remembers the physical expression of her distress at the children's taunting - "Whenever I look back on this, I can still feel my back soaked with sweat".

Further distancing from the young tomboy is achieved in a later passage, when the mature Fukuda is confronted with a young woman, dressed in masculine style, who has come to "apprentice" herself to Fukuda. Fukuda, however, advises the young woman to wear more conventional dress, and relates the story of the young woman's subsequent marriage. This episode suggests that there were other women who identified with her ambivalence concerning gender identity. Even before the publication of her autobiography, Fukuda was a well-known figure, because of her involvement in the Osaka Incident. Articles about Fukuda had appeared in newspapers, and Fukuda also describes visiting a theatrical performance in Okayama, which portrayed her participation in the Osaka Incident.

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19 Mary Mason has suggested that a doubling or splitting of the self is a characteristic of many early European women's autobiographies. See Mary G. Mason, 'The Other Voice: Autobiographies of Women Writers', in James Olney (ed) Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical, Princeton University Press, 1980; p211. Sidonie Smith also refers to "the generic contract" which "engages the autobiographer in a doubled subjectivity - the autobiographer as protagonist of her story and the autobiographer as narrator. Through that doubled subjectivity she pursues her fictions of selfhood by fits and starts." Sidonie Smith, A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987; p17.

20 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p70-71.

21 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p72-73.
However, despite her ironic distance from the young visitor, the conundrum of gender identity is never resolved in this text, as Fukuda must come to terms with the experience of a sexed body, and as Fukuda attempts to reconcile the contradictory identities of "woman" and "political activist". Her account of her political development is punctuated by accounts of her first menstruation and other physical developments. A "certain physiological change" (seirijô no ichi henshô) is described in the following terms:

Here, there is one more thing which I should record. This is a matter which most people would prefer to avoid, and remain silent about, even though [what I will tell] is the truth. However, I will dare to reveal something private, for those who wish to investigate the relationship between physical and psychological matters, and in order to provide evidence that, at that time, I was more masculine (otokorashikanishi koto) than feminine. I will be pleased if those who read this will not totally dismiss this as vulgar behaviour. What, then, is this matter which I must write about? It is that my physique was unusual, in that it was not until my twenty second year, while I was in prison, that I experienced that which every woman has once a month. I hear that most women start [menstruating] at about the age of fifteen...

When I still had not [started menstruating] at the time when all my childhood friends had married and produced children, my mother was anxious, and worried that I might be what they call a "barren woman" (ishime). Thus I hardly need tell you how surprised I was when this happened one day out of the blue while I was in prison.22

In her account of this "coming of age", Fukuda mixes these physical changes with an account of her tomboyish behaviour as a young woman: "I was, from birth, rather unrefined like a man, and did not in the least possess any of the feminine graces"23. The account of her physical maturation is followed by a discussion of the qualities of her "ideal husband" (risó no otto). According to the structure of her autobiographical text, physical maturation prefigures an interest in matters romantic. This does not, however, eclipse her political ideals. She had thought that her ideal husband should be "a great man, with

22 Warawa no Hanshôgai, p52.
23Warawa no Hanshôgai, p52.
a distinguished reputation", 24 and had first become interested in her fiancé Kobayashi, because of shared political ideals. 25 Later, in her account of "becoming a mother" (haha to naru), 26 it is the physical manifestations of her condition that she initially dwells on, before recounting the difficulties of her relationship with her lover Ōi Kentarō:

From the time [I returned to Tokyo], my physical condition was unusual, and as the days passed I felt ill and continued to show symptoms of nausea. Finally I realised why . . . . 27

Throughout her autobiography, Fukuda is conscious of the tension involved in being a woman, but also trying to be politically active. She constantly refers to the fact that she is a woman:

Even I, a woman, swore that I would not give up until I had found a way of getting rid of such bad government and evil laws. 28 [emphasis added]

Even though I was a woman, I had decided to risk my life, challenging the brutal government, and now [after my arrest] I was learning the truth of the adage "If you win, you are a loyalist, if you lose, you are a traitor". 29 [emphasis added]

After her arrest, she is sent to remand in Osaka, and is conscious that she is the focus of public attention because she is a woman:

After interrogation by the police, I was to be sent to Osaka. At about eight or nine o'clock at night, we left the police station, tethered together. Although I may look like I could move briskly, with my woman's gait I tended to get left behind, and was dragged along on the rope until I somehow made it to the wharf, where we were transferred to the ship. Seeing that we were guarded by police, the other passengers stared at us as if

24 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p52.
25 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p53.
26 Warawa no Hanshōgai, pp 74-78.
27 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p74.
28 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p17.
29 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p43; translation in Hane, Reflections on the Way to the Gallows, p42.
thunderstruck, but it was me - a woman - whom they stared at with rounded eyes ... ![emphasis added]

At other times it is the supposed weakness of the female body she refers to:

*Even though I may have a weak body, when it comes to patriotic fervour, I am second to no man.* ![emphasis added]

Despite this protestation of physical weakness, however, she can assert women's moral superiority over men who frequent brothels in the midst of a political crisis. This was one of the causes of her disillusion with her Liberal Party comrades:![emphasis added]

Here I would like to make a confession. Not only do I deplore the arrogance of the nobility and the rich merchants, I also abhor the failures and the frivolity of the comrades in the Liberal Party, with whom I shared matters of life and death. *Even I, a woman,* would never as long as I lived, give up the idea that I was acting for the country, and it was this one idea which guided me. ![emphasis added]

For any activist in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Japan, there was the problem of the lack of suitable models for political activity, particularly oppositional political activity. This was true for both male and female activists. The most vivid image of a political activist was the *shishi* - a member of the group of samurai who had overthrown the Shogunate and engineered the Restoration of the authority of the Emperor in the eighteen sixties. Although male activists could identify with the bravery and resolution of the *shishi*, the connection with samurai values and the restoration of imperial authority meant that the *shishi* was an ambivalent symbol for male socialist activists. This was even more true for a woman activist of the time.

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30 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p44.
31 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p26.
32 c.f. Her account of joining her comrades at a tea house: Warawa no Hanshōgai, p33.
33 Her disillusion also, however, refers to the co-optation of many of the leading liberals by the Meiji government.
34 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p20.
Fukuda's description of her own political activity and interests certainly makes use of the language of bravery, resolution, and determination, but her identification with the *shishi* can never be complete. Although she refers to her younger self as a *jo-shishi* "female *shishi*", the adult Fukuda's use of this phrase is distanced from the feelings of the young patriot. In the following extract she explains the feelings which prompted her participation in the Osaka Incident.

Ah! This is what caused the misfortune that I resolutely threw away my books. There is a piece of writing which reveals my emotion at that time, although it may appear to be the words of someone crazy. In order that you may understand that at that time I was an admirer of nationalism and devoted to patriotism, as the next part of my narrative, please allow me to quote from this piece of writing. This was written when I was in remand in Osaka.

Here I would like to make a confession. Not only do I deplore the arrogance of the nobility and the rich merchants, I also abhor the failures and the frivolity of the comrades in the Liberal Party, with whom I shared matters of life and death. Even I, a woman, would never as long as I lived, give up the idea that I was acting for the country, and it was this one idea which guided me. I was pleased to hear the ideas of the socialists, and eventually came to abhor the words of the imperialists who are bent on their own self interest and personal gain. Oh! how mistaken were my thoughts in those days when I lacked education, and was vainly ruled by my emotions. At that time, I and others explained my actions on the grounds that I was a female patriot - like the *shishi* of the Restoration. For the moment, let me continue the story as the female patriot.36

An earlier account of her participation in the Osaka Incident (written while she was in remand in Osaka) is then quoted in full. Although the issue which prompts her political activity is the issue of Korean independence, her consciousness of injustice is also aroused by the lack of political rights for


36Warawana no Hanshōgal, p20.
the majority of Japanese people, and the inequalities between men and women in Japanese society.37

However, although the adult Fukuda seems to have made some accommodation to the expectations of suitable feminine behaviour, she has not given up her resolve to participate in political activity. Her resolve to "fight" for various causes is reiterated in several places.

The [way I have travelled] has been one obstacle after another. I have always been fighting, and have never once been disheartened by setbacks. I have fought in the past; I am fighting in the present; and as long as blood flows in my veins, I intend to keep fighting. My vocation is in fighting, in the struggle against human iniquity. On realizing that this is my vocation, I can bear the pain of recollection, and can even look back nostalgically at past sufferings. The only thing that will relieve the pain of past sufferings is further sufferings. According to my vocation, I will fight against my own sins and the sins of the world. In the past I became excited by the cries of those calling for popular rights and freedom, those who were enraged by the monopoly over political power. Now I intend to oppose the monopoly of capital with all my might, and devote my attention to saving the unfortunate poor. . . 38

The text closes with a plan to educate women for self-sufficiency, an ending which may remind the reader of the opening descriptions of Fukuda's own education. We are introduced to Fukuda as a star pupil in the opening, and in the final pages we are told of Fukuda's plans to teach women useful crafts as a means to self-sufficiency. Although there is no simple sense of narrative closure - we see Fukuda embarking on a new venture rather than showing a sense of arrival or completion - there is a sense of symmetry.39


38Warawa no Hanshôgai, p12.

It is at the age of sixteen, when a marriage proposal is made to her family, that Fukuda first realises the economic vulnerability of women. On her refusal of this proposal her parents explain the state of the family finances to her, and thus the good economic reasons for going through with the marriage. In Fukuda's case, her education means that she can work as a teacher and contribute to the family budget, but this incident prompts Fukuda as narrator to reflect on the situation of women:

Oh! I thought, how many women are there who, in this way, marry a husband for whom they feel no love, who simply marry ritualistically and mechanically, because of pressure from their families. From this time on, a wish was etched into my mind, the wish to find a way for such unhappy women to live in independence and autonomy.

She is then ready for the message of feminist Kishida Toshiko, a member of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement, who visits Fukuda's hometown in Okayama, stays with her family, and gives speeches on women's rights. Fukuda is shocked at the government's interference in a social event involving Kishida, and the subsequent closing of her family's school. This is Fukuda's first experience of government repression. It is soon after Kishida's visit that Fukuda decides to travel to Tokyo, to continue her studies and follow her political interests.

The relationship between education, work, and women's independence is a theme which recurs throughout Fukuda's autobiography, as several other commentators have noted. For Fukuda herself, work meant primarily intellectual labour as a teacher, writer, and editor. However, she had experience of other kinds of work at different junctures in her life. In Tokyo,

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40 Warawa no Hanshōgal, p15.


she survived for a time on the typically “feminine” jobs of kamiyui (hairdressing), sentaku (laundry) and shitatemono (sewing), proclaiming that all kinds of work were equally sacred and honourable. While joining in preparation for the Osaka Incident, she played the part of sewa-nyôbo, or housewife, in the comrades' household which was disguised as a students' boarding house. Her account of this time suggests she was relatively unused to such a role, although she takes credit for thinking of this way of camouflaging their activities. In prison, she joins in sewing with the other prisoners, but is also set apart from the other women in her role as teacher. In this environment, she also comes into contact with women who have survived by begging and scavenging, and women for whom the threat of being sold into prostitution is a reality.

While arguing for women's economic independence through productive labour, she speaks from the position of a relatively privileged intellectual. In her plans for teaching women self-sufficiency, she generally focuses on manual labour such as sewing or handcrafts, noting that, while there has been an expansion in education for women, existing forms of women's education generally fail to contribute to women's self-sufficiency. However, while arguing for a change in the economic determinants of relationships between men and women, her view of women's work is shaped by dominant constructions of class and gender in Meiji Japan. Her

43 Warawa no Hanshôgai, p28-29.
44 Warawa no Hanshôgai, p35-36.
45 Warawa no Hanshôgai, p37-38.
46 Warawa no Hanshôgai, pp61-62.
47 Warawa no Hanshôgai, p94.
proposal is to teach women to produce embroidered silk handkerchiefs - a potential export product.48

Relationships with several men are discussed in the pages of Warawa no Hanshōgai - her fiancé Kobayashi Kusuo,49 her first lover Ōi Kentarō,50 and her husband Fukuda Tomosaku. However, much of the emotional intensity of the autobiography is reserved for Fukuda's female friends. Her friendship with Tomii Oto51 when she first comes to Tokyo, and her relationship with a fellow prisoner after the Osaka Incident are described in some detail, and there are also some significant encounters with women from other classes.

Tomii obviously comes from a similar class background to Fukuda, and they share political and other interests. Tomii is described as a sister to Fukuda:

When I met Miss Tomii at Mr Sakazaki's house, I felt as if she were an old friend, and we pledged that we would be like sisters to each other, and would help each other for the rest of our lives. We always told each other everything - good or bad - keeping no secrets from each other. So, when I told her about the uprising in Korea, and how conditions in East Asia were becoming more and more urgent, she said how pointless a woman's life was, and, sharing my disappointment at the irresolution of my comrades, left a thank you letter to Mr Sakazaki, and came with me to Kanagawa, from whence we secretly resolved to travel to country areas, and stir the feelings of the people [for this cause].52

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48 Warawa no Hanshōgai, pp94-95.
49 The pseudonym Haishi is used.
50 The pseudonym Omoi is used.
51 For biographical details of Tomii, another woman who had been inspired by the example of liberal feminist Kishida Toshiko, see Sievers, Flowers in Salt, p36.
52 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p28.
Tomii has also shared in Fukuda’s aspirations for the emancipation of women:

... while pursuing my studies, I wanted to try somehow to educate female comrades and established the *Fujutsui Kaisha*\(^{53}\) in order to teach the means of independence and autonomy, so that they need not be the slaves of men, and so they could freely pursue their vocation as women and thanks to this reform, in order to save women from the violence and cowardice of men, I planned, with Miss Tomii Oto, to gather donations from supporters all over the country, in order to establish a fund for the purpose of creating one large organisation. However, our intentions were frustrated when Ms Tomii unfortunately had to return to her home town.\(^{54}\)

Fukuda’s description of her reunion with Tomii dramatises the emotional attachment and solidarity which developed between Fukuda and her female friends:

Early one morning before daybreak, in the first week of September of that year, the landlord of the room I was renting called me excitedly from downstairs: "Miss Kageyama! Miss Kageyama!". I had hardly awoken from my early morning dreams, but called out drowsily "What is it?". I was told that I had a woman visitor. When I asked who it was, her answered that her name was Miss Tomii. "What! Miss Tomii!" I kicked the bedclothes away, and when I got up and ran downstairs in a dream, there she was, standing in the garden. Forgetting myself, I embraced her, and for some time tears silently ran down my face. My dear friend had spent several days in the same clothes, travelling in the hot early autumn weather. As one would expect of a young lady of her age, she appeared embarrassed to be seen in such a soiled, sweaty *yukata*, and stood in the garden looking rather abstracted. I took her upstairs, rejoiced at her safe arrival, and asked her what had been happening since we had parted. In tears, she told me how she had returned safely to her home, that her family had been pleased to see her, until she told them of the reason for her visit..........\(^{56}\)


\(^{54}\)Warawa no Hanshôgai, p27.

\(^{55}\)Fukuda’s name before her marriage.

\(^{56}\)Warawa no Hanshôgai, pp29-30.
The ecstatic tone of this reunion shifts to pathos, however, when they are to part once again. With the omniscience of hindsight, Fukuda as narrator can prefigure another parting:

... What a pure heart she had in her desire to devote herself to her country and devote herself to others. My love and respect for her grew even deeper. All of that day, in my lodgings which served as a meeting place for us two kindred spirits, we talked about various things, and were oblivious to the setting of the sun. When we had to part, we shook hands and said that even though we would each follow different paths, we would carry out our original intentions, and greet the new world of freedom which would come some day. Thus, we parted, promising to meet again, but there was no way of knowing that this was to be our last meeting.57

Another important friendship involves Fukuda and a fellow prisoner. Despite the sensual expression of this friendship - a physical closeness necessitated by the conditions of prison life - Fukuda is still quite innocent of sexual matters. The two women share the same bedding, keep each other warm at night, and bathe together. In addition, the better-educated Fukuda acts as a teacher to the other woman. They are shocked when they are separated by the prison authorities. Fukuda, due to her innocence of sexual matters, does not question the veracity of sensational stories of lesbian relationships involving a mimicking of husband-wife relationships, and horror stories of jealousy and revenge.58 Thus, Fukuda could feel love, respect, and affection for other women, the basis for the solidarity necessary for shared political activity.59 In her case, however, she did not question the

57 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p31. Tomii dies while Fukuda is in prison: Warawa no Hanshōgai, p51-52.

58 Warawa no Hanshōgai, pp45-48.

59 Several writers have discussed the relationship between female friendships and political solidarity in feminist movements. Deborah Gorham, for example, discusses how Vera Brittain "incorporated her feminist beliefs into a commitment to women's solidarity". Deborah Gorham, "The Friendships of Women" Friendship, Feminism and Achievement in Vera Brittain's Life and Work in the Interwar Decades, Journal of Women's History, Winter 1992, p49. See also: Carolyn Heilbrun, Writing a Woman's Life, New York: W.W. Norton, 1988; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, 'The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth Century America', in Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985, pp53-76.
sexual mores of her society, which proscribed sexual expression between women.

In Fukuda’s other relationships with women there is generally some class difference involved, with Fukuda cast as the benevolent provider of charity, knowledge, or educational assistance. The following description of an encounter with a female beggar is an opportunity to display Fukuda’s benevolence and sensibility, but the female beggar also serves as an image which can express Fukuda’s own feelings of loneliness and pathos, when she is left alone in an inn while her comrades visit tea houses:

Left alone in the inn, I would reflect on the past, worry about the future, and fall into deep depression. I lamented the frail plight of women and felt bitter towards my comrades...

Once, when I was alone in the second-floor room of the inn and feeling depressed, I opened the sliding door and gazed down at a boat loaded with trash. On it was a beggar woman, with a child, two or three years old, strapped to her back. She was rummaging through the trash, picking out waste paper and putting it into her basket. The child must have been in pain as the mother bobbed and weaved, for it was wailing as if it were about to suffocate. The mother ignored the screeching child and continued to pick through the trash. Finally, she dug up what appeared to be fish guts and chicken entrails. She began to wash those and prepare them for cooking. I was overwhelmed at this sight and thought, “Alas, I never realised how pitiful life could be. I am poor, but I am certainly better off than this beggar.”

I was overcome with pity for the mother and child and called out to them from the second floor. Taking out a fifty-sen note, a small fortune for me then, I attached a weight to it and threw it down to the mother. She treated it as if it were a gift from heaven. She picked it up timidly, ... as though she were afraid to take it, and I called out to her and told her to use it for the child...  

Even a socialist woman of the time was likely to see class differences as “natural”. While Fukuda feels solidarity with women from a similar class background, in her relationship with the beggar woman the barriers between

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60 Warawa no Hanshôgai, pp38-40; translated in Hane, Reflections on the Way to the Gallows, pp38-9.
women of different classes are preserved. The barriers between Fukuda and the beggar-woman are dramatised by the spatial distance between them, as the intellectual Fukuda looks down on the working-class beggar-woman from the second floor of the inn.

The innkeeper's comment on the suitability of contacts between the respectable Miss Kageyama\textsuperscript{61} and the beggar woman are presented without comment or disclaimer:

A little later, I decided to step outside. The landlady stopped me and said, "Was it you who gave some money to a beggar woman?" When I nodded, she said, "A moment ago the woman with a child on her back came here with tears in her eyes, saying that a woman guest had thrown some money to her and she had come to thank her. She asked me for your name. I didn't think it was wise to let a beggar have your name, so I told her I would convey her message to you, and sent her off. . . ." Charity rewards the giver, and not the receiver. I felt better than I had for days. Then I forgot about the incident like a haze that passes before one's eyes. Only later - like a scene from a novel - would I again meet this beggar woman where I least expected to.\textsuperscript{62}

The ensuing reunion, which occurs in prison in Osaka, is indeed novelistic in Fukuda's handling of the coincidence, and her description of the pathos of the beggar woman's situation.\textsuperscript{63} Such scenes reflect the careful construction of her text, which does not always follow a simple temporal sequence. Rather, episodes are juxtaposed for maximum dramatic effect.

The other important relationship in Fukuda's life concerns her mother, who continues to support Fukuda in various ways even after her marriage to Fukuda Tomosaku. Although her mother is not a major presence in the autobiography, a whole issue of Fukuda's socialist women's paper \textit{Sekai}

\textsuperscript{61}Fukuda's name before her marriage.

\textsuperscript{62}Hane, \textit{Reflections on the Way to the Gallows}, p39.

\textsuperscript{63}Warawa no Hanzōgai, pp37-40.
"Fujin" (Women of the World) is dedicated to Fukuda's mother on her death.64

Thus far I have tried to highlight ways in which Warawa no Hanshōgai portrays one woman's ambivalence about accepted notions of gender identity, and I have tried to consider how this ambivalence about femininity affected possible forms her political activity might take. Fukuda also discusses more conventional aspects of what is understood as political activity. She is interested in questioning the repressive power of the Meiji State, for she has, of course, been subject to the repressive power of this State,65 and comments in several places on the arbitrary nature of this power. On the occasion of her release from prison (thanks to an amnesty in celebration of the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution), she comments wryly:

So, the prison governor informed me that, thanks to the amnesty, my criminal record would be cleared, and I would be free from today. He gave the advice that I should, in future, devote myself even more wholeheartedly to the nation. On hearing this, a strange feeling came over me. Until yesterday - even until earlier today - I had been a traitor, but in the space of an hour I had been transformed into a patriot....66

Despite her ironic distancing from the concept of patriotism in this passage, up till now she has used the concept of patriotism as justification for her illegal activities. As mentioned above, in several places she contrasts her own actions "for the nation" with those who would act out of selfish or shallow motives.67 Her criticism is directed both at government which is

64 Sekai Fujin, No 33, February 1909.
65 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p17; p22; p43.
66 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p63.
67 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p20.
carried out for the benefit of a few individuals, and at some of her liberal comrades who would betray their cause for shallow motives. Like most other political thinkers of the Meiji period, Fukuda's political discourse is shaped by nationalism, a value which was almost beyond criticism in Meiji Japan.

By the time of the publication of her autobiography, Fukuda identifies herself as a socialist. There is, however, no clear espousal of a socialist political strategy. Rather, the vocabulary and slogans of socialist rhetoric become apparent. In addition to complaints about the repressive power of the Meiji State, she now sees "capitalists" and "imperialists" as her enemies:

Now I intend to oppose the monopoly of capital with all my might, and devote my attention to saving the unfortunate poor...

I was pleased to hear the ideas of the socialists, and eventually came to abhor the words of the imperialists who are bent on their own self interest and personal gain...

In 1904, socialist thought was still in its earliest days in Japan, and socialist women had not yet articulated a clear philosophy. Some of the issues of concern to socialist women were to be addressed in the socialist women's paper, Sekai Fujin (Women of the World), and in other writings by socialist women. But the problem of how to be a woman, and a political activist at the same time, was to be addressed in various ways over the next two or three decades. In such texts as Fukuda's Warawa no Hanshōgai we can see the

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68 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p12.
69 Warawa no Hanshōgai, p20.
beginnings of a tradition of feminism in Japan. Fukuda had been inspired to participate in political activism by the speeches of her liberal predecessor, Kishida Toshiko, and later feminists were able to refer back to Fukuda's writings in their own attempts to construct a political subjectivity.

Fukuda came to political maturity at a time when discussion of liberalism was flourishing in Japanese society, and the development of capitalist relations was accompanied by the development of modern notions of individualism. Although the Meiji State, as I discuss in Chapter Two below, failed to embrace liberal ideas in any real sense, the discourses of liberalism and individualism held resonance for the intellectuals of early twentieth century Japan, and these ideas were reflected in the development of new genres of fiction, autobiography, and political writings. Autobiography is a genre which has been linked with modern notions of individualism in the European context, and it is perhaps unsurprising that we should see the development of this genre in Meiji Japan. Like the European women's autobiographies discussed by Sidonie Smith, Fukuda's autobiography may be seen as an attempt to resolve the tension between becoming a woman and aspiring to a modern notion of selfhood which could include participation in public political activity. However, such writing must also be

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70 By "tradition", I am thinking of the concept of tradition employed by Hobsbawm and others, whereby tradition is seen not as something timeless and unchanging, but as something which is constantly reinvented and reconstituted, both by dominant groups and by those taking an oppositional stance. See Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (eds) The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge University Press, 1983; and the discussion of "tradition" in Stuart Hall, 'Notes on Deconstructing "The Popular"', in Raphael Samuel (ed) People's History and Socialist Theory, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, pp227-240.

71 c.f. Sievers, Flowers in Salt, passim.

understood as being shaped by specific discourses of nationalism and politics, and specific constructions of masculinity and femininity in the context of Meiji Japan. In the following chapters I will explore these questions with reference to other genres of political writing used by socialist women in early twentieth century Japan.

I have chosen to introduce this thesis with an analysis of Fukuda Hideko's autobiography for several reasons. Fukuda was writing at a time when socialist thought was first being articulated in Japan, and discussion of socialist understandings of the 'woman question' was just beginning. Thus, this is a useful entry point for discussion of the relationship between socialism and feminism in twentieth century Japan. Her account also traces her participation in the The Movement for Freedom and Popular Rights (Jiyū Minken Undō), one of the intellectual precursors of Japanese socialism and feminism. In addition, the basic problem of her text, how to resolve the disjunction between being a woman and aspiring to political activism, was a problem to be addressed implicitly and explicitly by other socialist women in early twentieth century Japan. Fukuda's autobiography may be seen as a liberal gesture - displaying an implicit faith in individualism. Other writings of socialist women would grapple with similar issues, but would also attempt to address the issue of class consciousness with varying degrees of success, as I will discuss below. Implicit in the writings of Fukuda and others is the search for a "speaking position" from which to articulate a feminist consciousness. In order to explore this proposition, my narrative of socialist women's writings and activities will be organised around some of these possible "speaking positions".

Sidonie Smith, in A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation, discusses the relationship between autobiography and liberal individualism, and the contradictions involved in women's writing of autobiography and aspiring to the ideals of liberal individualism.
According to the dominant discourses on women in Meiji Japan, women were positioned as imperial subjects, as wives, and as mothers. As I will discuss in Chapter Two below, women as imperial subjects were explicitly excluded from political participation. Some women, however, attempted to gain a voice by speaking as "wives" or as "mothers", as I discuss in Chapters Three and Four. However, the reality for most women was that they were engaged in various kinds of labour - domestic labour, agricultural labour, factory labour, or sexual labour. Was it possible for women to speak as "workers"? In Chapter Five I will discuss the disjunction between being a "woman" and being a "worker", and the gendered construction of work and class consciousness. The tensions generated by the disjunctions between these positions led many women to political activism, and in Chapter Six I discuss socialist women's attempts to engage with State institutions and to speak with a political voice as "activists". Finally, in Chapter Seven, I close with some reflections on the process of imagining exploitation and liberation, repression and resistance, in socialist women's writings. But first it is necessary to place this study in the context of recent scholarship on Japanese history, and to outline the methodological and theoretical concerns of this study.

1.2 The Historiography of Feminism and Socialism in Japan

The socialist women's writings analysed in this thesis mainly come from the years 1900 to 1937, but in order to understand the context in which these women were writing, it is necessary to understand the political context of Meiji Japan, for the political institutions, conventions, and practices established in the first half of the Meiji period were to provide the context for political activity in Japan right up to the end of World War Two. In the years from 1868 to 1898, Japan created all of the machinery of a modern nation-
state - a Constitution, a new legal code and policing system, a system of compulsory education, capitalist industry, and an army and navy.

As part of this process, there was extensive discussion of the family, which was to form a crucial link in the chain of loyalty from subject to emperor. Despite the diversity of marriage and inheritance practices prevalent in pre-Meiji Japan, it was the most conservative form of patriarchal family based on primogeniture which was privileged in the Meiji Civil Code of 1898. This (literally) patriarchal form of the family was dressed up in the ideology of "good wives and wise mothers" which idealized women's contribution to the family.

The intensity of debates around the family in late nineteenth century Japan suggests that something very basic was at stake. What was being debated were fundamental structures of authority in the new society. Writers on all points of the political spectrum linked family and State in a surprisingly explicit way. An understanding of debates on the family in Meiji Japan,

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74Takamure Itsue's research has shown a variety of matrilocal, patrilocal, wife-visiting, and duolocal marriage systems in pre-modern Japan. Practices varied according to region and social class. The Tokugawa Shogunate did not manage to unity marriage customs, for laws varied from domain to domain. By the end of the feudal period two contradictory trends were transforming the family system. In wealthy warrior and merchant families, increased centralization of property and authority led to a privileging of a patriarchal, extended family with inheritance based on primogeniture. In rural areas, changes in farming methods and the spread of capitalist market relations meant that the nuclear family was becoming the most efficient unit of production. For discussion of historical changes to family forms, see: Takamure Itsue, Josei no Rekishi, Tokyo: Kôdansha Bunkô, 1972, 2 volumes; Joyce Ackroyd, 'Women in Feudal Japan', Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, Volume 7, No 3, 1959; Haruko Wakita, 'Marriage and Property in Pre-modern Japan from the Perspective of Women's History', Journal of Japanese Studies, Winter 1984, pp73-100; Hitomi Tonomura, 'Women and Inheritance in Japan's Early Warrior Society', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 1990, pp592-623.


76Takamure Itsue has traced the development of ryôsai kenbo ideology, a curious amalgam of Confucian and European ideas, Takamure Itsue, Josei no Rekishi, Volume 2, pp79-83.

77These debates will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two below.
then, also contributes to an understanding of the structures of domination and subordination under the Meiji regime, where patriarchal authority was linked to imperial authority. While intellectuals discussed "good wives and wise mothers", women came to comprise at least 60 per cent of the industrial labour force, and other women were engaged in agricultural or domestic labour. The major export industries - silk, and later cotton, were dependent on the labour of young women from rural areas.

In Japan, as in many Western countries, economists and social scientists have tended to neglect the importance of women's labour in the early stages of industrialization. Japan's later expansion into heavy industry was largely based on capital built up in the first stages of light industry. Since the conditions of women's industrial labour were extremely exploitative, it is hardly surprising that spontaneous strike activity erupted as early as 1886. (The first textile mill had been established in 1872.) The first strike activity of any kind in Japan was carried out by female textile workers, without the support of an organised union movement. The subsequent failure of the organized labour movement to organise female textile workers on a mass basis is one of the continuing controversies of Japanese labour history, as I will discuss below. The socialist women's writings to be analyzed here


80 For discussion of these early disputes, see: Tsurumi, Factory Girls, pp50-58, pp112-120.

include discussion of political strategies for mobilizing women workers in union activity.

The Meiji period is often presented as a period of intense interest in "foreign" ideologies, as both the élites of the new society and their opponents seized on the theories of absolutism and social darwinism, liberalism and natural rights theory in order to justify a variety of political positions and decisions. It is also true of the early days of socialism in Japan that European socialist works were eagerly read and discussed, interpreted and translated into the Japanese context. However, I am less interested in the "foreign" origins of Japanese socialist thought, than in the ways in which these sets of ideas were seen to be useful in explaining the situation of workers in the context of an industrializing Japan.

The first socialist groups were established in the late 1890s. The members of such organizations as the Rōdō Kumiai Kiseikai (Society for the...
Promotion of Labour, established in 1897) and the Shakai Shugi Kenkyûkai (Society for the Study of Socialism, established in 1898) were to become leaders in the socialist, anarchist, and labour movements. An interest in labour conditions was also promoted by such journalistic works as Yokoyama Gennosuke's Nihon no Kasô Shakai (The Lower Social Strata of Japan). However, the Peace Regulations of 1887 gave the police powers to ban mass meetings, and the Public Peace Police Law (Chian Keisatsu Hô) of 1900 was to give police even more extensive powers. Women, minors, police and members of the armed forces were prohibited from engaging in political activity, and labour organizations and strikes were banned. This legislation was used in May 1901 to ban the newly-founded Shakai Minshutô (Social Democratic Party).

Women were active in such groups as the Heiminsha (Commoners Society) from its inception in 1903. Women continued to give a socialist critique of their position through these groups, and through separate groups and journals directed at socialist women. The first of the major labour organizations, the Yûaikai (Friendly Society) was established in 1912, and metamorphosed into the Sôdômei (General Federation of Labour). In the nineteen twenties, socialist women tried to reach working women through the women's departments of unions and the left-wing political parties which were established after the enactment of Universal Manhood Suffrage in


83Yokoyama Gennosuke, Nihon no Kasô Shakai, Tokyo, 1899 (Reprint: Iwanami Shoten, 1949).

84For discussion of the activities of women in the Heiminsha, see: Suzuki,Shiryô Heiminsha no Onnatchi, Nishikawa Fumiko, Heiminsha no Onna; Murata Shizuko, Fukuda Hideko, pp100-107; Sievers, Flowers in Salt, Chapter 6, pp114-138.
1925. It is difficult to follow the progress of socialist and feminist thought through the political repression of the nineteen thirties, but we can say that there was an active tradition of socialist activity by women for at least the first thirty years of this century. It is the conjunction of socialism and feminism, through the writings of these socialist women, that I will examine in this study.

In this context I will refer to several of the abovementioned studies of the socialist and labour movements in what is increasingly being referred to as "imperial Japan". Until well into the nineteen sixties, English-language scholarship on Japan was dominated by the paradigm of "modernization theory", but in the last two decades, the "modernization" school of Japanese studies has been challenged in various ways. Several authors concentrate on the history of dissent in Japanese political history. Large and Totten have studied labour, anarchist, and social democratic movements, while writers such as Bowen have directed attention to the early movement for "Freedom and Popular Rights" (Jiyû Minken Undô). Patrick's edited collection examined the social costs of Japan's early industrialization. Others have considered Japanese ultranationalism in the nineteen thirties, and whether the label "fascist" can be applied in this case.

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85 Several writers use the label "imperial Japan" to refer to the period from 1890 (the date when the Meiji Constitution became effective) to 1945. See Thomas Stanley's discussion of alternative periodizations of modern Japanese history. Thomas A. Stanley, 'Periodization in Modern Japanese History', ASAA Review, Volume 10, No 3, April 1987, pp101-105.


87 Large, The Rise of Labour; Large, Organized Labour and Socialist Politics in Interwar Japan.


89 Roger Bowen, Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan, University of California Press, 1980.

Some see Japanese ultranationalism not as an aberration in the otherwise steady progress towards capitalism, but as a phenomenon which has its roots in political decisions made during the Meiji period. Jon Halliday has surveyed Japanese history from the perspective of Marxist political economy. In Australia, several scholars have worked to challenge the idea of Japanese as a "consensus" society. The influence of the new social history is apparent in Hane's history of the "underside" of modern Japanese society.

While non-Japanese historians have, until relatively recently, been wary of Marxist interpretations of Japanese history, Japanese scholars themselves have shown no such reluctance. Some of the most spirited debates in Japanese history centre on the correct Marxist interpretation of the Meiji Restoration. Was it a bourgeois revolution, or did feudal remnants persist? What was the correct Marxist interpretation of the Emperor system? What did these debates imply for political strategy? The Rōnō-Kôza debates of the 1930s centred on this area of controversy.


95Dower, 'E.H. Norman, Japan and the Uses of History', pp. 35-38; Hoston, Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Prewar Japan, passim.
However, until quite recently, in both Japanese and English language scholarship on the early socialist and labour movements, the question of the gendering of political participation has been relatively neglected. Many English-language historians of the labour movement have ignored women workers completely. Although George Totten does devote a few pages to women in his account of the socialist movement in the twentieth century, he ignores the nineteenth century strike activity by women. His survey of the antecedents of the social democratic movement in Japan makes no mention of this early strike activity. He dismisses the possibility of organizing women workers as follows:

... those who worked in the various crafts, such as sawyers, held on to exclusive guild traditions, while the mass of women and children in textiles *hardly constituted much of a base for building trade unionism*. 96 [emphasis added]

For Totten, the impossibility of organizing women workers is self-evident, requiring no further explanation. Robins- Mowry, in her history of Japanese women, also fails to mention this strike activity. She portrays these women workers as victims, singing "pathetic little songs to express their unhappiness".97 The limitations of Japanese-language writings on women in the socialist and labour movements have been surveyed by Suzuki Yûko.98

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Recently, such writers as Kidd,\textsuperscript{99} Sievers,\textsuperscript{100} and Tsurumi\textsuperscript{101} have re-examined the documents of such pioneers as Hosoi Wakizô,\textsuperscript{102} Katayama Sen\textsuperscript{103} and Yokoyama Gennosuke\textsuperscript{104} in an attempt to understand the failure of the early twentieth century Japanese union movement to organize women workers, as I will discuss in more detail below, after some comments on the context of women's political participation in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Japan.

As mentioned above, there had been extensive discussion of women's "proper role" in society from as early as the eighteen eighties, although we must wait until the early twentieth century for evidence of an organised women's movement. Meiji ideology relegated women to the domestic sphere as 'good wives and wise mothers', and women were actively prohibited from participating in political activity. They could not vote, and Article Five of the Public Peace Police Law (Chian Keisatsu Hô) prohibited women from attending, or holding, a political meeting, or from joining a political party. Women were also prohibited from observing Diet proceedings in the first days of Constitutional government. In the eighteen eighties, it had been possible for someone like liberal feminist Kishida Toshiko to tour the country, speaking on behalf of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement. After 1900 this was impossible. At a time when women in several European


\textsuperscript{100}Sievers, \textit{Flowers in Salt}, Chapter 4.


countries were engaged in campaigns for female suffrage, Japanese women were prohibited from engaging in any public political activity. In 1905, women started a campaign for the repeal of Article Five, but this article was not modified until 1922. The first organizations devoted to the achievement of female suffrage were established in the 1920s.

Some middle-class women avoided overt political activities and engaged in philanthropic activities. From the late nineteenth century women were active in the Japanese chapters of the Red Cross and the Women's Christian Temperance Union (Nihon Kirisutokyō Kyōfūkai). In 1901 the Patriotic Women's Association (Nihon Aikoku Fujin Kai) was formed. This organization was perhaps more overtly political. In addition to welfare activities, the women of the Patriotic Women's Society saw their role as contributing to the development of the nation: this was to include support for Japan's colonization of its Asian neighbours. Sievers dismisses the Patriotic Women's Association as an organization "governed by men", "for men", while patriotic women's groups have been examined in more detail by other writers.

Until recently, most accounts of women's political activity in early twentieth century Japan have concentrated on the Seiūsha (The Bluestocking Society) and their journal Seiū (Bluestocking), which appeared from 1911

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106 Sievers, Flowers in Salt, p115.

to 1916. There have also been several studies of individual *Seitô* members. The *Seitô* group was significant, not least for the ability of such writers as Yosano Akiko and Hiratsuka Raichô to call forth an emotional response in their readers. The "Bluestockings" concentrated on issues of love, sexuality, and personal fulfilment, and paid little attention to issues concerning women's labour. However, in debates on prostitution, and abortion, some writers attempted to link sexuality and reproduction with the State and political structures. In 1918, several former *Seitô* members engaged in a debate on State support for single and widowed mothers, which also linked reproduction with political structures, as I discuss in Chapter Four below. Several former "Bluestockings" went on to engage in feminist activism and labour activism.

*Seitô* was, however, predated (and postdated) by socialist feminist activity. There were at least three socialist women's journals before the appearance of *Seitô*: *Nijûseiki Fujin* (Twentieth Century Woman: 1904), *Suiito Hoomu* (Sweet Home: 1904), and *Sekai Fujin* (Women of the World). The most prominent of these, *Sekai Fujin*, appeared between 1907 and 1909.  

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110 A rare exception is a short story on a factory worker by Iwano Kiyoko, cited in: Nancy Andrew, 'The Seitôsha', p56.

111 *Seitô*, volume 15, no 8.

112 *Seitô*, volume 6, nos 1-2.

113 See section 4.6 below.
Contributors to *Sekai Fujin* were also concerned with such issues as love and marriage, but this was linked to a consciousness of women's labour and political activity. The journal carried reports on suffragist, socialist, pacifist, and union activities by women all over the world, and published reports of women's working conditions in various countries. There were also reports of women's working conditions and strike activity within Japan, and several reports on prostitution, including at least one report on the Karayuki-san (women sent to work as prostitutes in various parts of the world), whose labour provided capital for early Japanese entrepreneurial ventures. The pages of this journal attempted to provide information on all aspects of women's situation in early twentieth century Japanese society. *Sekai Fujin* only lasted for two years, succumbing to government suppression, like so much progressive journalism of the time, but women continued to be active in the socialist and labour movements, and at times formed separate groups such as the *Sekirankai* (Red Wave Society) and *Yôkakai* (Eighth Day Society). By the late nineteen twenties unions and left-wing political parties all had separate women's divisions or affiliated women's leagues (necessitated by the political regulations restricting women's political activity), and we can trace the development of the political positions of socialist women through the publications of these organizations.

Within Japan, there is a tradition of scholarship on women dating to the 1930s and 1940s. Inouye Kiyoshi's Marxist-influenced history of Japanese women first appeared in 1948. Takamure Itsue's series of works on

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114 *Sekai Fujin*, No 30, p2.

115 There was an expansion of left-identified political parties after the granting of universal male suffrage in 1925. That is, all males over the age of twenty five, could vote without property qualifications. Totten, *The Social Democratic Movement*, p360.

marriage practices started to appear in 1938,\textsuperscript{117} while her history of Japanese women to contemporary times, \textit{Josei no Rekishi} (The History of Women), appeared posthumously in 1972.\textsuperscript{118} More recently, feminist scholars within Japan have been engaged in a project of reclaiming Japanese women's history, and making the writings of early Japanese feminists accessible to researchers.\textsuperscript{119} In general, however, English language scholarship has been slow to catch up with this tradition.\textsuperscript{120} When women's experience has been included in English language scholarship on Japan, it has often been subsumed under the heading of "the social costs of Japanese development", with "the status of women", in fine Orientalist tradition, being utilised as a marker of Japanese societal development.\textsuperscript{121}

However, from the nineteen seventies a series of studies appeared which tended to treat "women" as a homogeneous category,\textsuperscript{122} which could be described in unitary terms. Such studies include \textit{Women in Changing


\textsuperscript{118}Takamure Itsue, \textit{Josei no Rekishi}, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{119}Such publishers as Domesu Shuppan and Fuji Shuppan have released collections of documents and facsimile editions of early women's publications, while other researchers have been engaged in oral history projects among women activists in the early labour, socialist, and feminist movements. The present study would not have been possible without the groundbreaking work of these Japanese researchers, which will be referred to below. Autobiographies, collections of documents, and original and facsimile editions of journals referred to are listed in section 1 of the Bibliography.


\textsuperscript{122}For a discussion of the problems involved in describing "women" as a transhistorical category divorced from specific circumstances, see Denise Riley, \textit{Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History}, London: Macmillan, 1988, passim.
Japan, The Hidden Sun: Women of Modern Japan, Japanese Women: Constraint and Fulfilment, and Japanese Women: A Century of Living History. Other studies have been concerned with specific groups of women, such as Susan Pharr's Political Women in Japan, and several studies of working women.

An interest in the history of Japanese feminism has been apparent more recently, with several writers adopting a biographical approach to the history of feminism, an approach which has also been favoured by writers on other aspects of Japanese political history. As yet, however, there has been no full-length study of the activities of socialist women in Japan. Sharley Conroy Ushioda's articles on Fukuda Hideko and Sharon Sievers' chapter on early socialist women are useful introductory works, but both concentrate on events and biographical details at the expense of an examination of socialist and feminist ideas. Mikiso Hane's collection of memoirs by


126 Ushioda, 'Women and War in Meiji Japan: The Case Of Fukuda Hideko'; Ushioda, 'Fukuda Hideko and the Women's World of Meiji Japan'.

127 Sievers, Flowers In Salt, Chapter 6.
Japanese women makes the words of some activists available in English for the first time, but lacks any substantial analysis.\(^{128}\) Stephen Large's article on Tanno Setsu and Itô Noe and their partners Watanabe Masanosuke and Osugi Sakae is an original examination of the links between personal philosophy and political life.\(^{129}\) E.P. Tsurumi's study of anarchist historian Takamura Itsuue touches briefly on Takamura's debates with socialist women in the journals *Nyonin Geijutsu* and *Fujin Sensen*.\(^{130}\)

Some other recent studies can be situated at the borders of women's history and labour history. E.P. Tsurumi exposes some of the lacunae of accepted descriptions of Japanese labour history. Tsurumi challenges the accepted picture of textile workers as 'docile and submissive', using statistics on the transience of the textile labour force to argue that many women in fact ran away, refusing to submit to intolerable conditions.\(^{131}\) By quoting workers' songs from *Jokô Aishi* (The Pitiful History of the Female Factory Workers) and other sources, Tsurumi shows that these women were far from accepting of their lot. Tsurumi does challenge the myth of 'docile and submissive' workers, but provides no conclusive explanation for the failure to organize women workers.\(^{132}\) There is much more to be said on this problem in Japanese labour history, as I will discuss in Chapter Five below, in my analysis of socialist women's writings on women and work. It is also

\(^{128}\)Hane, *Reflections on the Way to the Gallows*.


worth noting that similar questions have been raised with respect to European labour history, as explained by Anna Davin:

> We can find women on strike and industrially militant - and when we don't we can look for reasons in the types and conditions and patterns of their work, not in the female character. Still more important, we can extend the conventional definition of political activity (as taking place in parliament and party or even unions and picket lines) and show that it is to be found wherever people combine to resist extortion and exploitation, in the community as well as at the workplace, and that in such struggles women have always been prominent."\(^{133}\)

Davin argues for a feminist history which, in attempting to make sense of women's experience, challenges accepted notions of what constitutes political activity. Politics "goes beyond mere description of elections and political parties."\(^{134}\) In attempting to explain and describe women's political activities we may also be prompted to rethink concepts of domination and subordination, exploitation and resistance, repression and liberation.\(^{135}\)

1.3 Theoretical Perspectives on the Study of Socialism and Feminism

Any study of socialism and feminism must also confront the problem of the relationship between systems of domination based on gender and on class. Ever since the first uneasy conjunction of socialism and feminism, there have been debates on the relationship between class oppression and the "woman question". Early socialist discussions of the "woman question" tended to subsume sexual exploitation under class exploitation, and tried to

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\(^{134}\) Alexander, Sally & Davin, Anna, 'Feminist History', History Workshop, Volume 1, No 1, Spring 1976, pp 4 - 6.

\(^{135}\) See the discussion of recent feminist theories of subjectivity and agency in section 1.3 below.
explain the subordination of women by analysing their relationship to the means of production. Socialist revolution, it was argued, would also improve the situation of women. As Sally Alexander has pointed out, anyone familiar with the early literature on socialism and the "woman question" is used to hearing these questions framed with respect to certain dichotomies,

The dichotomies - Women and Labour, Sex and Class, Feminism and Socialism have been the intimate inhabitants of both my psyche and my intellectual work (if the two can be separated) as they have been for many women of my political generation.136

However, to write about these issues in the nineteen nineties it is inevitable that one must confront more recent theorizations of the relationship between what we now call "gender" and "class".137 This includes nineteen seventies feminist attempts to theorise women as a 'sex-class' or 'gender-class', on the basis of women's common experience of oppression by men;138 the radical feminist position which gives primacy to patriarchy as the major determinant of women's oppression;139 dual systems theory which gives equal weight to capitalism and patriarchy;140 and the vision (nightmare?) of a unified system of capitalist patriarchy.141

136 Sally Alexander, 'Women, Class and Sexual Differences in the 1830s and 1840s: Some Reflections on the Writing of a Feminist History', History Workshop, No 17, Spring 1984; p127.

137 These are issues are discussed in: Rosemary Crompton, 'Class Theory and Gender', British Journal of Sociology, Volume 40, Number 4, 1989.


139 For a discussion of the development of the radical feminist position, see Hester Eisenstein, Contemporary Feminist Thought, London, Unwin Paperbacks, 1984; pp 125-135.


More recent views of the relationship between class and gender reject any search for origins. While keeping class and gender conceptually distinct, such theorists argue that the two systems are mutually constitutive of each other. These writers are often interested in the ideological and symbolic dimensions of class and gender. Joan Scott, for example, in her work on French labour history, attempts to go beyond the surface meanings of words to consider the structure of texts, and the meanings of masculinity and femininity. "Historically specific, normative definitions of gender", argues Scott, "were reproduced and embedded in the culture of the French working class." 142

It is this perspective that I would like to bring to my analysis of the texts of socialist women in early twentieth century Japan. Such a perspective is also relevant to an understanding of the early Japanese labour movement. Implicit in early labour movement rhetoric was the notion that the categories of 'worker' and 'woman' were mutually exclusive. Women were thus denied a consciousness of their class interests as 'workers', and male workers were thus denied solidarity with female workers, as I discuss in Chapter Five.

Any consideration of groups or individuals who take an oppositional stance in society must also confront the concept of agency, and the relationship between individual and society. This problem was formulated in the following terms by E.H. Carr in 1961:

> Here I should say something about the role of the rebel or dissident in history. To set up the popular picture of the individual in revolt against society is to reintroduce the false antithesis between society and the individual. No society is fully homogeneous. Every society is an arena of social

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conflicts, and those individuals who range themselves against existing authority are no less products and reflexions of the society than those who uphold it...143

How do we reconcile the recognition that ideology is to some extent structurally determined with the desire to ascribe to human subjects some degree of control over their destiny - the notion of historical agency? If agency refers to individuals' actions, their attempts to gain control over their own destinies, then subjectivity refers to the attributes ascribed to these individuals: intentionality, desire, and awareness.144

Questions of agency and subjectivity form one strand of the complex debates centring on E.P. Thompson's *The Poverty of Theory*, where British historians debated the concepts of free will and determinism, culture and structure, and the relationship between history and theory.145 Thompson's hostility was directed at Althusser's theory of the subject, which has been described as follows:

He argued that in *Capital* Marx has shown how the development and structure of whole societies could be comprehended through an analysis of social practices - specifically, economic practices, politico-legal practices, theoretical practices, and ideological practices, each with its own dialectical process, determined, though only "in the last instance" by the economy. Further, he contended that such an analysis, the only way of understanding social formations in their entirety, required the view that human beings are not the makers of social practices but rather the supports or bearers of

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144Subjectivity has been defined by Lieven, as follows: "'Subjectivity' is the general term for all of those attributes (intentionality, desire, awareness, etc.) which make us human 'subjects' - i.e. 'individuals', whose existence is bound up with that of our human bodies, and who reflect on ourselves as living among others. Materialist theories of subjectivity are opposed to the notion of a 'transcendental' subject, an individuality which somehow pre-exists social relations, or exists independently of them; rather, subjectivity is socially constructed, it changes historically as societies change, and is always being reconstructed." E. Lieven, 'Subjectivity, Materialism, and Patriarchy', in Cambridge Women's Studies Group, *Women in Society*, London: Virago, 1981, p257.

them. History must be, in Althusser's famous phrase, a process without a subject.\textsuperscript{146}

Thompson and others have criticised Althusserian views of subjectivity, because of a perceived inability to theorise resistance to dominant ideology. At least some writers, however, seem able to envisage a dynamic view of the subject, while recognizing that structural determination exists. Stuart Hall is critical of simplistic readings of Althusserian views of the subject in history, but also criticises those who would reject structuralist notions completely. In his discussion of popular culture, Hall quotes Gramsci and Volosinov in defence of his view that ideology, too, is a site of struggle.\textsuperscript{147} Subsequently, feminist historians addressed the gendered dimension of ideological struggle. With respect to the debate on structure versus culture, Magarey notes that:

\ldots Perhaps the culture vs. structure debate represents the last moment in British intellectual and political practice when the false universality of the masculine could be assumed. Feminism has already begun to change the concepts necessary to any debate between free will and determinism.\textsuperscript{148}

Feminist historians have been particularly interested in the construction of the 'gendered' subject. Sally Alexander, drawing on Lacanian psychoanalysis, has outlined the relationship between the gendered subject and political ideologies:

Against marxism's claims that the determining social relationship is between wage labour and capital, exploiter and exploited, proletarian and capitalist, feminism insists on the recognition that subjective identity is also constructed as

\textsuperscript{146}Magarey, 'That Hoary Old Chestnut', pp631-632.

\textsuperscript{147}Stuart Hall, 'Notes on Deconstructing "The Popular", pp235-237.

\textsuperscript{148}Magarey, 'That Hoary Old Chestnut', p639.
masculine or feminine, placing the individual as husband or wife, mother or father, son or daughter, and so on. And these subjectivities travel both into political language and forms of political action, where they may be severed from class or class interests, indeed may be at odds with them.149

Chris Weedon has argued for a dynamic view of the construction and reconstruction of subjectivity, with language and discourse being seen as sites of struggle. 150 Weedon argues for a feminist poststructuralism, which uses the concept of discourse, in order to "understand existing power relations" and "identify areas and strategies for change".151

More recently, some feminist historians writing from a postcolonial or third world perspective have tried to re-theorise questions of agency and subjectivity in various ways.152 The political commitment of these writers causes them to reject any overly deterministic view of the relationship between subjectivity, agency and societal structures. Agency is often seen to reside in a community of people united in a common struggle, rather than the individual of liberal humanist political discourse.153 Chandra Mohanty, drawing on Foucauldian theories of power and discourse, and the work of feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith, argues for a new conceptualization of

149 Alexander, 'Women, Class and Sexual Differences', p132.
151 Weedon, Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory, p41.
153 Mohanty draws on Benedict Anderson's notion of an "Imagined community". While Anderson was, of course referring to the modern construct of the nation, Mohanty uses this concept to refer to feminism as an "Imagined community" of women united in a common struggle. She also refers to the concept of "communities of resistance", in an attempt to go beyond individualist notions of agency. Mohanty, 'Cartographies of Struggle', pp4-5.
power, which attempts to go beyond liberal and marxist views of political activity:

The relations of power I am referring to are not reducible to binary oppositions or oppressor/oppressed relations. I want to suggest that it is possible to retain the idea of multiple, fluid structures of domination which intersect to locate women differently at particular historical conjunctures, while at the same time insisting on the dynamic oppositional agency of individuals and collectives and their engagement in "daily life". It is this focus on dynamic oppositional agency that clarifies the intricate connection between systemic relationships and the directionality of power... However, systems of domination operate through the setting up of (in Dorothy Smith's terms) particular, historically specific "relations of ruling" (Smith, 1987, 2). It is at the intersections of these relations of ruling that... feminist struggles are positioned. It is also by understanding these intersections that we can attempt to explore questions of consciousness and agency without naturalizing either individuals or structures.154

Mohanty draws on the writings of third world feminist writers to bring a new perspective to questions of subjectivity and agency, focusing on the role of writing in constructing a political identity. She argues that:

... the very practice of remembering and rewriting leads to the formation of politicized consciousness and self-identity. Writing often becomes the context through which new political identities are forged. It becomes a space for struggle and contestation about reality itself.155

In my analysis of the writings of socialist women in early twentieth century Japan, I will be interested in the role of writing in forging "new political identities" for these women. Mohanty argues that writing is crucial in "the redefinition of the very possibilities of political consciousness and action".156 However, a concentration on textual analysis need not suggest a neglect of


155 Mohanty, 'Cartographies of Struggle'; p34.

156 Mohanty, 'Cartographies of Struggle'; pp35-36.
the description of more conventional forms of political struggle. Rather, I would agree with the assertion that:

Feminist struggles are waged on at least two simultaneous, interconnected levels: an ideological, discursive level which addresses questions of representation (womanhood/femininity), and a material, experiential, daily-life level which focuses on the micropolitics of work, home, family, sexuality, etc.157

I will thus be interested in analysing the representations of femininity and masculinity, and the constructions of gender and class to be found in the texts of socialist women, but I will also be interested in linking these representations with the micropolitics of everyday life, and the specific political struggles engaged in by these women.

It is from this perspective that I hope to explore the speaking positions available to socialist women in early twentieth century Japan, the discursive strategies employed in their writings, and the political strategies they envisaged for changing their society. In such an analysis it is also necessary to be sensitive to the possibilities and constraints of particular types of political writing.158 The generic features of the socialist women's writings I have examined in this thesis include the valorization of individual selfhood in autobiography, the imagination of other realities in fiction and poetry, the hortative tone of the political manifesto or strike pamphlet, the cool tone of political debate, or the pathos of the workers' songs recirculated in labour movement publications.

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157 Mohanty, 'Cartographies of Struggle'; p21.

The definition of 'socialist woman' in this study is, by necessity, somewhat pragmatic. Such definitions are essentially relational. The earliest socialist women defined themselves against (bourgeois) feminists - jokenshugisha. At this stage socialism could embrace a range of positions from anarchism, through social democracy to a mild left liberalism. However, as the socialist position came to be defined more precisely, and with the development of factionalism within the socialist movement, revolutionary socialism could be defined in opposition to parliamentary socialism, which could both be defined in opposition to anarchism. These factional divisions were relevant to both male and female participants in the socialist movement. Thus, the meaning of such labels as 'socialist', or 'socialist woman' depended on the terms to which they were opposed. I shall thus include in this study the writings of those women who identified themselves as 'socialist', and who chose to publish in socialist journals. The meaning of 'socialism' for these women will be explored in these specific contexts. I will, however, limit my attention to women in urban-based socialist organizations in the Tokyo region. Women in farmers' unions and women in regional socialist organizations deserve independent full-length studies. I will also concentrate my attention on women in the so-called "legal" left. Anarchist and communist women will be referred to where their activities influenced the socialist movement, and where they contributed to the definition of a "socialist" position through their debates with members of the "legal" left.

These questions can only be explored through an examination of socialist women's own writings about their situation. The major sources for this thesis are the feminist and socialist journals held in several archives in Tokyo.159

159These archives include the Ôhara Social Research Institute at Hôsei University, the Women's Suffrage Centre, Tokyo University's Meiji Newspaper and Magazine Collection, and the Ōya Sōichi Library.
or reissued in facsimile editions.\textsuperscript{160} I have also made use of published document collections\textsuperscript{161} and collections of interviews with women involved in the labour movement.\textsuperscript{162} In addition, several socialist women have written autobiographies.\textsuperscript{163} Other materials will also be referred to, in order to show how socialist women's writings were shaped by, or managed to challenge, the dominant discourses concerning women.

In this study I will also be guided by the insights of feminist historians and political scientists who have considered the conjunction of feminism and socialism in other national contexts. Barbara Taylor and others have considered the participation of women in the development of different strands of British socialism.\textsuperscript{164} Charles Sowerwine has considered the contradictory position of women in the French socialist movement, as suggested in the title of his monograph, \textit{Sisters or Citizens}?\textsuperscript{165} and similar questions have been explored in the context of socialist movements in other European countries,\textsuperscript{166} the United States,\textsuperscript{167} China,\textsuperscript{168} and Australia.\textsuperscript{169}

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\textsuperscript{160}See Bibliography, section 1a.
\textsuperscript{161}See Bibliography, section 1c.
\textsuperscript{162}See Bibliography, section 1d.
\textsuperscript{163}See Bibliography, section 1b.
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All of these writers have identified the contradictions involved in the conjunction of feminism and socialism, and the problems involved in trying to bring a gendered perspective to socialism, and a class perspective to feminism. These contradictions, however, are worked out in different ways in each national context, depending on specific historical circumstances and local institutional constraints.

One aspect of this study will be the uncovering of something which has been "hidden from history", that is, the development of a movement of socialist women in early twentieth century Japan. I am also, however, interested in what a study of socialist women's writings can teach us about various aspects of political activity in early twentieth century Japan. Such a study can shed light on the relationship between gender and structures of domination and subordination, and the gendering of political activities and ideologies in this context.


171 The following sources have also been useful in clarifying the conceptual and methodological issues involved in writing feminist history: Joan Kelly, Women, History and Theory, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984, Kelly-Gadol, Joan, 'The Social Relations of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History', Signs, Volume 1, No 4, Summer 1976; Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History; Carole Pateman, The Sexual
CHAPTER TWO: WOMEN AS IMPERIAL SUBJECTS (1868-1900)

The period from 1868 to 1898 is crucial for an understanding of the institutional context of gender relations in Japan until well into the twentieth century. The constitutional and legal systems codified in this period were effective until the promulgation of a new Constitution and Civil Code after World War Two. These years saw the creation of the modern Japanese nation-state, which was based on a constitutional monarchy which denied its subjects - particularly women - basic democratic freedoms. The Meiji state failed to embrace liberal, democratic ideas, and the family was mobilised for the purposes of the autocratic state. In this chapter I will outline the institutional and legal context for women's political activities, and the discursive context whereby women were primarily positioned as subjects of the Emperor - as gendered subjects whose service to the Empire was mainly discussed in terms of service to the home and family.

Laws promulgated as part of the Meiji Civil Code relegated women to the domestic sphere in a reconstituted patriarchal family based on the principle of primogeniture. This particular form of family played a crucial role in mobilizing loyalty to the emperor - the figurehead of the new state. Within the family, women were subject to the authority of father or husband. The family itself was explicitly politicized, and women's activities within the family were linked with national policy, although women were prevented from engaging in public political activity. Legal changes were reinforced by ideologies concerning women's role in the family. According to the doctrine of *ryôsai kenbo* (good wives and wise mothers) the importance of mothers as the educators of children was emphasised. A new emphasis on monogamy provided women with a positive role in marriage, while, in the literary sphere, monogamous marriage and romantic love were being linked

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in a new way.

Even before the catalyst of Perry's expedition in 1853 the feudal system had become unstable. Some sectors of the economy were already in transition from feudalism to nascent capitalism. Daughters of poor rural families could be indentured as domestic servants or indentured to brothels in times of famine in exchange for an advance payment to their families. In some sectors of the economy, cash was replacing rice as the basic unit of exchange. Centralisation of production had begun in the textile industry, and some members of the rural population were being engaged in day labour on a cash payment basis. As a result of urbanization, increased trade between domains, and bureaucratisation of the samurai class, feudal authority and class relations were being transformed. In the years between Perry's first visit in 1853 and the Restoration of 1868, there was a reconfiguration of power relations at the élite level, resulting in the end of the military rule of the Shōguns and a reaffirmation of the authority of the Emperor. The creation of a new regime was symbolised by the move of the Imperial court from Kyôto to Edo (renamed Tókyô), and the designation of a new era name - Meiji, or "enlightened rule". In the first few years after the Restoration, the feudal domain system was abolished and the feudal class system was dismantled, although former samurai retained some privileges.

The task of the Meiji élite was the creation of a modern nation-state, with all of the political, legal and bureaucratic machinery this entailed. From now on, the transition from a semi-feudal economy to industrial capitalism was largely directed from above. The decisions made at this time limited the possibilities for women's full participation in society, and circumscribed the possible forms of a feminist movement. In Europe, the rise of liberal ideology had made possible the first theorization of feminism. In Japan,
liberalism held resonance for many Japanese intellectuals and common people, although the ideals of natural rights, equality, and individualism, were not espoused by the Meiji state, as I will discuss below. The social conditions of the time also provided the context for the development of socialist and feminist ideas. In Japan, however, socialist ideas did not become influential until the 1890s, and the conjunction of socialist and feminist thought did not appear until the first decade of the twentieth century. For Japanese women of the nineteenth century, then, liberalism was the only body of thought available for theorizing their position.

2.1 The Meirokusha

In the first two decades after the opening of the country in 1854, representatives of several domains travelled to Europe and America to study techniques of administration, education, industry, and commercial and military technology. The young men who travelled and studied overseas became the experts in "Western learning", and were involved in the establishment of new structures for the dissemination of ideas and knowledge. Newspapers and journals were established on a private basis, but the administration was not slow to institute mechanisms of control in the form of Press Regulations.\(^2\)

In 1873 (the sixth year of the Meiji era), Mori Arinori\(^3\) and others established

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1 Liberalism is not, of course, the only way of theorising feminism, and one of the tasks of feminists has been exposure of the limits of this ideology. In nineteenth century Europe, Utopian Socialists spent much time in theorising women's position in society, while Marxist socialism at this time tended to subsume women's issues under the class struggle. See: Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, London: Virago, 1983, passim.


the *Meirokusha* (Meiji Six Society), a society devoted to the dissemination of "modern" ideas. In addition to discussion of alternative systems of government, the role of the intellectual, and issues related to education and language planning, the members of the *Meirokusha* used their journal, *Meiroku Zasshi*, to discuss notions of women's role, providing a cautious challenge to Confucian notions, and challenging the double standard which allowed such practices as prostitution and concubinage. In 1872, the new government had given legal recognition to concubines, and in the following year had allowed that the children of concubines need not be treated as illegitimate. To the *Meirokusha* writers, this was seen to be tantamount to official recognition of polygamy.

Although these writers were often promoting radically new ideas of gender relations in the context of Meiji Japan, their arguments were couched in traditional Confucian terms, complete with quotations from Confucius and Mencius.

Mori Arinori, for example, who advocated (and attempted to practice) a form of contractual marriage based on mutual consent, used the Confucian language of "righteousness" to denounce the practice of concubinage:

> When righteousness does not prevail, the strong oppress the weak and the smart deceive the stupid. In extreme cases, immorality becomes an amusement providing a source of livelihood as well as pleasure. Among the customs common

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5 It has been pointed out that almost all of the *Meirokusha* members had studied Confucianism as well as "Western learning". For details of individual members of the *Meirokusha*, see Braisted, *Meiroku Zasshi*, pp.xxii-xxxiii, and Kôsaka Masaaki, *Japanese Thought in the Meiji Era*, Tokyo: Pan-Pacific Press, 1958, pp85-133.
among barbarians, mistreatment of wives by their husbands is especially intolerable to witness.\(^6\)

Sakatani Shiroshi quoted Mencius in order to argue for "separate spheres" for men and women, but questioned the concept of equal rights:

In sum, the word rights includes evil. There is a tendency for the advocacy of rights to generate opposing power. This was never the intention of the wise men of Europe and America and the translation [of the word "right" as \textit{ken}] is not appropriate. Instead it would be well to speak of preserving the spheres of men and women (\textit{danjo shubun}) or of the harmonious bodies of husband and wife (\textit{fufu dōtai}). Further, from the point of view of rights, the man should stand slightly above the woman, just as elder brother takes precedence over younger brother.\(^7\)

Nakamura Masanao, credited with coining the phrase \textit{ryōsai kenbo} (good wives and wise mothers),\(^8\) argued for purity on the part of both husbands and wives.\(^9\) Most of these writers argued that education was necessary in order to instil notions of purity in both sexes. They advocated monogamy and a single sexual standard for both sexes.\(^10\) The \textit{Meirokusha} members limited their discussion of women's role to marriage, however, and even those who referred to "equal rights" within marriage were reluctant to grant women equal rights in society at large.\(^11\) Katō Hiroyuki was actively hostile


\(^8\) Sievers, \textit{Flowers in Salt}, p22, quoting Takamura, \textit{Josei no Rekishii}.


to the notion of equal rights for women in any sphere. Fukuzawa Yukichi realised that Meiji men were not ready to relinquish their privileges, and allowed that they could "tacitly" keep concubines, as long as they did not flaunt the fact. In other writings, Fukuzawa challenged the Confucianist identification of family and state, and later wrote "enlightenment" versions of didactic texts for women.

In the above writings, we should note the gap between theory and practice - the most liberal of writers were often far from exemplary in their private conduct. We should also note that this first debate on gender roles and the connections between family and state was carried out by male writers only. Although questions of family and gender relations were fundamental to Meiji enlightenment discourse, women were implicitly excluded from this

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12 Katô Hiroyuki, 'Fûfu Dôken no Ryûhei ron', Meiroku Zasshi, No. 31, March 1875; in Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryô Shûsei, Volume 8, pp77-79; and translated in Braisted, Meiroku Zasshi, pp. 376-77.


14 Fukuzawa pointed out that the identification of family and state, and the expectation of obedience to Emperor and father, rested on a series of assumptions. There was an assumption that: "the people are always good but stupid, and hence need constant help and guidance, and must therefore be taught to obey their superiors blindly in everything they do ... It assumes also that the ruler is holy and enlightened, and that the ministers who aid him are wise, upright, free from selfish desires and passions, pure as water and straight as arrows. They love and cherish the people, feed them when they are hungry, house them when their homes are burnt down ... Moral influence blows from above like a fragrant south wind, and the people yield to it as grasses bend before a breeze ... Certainly an idyllic state of harmony between high and low ... But where, may I ask, is one to find this ideally wise and good ruler, and these ideally meek and obedient people? And what kind of teaching will produce them? Certainly the Chinese have not since Chou times produced people conforming with these requirements." Fukuzawa Yukichi, Gakumon no Susume, translated in: Blacker, The Japanese Enlightenment, p69.

15 As a challenge to the dominance of such writings as Confucian Scholar Kaibara Ekken's Onna Daigaku (Greater Learning for Women), Fukuzawa penned: Nihon Fujin Ron (On Japanese Women) and Hinkôron (in 1885; Danjo Kösei Ron (On Relations Between Men and Women) in 1886; Onna Daigaku Hyôron (A Critique of Greater Learning for Women) and Shin Onna Daigaku (The New Greater Learning for Women) in 1899. For discussion of these writings, see: Blacker, The Japanese Enlightenment, pp67-89; Sievers, Flowers in Salt, pp18-25; Kiyooka Eliachi, Fukuzawa Yukichi on Japanese Women: Selected Writings, Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1988.
discussion, and positioned as passive figures whose fate could be decided by more or less benevolent male intellectuals and public servants. Some women were, however, able to participate in the liberal movement of the eighteen seventies and eighteen eighties. Explicit exclusion of women from political activity and participation in public discourse came later with the enactment of regulations on women's political activities, as I discuss below. Nakamura's prescription that women should aspire to be "good wives and wise mothers" was to become the catchcry for those in the bureaucracy and educational establishments who increasingly devoted attention to the nature of women's support for the imperial state.

2.2 Freedom and Popular Rights

From 1874 on, a series of petitions were presented to the government calling for the establishment of a national assembly, often referring to the relevant section of the Charter Oath of 1868. This was one of the topics which was debated in the pages of almost every issue of the *Meiroku Zasshi.*

16As most of the contributors to the *Meiroku Zasshi,* with the notable exception of Fukuzawa Yukichi, were public servants and bureaucrats, they were in a position to influence and even implement government policy. Mori Arinori, for example, was to serve as Minister for Education; Nishimura Shigeki was appointed Chief of the Compilation Section of the Ministry of Education in 1873 and lectured on Western Books to the Meiji Emperor. Katô Hiroyuki, Tsuda Mamichi, and Nishi Amane also held government positions. Hall, *Mori Arinori;* Blacker, *The Japanese Enlightenment,* p32.

17McLaren, "Japanese Government Documents," p427: "It is impossible to print all the memorials which were sent in to the government between 1874 and 1881, petitioning for the establishment of a National Assembly. In the first nine months of 1880 no less than thirty petitions were received by the *Genrô-in,* of which twenty-three were forwarded to the Council of State for consideration. . . The expression of the public mind on the subject was not by any means confined to petitions and memorials, but after 1877 found its way into the press to an extent which is surprising."

18The Charter Oath was proclaimed in the name of the Emperor Meiji in April 1868. The following general principles were stated in the oath: "By this oath we set up as our aim the establishment of the national weal on a broad basis and the framing of a constitution and laws. 1. Deliberative assemblies shall be widely established and all matters decided by public discussion. 2. All classes shall unite in vigorously carrying out the administration of affairs of state. 3. The common people, no less than the civil and military officials, shall each be allowed to pursue his own calling so that there may be no discontent. 4. Evil customs of the past shall be broken off and everything based upon the just laws of nature. 5. Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to strengthen the foundations of imperial rule." Translated in Ryûsaku Tsunoda, *et al., Sources of Japanese Tradition,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1964; Volume II, p137.
Although the first of these petitions emanated from disaffected members of the former samurai class, the demand for a popularly elected assembly soon became the focus for other groups, and broadened into a national movement, known as the Jiyū Minken Undō (Movement for Freedom and Popular Rights). Although the concept of liberalism promoted by the former samurai may have been somewhat limited, the universalist principles of liberal thought were meaningful to women who had been marginalised under the feudal system, and to those members of the former peasant class who participated in such organizations as the Debtors' Party, the Tenants' Party, the Poor People's Party, and the Oriental Socialist Party.

In Europe, the development of liberalism and individualism has been identified with the rise of Protestantism, capitalism, and free market ideologies. From these roots came the first bourgeois revolutions, the rise of democratic ideas, and, eventually, feminism. These ideas originated in the writings of Locke and Rousseau, and were developed by Jefferson in the American Revolution, and by Bentham, Mill and Spencer in England. Liberal ideas were particularly congenial with the transition from the subsistence values of feudalism (custom, status, authoritarianism) to the free market ideology of capitalism (mobility, freedom, market values). Ideas of natural rights were employed to justify democratic ideas. Natural rights entailed the

19 Roger Bowen has discussed the participation of commoners in the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement, and the efforts made to disseminate liberal ideas through political societies, discussion groups, study groups, and the composition of songs on the theme of popular rights. Roger W. Bowen, Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980; p179.

20 Hane has pointed out that few of the samurai members of the Jiyū Minken Undō intended to extend political rights to commoners, and most upheld notions of filial piety and loyalty to the Emperor: Mikiso Hane, 'The Movement for Liberty and Popular Rights' in Harry Wray, & Hilary Conroy (eds.), Japan Examined, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983, pp90-97.

notion of equal rights and universal values, and it became logically difficult not to extend these to women. The first major tracts of European feminism were almost contemporaneous with the French Revolution,\textsuperscript{22} and some of these writers attempted to use the supposed universalism of liberal theory in order to argue that women were entitled to the same rights as men.\textsuperscript{23}

Japan in the nineteenth century was also undergoing the transition from a feudal to a capitalist economy, and market relations were already prevalent in particular sections of the economy.\textsuperscript{24} Bowen, drawing on the work of T.C. Smith, links these economic changes with the development of liberal ideologies in rural Japan:

\begin{quote}
The free rural market of late Tokugawa, Smith shows, likewise demonstrated such aspects of capitalistic society as occupational migration and mobility; employment contracts; competitive hiring practices; competition to secure adequate supplies of raw materials; a small-producer hatred of government-supported monopolies; the concentration of wealth and political power in the hands of large landholders; and wide-scale commercial farming . . . "Such men were far from being peasants with an abacus," Smith writes. Instead, "we find them in conflict with government over its intervention in local affairs, in matters concerning village common land, irrigation rights and the selection of headmen . . . " Local political autonomy, "a more open system above," and unrestricted rights of commerce were the "liberties" \textit{demanded} by the rural beneficiaries of the expansion of the market economy.\textsuperscript{25}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{25}Bowen, \textit{Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan}; pp120-121.
Peasants under the feudal relationships of the Tokugawa period had been conscious of the "right to subsistence," and had been positioned as "supplicants," who could petition a benevolent government when subsistence was threatened. When their petitions were unsuccessful, their dissatisfaction was at times expressed in riots and uprisings. By the Meiji period they were now participants in a market economy, and many of them wanted to see the freedoms and rights of the market economy extended to the political sphere.

Liberal ideas were debated by intellectuals as the classics of Western liberalism were translated into Japanese. Rousseau's *Social Contract*, Mill's *On Liberty* and *On the Subjection of Women*, Spencer's *Social Statics*, and Millicent Fawcett's *Making a Case for Women's Political Rights* had all been translated by 1884. Such Meiji intellectuals as Nakae Chōmin, Yano Fumio, Sugita Teiichi, Ueki Emori and Ōi Kentarō were influenced by liberal ideas. The members of the *Jiyū Minken Undō* used these ideas to justify their demands for a popularly elected assembly.

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31 Bowen, *Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan*, p109: "Common to most of these [petitions to the government] was a notion of natural right that would have as its positive expression the institutions of self-government, local autonomy, and the equality of the classes."
first petitions for an elected assembly had been submitted to the government in 1874, and the following years saw the establishment of political parties devoted to democratic and liberal principles. From the end of the decade there was a proliferation of popular rights societies, whose members were engaged in discussion of the ideas of parliamentary democracy, and in producing alternative draft constitutions.\textsuperscript{32} Discussion of these themes intensified after the announcement (in the name of the Emperor) in October 1881 of a commitment to the establishment of a national assembly by 1890.\textsuperscript{33}

The development of a popular press made possible the dissemination of alternative political proposals. In the eighteen eighties the Minyūsha (Friends of the Nation) promoted democratic ideas through the journal \textit{Kokumin no Tomo} (The People's Friend), edited by Tokutomi Sohō.\textsuperscript{34} Tokutomi described his political position as \textit{heiminshugi} (commonerism).\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{32} Bowen, \textit{Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan}, p. 108. See also the work of Irokawa Daikichi, who has researched the regional liberal societies and study groups which were involved in producing alternative draft constitutions on liberal principles: Irokawa Daikichi, 'Freedom and the Concept of People's Rights', \textit{Japan Quarterly}, Volume XIV, No 2, April-June 1967, pp175-183; Irokawa Daikichi (ed) \textit{Minshū Kenpō no Sósó: Uzumoreta Kusa no Ne no Ninmyaku}, Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1970.


\textsuperscript{35} Bowen defines \textit{heiminshugi} in the following terms: "Heiminshugi, or "commonerism", was one shorthand characterization of the period ised to refer to the ideological and social underpinnings of wide-scale commoner participation in the popular rights movement; democratic populism, perhaps, no less captures the essential meaning." Bowen, \textit{Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan}, p125. For further discussion of the meaning of \textit{heiminshugi}, see Kōsaka, \textit{Japanese Thought in the Meiji Era}, p207. \textit{Heimin} refers to the new "commoner" class which replaced the old status groups of merchants, peasants and artisans after the Meiji Restoration. The elite of the samurai class retained some privileges under the name of \textit{kizoku}.
a phrase which would later be appropriated by the early socialist movement.\textsuperscript{36} For a short time in the 1880s a genre of "political novel" dramatised the new political ideas in circulation.\textsuperscript{37} Ueki Emori, like Tokutomi, was influenced by Spencer's ideas.\textsuperscript{38} He wrote his own draft constitution - based on popular sovereignty, democratic principles, and equality between men and women, and said to be the most liberal of the thirty-odd drafts around at the time.\textsuperscript{39} Ueki also composed a song on the theme of freedom, 'A Country Song of Civil Rights' (Miken Inaka Uta), which used the imagery of nature to give metaphorical force to the notion that the rights being demanded were the natural inheritance of men and women:

\begin{quote}
\ldots Though the birds have wings they cannot fly; 
The caged bird can see the outside. 
Though the fish have fins they cannot swim; 
The netted fish sees the sea beyond. 
Though the horses have hooves they cannot run; 
The tethered horse sees the grass out of reach. 
[We] are endowed with arms and legs; 
We have hearts and minds. 
But today we have no liberty or rights. 
If we call ourselves [human] 
The each person must... stand up and say 
\end{quote}

(nobility), while members of the former outcaste class were labelled as Shin-heimin or "New Commoners".

\textsuperscript{36} One of the early socialist groups, as I will discuss below, called itself the Heiminsha (Commoners’ Society), and published a newspaper called the Heimin Shinbun (Commoners' News). Pyle reports that such socialist pioneers as Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko described the influence of Tokutomi and the Kokumin no Tomo on the development of their political ideas. Pyle, The New Generation, p47.


\textsuperscript{38} Bowen, Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan, pp. 204-5. For a discussion of the ideas of Ueki Emori, see Ienaga Saburō, Ueki Emori Kenkyū, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1960.

\textsuperscript{39} Bowen, Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan, pp. 208-10. For a discussion of alternative draft constitutions, see: Pittau, Political Thought in Early Meiji Japan, pp99-130.
"[Humans] have rights."40

Given the currency of notions of "natural rights" in nineteenth century Japan, it is not surprising that many women also seized on this concept in order to demand "women's rights" (joken). As early as 1878 Kusunose Kita demanded voting rights for the local assembly on the grounds that she held the family property on the death of her husband and was thus liable for taxation (in an argument implicitly based on the logic of "no taxation without representation").41 Some women participated in the liberal movement: Kishida Toshiko toured the country making speeches demanding political rights for women and contributed articles to the liberal newspaper Jiyû no Tomoshibi (The Light of Freedom); Tomii Oto was inspired by Kishida's example to come to Tokyo and work in the fields of journalism and women's education;42 Fukuda Hideko also became involved in the liberal movement after hearing a speech by Kishida - Fukuda was involved in the Osaka Incident with Ôi Kentarô and others, and embraced socialism after her release from prison.43

The early liberal feminist discussion of rights often focused on the family as


43See Chapter One, above.
the site of women's oppression. Given that the family came to be crucial in the structures of authority under the constitutional system (as I discuss below) criticism of the family could be said to question the very basis of power under the Meiji system. Discussion of the family was taken so seriously that Kishida Toshiko was imprisoned in 1884 for her attack on the family system. In her writings and speeches, Kishida used the metaphor of imprisonment to describe women's situation. She used the conventional phrase used to describe the upbringing of young ladies, *hakoiri musume* (daughters raised in boxes) but turned it into an image of deprivation. Daughters raised in this fashion were like cultivated plants whose growth had been stunted, in comparison with flowers growing wild in the mountains and valleys. Kishida lamented this situation and advocated smashing the boxes which restricted women's freedom. Like Ueki, Kishida used natural imagery to describe a very un-natural state of subjection. The upbringing of young women was like the cultivation of *bonsai* trees, whose shape is created by the trimming of roots and leaves.

Despite the resonance of liberal ideas for many individuals experiencing the economic and social transformations of Meiji Japan, the legitimacy of liberal ideas could be put into question by the dominance of Confucianist ideas, which emphasised hierarchy and obedience, rather than equality and freedom. Confucianist ideas were particularly dismissive of women's role in society, and revivalist philosophies such as *Kokugaku* (National Learning)

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45Sievers, *Flowers in Salt*, p34.
48Itoya Toshio, *Josei Kaiho no Senkushatachi*, p44.
and Mitogaku (the Mito school) failed to challenge prevailing views of women. Confucianism lacked a liberal conception of individualism and the Confucian emphasis on hierarchy could also be said to be incompatible with notions of equal rights. The Confucian individual was always placed in social context, and was enmeshed in a series of dyadic relationships (ruler/ruled; father/child; elder/younger; husband/wife; teacher/pupil) where obedience on the part of the inferior was balanced by benevolence on the part of the superior.

After Nakamura Masanao's translation of Samuel Smiles' Self-Help, Protestant ideas of individualism and advancement through hard work were understood in Confucian terms. In other cases concepts were reinterpreted or rephrased to fit Confucian principles. Irokawa argues that many of the participants in the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement understood their participation in this movement in terms drawn variously from Confucianism, from the Kokugaku (National Learning) School, or from the millenarian Yonaoshi movements of the late Tokugawa period:

The gōnō [wealthy farmer] advocates of Freedom and People's Rights took the ideal of primitive Confucianism to consist in the ideology of the love of Emperors Yao and Shun for the people - the ideology of "dynastic change" which stated that incompetent emperors should abdicate or be replaced, and that the absolutism of the sovereign was not the natural "will of heaven", and also the utopian vision of the simple society in which people live in happy contentment, as the "will of Heaven." The gōnō then, by joining this ideology with the revolutionary ideology of Europe and America (the modern doctrine of natural rights) and the doctrine of joint rule by sovereign and people, formed the ideology of Freedom and People's Rights.

49 Takamure Itsue, Josei no Rekishi, Volume 2, pp54-55.


51 Irokawa, 'Freedom and the Concept of People's Rights', p181.
In other words, it was also possible to find, in the Confucian tradition, justification for rebellion against a ruler who did not show the necessary benevolence. The language of Confucianism was not simply a remnant of premodern times, which somehow retarded the development of liberal or democratic ideas. Rather, Confucianism was constantly being reinvented and reconstituted, and Confucianist language could be used to justify the most modern practices and institutions.

2.2.1. Rights

While the language of pre-modern social relations could sometimes be re-interpreted to fit new political realities, in other cases new words were coined. The word for "rights" (kenri), and the compounds formed from this root were all newly coined in the Meiji period. The word used to translate "rights" - kenri - had been discussed since the eighteen seventies. Nishimura Shigeki spent several pages of the early Meiji intellectual journal *Meiroku Zasshi* in explaining the concept of "rights". He spent little time, however, on natural rights; most of the article was devoted to describing the limits to rights, and the obligations that go along with rights. Many of the *Meirokusha* intellectuals had expressed anxiety about the "abuse" of rights -- especially if they were extended to women. The word was also to cause

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52 Andrew Gordon discusses the use of such concepts as *giri* (obligation) by participants in twentieth century labour disputes, and concludes that "Japanese cultural values" could "work to sanction resistance to authority." Andrew Gordon, *Labour and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan*, Berkeley: University of California, 1991, p73.

53 Pittau, *Political Thought in Early Meiji Japan*, p233: "By this time the term *shukon* (sovereignty) was already widely used in the meaning of supreme power of the nation. Up to the mid-seventies, there had been talk of *kunken* (rights of the ruler), *miken* (rights of the people), and *kokken* (rights of the state), but the Western notion of sovereignty was often expressed by using the German *Souveränität* or the English "sovereignty."


55 See discussion of *Meiroku Zasshi*, above.
trouble in the drafting of the Civil Code in the eighteen nineties.56

However, while the concept of people's rights was seen to be problematic by some members of the élite, the concept continued to have resonance for the members of the Movement for Freedom and Popular Rights. Rhetorically, people's rights (minken) were often contrasted with state rights (kokken), or the rights of the ruler (kunken). In the political climate of the late nineteenth century, where national sovereignty was perceived to be under threat, and national policy was guided by the slogan fukoku kyōhei (a wealthy country and a strong army) the concept of "state rights" could be used to question the legitimacy of selfish assertions of individual rights by women and commoners, as explained by Katō Shūichi:

There were partisans of minken (the rights of the people) and partisans of kokken (the rights of the state); some emphasised the independence of the individual, and others emphasised the subordination of individual rights in order to maintain national independence.57

Another new concept of the nineteenth century was kokumin ("the people" - literally: "people of the nation"). For perhaps the first time, Japanese people were seen to have a common identity linked to the construction of the modern nation-state. Implicit in different usages of the word kokumin were different possible relationships between individual and state.58 Was the individual a citizen with inalienable rights, or a subject whose limited rights

56 Ishii Ryosuke, *Japanese Legislation in the Meiji Era*, p579: "The translation of the French word droit civil into Japanese was another special problem, apparently, since it is said that the equivalent Japanese word minken, which was created by Mitsukuri, was opposed by members of the first Civil Code Committee on the ground that common people were not entitled to any such thing as rights."


were granted by the Emperor? Were the concepts of citizen and subject gendered concepts? These questions were implicit in the discussions leading up to the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution and the framing of the Meiji Civil Code.

2.3 The Meiji Constitution

As Ike has pointed out, it was not only liberal ideas which were made available through translation in the Meiji period. Prussian ideas were used to justify a particular conception of the monarch's relationship to the state, and Social Darwinist ideas were used by Katō Hiroyuki, for example, to argue against natural rights theory. Pittau reminds us that "[A]uthoritarian systems could be very modern and very Western".

There was, then, a wide range of political ideas discussed in early Meiji Japan, but it is no accident that it was Prussian ideas that were used in framing the Meiji Constitution. The Meiji oligarchy deliberately chose a form of constitutional monarchy where the imperial institution was buttressed against the encroachment of democratic forces. The final form of the Meiji Constitution reflected the desire to pay lip-service to democratic ideals while at the same time ensuring the power of the élite in the name of the Emperor. Although an elected assembly was allowed for, its powers were limited, and the franchise was limited by a qualification depending on the amount of tax paid. "Preponderent power", explains Andrew Barshay, "lay with official bureaucracy and a transcendent cabinet rather than with an elected

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60 Pittau, Political Thought in Early Meiji Japan, p129.
61 Ike, The Beginnings of Political Democracy in Japan, p113.
62 In 1890, the electorate numbered 450,000, or 1.1 per cent of the population. Those who paid 15 yen per annum in direct taxes were enfranchised. Gluck, Japan's Modern Myths, p67.
Where other constitutions carried a Bill of Rights, the corresponding section of the Meiji Constitution (Chapter 2) outlined the Rights and Duties of Subjects. There was no mention of inalienable human rights - rights were granted to the people as subjects of the Emperor, who was described as "sacred and inviolable" (Article 3). Freedom of religious belief and freedom of speech and association were only granted "within the limits of law" and "within limits not prejudicial to peace and order" (Articles 28 and 29). Any of these provisions were subject to the exercise of the powers of the Emperor "in times of war or national emergency" (Article 31). It was also stated explicitly for the first time that only male heirs could succeed to the Imperial line (Article 2).

Thus, the Meiji state failed to support democratic or liberal ideas in any real sense. The preamble to the Constitution used Shintō ideas to proclaim the divinity of the Emperor. The "monarchic principle" of the German Constitutions of the 1850s was adopted to justify the notion that sovereignty resided in the Emperor. Although it may seem that the Constitution was stitched together in somewhat piecemeal fashion from these disparate sources, the Meiji bureaucrats were clear in what they wanted. Nagai

63Andrew Barshay, State and Intellectual in Japan: The Public Man in Crisis, Berkeley: University of California, 1988, p3. Barshay argues that the imbalance in power relations between "the people" and the bureaucracy is encapsulated in the phrase kanson minpi "revere the officials and despise the people", a phrase originally used to refer to representatives of the feudal bureaucracy, but which also came to be applied to the modern bureaucrats of the Meiji system. For further discussion of kanson minpi, see Gluck, Japan's Modern Myths, pp60-72; pp227-246.


describes Itô Hirobumi's reaction on meeting the German legal experts von Gneist and von Stein:

In describing the impression that these two men made upon him, Itô records that those who followed the teachings of the extreme liberals of England, America and France were erroneously leading Japan down the wrong path, but that through his encounter with these two men he had gained the confidence which would enable him to secure the Imperial foundations and to structure the State in accordance with the Imperial Principle. Having found in Prussia a model for the building of Japan he wrote: "I feel that I can die a contented man."67

Yet, there were tensions in the establishment of the constitutional system, as Andrew Gordon has outlined:

The promulgation of a constitution and the convening of an elected Diet meant that Japan was a nation of subjects with both obligations to the state and political rights. Obligations included military service, school attendance, and the individual payment of taxes. Rights included suffrage and a voice in deciding the fate of the national budget. The fact that these rights were limited to men of substantial property is well recognized and, of course, important. Clearly the constitution was expected by its authors to contain the opposition. Nonetheless, to stress only the limitations placed on popular rights by the Meiji constitution is to miss its historical significance as a cause of future change: the mere existence of a constitutionally mandated, elected national assembly with more than advisory powers implied the existence of a politically active and potentially expandable body of subjects or citizens. Indeed, the decision of the oligarchs for a constitution was made in acute awareness that such a citizenry was in the process of forming itself and developing its own ideas about the political order.68

To overemphasize the repressive potential of the Meiji constitution would be to deny the activism which was one of the catalysts for the creation of constitutional government, and to deny the legitimacy of the oppositional movements which persisted into the twentieth century. Unfortunately,


Gordon does not elaborate at this point on the distinction between "subjects" and "citizens", or speculate on whether the "potentially expandable body of subjects or citizens" could include women, but his insight is suggestive. To what extent was the "subject" of the Meiji emperor a gendered subject, and what did this imply for the possibilities for political activity by women? The women who had participated in the Liberal Movement of the 1880s had certainly thought that women should be included in the category of citizen. In the following sections of this chapter I will consider how women were positioned according to the official and legal discourses of the Constitutional system.

For Meiji women, the constitutional system meant that they were to live in a state which did not recognise the notion of "natural rights", let alone extend them to women. Although the language of the Constitution was gender-neutral, women were implicitly excluded in various ways. The duty to perform military service, for example, could be said to imply a male subject. The different duties of male and female subjects were also outlined in various ways in the provisions of the Civil Code, as I discuss in detail below. The family and women were not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution itself, but the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890 upheld a Confucian view of a state based on hierarchy and obedience, with the family as the basic unit of society.

2.4 The Imperial Rescript on Education

There was perhaps, democratic potential in the institution of a compulsory education system in 1872, but the educational system went through several transformations in the next few decades. The educational system eventually

69 Except for the statement that the imperial succession was based on the male line (Article II).
adopted had similarities with the Prussian system, which saw the purpose of education as training subjects to serve the State more efficiently, rather than the cultivation of talent and learning for its own sake. This suited Confucian conceptions of seikyō itchi - unity of government and education.70 The Education Ordinance (Gakusei) of 1872 made education compulsory for both boys and girls,71 but the actual attendance rates were much lower for girls, who were often expected to carry out home duties or paid work.72 The Imperial Rescript on Education (Kyōiku Chokugo) of 1890 made explicit the principle that education was for the purpose of producing subjects loyal to both family and state:

Know ye, Our Subjects: Our Imperial Ancestors have founded our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting and have deeply and firmly planted virtue; Our subjects ever united in loyalty (chû) and filial piety (kô) have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of Our Empire, and herein also lies the source of Our education. Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects (chûryō no shinmin), but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers.

The Way here set forth is indeed the teaching bequeathed by Our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by Their descendants and the subjects, infallible for all ages and true in all places. It is Our wish to lay it to heart in all reverence,


71 Takamura, Josei no Rekishi, pp. 67-68. It was not until the early twentieth century that female students' attendance rates passed 90%. Tachi Kaoru quotes the following attendance rates for girls: 1873: approx. 15%; 1888: approx 28%; 1903: 90%. Tachi Kaoru, 'Ryōsai Kenbo', in Joseigaku Kenkyūkai (eds) Kōza Joseigaku 1: Ōnna no Imēji, Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1984, p188.

72 Robins-Mowry, The Hidden Sun, p41.
common with you, Our subjects, that we may all thus attain to the same virtue.
The 30th day of the 10th month of the 23rd year of Meiji (1890).73

Gluck has emphasised the role of the Rescript in defining "civil morality":

...the Rescript itself was raised to the status of a civic creed.
What began as an assertion of native values and social ethics became a civil morality: an index of loyalty and patriotism (chûkun aikoku) not only for the schools, but for wherever allegiance to the state was at ideological issue.74

This emphasis on hierarchy and obedience and the Confucian values of loyalty and filial piety was to provide ideological support for the patriarchal family system codified in the Meiji Civil Code. The Imperial Rescript was supported by Inoue Tetsujirô's Commentary on the Imperial Rescript (Chokugo Engi), commissioned by the Meiji government. In his commentary, Inoue made explicit the connection between family and State, and linked filial piety with loyalty to the Emperor.75

Primary education became compulsory for both boys and girls in the 1870s, but it was some time before women had access to secondary and tertiary education. With respect to women's education, there was a shift from a liberal view of education in the early Meiji period which was seen to be equally relevant to male and female students, to the late Meiji period which saw an emphasis on education specifically directed at women, and based


74Gluck, Japan's Modern Myths, p127.

on the ideology of 'good wives and wise mothers'.\textsuperscript{76} When higher education was extended to women, it was generally discussed in terms of this doctrine.\textsuperscript{77} The gradual extension of education and literacy to women had both positive and negative implications. Prescriptive images of womanhood could be disseminated to a female reading public, but print media also provided the potential for the dissemination of alternative images and representations.

2.5 The Drafting of the Meiji Civil Code

In broad terms, then, women were granted no basic rights under the Meiji Constitution, and were actively repressed in many ways. But the Constitution was often vague, and many provisions were specifically limited by law. The real implications of this system for women and gender relations can only be understood by examining those sections of the Civil Code which pertain to the family - the sections on marriage, family headship, succession, and divorce.

In this period it was thought vital for the prosperity and stability of the state that the most suitable form of the family be instituted. This reflects the Confucian utilitarianist belief that family, school, and other institutions are inseparable from the functioning of the state.\textsuperscript{78} The Meiji Restoration had threatened traditional power relations by the abolition of the feudal domains and the modification of the feudal class system. By identifying the state with the family, it was possible to use emotional attachment to the family in the

\textsuperscript{76}Tachi Kaoru, 'Ryôsai Kenbo', p187.

\textsuperscript{77}Nagai Michio, 'Westernization and Japanisation: the Early Meiji Transformation of Education', op.cit.

\textsuperscript{78}Nagai, 'Westernization and Japanisation: the Early Meiji Transformation of Education', p76.
service of the state. Gluck has described this process succinctly:

... confronted with increasing individuation and even anomie, ideologues enshrined the family -- the hyphenated metaphor of the family-state in effect sanctifying the family at least as much as it domesticated the state.79

The principle of loyalty to the Emperor and one's elders described in the Imperial Rescript on Education was carried one step further by ethics textbooks which explicitly linked family to state, and father to Emperor. The father was "ruler" over his family members and the Emperor "father" to his childlike subjects.80 Those sections of the Civil Code which concerned the family were thus seen to be vital to authority relations in the new political system.

The process leading up to the promulgation of the Meiji Civil Code has been described in detail in several sources.81 The Napoleonic Code was chosen as the first model, and Mitsukuri Rinshō was commissioned in 1870 to translate the French Civil Code into Japanese. In 1879 the French legal scholar Emile Boissonade was requested to compile the new Civil Code. Boissonade's draft, however, encountered opposition. In this context it is interesting to note that most of the opposition to his draft centred on the family. For example, Boissonade's draft allowed for the sharing of inheritances between siblings, and included the unthinkable proposition that family heads could be deposed.82 In the final draft of the Civil Code most of the other sections were taken almost literally from French or German

79 Gluck, Japan's Modern Myths, p. 265.
80 Ike, The Beginnings of Political Democracy in Japan, pp197-98.
sources, but the book on Persons, which contained those provisions relating to marriage, divorce, family headship and inheritance was completely rewritten by Japanese scholars in line with their vision of a Confucian family-state.83

The link between patriarchal authority in the family, and imperial power in the state was made explicit at both ends of the political spectrum, and there was extensive public discussion of the draft Civil Code. On the one hand, conservative legal scholar Hozumi Yatsuka criticised Boissonade's draft in the Hōgaku Shinpō (Law Review) in 1891. He stated that the form of the Japanese state depended on the Japanese family system, and described an idealised, trans-historical form of the family system.84 Hozumi's appeal to antiquity is a common feature of modern nationalist thought.85

In opposition to Hozumi's views, Ueki Emori, one of the most liberal of Meiji intellectuals, envisaged a state made up of individuals and not a collection of families. He lamented that those who grew up under authoritarian states failed to develop independence and autonomy. Ueki used natural rights theory to argue for equal rights for men and women, and identified the patriarchal power of the family head (koshu) with the absolute power of the monarch (kunshu). He argued that the country should be made up of individuals, not a collection of families. Those who grew up under an autocratic power structure, he argued, failed to develop independence and autonomy. He called for a Civil Code based on the "new ideas" of the

83 Ishii, Japanese Legislation in the Meiji Era, p591.


85 Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism, London: Verso, 1983, p19: "If nation-states are widely conceded to be 'new' and 'historical', the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past."
nineteenth century. 86

Several editorials in Kokumin no Tomo - the journal of the Minyûsha - were devoted to reform of the family system, and Minyûsha leader, Tokutomi Sohô, established Katei Zasshi (Family Magazine) in 1892 for the dissemination of his ideas. 87 Meanwhile, in the pages of the journal Nihon (Japan), the nationalist rival to Kokumin no Tomo, the desirability of the "existing" Japanese family system was reaffirmed. 88 The ideas of the Meirokusha intellectuals have been discussed in more detail above, but it should be reiterated here that they shared the view that the family was crucial to the prosperity of the state.

Ishii has stated that the section of the Civil Code pertaining to the family was rewritten to fit in with Japanese custom, 89 but in fact there had been no universal, customary form of marriage and family. Before the Edo period there had been a mixture of matrilocal, patrilocal and duolocal marriage systems, and inheritance practices were just as diverse. The Tokugawa Shogunate had failed to unify these practices. Laws varied from domain to domain and actual practice varied according to class and region. 90

During the Edo period there had been two main conflicting trends with regard to family form. In agricultural areas, the nuclear family had become the most efficient unit of production, and feudal relations based on duty and


89 Ishii, Japanese Legislation in the Meiji Era, p 519.

obligation were being replaced by market relations whereby labour could be sold on a daily basis. In the samurai class, increased centralisation of property and authority brought an emphasis on primogeniture and subordination of all family members to the patriarch. This practice was emulated by the wealthier merchants and artisans, who did not want to see their property (and authority) being divided up on the marriage of their children.

The writers of the Meiji Civil Code, then, did more than codify a conservative view of the family. They ignored the diversity of marriage and inheritance practices in different regions and classes of late Tokugawa society, and imposed a version of the patriarchal samurai family on all sections of society. The depiction of the patriarchal family form as unique, immutable, and trans-historical by such writers as Hozumi was a convenient myth which has persisted to the present day, and the identification of family with state was a socially constructed ideal. Gluck has described the construction of this ideal:

Family conceptions of the State and folkish views of the nation rested congenially with communitarian values that less readily accommodated either raw individualism or representations of class conflict. On the other hand, neither State nor nation made the same kind of immediate sense as the economic and social imperatives of personal success and family survival. Indeed, the unrelenting efforts of the ideologues to assert the pre-eminence of public values revealed that it was often the private ones that constituted stronger personal motivation. The continued tension between the public and private poles of civic value arose in part because Japan's social meanings did not readily dispose people ... to make "the leap to the state".

Perhaps we can reconsider Gluck's insight with reference to Benedict

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91 Smith, The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan; passim.
92 Wakita, 'Marriage and Property in Pre-modern Japan from the Perspective of Women's History', op.cit.
93 Gluck, Japan's Modern Myths, pp. 258-59.
Anderson's discussion of nationalism as the construction of an "imagined community". In Japan, it seems, the identification of family and state was to facilitate the imagining of a new community: the nation-state as family, referred to in the Japanese literature as kazoku-kokka (family-state). It is also possible to argue that this emotional identification with family and state may have been seen to provide an alternative to other forms of social grouping based on class or occupation. Barshay's description of the "family-state" brings together the themes of patriarchalism, national integration, and the "exaltation of officialdom":

The "family-state" postulated a semi-divine monarch whose family was the "great house" for all his subjects, at once chief priest of the Sun line and a modern ruler with enormous prerogatives who "presided over" (suberu; tôchi suru) but did not "involve himself" (ataru) in the actual administration of the state . . . Here let us stress its valorization of organic harmony and patriarchal integration over any conflictual notions of the composition of the polity. This ties in, of course, with the "exaltation" of officialdom, which, along with the independent military, acted for the first three decades of the modern period as the structural expression, so to speak, of the imperial will.

The implications for gender relations of this system will be considered through an examination of those sections of the Civil Code concerned with Family Law, and legislation concerned with women's political activities.

2.5.1 Women's Political Participation

The potential for political repression existed in this system, and this power was directed against women as much as any other groups in society. The first regulations on public meetings and associations had been passed in the eighteen eighties. The new regulations, from 1890 on, added clauses

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94 Anderson, Imagined Communities, passim.
95 Barshay, State and Intellectual in Meiji Japan, p4.
96 Regulations for Political Meetings and Associations, 1880; Revised Regulations for Political Meetings and Associations, 1882; Hôan Jôrei (Peace Preservation Ordinance), 1887; Revision of Public Meeting Regulations, 1889; McLaren, 'Japanese Government Documents', pp495-505.
specifically directed at women, similar to regulations which had existed in Germany from 1851, and in Austria from 1867. The Japanese Law on Political Associations and Meetings of 1890 (Shûkai oyobi Kessha Hô) prevented women from engaging in any political activity, whether it be attending a political meeting, holding one, or joining a political party. These bans were reiterated in Article Five of the Public Peace Police Law of 1900 (Chian Keisatsu Hô). (Women were, of course, excluded from the very limited franchise.) Thus, there was no scope for Meiji women to demand "rights" publicly. The repeal of these provisions was necessary before they could even begin to consider other political activity. In the eighteen eighties it had been possible for Kishida Toshiko to make speeches all over the country demanding political rights for women. This would no longer be permissible, and meant that public speaking could no longer be used as a means of promoting feminist ideas. Thus, one of the first activities of both liberal and socialist feminists of the Meiji period involved campaigning for the amendment of Article Five, as I discuss in Chapter Three below.

2.5.2 Family Registration

In concrete terms, it was laws concerned with family registration, marriage, divorce and inheritance which restricted women's rights and delimited the role they could expect to play in the Meiji "family-state". The basic administrative unit of the state was the family. Each person was registered in the Family Register (Koseki) on birth. The head of the family (the father)

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97 The Combination Law of 1851 prohibited women from taking part in political meetings or joining political associations in most parts of Germany. Similar legislation was enacted in Austria in 1867. Evans, The Feminists, p94; p105.


99 Regulations concerning Household Registration were promulgated as early as 1871. Gluck, Japan's Modern Myths, p187.
had authority over each family member, and it was his duty to ensure the loyalty of each family member to the Emperor. The father's permission was necessary for marriage up to the age of thirty for men, twenty-five for women.\textsuperscript{100}

2.5.3 Family and Inheritance

On the death of the father, the headship and all property passed to the eldest son. A distinction was made between the headship, which involved "succession to all the rights and duties of the deceased ancestor", and heirship, which concerned the "rights and obligations pertaining to the property of the family."\textsuperscript{101} Boissonade's draft Civil Code had made provision for sharing of the inheritance between siblings, and this had been the practice in some regions, but the final draft of the Civil Code affirmed the principle of primogeniture. The practice of adopting a son or son-in-law where there was no male heir continued to be recognised.\textsuperscript{102}

2.5.4 Marriage and Divorce

Marriage was recognised as legal when the wife was entered in the family register of her husband's family. This system was open to abuse, however, and wives were often not registered until they had produced an heir. A married woman lost all control over any property she brought to the marriage, unless it was specifically protected by a marriage contract. Legally, married women were put in the same class as minors and other legal "incompetents". They could not enter into contracts, or buy or sell

\textsuperscript{100} Ishii, \textit{Japanese Legislation in the Meiji Era}, p. 669.


\textsuperscript{102} Ishii, \textit{Japanese Legislation in the Meiji Era}, pp685-691.
property without the consent of the husband. 103 Under a system where suffrage was dependent on property, this had further implications for the possibility of arguing for women's political rights.

The divorce law alone gave some small improvement in women's position. 104 For the first time, women could sue for divorce, but the grounds were restricted. Women could sue on the grounds of cruelty or desertion, but not adultery. Men could obtain divorce on the grounds of the woman's adultery, but a man could only be prosecuted by the husband of another married woman. Adultery with a single woman was no offence as it did not threaten the family line. The practice of divorce by mutual consent was often abused, with families coercing an unsatisfactory bride into signing consent for divorce. There were no provisions for alimony or maintenance, so that divorced women were totally unprotected. The father usually retained custody over any children. 105

At an official level Meiji society was ambivalent towards prostitution and concubinage. Contracts between prostitutes and their owners were officially made invalid in 1872 but the practice continued tacitly. 106 Laws were passed in 1872 and 1873 which included concubines in the family register, and gave their children legitimate status. This law was rescinded in 1882. 107

In sum, the Meiji Constitution outlined a society where the people were

103 Ishii, Japanese Legislation in the Meiji Era, pp666-74.

104 For a survey of premodern marriage and divorce practices, see Hatoyama & Sakamoto, 'Japanese Personal Legislation', pp251-280.


106 Takamure, Josei no Rekishi, p70; Sievers, Flowers in Salt, p13.

107 Takamure, Josei no Rekishi, p71; Braisted, Meiroku Zasshi, p114.
constructed as subjects of an Emperor rather than citizens with natural rights. The patriarchal family was the basis of authority relations in this state, and the gendered nature of subjecthood was made explicit through the Civil Code, which was finally promulgated in 1898. This basic structure of Constitutional, Civil, and Commercial Law was effective until after World War Two. These legal and institutional structures were supported by ideological attention to the duties of subjects and the gendered nature of subjecthood.

2.6 Discourses of Family and State

As discussed above, family structure and family relationships were seen to be crucial to authority relations in the Meiji state. According to Meiji nationalist discourse, the role of women as imperial subjects was seen through the prism of family relationships. In this context, women's contribution as wives and mothers was taken seriously for perhaps the first time. Several writers promoted the idea that women should be, in Nakamura's phrase, "good wives and wise mothers" (ryōsai kenbo), and that they should receive a proper education for this role. Some writers also began to promote monogamous marriage based on love between husband and wife.

The conjunction of Ryōsai kenbo ideology and notions of romantic love in marriage can be traced to the members of the Meirokusha, the members of

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108 Such a gendering of nationalist discourse is also true of other countries. In India, where nationalist discourse was developed in opposition to Western imperialism, the conflict between "Eastern" tradition and "Western" modernity was often framed in gendered terms, and focused on women's role within the family. See the discussion of these issues in Kumari Jayawardena, Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World, London: Zed Press, 1986, passim; Partha Chatterjee, 'The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question', in Kumkum Sangari & Sudesh Valdi (eds) Recasting Women: Essays in Indian History, New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1990, pp233-253; Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The Difference-Deferral of (a) Colonial Modernity: Public Debates on Domesticity in British Bengal', History Workshop Journal, No 36, Autumn 1993, pp1-34. For a brief discussion of the role of women as the embodiment of tensions between "tradition" and "modernity" in the Japanese context, see Sievers, Flowers in Salt, pp10-15. 
the Bungakukai literary group, and various Christian organisations. The Christian influence was also apparent in the creation of the Japanese chapters of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Red Cross. These ideas provided women with a positive role for perhaps the first time, but ultimately women were positioned in the home, and any public activities could only be legitimated as extensions of the role of "good wives and wise mothers". Meiji period discourses on women can usefully be compared with premodern notions.

In feudal Japan, Buddhist and Confucian ideologies had devalued women's contribution to society. According to Buddhism, women were sinful, and were not allowed into certain sections of temples. A woman could not achieve enlightenment unless she was reincarnated as a man. According to Confucian ideas, women were subject to "the three obediences" -- a woman had to obey her father, then her husband, then her eldest son. According to Kaibara Ekken, the author of Onna Daigaku, a didactic text for women:

Woman has the quality of yin (passiveness). Yin is the nature of the night and is dark. Hence, because compared to a man, she is foolish, she does not understand her obvious duties... She has five blemishes in her nature. She is disobedient, inclined to anger, slanderous, envious, stupid... Since she is foolish, in everything she must submit to her husband.

It was not thought necessary to provide formal education for women, and

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109 The Women's Temperance League was established in 1886 and its journal Tôkyô Fujin Kyôdô Zasshi commenced publication in 1888. the Red Cross was established in 1887.


111 In education, as in other aspects of the lives of women in Tokugawa Japan, there was huge variation according to region and class. On the education of peasant women, see Anne Walthall, 'The Life Cycle of Farm Women in Tokugawa Japan'. In Creating Japanese Women, pp46-49.
a woman could be divorced on presentation of a short declaration known as mikudari-han. The grounds for divorce were: failure to produce an heir, gossiping, theft, disobedience, jealousy, loose conduct, disease.\textsuperscript{112}

Such ideologies ignored the fact that women's labour was crucial to the survival of peasant, artisan, merchant, and even poor samurai families. Women performed their share of agricultural labour, and were largely responsible for such cottage industries as spinning and weaving. Only aristocratic, samurai, and wealthy merchant families could afford to keep women who did not contribute their labour to the subsistence of the family. These women were valued for their reproductive power, and could be traded in marriage for the purpose of expedient political alliances. Even in peasant families, however, women were seen as the most "expendable" members of the family. It was female babies who were "thinned out" (a euphemism for infanticide) at birth, and older girls could be sold to brothels, for the sake of the survival of their fathers and brothers.\textsuperscript{113}

In feudal Europe, one aspect of aristocratic culture was the development of the ideal of courtly love which was one of the precursors of modern bourgeois notions of romantic love and companionate marriage.\textsuperscript{114} Feudal Japan had not developed a tradition of courtly love among the warrior class. If such a tradition existed at all, it was directed at young men.\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{112} Ackroyd. 'Women in Feudal Japan', p6.

\textsuperscript{113} For an overview of the sexual division of labour in households in early modern Japan, see: Kathleen Uno, 'Women and Changes in the Household Division of Labour', in Creating Japanese Women; pp17-41; Walthall, 'The Life Cycle of Farm Women in Tokugawa Japan'; pp42-70.

\textsuperscript{114} For discussion of the implications of the tradition of courtly love for women in Europe, see: Joan Kelly-Gadol, 'Did Women Have a Renaissance?', in Becoming Visible, pp175-201. For the history of the notion of romantic love in modern western European societies, see Jacqueline Sarsby, Romantic Love and Society, Hammondsword: Penguin, 1983.

among the samurai class was described as a matter of duty and obligation rather than romantic attachment, although it is possible that there was a different tradition in peasant society, where young people could still choose their own marriage partners.\textsuperscript{116} Samurai women were enjoined to be chaste, frugal and obedient:

The relationship of a wife to her husband is based on the two virtues of chastity and obedience, not merely on the matrimonial bond. It is immoral to place matrimonial affection before chastity and obedience.

A wife is conducting herself in conformity with morality when she seeks for concubines for her husband with a view of keeping his line from extinction. Is it not a shameful thing to speak ill or become jealous of others out of a desire to monopolize love?\textsuperscript{117}

Sexual love was seen as a dangerous force, to be banished from mainstream society and restricted to the limbo zone of the licensed quarters. Walthall explains that:

To circumscribe the power of mature female sexuality, men tried to direct it either to the confines of the red light district or to marriage.\textsuperscript{118}

The licensed quarters were frequented by members of the merchant class, and unofficially by members of the samurai class. The women were those daughters of poor peasants who had been sold for the survival of their families.

This does not mean that Edo society lacked a conception of romantic love;


\textsuperscript{117}Quotations from two eighteenth century didactic texts, Ackroyd, 'Women in Feudal Japan', pp57-60.

\textsuperscript{118}Walthall, 'The Life Cycle of Farm Women in Tokugawa Japan', p64.
the popular culture of the time continually dramatised the conflict between societal obligation (giri) and emotional ties (ninjō). This conflict was dramatised along class lines, or in economic terms. Sometimes the conflict was between the merchant's duty to his wife and his emotional ties to his mistress. Or perhaps a poor clerk did not have enough money to redeem his lover from her rich patron. These dramas invariably ended in suicide, reinforcing the idea that sexual passion was a dangerous force. Although the new discourses on women and family continued to see sexuality as a dangerous force, there was a new linkage of romantic love with monogamous marriage.

By the 1890s, Christian influence had become stronger in certain groups in Meiji society, and the Christian emphasis on social service would become an important influence on the subsequent development of socialist and feminist thought in Japan. Many intellectuals had received their education at Christian mission schools, and this was often the only place where middle-class Meiji women could receive higher education. Many young writers of the time were influenced by Iwamoto Zenji, principal of the women's school Meiji Jogakuin, and founder of the women's education journal Jogaku Zasshi. Iwamoto, in addition to being principal of Meiji Jogakuin, was leader of the Bungakukai school of romantic novelists, and many of the school's romantic ideas found their way into the pages of Jogaku Zasshi. Indeed, many members of this literary school taught at the women's college and wrote for Jogaku Zasshi, or Bungakukai, the literary magazine which

119 Several feminist leaders were connected with this school or educated there, including Shimizu Toyoko, Ōtsuka Kusuko, Nogami Yaeko. Maruoka Hideko, Fujin Shisō Keisei Shi Noto, Volume 1, p45.

developed from *Jogaku Zasshi*.

Writers in *Jogaku Zasshi* displayed a variety of stances on women's rights and women's education and the emphasis of the journal as a whole shifted several times. The journal promoted women's education and women's political rights, but in the context of ideas of romantic love and monogamous marriage. Education for women, indeed, was often promoted for the sake of the women's children. *Jogaku Zasshi*, then, was important in the promotion of a notion of monogamous marriage which supported a form of *ryōsai kenbo* ideology. It has been argued, however, that the concept of *ryōsai kenbo* espoused in the mid-Meiji period was different from the nationalist version of *ryōsai kenbo* ideology promoted by the bureaucracy and semi-official women's organizations in the early twentieth century.

Articles by Ueki Emori on women's political rights in this journal sit uneasily with Hatoyama Kazuo's "Become your husband's closest friend rather than [demanding] equal rights" and Kitamura Tōkoku's "Misanthropic poets and women". This publication was, however, one of the places where criticism was voiced against the regulations which prevented women from participating in political activities. Both Shimizu

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121 For discussion of *Jogaku Zasshi* and *Bungaku*ka, see: Kōsaka, *Japanese Thought in the Meiji Era*, pp261-269. *Bungaku*ka appeared from 1893 to 1898.


Toyoko and Iwamoto himself criticised the Law on Political Assembly and Association of 1890 - the precursor of the Peace Police Law of 1900. Iwamoto was also mildly critical of the Imperial Rescript on Education, recognizing that the Rescript could be used as justification for discriminatory treatment of women. 

Domestically oriented women's magazines started to appear in the Meiji period, with such titles as *Meiji no katei* (The Meiji Family). Although the more progressive of these magazines supported women's education and political rights, they generally placed women firmly in the family, and took a patriotic tone.

Meiji popular culture dramatised conflicting notions of romantic love. Such writers as Nagai Kafū, Izumi Kyōka and Sato Ryokū continued in their romanticised (and often misogynistic) portrayal of the licensed quarters. The Bungakukai writers dramatised the problems of romantic love in the mission schools -- an idealised version of love in marriage, which they were often unable to achieve in their private lives. Perhaps the only writer to demystify notions of romantic love was Higuchi Ichiyō - a member of Bungakukai - in her portrayal of young people on the fringes of the licensed

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127 Shimizu Toyoko, 'Naze ni joshi wa seidan shûkai ni sancho suru to o yurusarezaru nari', *Jogaku Zasshi*, No. 228, August 30, 1890; 'Naite Aisuru Shimai ni tsugu', *Jogaku Zasshi*, No 234, October 11, 1890 (supplement).

128 Iwamoto Zenji, 'Joshi no Seidan Bôchô', *Jogaku Zasshi*, No 225, 1890.


quarters.\textsuperscript{133}

With the popularity of Nakamura Masanao's translation of Smiles' \textit{Self-Help}, young people became interested in worldly success -- \textit{risshin}. The feudal debate on \textit{giri} versus \textit{ninja} was reframed in terms of \textit{risshin} versus \textit{ren'ai} (love).\textsuperscript{134} This conflict was dramatised in the novels of Mori Ōgai and Tsubouchi Shōyō, and in the debate on romantic love between Tokutomi Sohō and Kitamura Tōkoku.\textsuperscript{135} The ideology of \textit{risshin shusse}, was however implicitly masculine. Tachi Kaoru has argued that, while the young men of the Meiji period aspired to worldly success, \textit{risshin shusse}, young women were being educated according to the ideology of \textit{ryōsai kenbo}, 'good wives and wise mothers'.\textsuperscript{136}

\textbf{2.7 Good Wives and Wise Mothers}

Although there were many contradictory ideas in circulation at this time, romantic love was being linked with monogamous marriage in a way which had not happened previously. When linked with \textit{ryōsai kenbo} ideology, these ideas provided a justification for the restriction of women's role to the domestic sphere. Takamura has traced \textit{ryōsai kenbo} ideology as an amalgam of European and Confucian ideas.\textsuperscript{137} This has become a common theme in Meiji political history. Useful Confucian ideas were retained or revived and combined with only those "Western" ideas congenial to the type

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{134}Klinmonth, \textit{The Self-Made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought}, pp47-8.
\item \textsuperscript{135}Nakamura Mitsuo, \textit{Japanese Fiction in the Meiji Era}, Tokyo: Kokusai Bunka Shinkō kai, 1968; pp64-70.
\item \textsuperscript{136}Tachi Kaoru, 'Ryōsai Kenbo', p195-196.
\item \textsuperscript{137}Takamura, \textit{Josel no Rekishi}, pp79-83.
\end{itemize}
of state envisaged by the Meiji power élite. Tachi Kaoru has traced in more detail the transformations of ryōsai kenbo ideology, from an initial emphasis on the relationships between husband and wife and mother and child, to a later version of ryōsai kenbo ideology which linked these relationships to nationalist goals. Tachi is also sensitive to the class basis of this ideology. She argues that the development of higher education for women in Japan was linked to the perceived necessity to provide partners for men who were already finding social location in suitable class positions through an increasingly stratified education system. The growth of the higher schools for women (kōtō jogakkō) was spectacular, and these schools were the site for the promotion of ryōsai kenbo ideology among middle and upper class women. Although the increased demand for women’s labour in the industrial sector could be seen to threaten the stability of the patriarchal family system, Tachi argues that familial ideology was also promoted among the working classes, in order to counter any perceived threat to the family system.

Sharon Nolte and Sally-Ann Hastings have described how the Japanese Ministries of Education and Home Affairs built on ryōsai kenbo ideology in campaigns aimed at mobilising women through the educational system and

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138 It should be added, however, that oppositional groups may also have tried to appropriate the language of Confucianism. C.f. Irokawa’s discussion of the use of Confucianist concepts in the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement. Irokawa, ‘Freedom and the Concept of People’s Rights’, p181.


140 Tachi Kaoru, ‘Ryōsai Kenbo’, pp192-193. The number of women enrolled in higher schools was 286 in 1882, 2,363 in 1888, 12,000 in 1900, and 75,000 in 1912.

141 Tachi Kaoru, ‘Ryōsai Kenbo’, p195. I would agree with Tachi’s assertion that specific appeals were made to women of different classes, although the familial ideology promoted among young single working women seems somewhat different in content to ryōsai kenbo ideology, which was much more relevant to middle and upper class women who did not engage in paid work.
semi-official patriotic organizations in the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{142} This corresponds to Tachi's discussion of a 'nationalist' (kokkashugiteki) phase of \textit{ryôsai kenbo} ideology. Nolte and Hastings quote official statements on the exclusion of women from participation in parliamentary politics. The head of the Police Bureau, Kiyoura Keigo "argued that women's political participation would undercut home management and education", while the architect of the Public Peace Police Law, Arimatsu Hideyori, "commented \ldots that political meetings were disreputable affairs that might compromise women's virtue."\textsuperscript{143}

Nolte and Hastings argue that women's exclusion from political activity reflected their role as semi-public servants whose sphere of activity was the home.\textsuperscript{144} While I agree that women's activities were explicitly politicized, and that the state (in Nolte and Hastings' succinct phrase) "claimed the home as a public place", I am doubtful about such an implied valorization of these activities. As we shall see below, the socialist women who campaigned against Article Five were sceptical about women's co-optation as servants of a state which denied them political rights. It may be more useful to explore the similarities and differences between women and propertyless men, who were not enfranchised until 1925.

\textsuperscript{142} Nolte & Hastings, 'The Meiji State's Policy Towards Women', pp151-174.

\textsuperscript{143}Nolte & Hastings, 'The Meiji State's Policy Towards Women', p156.

\textsuperscript{144}Nolte and Hastings put forward this point of view in the following (unfortunately unsourced) paragraph: "Yet the ban on joining political organisations actually suggests a third image of woman, one neither innocent nor rebellious but responsible and authoritative. The ban placed women in the same category as public figures, including military men, public and private school teachers and students, and shrine and temple officers. The grouping implied that women were like civil servants whose political activity would be inappropriate or whose responsibilities so weighty as to preclude their participation. Gradually conservatives inside and outside the government would elaborate on the idea that wives were public figures, veritable officers of the state in its microcosm, the home. Their mission was a noble one that transcended petty partisan politics. Thus, the justification of women's political exclusion was primarily in terms of their home and family duties, and not of their physical, mental, or moral incapacity." Nolte & Hastings, 'The Meiji State's Policy Towards Women, 1890-1910', p156.
We should, however, be careful about aligning *ryōsai kenbo* ideology too closely with European ideas of "separate spheres". In Europe, bourgeois marriage developed as the site of production moved out of the home, and middle-class men engaged in paid labour outside while their wives looked after the management of the domestic sphere. The ideological construction of the private sphere rendered aspects of gender relations "invisible" in political terms, and naturalised the gendered hierarchy in the family.

In Japan, however, there were not the same notions of "public" and "private". According to Confucian ideology, power relations in the family were articulated directly into the power relations of the state. In Europe, the concept of "separate spheres" could be used by some feminists to argue for equal political rights for women, on the grounds that women made an equally significant contribution to society. In Japan, under the Constitutional system, notions of a gendered hierarchy within the family were made explicit, and the family itself was politicised, rather than being seen as a private haven.

Mainstream political ideology in the Meiji period was antithetical to feminist ideas in several major ways. The Meiji Constitution described an autocratic state, based on divine right rather than popular sovereignty and natural

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146 See Barshay's discussion of the development of notions of public and private in Japan. Barshay argues that the concept of "private" in Japan was opposed to "public" in the meaning of governmental or official. Unfortunately, Barshay does not elaborate on possible connections between gender relations and the development of concepts of public and private in the Japanese context: Barshay, *State and Intellectual in Japan*. 
rights. The Civil Code encoded a patriarchal family system, which was an essential part of the authority structures of the new state. Ideals of monogamy, and a new emphasis on the importance of women in rearing and educating children, persuaded women that they could achieve emotional satisfaction within marriage, and compensated them for their lack of political rights. However, these official discourses were counterbalanced by the development of oppositional discourses on women and gender relations. Indeed, it could almost be said that the official and semi-official pronouncements on family and state opened up a discursive space for the articulation of oppositional points of view on these matters.

2.8 Oppositional Discourses
What is missing from all of these debates is a recognition of the role of women's labour in the modernisation of the Meiji state. While the élite discussed "good wives and wise mothers", women soon made up the majority of workers in the textile industry, Japan's major export product. Such ideologies may even have allowed the more efficient exploitation of such women; if they thought that their primary loyalty was to the family and future husband, this may have hampered the development of class consciousness. In this context, one task of feminists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was to bring discussion of women's labour into the mainstream of political discussion. As long as women themselves confined their discussion and demands to the role of women within the family, there could be little challenge to the dominant political discourse.

To a large extent this is what happened in the early years of Meiji feminism. The women of the Japanese chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (Nihon Kirisutokyō Kyōfūkai) drew on the Christian tradition of social service and carried out welfare activities among prostitutes and textile
workers. The women of the Kyōfūkai were involved in campaigns against licensed prostitution, and paid some attention to issues of "women's rights", but failed to develop a coherent critique of the links between women's oppression in the home and as workers.147 The late Meiji/early Taishō feminists of the Seittō group, as we shall see, challenged the notion of monogamous marriage, but neglected consideration of women's labour. Early socialist women's journals considered women's labour as factory workers, prostitutes, or in rural areas, and also debated the ideology of monogamous marriage.

As an introduction to the next chapter I will briefly outline the development of socialism as an oppositional discourse which provided a critique of industrial capitalism as it developed in Japan. I will then consider how socialism in early twentieth century Japan was conjoined with another oppositional discourse - that of feminism. Within socialist and feminist discourse, women attempted to speak in ways which challenged their construction as gendered subjects of the Emperor. In their attempts to speak as wives and as mothers, they could be seen to be attempting to appropriate official constructions of womanhood to their own purposes. Attempts to speak as workers and as activists, however, provided a challenge to these discourses. My discussion of the writings of socialist women will be organised around these possible speaking positions: as wives (Chapter Three), as mothers (Chapter Four), as workers (Chapter Five), and as activists (Chapter Six).

147 Sievers, Flowers in Salt, pp87-113.
CHAPTER THREE: WIVES (1900-1911)

3.1 The Conjunction of Feminism and Socialism

While feminism, in its liberal guise, attempted to use the universalist principles of liberalism and see them extended to women, socialism sought to point out some of the limitations of liberal ideology and to provide a critique of the capitalist system. The context of the early development of Japanese feminist thought has been traced in the previous chapters, where we noted the participation of women in the liberal movement, and the influence of Christianity through the mission schools and philanthropic organizations. The intellectual antecedents of socialist thought in Japan can be found in the left wing of the liberal movement, in the Christian emphasis on social service, and in the study of American labour activism and British socialism by Katayama Sen, Takano Fusatarō and others. It could also be said that the male and female workers who had withdrawn their labour in strike activity in the eighteen eighties and eighteen nineties (albeit without the support of an organised union movement) had made an important step towards recognition of the basic contradiction between the interests of capital and labour, although the history of this early strike activity was not always available to later generations of workers. The growth of factory labour and the concomitant development of labour disputes has been traced by Stephen Large:

The dimensions of the labor question, while not great by recent standards, were nonetheless considerable in the context of the

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period. As the number of factories multiplied, from 778 with a combined capitalization of 44,590,000 yen in 1894 to 1,881 factories with a combined capitalization of 105,380,000 yen by 1897, so too did the industrial workforce begin to assume large proportions. For instance, in 1892, there were 294,425 factory workers in Japan; by 1897, this number had reached 439,549. In the last six months of 1897, the year in which the first unions arose, there were thirty-two strikes encompassing 3,517 workers; in 1898, forty-three strikes occurred, involving 6,293 participants.³

Within the bureaucracy socialist thought was seen to be beyond the pale of acceptable political discourse, but the German school of social policy (Sozialpolitik) became influential as a way of dealing with social problems without resorting to socialist solutions. The formation of the Shakai Seisaku Gakkai (Society for the Study of Social Policy) in 1896 reflected this influence. Indeed, some of the more progressive social policy decisions of the early twentieth century could be seen as ways of containing the spread of the oppositional discourse of socialism.⁴ The modestly reformist position of the Shakai Seisaku Gakkai was laid out in a prospectus issued on the formation of the association:

Since the spirit of extreme self-interest and of free and unrestricted competition gives rise to widening gulfs between rich and poor, we reject the principles of laissez-faire. We are also opposed to socialism because its plans for the destruction of capitalists and for the overthrow of the existing economic system would be detrimental to the fortunes of the nation. We believe that, if the present system of private property is maintained and if, within its limits, class friction is prevented by the exercise of state power and by exertions of individual


citizens, we may look forward to the continuation of social harmony.5

Socialist ideas were first introduced through the publications of the Minyûsha. The Minyûsha journal Kokumin no Tomo (The Nation’s Friend) included articles on aspects of socialism, and reports on socialist movements in Europe from Sakai Yûsaburô, then visiting Paris.6 Some Japanese monographs on socialism appeared in the eighteen nineties7 and the first sustained socialist organizations were established in the late eighteen nineties.8 The Shokkô Giyûkai (Knights of Labour) laid the groundwork for the formation of the Rôdô Kumiai Kiseikai (Society for the Promotion of Labour, established in 1897). The Shakai Shugi Kenkyûkai (Society for the Study of Socialism, established in 1898) metamorphosed into the Shakai Shugi Kyôkai (Socialist Association) in 1900. Members of these pioneering organizations were to become leaders in the socialist, anarchist, and labour movements. Katayama and others published Rôdô Sekai (Labour World) from December 1897, and an interest in labour conditions was also promoted by such journalistic works as Yokoyama Gennosuke’s Nihon no Kasô Shakai (The Lower Social Strata of Japan) which appeared in 1899.9 At the same time, former liberal activist Ōi Kentarô

5Translated in Kublin, Asian Revolutionary, p137.


8In 1882, a group on the left of the liberal movement called itself the Tôyô Shakai Tô (Oriental Socialist Party), but its activities were short-lived. After only a few months the government ordered its disbandment. John Crump, The Origins of Socialist Thought in Japan, Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm, 1983, p39.

was involved in founding the Greater Japan Labour Association (Dai Nihon Rōdō Kyōkai), an organization devoted to research on labour issues.

Although women formed the majority of the still small industrial labour force, the earliest labour reformers spoke to an implicitly masculine group of workers. For example, the writers of 'A Summons to the Workers', issued in 1897, refer to workers' desire to support their wives and children, and lament that industrialization has taken women out of the home and into the factories. While the journal Rōdō Sekai included reports on the conditions of women workers, these women were constructed either as competitors for men's jobs, or as objects of pity. Women workers were an object of description and analysis, rather than being addressed as potential unionists.

However, the development of the socialist and labour movements could be restricted by State actions. The Peace Regulations of 1887 had given the police powers to ban mass meetings, and the Peace Police Law of 1900 was to give police even more extensive powers. Women, minors, police and members of the armed forces were prohibited from engaging in political activity. Article 17 of the Peace Police Law banned the promotion of labour

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12This theme will be explored in more detail in Chapter Five below, with respect to later writings on women workers.
organizations and it was illegal to incite workers to strike.¹³ This legislation was used in May 1901 to ban the newly-founded *Shakai Minshutō* (Social Democratic Party).¹⁴ Tipton points out that from this time until the Allied Occupation, "people intending to hold a meeting involving political speeches or discussion were required to report this to the police, giving information about the site, time, and names and addresses of the chief participants."¹⁵

Several books devoted to an exposition of socialism appeared around the turn of the century. These included Kōtoku Shūsui's *Nijū Seiki no Kaibutsu: Teikoku Shugi* (Imperialism: The Spectre of the Twentieth Century: 1901) and *Shakai Shugi Shinzui* (The Essence of Socialism: 1903), Katayama Sen's *Waga Shakai Shugi* (My Socialism: 1903), Katayama Sen and Nishikawa Kōjirō's *Nihon no Rōdō Undō* (The Japanese Labour Movement: 1901), Abe Isoo's *Shakai Mondai Kaishaku Hō* (The Solution to Social Problems: 1901), *Shakai Tō* (The Socialist Party) by Nishikawa Kōjirō, and Yano Ryūkei's *Shin Shakai* (New Society).¹⁶ The philosophy espoused by the early socialists was somewhat eclectic. Ōkōchi Kazuo lists Saint-Simon and Fourier, Marx and Lassalle, Proudhon and Bakunin, Henry George, and

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¹³Article 17 stated that:"No one shall commit violence or threaten others or publicly slander others for the purposes in the following paragraphs or seduce or incite others for the purpose of paragraph 2 below: 1. In order to let others join, or to prevent others from joining, an organization which aims at cooperative action concerning conditions of work or remuneration. 2. In order to make an employer discharge workers, or to make him reject applications for work or to make him refuse an offer of employment with a view to organizing a lockout or a strike. 3. In order to compel the other party to agree to the conditions of work or remuneration." Translation in: S.S. Large, *The Rise of Labour in Japan: The Yūaikal 1912-19*, Tokyo: Sophia University Press, p3.


¹⁶Odagiri Susumu, *'Kaidai*', p416.

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Tolstoy, as representing strands of thought which could all be included under the broad banner of socialism in the early nineteen hundreds in Japan. It was not until after the Russo-Japanese War, argues Ōkōchi, that socialism came to be synonymous with Marxism in Japan. The first conjunction of feminism and socialism became apparent in the Heiminsha, through the participation of some women in this organization, and through socialist attempts to address the "woman question".

The Heiminsha (Commoners’ Society) was established in 1903 by Sakai Toshihiko and Kōtoku Shūsui, and continued its activities in one form or another through the first decade of the twentieth century. The name Heiminsha may remind us of one of the antecedents of the socialist movement - the left wing of the nineteenth century liberal movement, where Tokutomi Sohō espoused his philosophy of Heimin shugi ("commonerism") in the pages of the journal Kokumin no Tomo (The Nation's Friend). This lineage was acknowledged by Ishikawa Sanshirō and Kōtoku Shūsui:

The Japanese Socialist Party is indebted to the Minyūsha... He [Sohō] became an instigator of strikes... The Minyūsha was a second Meirokusha, it became a well-spring for new thought. The currents of socialism in Japan can truly be said to have emerged from this source.

The founders of the Heiminsha, Sakai Toshihiko and Kōtoku Shūsui, were employed as journalists by the Yorozu Chōhō (Complete Morning Report). After they resigned from the Yorozu Chōhō over their criticism of the newspaper's editorial support for war with Russia they started publishing the

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weekly *Heimin Shinbun* (Commoners' News).\(^{19}\) Pacifism was to be a major theme of writings in the *Heimin Shinbun*, and the Russo-Japanese War provided the socialists with an opportunity for public statement of the principles of internationalism.\(^{20}\) Despite the internationalist sentiments of the socialists, Japan's first military victory over a European power also became a focus for nationalist sentiment, in the form of the Hibiya Riots of 1905, where people protested against the terms of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty.\(^{21}\)

The weekly *Heimin Shinbun* appeared until January 1905. After its closure *Chokugen* (Plain Talk) moved from a monthly to a weekly schedule, and became the main publication of the socialist movement.\(^{22}\) The background of the *Heiminsha* members is revealed in a series of short articles where individual male socialists explain "How I Became a Socialist". Several mention a background in Confucianism and contact with the liberal movement, followed by flirtation with the religious doctrines of Christianity or the scientific doctrine of Darwinism. Influential texts include Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, Ely's *French and German Socialism*, Schäffle's *The Quintessence of Socialism*, the writings of Henry George, and the

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publications of the *Minyûsha*. Few of these books would be included in any modern canon of socialist texts.

Most of the contributors to this series see socialism as the answer to poverty and other social problems, problems which are made concrete in Yamaguchi Koken's description of walking through a Tokyo slum. He considers religion, science and virtue as possible solutions to the problem of poverty, rejecting each in turn until he hears about socialism. According to socialist thought, society should be made to resemble "a big family" (*shakai o dainaru katei no gotoku seyo*) where work and the necessities of life are guaranteed. Yamaguchi also includes mention of sexual equality in his vision of an ideal society, where there would be "no difference between ranks, or between rich and poor, male and female" (*kisen naku hinpu naku otoko mo onna mo . . .*), and all would be given equal access "to benefits and to happiness" (*rieki to kôfuku*).

Sakai Toshihiko employs the language of enlightenment in his account of his conversion to socialism, and this semi-religious attitude to socialism appears in several of the accounts. Sakai had suffered great confusion after trying to reconcile Mencius, Confucius and French philosophy; liberalism and patriotism; Christianity, the theory of evolution, and Utilitarianism. But socialism provided him with a "ray of light" which he could use to shed light on all of these philosophies. Finally, he felt relief when he

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23 "Yo wa ika ni shite shakaishugisha to narishi ka", in Odagiri (ed) *Meiji Shakai Shugi Bungaku Shô* 2, pp389-392.

24 Yamaguchi Koken, "Yo wa ika ni shite shakaishugisha to narishi ka", *Shûkan Heimin Shinbun*, No 44; reproduced in Odagiri (ed) *Meiji Shakai Shugi Bungaku Shô* 2, pp391-392.

was able to put all of these ideas in order, until there were "no shadows and no darkness".26

After this initial eclecticism, the socialist movement split into Christian socialist and materialist socialist factions in October 1905. The Christian socialist faction, including Ishikawa Sanshirō, Kinoshita Naoe and Abe Isso, produced the journal *Shin Kigen* (New Era),27 while the materialists, including Nishikawa Kōjirō and Yamaguchi Koken produced the journal *Hikari* (Light).28 A second attempt to form a socialist party was made in February 1906 by members of both the Christian and materialist factions. The Japan Socialist Party (*Nihon Shakai Tō*) declared its intention to pursue legal, parliamentary means to social change, and survived until 1907. Later splits involved a conflict between the espousal of direct action and parliamentary tactics, precipitated by Kōtoku's speech on direct action at the congress of the Japan Socialist Party, just before its dissolution in 1907. The *Heimin Shinbun* was revived as a daily newspaper from 1907.29

What has been relatively neglected in scholarship about these developments is that a consideration of women's issues was one element of the writings of these male socialist journalists, albeit a small element in

26Sakai Toshihiko, 'Yo wa ika ni shite shakaishugisha to narishi ka', *Shûkan Heimin Shinbun*, No 8; reproduced in Odagiri (ed) *Meiji Shakai Shugi Bungaku Shû* 2, pp389-390.


some cases. Sakai, Kôtoku,30 Kinoshita Naoe31 and others wrote and gave lectures on such topics as 'Women and War' and 'Women and Politics'. Sakai in particular showed an early interest in issues related to the 'woman question'. His earliest writings on these issues appeared in the Yorozu Chôhô, and these articles laid the groundwork for his six-volume work: Katei no Shinfûmi (A New Style of Family), published from 1901 to 1902.32 Sakai's early writings carried on the liberal tradition of Ueki Emori and Fukuzawa Yukichi, as has been noted by Suzuki Yûko.33 He would, however, go on to bring a socialist perspective to issues related to women, marriage and the family in the journal Katei Zasshi.34 Of the socialist newspapers Chokugen had a better record than the Heimin Shinbun on the inclusion of women's issues. A special women's edition of Chokugen appeared on April 23rd 1905, bearing the slogan "The ideals of socialism develop from the gentle hearts of women". This edition carried articles by Kinoshita Naoe and Sakai Toshihiko, and several statements by women on "How I Became a Socialist".35 The speeches given at the Socialist

30It should also be said that Kôtoku's often liberal views on women's issues in print were not matched by his private conduct.

31Kinoshita's activities were not restricted to the Heiminsha circle. Itoya recounts that Kinoshita gave a speech entitled 'Danjo Kôtoku Hikaku Ron' (A Comparison of the Happiness of Men and Women) at a national meeting of the Nihon Kirisutokyô Kyôfûkai (Japan Women's Christian Temperance Union), held in the Kanda district of Tokyo. On finishing his speech, he brandished a copy of the weekly Heimin Shinbun, proclaiming that this publication held the basic answers to the resolution of the 'woman question'. Itoya, Kanno Suga, pp41-42.


35See section 3.2 below.
Women’s Seminar were reported regularly in the pages of Chokugen. Stories about women workers appear sporadically in the pages of the Heiminsha publications, particularly in the weekly digest of news from Japanese newspapers. Songs and poems about factory workers also appear occasionally. The Heiminsha was also responsible for the publication of several pamphlets on Socialism and the 'Woman Question', under the Heimin Bunko (Commoners' Library) imprint.

Women were active in the Heiminsha almost from its inception. The journal Katei Zasshi had been established by Sakai Toshihiko in order to promote socialist ideas among women, but socialist women soon established their own journals. There were at least three socialist women's journals in the first decade of the twentieth century - Nijû Seiki no Fujin (Twentieth Century Woman: 1904), Suiito Hômu (Sweet Home: 1904), and Sekai Fujin (Women of the World). Some issues of Nijû Seiki no Fujin

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36 To be discussed in section 3.3. below.

37 'Jokô no Dômei Higyô', Shûkan Heimin Shinbun, No 3, 29/1/1903, p2; 'Kôjo no Gyakutai', Shûkan Heimin Shinbun, No 4, 6/12/1903, p2; Jokô no Dômei, Shûkan Heimin Shinbun, No 51, 30/10/1904, p2; 'Kôjo Gyakutai', Chokugen, Volume 1, No 22, 25/9/1906; etc.


39 Early titles include: Kakumei Fujin (Revolutionary Women) Tokyo: Heiminsha Bunko, 1905; and Yamaguchi Koken, Shakai Shugi to Fujin (Women and Socialism), Tokyo: Heiminsha Bunko, 1905.


41 Nijûseiki no Fujin was established on 1st February 1904, with Kawamura Haruko and Imai Utako as publisher and editor. Endô [Iwano] Kiyoko later took over the editorship. After a brief hiatus, the magazine reappeared in May 1906, and the final edition was published in November 1906. Miki Sukako, 'Meiji no Fujin Zasshi o Tadoru', p79. Extant issues of Nijûseiki no Fujin are held in Tokyo University's Meiji Newspaper and Magazine Collection.
have survived, but I have found no extant issues of *Sweet Home* (although we can see advertisements for *Sweet Home* in other socialist publications). The most prominent of the early socialist women’s publications - *Sekai Fujin* (Women of the World) - appeared between 1907 and 1909.42

3.2 Women in the Socialist Movement

Accounts of women in the early socialist movement often describe these women’s activities as having been shaped by the influence of familial, marital, or romantic relationships with male socialists. In many cases, the women in such groups as the *Heiminsha* were indeed involved with male socialists. However, this emphasis on familial connections tends to obscure the independent political commitment of many of these women. Fukuda Hideko, for example, already had a ‘career’ in oppositional politics before her contact with the socialists in the early nineteen hundreds.43 She was well known for her involvement in the Osaka Incident, and was often described as “the heroic woman of the Osaka Incident” (Osaka Jiken no joketsu). Her fame spread with the publication of her autobiography *Warawa no Hanshôgai* (My Life so Far) in 1904, and the semi-autobiographical novel *Warawa no Omoide* (My Recollections) in 1905.44

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42*Sekai Fujin* seems to have been able to gain support from all factions of the socialist movement. Among *Sekai Fujin*’s supporters, Suzuki Yūko lists Christian socialists Ishikawa Sanshirō, Abe Iseō, social democrat Sakai Toshihiko, anarcho-syndicalist Kōtoku Shūsui, and Nishikawa Fumiko, Sugaya Iwako, and Kamikawa Matsuko, who displayed a commitment to both feminism and socialism. Suzuki Yūko (ed) *Shiryō Heiminsha no Onnatachi*, p17.

43Fukuda had made contact with the socialists after she moved into the same neighbourhood as Sakai Toshihiko in 1901. Itōya Toshio reports that Fukuda introduced Sakai to Kato Tokijirō who, with Kojima Ryūtarō, provided funding for the establishment of the *Heimin Shinbun* in 1903. See: Itōya Toshio, ‘Kaisetsu’, in Fukuda Hideko, *Warawa no Hanshōgai*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958, pp113-115.

Such a stereotypical presentation of women's political commitment as inevitably being a result of the influence of male relatives can ultimately tell us little about the motivations of women in the socialist movement. What is worth exploring, however, is the use of familial metaphors and gendered metaphors of political philosophy within such groups as the Heiminsha. Even women who were not actually married to one of the male socialists were metaphorically constructed as "wives". The women of the Heiminsha were referred to as the "kitchen crew" while the senior woman of the group, Fukuda Hideko, was referred to as shūtome, "mother-in-law". The use of such fictive kinship terms implicitly constructed the Heiminsha as an extended family, a metaphor which was made explicit by Matsuoka [Nishikawa] Fumiko in an account published in the Heimin Shinbun. Matsuoka identifies herself as being responsible for the Heiminsha kitchen, and describes the Heiminsha as an extended family (daikazoku), complete with a pet dog, which performs the function of bringing out the human side of the Heiminsha members.

However, within the metaphorical Heiminsha family women performed the very real labour of providing meals and supporting the activities of their male comrades. Matsuoka closes her reflection on the Heiminsha family:

45The phrase "the kitchen crew" has been coined by Sharon Sievers in Flowers in Salt, p125.
46Suzuki, Shiryō: Heiminsha no Onnatachi, p16.
48Sakai Toshihiko, however, seems to have taken an interest in improving the practical conditions of the work of the "kitchen crew", in purchasing, for example, a device to simplify the process of washing rice. C.f. Nishikawa Fumiko, 'Kometogl Kikal no Ohanashi', Heimin Shinbun, No 63, 22/5/1905, reproduced in Suzuki, Shiryō: Heiminsha no Onnatachi, p56. Sakai, indeed, was distinguished as one of the male socialists in the early twentieth century who showed a prolonged commitment to pursuing answers to "the woman question". C.f. Suzuki Yūko, 'Sakai Toshihiko no Josei Ron Nōto', Undō Shi Kenkyū, No 12, August 1983; Suzuki Yūko (ed) Sakai Toshihiko Josei Ron Shū, Tokyo: San-Ichi Shōbō, 1983.
I still have various things to write about, but it is time to start preparing dinner, so I will leave them for another occasion.\textsuperscript{49}

Matsuoka's advertisement for a kitchen helper, which appeared in the \textit{Heimin Shinbun} of January 1905, reveals an unselfconscious acceptance of a sexual division of labour within the socialist movement. The members of the \textit{Heiminsha} are reluctant to employ a maid in the conventional sense, for they "hate class differences between people". However, it is taken for granted that it will be a woman who assists Matsuoka in the kitchen. On behalf of the \textit{Heiminsha} "family", Matsuoka states that she wishes to hear from a woman who "knows our ideas; wishes to work for our ideals; wishes to help our happy family; and is willing to do any kind of work". It will be possible, she adds, to arrange flexible hours, and time to study.\textsuperscript{50}

The woman who answered Matsuoka's advertisement was Nobuoka Tameko, later to marry Sakai Toshihiko.\textsuperscript{51} Accounts of such women as Nobuoka provide evidence that many young women in fact made an independent decision to leave country towns and come to Tokyo to participate in the socialist movement, without the influence of a male partner. Kanno Suga also contacted the socialist movement independently after hearing speeches by Kinoshita Naoe, and reading Sakai Toshihiko's writings in the \textit{Yorozu Chōhō}.\textsuperscript{52}


\textsuperscript{51}Suzuki, \textit{Shiryō: Heiminsha no Onnatachi}, pp72-73. Nobuoka's account of the reasons for her interest in socialism will be discussed below.

\textsuperscript{52}For details of Kanno Suga's connection with the \textit{Heiminsha}, see: Itoya, \textit{Kanno Suga}, Chapter II; Sievers, Sharon, \textit{Flowers in Salt}, pp139-162. See also Kondō Magara's reminiscences of Kanno in Kondō, \textit{Watashi no Kaisō}, Volume 1, pp114-117, pp189-191. For a comprehensive study of Kanno Suga's life and works, see Helene Bowen, 'Victims as
Some sense of the motivations of women who became involved in the socialist movement can be gleaned from a group of short articles in the women's edition of Chokugen (Plain Talk) in April 1905. Each takes the form of a statement by a woman on "How I Became a Socialist". Nishikawa Fumiko identifies the inheritance of private property as the cause of inequality in society, and refers to having read Katayama Sen and Nishikawa Kōjirō's journal Rōdō Sekai (Labour World). Nobuoka Tameko was influenced by such publications as Sakai Toshihiko's Katei Zasshi (Family Magazine). Nobuoka states that she was influenced by Sakai's views on the family, and started reading the Heimin Shinbun when Sakai left the Yorozu Chōhō. The Russo-Japanese War was another major turning point in Nobuoka's politicization. Sugaya Iwako refers to reading a Russian novel which portrayed a woman who sacrificed herself to the socialist cause, and states that this stimulated her curiosity about socialism. A "kind Professor of Economics" spent several hours explaining socialism to her. Kamikawa Matsuko gives an almost visionary account of meditating on the injustices of the world, and realizing the futility of religion, education, and virtue (dōtoku) in rectifying such problems. Like Sakai Toshihiko and


Yamaguchi Koken before her,\(^{57}\) she concludes that it is better to trust in socialism than religion in cleaning up "the muddy stream" of society.\(^{58}\)

Several of the women relate heart-wrenching scenes of poverty and hardship which prompted feelings of compassion. For Matsuoka, it was those who had to eke out a living while studying hard; for Nobuoka it was the wounded in the Russo-Japanese War; for Sugaya, it was the sight of a beggar woman suckling her baby.\(^{59}\) Few of the women profess any philosophical knowledge. Rather they emphasise feelings of compassion which led them to the socialist movement.

In the case of Matsuoka [Nishikawa] Fumiko, the link between compassion and socialism is explained in gendered terms. This "gendering" of socialist philosophy is explained in the text of a speech which appeared in the *Heimin Shinbun*:

> When you mention socialism, there are many people who understand it as something violent, but socialism is in fact a set of ideas (shugi) deep in mercy. Thus, I believe that women, who are naturally gentle and full of sympathy must agree with socialism, and women's (voices) will be heard on certain points. I think that the power of women is stronger than has been supposed, and women should give up being shy and reticent, and devote all their energies to socialism.\(^{60}\)

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\(^{57}\)See section 3.1 above.


\(^{59}\)This brief account is somewhat reminiscent of Fukuda Hideko's extended treatment of her meetings with a female beggar in her autobiography, as discussed in Chapter One, above.

\(^{60}\)Matsuoka [Nishikawa] Fumiko,'Fujin no honsei to shakai shugi', *Shûkan Heimin Shinbun*, 20/11/1904, reprinted in *Nishikawa Fumiko Jiden*, p206. This was the content of Nishikawa's speech to the Socialist Women's Seminar (*Shakai Shugi Fujin Köen*) 6/11/1904, as reported in 'Shakai Shugi Fujin Köen (Honsha)', *Shûkan Heimin Shinbun*, No 54, 10/11/1904.
According to Matsuoka [Nishikawa]'s account, socialism as a humane and caring philosophy is implicitly contrasted with the masculine and aggressive values of capitalism. Such a linking of socialist philosophy and "feminine" values could also be found in the writings of the British Utopian socialists, and contrasts with the language of "class war" to be found in Marxist socialism. Thus, while the women of the Heiminsha challenged expectations of suitable feminine behaviour by their decision to participate in oppositional political activity, the form of their participation was often understood in gendered terms.

3.3 The Socialist Women's Seminar (Shakai Shugi Fujin Kōen Kai)

One of the Heiminsha activities specifically directed at women was the Shakai Shugi Fujin Kōen Kai (Socialist Women's Seminar). These lectures were held at either the Heiminsha premises or at a public hall in Kanda. The commencement of the new lecture series was announced in the Heimin Shinbun in January 1901. The members of the Heiminsha intended

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61 Barbara Taylor explains the consequences of this tendency in the writings of the Utopian socialist women: "[There was] an unresolved tension between the desire to minimize sexual difference and the need to re-assert it in women's favour. This tension was particularly acute within socialist rhetoric, since the very qualities which were considered quintessentially female were also those which the Owenites wished to see generalized across the population: love, compassion, generosity, charity. A good woman, it was implied, was a born communist." Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, London: Virago, 1984, p30-31.

62 Compare this view of socialism with Ōsugi Sakae's autobiographical account, where he relates his understanding that it was necessary to renounce pacifism in order to embrace socialism: "Simultaneously [with my disillusion with Christianity] I came to doubt the principle of nonresistance, the "turn the other cheek" that is an essential quality of religion and that I had begun unconsciously to embrace. Thus I could now embrace pure socialism and the class struggle." *The Autobiography of Ōsugi Sakae*, edited and translated by Byron K. Marshall, Berkeley: University of California, 1992, pp125. Arahata Kanson, in his autobiography, also reflects on the contradiction between belief in the class struggle and the statement of pacifist principles. Arahata Kanson, *Kanson Jiden*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976, Volume 1, pp99-107.

to "investigate the woman question", focusing on such issues as "professions for women, the reform of the family, free marriage (jiyū kekkan), and education for women". The author of the report is confident, however, that "the basic solution to these issues is none other than socialism."\(^6^4\)

The first Socialist Women's Seminar was held on 23rd January 1904, and meetings took place roughly once a month after that. Speakers at the first session were Kinoshita Naoe, Sakai Toshihiko and Nishikawa Kōjirō. Only a short report of the first meeting appears in the *Heimin Shinbun*, but later sessions are reported in more detail in *Heimin Shinbun*, *Chokugen* or *Katei Zasshi*. At the first few sessions, not only the speakers, but most of the audience were men. Speeches included Sakai Toshihiko on 'The Class System within the Family',\(^6^6\) 'Relations Between Parents and Children',\(^6^7\) and 'What is Femininity?';\(^6^8\) Nishikawa Kōjirō on 'The Main Points of the Woman Question';\(^6^9\) Ishikawa Sanshirō on 'Woman's Vocation';\(^7^0\) and Abe

\(^6^4\)Shakai Shugi Fujin Kōen no Kī, *Shūkan Heimin Shinbun*, 21/2/1904, cited in Ōki Motoko. 'Meiji Shakai Shugi Undō to Josef', p120.

\(^6^5\)Shakai Shugi Fujin Kōen', *Shūkan Heimin Shinbun*, No 12, 31/1/1904.


\(^6^7\) 'Oyako no Kankan', speech presented on 12/3/1904; reported in 'Shakai Shugi Fujin Kōen Daisanka', *Shūkan Heimin Shinbun*, No 19, 20/3/1904.

\(^6^8\) 'Onnarashiki to wa nan zo ya', speech presented on 9/4/1904; reported in 'Shakai Shugi Fujin Kōen (Heiminsha)', *Chokugen*, Volume 2, No 11, 20/3/1904.

\(^6^9\) 'Fujin Mondai No Chūshinten', speech presented on 13/2/1904; reported in 'Shakai Shugi Fujin Kōen no Kī', *Shūkan Heimin Shinbun*, No 15, 21/2/1904.

\(^7^0\) Christian Socialist Ishikawa Sanshirō stated that the purpose of socialism was to bring the "freedom of love" (ai no jiyū) to all of humanity, and thought this was particularly suited to women's vocation of "creating love" (ai no jitsugen o tenshoku to suru fujin). Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Fujin no Tenshoku', speech presented on 12/3/1904; reported in 'Shakai Shugi Fujin Kōen Daisanka', *Shūkan Heimin Shinbun*, No 19, 20/3/1904.
Isoo on 'Women and Revolutionary Movements'. Some of the speeches are prescriptive statements by men on their expectations of women in the socialist movement. In other cases, however, the occasion provided an opportunity to introduce the ideas of Bebe and others. Some of these speeches will be discussed in more detail in later sections of this chapter.

The first occasion at which women spoke was the 6th of November 1904. The speakers were Sugaya Iwako, Teramoto [Koguchi] Michiko, and Matsuoka [Nishikawa] Fumiko. A summary of Nishikawa's speech was published in the Heimin Shinbun under the title 'Socialism and Women's Nature'. Gradually the women in the audience expanded beyond the immediate Heiminsha circle to include various women with an interest in socialism. Yamaguchi Koken later referred to the activities of those women who had "nurtured the knowledge of socialism, and who were all enthusiastic preachers": Fukuda Hideko, Sakai Tameko, Nishikawa Fumiko, Hori Yasuko, Teramoto [Koguchi] Michiko, and Kamikawa Matsuko.

Matsuoka [Nishikawa] Fumiko contributed several speeches to the series. In one contribution she tells the story of Shizuka Gozen, the mistress of Yoshitsune, and uses Shizuka as an example of a woman who stuck to her ideals without wavering. This historical figure is presented as an example

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71'Kakumei Undō to Fujin', speech presented on 12/6/1904, reported in 'Shakai Shugi Fujin Kōen', Shōkan Heimin Shinbun, No 32, 19/6/1904.
72Sakai Toshihiko, 'Bëbel no Fujin Ron' Part 1, speech presented on 7/5/1905; reported in 'Fujin Kōenkai (Heiminsha)', Chokugen, Volume 2, No 15, 14/5/1905.
73Matsuoka [Nishikawa] Fumiko, 'Fujin no honsei to shakai shugi', see above.
76Shizuka Gozen was the mistress of Yoshitsune, who was captured while fleeing Yoritomo's forces with Yoshitsune. She displayed her defiance of Yoritomo's authority by proclaiming her
for modern women to emulate. An interest in literary and historical figures is also apparent in Sugaya Iwako's speech on 'Women in the Tale of Genji'. Sugaya categorizes the women in Murasaki's novel according to the particular form of exploitation suffered: some are sacrificed in political alliances, some are trapped in loveless marriages, some are sacrificed to men's "animal passions", while others are unhappy because of the practice of polygyny. Sugaya uses Genji as a starting point for a critique of the sexual double standard.

In another speech, Matsuoka [Nishikawa] discusses 'Heaven, Earth and Humanity'. After discussing the place of humans in nature, Matsuoka [Nishikawa] advocates co-operation among people, and the development of an all-embracing compassion which should not be restricted to the love between men and women. Rather, love should extend to include the aged, children, animals and plants. While this speech is not explicitly about socialism, it echoes her speech on 'Socialism and Women's Nature', where she portrays socialism as a "feminine" philosophy based on caring and compassion.

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78 Sugaya Iwako, 'Genji Monogatari ni okeru Josei' speech reported in 'Shakai Shugi Fujin Kōen' (Heiminsha), Chokugen, Volume 2, No 6, 12/3/1905, p6.


80 Matsuoka [Nishikawa] Fumiko, 'Fujin no honsei to shakai shugi', op. cit.
3.4 Socialist Views of Marriage and the Family

A constant topic of discussion at the Socialist Women's Seminar and in the socialist press was marriage and the family. Issues related to marriage and "free love" (jiyû ren'ai) were aired repeatedly in Katei Zasshi and Chokugen and in publications such as Nijû Seiki no Fujin and Sekai Fujin which were produced by and for socialist women. Many of the male speakers and writers on socialism assumed a natural connection between socialism and "free love", and seemed to assume that their female listeners and readers were primarily interested in romantic matters. While Nishikawa Fumiko had linked socialism with the "feminine" values of nurturance and compassion, Murai Tomoyoshi invited women to "fall in love" with socialism. 81

Views on love and marriage ranged from descriptions of the European bourgeois ideal of companionate marriage, to an espousal of "democratic" family arrangements reminiscent of the early Meiji debate on women, to an affirmation of "free love" which accompanied a complete rejection of marriage and the family system. Women's role within marriage was occasionally likened to slavery,82 and the condition of wives could be linked with the situation of other women, such as prostitutes, who laboured under unfree conditions.83 Sakai Toshihiko attempted to develop a socialist perspective on marriage and the family in his writings in Katei Zasshi and in

81 Murai Tomoyoshi, 'Nihon Fujin ni Taisuru Nidaimeisô' (part one), speech presented to the Socialist Women's Seminar, 13/2/1904, reported in 'Shakai Shugi Fujin Kôen no Ki', Shôkan Heimin Shinbun, No 15, 21/2/1904; reproduced in Suzuki, Shirô: Heiminsha no Onnatachi, pp277-280.

82 For some examples of the use of this analogy, see: Sakai Toshihiko, 'Ryôsai Kenbo Shugi'; Imai Utako, 'Fujin no Chin', Nijûseiki no Fujin, Volume 1, No 7; 1/8/1904; H.A.Sel,'Tate yo Shimai'. Sekai Fujin, Volume 1, No1, p7; Kamikawa Matsuko, 'Orî ni Furete', Sekai Fujin, Volume 1, No3, 1/2/1907, p5; etc.

several monographs and translations.\textsuperscript{84} Sekai Fujin also included extended debates on issues related to marriage, the family system, free love, and women's economic independence. Writers on these issues included Nishimura Shozan, Sugaya Iwako, Kamikawa Matsuko and Endô Yûshirô.\textsuperscript{85} Nishikawa Fumiko contributed articles on marriage and the family to all of the early socialist publications, and would continue her critique of marriage in the journal Shin Shin Fujin (The True New Woman) which she edited from 1913 to 1923.\textsuperscript{86}

In an article on 'Women as Wives' in Nijû Seiki no Fujin, Imai Utako presents a view of marriage almost indistinguishable from European ideals of bourgeois companionate marriage. Indeed, most of the examples she chooses to illustrate her discussion of women's provision of "assistance", "solace", and "entertainment" to their husbands come from Europe: they are the wives of Bismarck, Gladstone, Madison, and Fawcett. She does, however, mention some Japanese examples of notable wives, including Hatoyama Haruko.\textsuperscript{87}

In another article, however, Imai criticises the ideology of "good wives and wise mothers" and considers the possibility of women engaging in public activities, and working for "the happiness of society and peace for all" on the

\textsuperscript{84}Miki Sukako, 'Meiji no Fujin Zasshi o Tadoru', p76.

\textsuperscript{85}Miki Sukako, 'Meiji no Fujin Zasshi o Tadoru', pp77-78.

\textsuperscript{86}Shinshin Fujin appeared from February 1913 to September 1923, and was often presented as a rival to Seiðō (Bluestocking). Nishikawa's writings in this journal will be referred to in the next chapter.

model of American women. For Imai, it seems, the role of woman as helpmate in the home could be compatible with some kinds of public activity, although these were likely to be gender-typed activities: nursing, education, the arts, and voluntary activities. In another article, she valorises the role of women as having perfect qualifications to act as "conciliators" for society (shakaiteki chōwasha). Other socialist women, such as Nishikawa Fumiko and Kanno Suga, attempted to expand the notion of suitable activities for women. Kanno's initial proposal was somewhat modest - that women should set aside half-an-hour each day for reading, and thus take an interest in political matters.

In an editorial in the Heimin Shinbun on the topic of 'free love', Ishikawa Sanshirō quotes British Socialist writer Robert Blatchford, who advocated that men and women should be able to enter into relationships freely and break off relationships just as freely without the structures of marriage and divorce. Ishikawa concedes that there are some dangers in the practice of 'free love'. In response to fears that such practices would result in an increase in separations, however, he asserts that this is better than existing marriages, which are entered into under false pretences.

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88 Imai Utako, 'Ikeru Fujin', Nijūseiki no Fujin, No1, 1904.
89 Imai Utako, 'Ikeru Fujin'.
Faults in the existing marriage system could also be linked with the issue of prostitution. In 1905, Matsuoka [Nishikawa] Fumiko reported on a walk through the Yoshiwara licensed district with two other socialist women.93 Matsuoka's account focuses on the conditions of the prostitutes - their confinement behind wooden gratings is compared to that of caged animals in the zoo. Matsuoka laments that the women are treated like "non-human commodities" (ningen igai no butsuhi), and that they have "lost the freedom [to express] human emotions". Matsuoka understands that they are probably doing this work for the sake of aged parents or invalid relatives, and "in thinking about their fate", she hated "the society which placed our comrades (dôhô) in such pitiful circumstances". For some later socialist writers, prostitution would be used as a symbol for the exploitation of women in capitalist society.94

Not all socialist writers, however, advocated a complete rejection of the family system. An editorial in Sekai Fujin in December 1908 considers 'The Family in Communal Society'. The writer considers the view that socialism necessarily means a rejection of the family in favour of communal solutions to problems of childcare and care for the aged, and concludes that people may be reluctant to resort to solutions which may conflict with the ideal of ninjô (human feeling and compassion). The writer refers to the transformations which the family has undergone through history and suggests that, while the family will continue to exist in a communal society, it will undergo further transformation.

93Matsuoka Fumiko, 'Yoshiwara Kenbutsu no Ki'. The title of the report 'Record of Sightseeing in Yoshiwara' suggests a somewhat voyeuristic attitude to the women of the Yoshiwara, an attitude which would be replicated in the more famous incident involving members of the Bluestocking Society. For an account of the Bluestockings' visit to the Yoshiwara, see Horiba Kiyoko, Seidô no Jidai, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988, pp112-113.

94See also Yamaguchi Gizô, 'Shakaishugi to Inbaitu', Shûkan Heimin Shinbun, No 21, 3/4/1904, p7. For the views of later socialist writers on prostitution, see Chapter Five, below.
The writer goes on to argue that, once the wealth of society is communalized, the family will no longer be held together simply by economic necessity. This will allow the emergence of relationships within the family where the motive power is that of the pure human feelings of love between husband and wife and between parents and children. In response to the view that love within the family is based on selfish individualism (shiyoku), and should thus be abolished, the writer argues that it is the present social system which sets up this conflict between the needs of the family and society, and that under a communal society, love will be able to emerge in a purer, more beautiful form. This is presented as only a provisional view, for socialist thought, it is argued, will undoubtedly undergo further transformations. Although the names of Morgan and Engels are not mentioned, it seems likely that the writer is drawing on this strand of thought on the family. By this time Sakai Toshihiko had published at least two works which drew on Engels' ideas on the family.

Abe Issoo tackles the subject of 'Women and Genetics', in an article published in Sekai Fujin in January 1909. Abe uses quasi-scientific arguments to challenge some accepted notions about women and marriage. He challenges the view that a woman's body is only a vessel for the unborn child (encapsulated in the Japanese saying 'onna no hara wa karimono'), arguing that this view displays a superstition that the child only inherits its father's genetic makeup. Abe points out that a child receives its genetic

95'Shasetsu: Kyōsan Shakai no Katei', Sekai Fujin, No 31, 5/12/1908, p1.

96Fujin Mondai (The Woman Question), published in 1907, explicitly mentions Carpenter, Engels, Bebel and Rappaport. Danjo Kankei no Shinka (The Progress of Relations Between Men and Women) has been described as a history of women in Japan, drawing on Engels' The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State. Suzuki, Sakai Toshihiko Josei Kaihō Ronshū, p391.
inheritance equally from its father and mother: thus, the mother's body is more than a 'borrowed womb'.

In the nineteen hundreds there was also some discussion of the role of fathers, with several writers mentioning the necessity of "good husbands and wise fathers" (ryôfu kenfu) as companions for the "good wives and wise mothers". The phrase was used by a writer in Fujo Shinbun in 1904, by Kanno Suga; and later by Nishikawa Fumiko. Some writers challenged the sexual divisions in the labour market, and argued that more occupations and professions should be opened to women. Few of these writers, however, addressed the division of labour in the home whereby women have the major responsibility for childcare and domestic labour.

The search for a socialist view of marriage and the family involved, first of all, a questioning of the relationship between husband and wife. This concern could be extended to an interest in relationships in society at large. As in the early Meiji period, the family could be seen as paradigmatic of social relations in general. The deficiencies of the present family system were seen to be symptomatic of problems with the existing economic system, and the family was a site for imagining the forms and practices of an ideal communal society.

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97 Abe Isoo, 'Joshi to Iden', Sekai Fujin, No 32, 5/1/1909, p2.
98 'Ryô sai Kenbo', Fujo Shinbun, No 159.
100 Nishikawa Fumiko, 'Nihon Shôrai no kale', Shinshin Fujin, 1914, reprinted in Nishikawa Fumiko Jiden, pp244-47.
In Japan, as in other socialist movements, the family could be used as a metaphor for any organization run on communal principles. The familial metaphor was employed by Sakai Toshihiko, who described the *Heiminsha* as a refuge from the restrictions of society. Here, it is the *Heiminsha* that is described as a family. In socialist rhetoric on the ideal society, however, the whole of society was sometimes described as a family where all members of society would be looked after. Yamaguchi Koken, for example, had described the ideal socialist society as a "big family". The search for a more democratic family form was linked to a questioning of the role of woman as "helpmate" within marriage. This led to a questioning of the role of woman as "helpmate" to the State, and a re-evaluation of the possibilities for women's political activities.

3.5 Socialists and the Patriotic Women's Association

The dominant construction of women as "wives and mothers" of the State had become explicit with the formation of the Patriotic Women's Association (*Aikoku Fujin Kai*) on 24th February 1901. The Association was

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101 Sakai Toshihiko, 'Heiminsha yori', *Chokugen*, Volume 2, No 12, 23/4/1905, quoted in Suzuki Yüko (ed) *Shiryō: Heiminsha no Onnatachi*, p28. In the same article, Sakai, who was usually sensitive on matters related to gender relations, reveals a reliance on conventional literary imagery when he describes the women of the Heiminsha as "flowers", employing a different floral image for each woman. *Heiminsha* stalwarts Nishikawa Fumiko and Nobuoka Tamako are the plum and cherry blossoms, while the other women are wisteria and peony, the chrysanthemum and Chinese bellflower. Women are said to enliven the place like birds or like butterflies. Comrades come and go, "some to enjoy the fragrance, some to gain courage for new political campaigns, some to gain relief from the fatigue of long campaigns."

102 See the discussion of Yamaguchi Koken's, 'Yo wa ika ni shite shakaishugisha to narishika', above. For the use of the analogy between family and society in other socialist movements, see Barbara Taylor's discussion of British Utopian Socialism and Charles Sowerwine's discussion of women and socialism in France. Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, p244; Charles Sowerwine, *Sisters or Citizens? Women and Socialism in France Since 1876*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, p31.

established by Okumura loko and members of several existing women's organizations. In 1902, the organization started publishing its own journal *Aikoku Fujin* (Patriotic Woman). By the end of the Russo-Japanese War, the membership of the Patriotic Women's Association had leapt from an initial 45,000 to 463,000. By 1912 the organization had 816,609 members, making it the largest women's organization in the Meiji period.

Although initially formed as a private organization, the activities of the Patriotic Women's Association were congruent with bureaucratic definitions of the role of "good wives and wise mothers", and the organization came to take on a semi-official character. The Russo-Japanese War saw an expansion of the membership of the Patriotic Women's Association, and several other women's organizations also became involved in activities which supported the war effort, including fund-raising activities and the preparation of *imonbukuro* (comfort packages) to send to soldiers serving overseas.104

The activities of this association provided an opportunity for comment by several socialist writers on the issue of women's political participation. In a sense, the Patriotic Women's Association provided a living example of the implications of subjecthood for women under the Meiji regime which emphasized "a wealthy country and a strong army" supported by "good wives and wise mothers". While women were politically confined to the domestic sphere by Article Five of the Peace Police Law of 1900 which prevented them from attending or holding political meetings or joining political parties, their support for the war effort could be sought where

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necessary. By contrast, several of the male and female socialist writers argued for a view of women and politics whereby women could become citizens with rights which matched their obligations. In addition to direct criticism of the notion of "good wives and wise mothers", they also criticised the activities of the Patriotic Women's Association.

Several of the male socialist journalists wrote and gave lectures on 'Women and War' and 'Women and Politics'. Although sometimes lapsing into an essentialist position on women's peace-loving nature, they were universally critical of the Patriotic Women's Association's support for militarism. Such criticism was voiced by both Kinoshita Naoe and Kōtoku Shusui. In a speech to the Socialist Women's Seminar (Shakai Shugi Fujin Kōen), Kōtoku pointed out the contradictions of a state which expected women to devote their energies to the war effort, but denied them basic political rights.

In Japan, the relationship between women and politics is a very strange one. When there is a war, suddenly women are told to devote their energies to the state because they are Japanese subjects. But, up till now women have been said to have no connection with politics, and have even been prohibited from listening to political speeches! It is strange that no women lament the fact that they are manipulated at the whim of man and the state, and are told to sacrifice their own needs by a society and laws based on masculine principles. So this is the state of women in this twentieth century civilized nation, this first-rate nation, this Imperial Japan!

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105 Sakai Toshihiko, 'Ryōsai Kenbo Shugi': "...The view that 'women should simply stay in the home, obey their husbands, and bear and bring up children', is an ideology which pushes women into the home and makes them the slaves of men. Ryōsai Kenbo ideology is, in other words, a method of training slaves for the nation of men (danshi koku)."


108 Kōtoku, 'Fujin to Seiji'.

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Kôtoku stated that women would be better off working for world peace than supporting the war effort, and suggested that helping the hundreds of thousands of female factory workers might be a more lasting occupation than short-term (he thought!) work as a war nurse. Kôtoku even blamed war - with its emphasis on masculine physical strength (wanryoku) - for the low position of women in society, and predicted that women's position would only improve with the eradication of war, and the advent of a society which did not value physical strength.\textsuperscript{109} Kôtoku also attempted to extend the definition of politics to include what goes on in the home. The following passage displays a cautious challenge to existing stereotypes. Kôtoku wavers between trying to take women out of the kitchen, and trying to bring politics into the home:

The aim of politics is [the achievement of] a comfortable life for all people. If the basis of a good life is a good kitchen, then there must be a relationship between politics and the kitchen, therefore women also have a connection with politics. While women have ignored politics and followed the words of men, they have had their needs and rights trampled on. If they can't protect their own rights and needs, how can they promote those of their husbands and children? In order to become a "good wife and wise mother" first of all learn about politics and participate in politics. Don't say "I could do it if I were a man", rather say "I must do it because I am a woman". You should demand political rights without feeling inferior to Western women, and without being scared of being labelled as "impudent" (namaiki). Strike out into the world of politics and demand the return of the rights which have been snatched away from you.\textsuperscript{110}

What is interesting about the above extract is Kôtoku's use of the language of rights. According to Kôtoku's rhetoric women are potential citizens who should "demand" the "rights" which have been taken away from them. In a

\textsuperscript{109} Kôtoku, 'Fujin to Sensō', Katei Zasshi, No3, pp6-10.

\textsuperscript{110} Kôtoku, 'Fujin to Seiji'.
common rhetorical move of the time, he also employs the conventional language of "good wives and wise mothers", but redefines the phrase to include an interest in politics, and a new definition of suitable feminine behaviour. Kôtoku's women are still identified with the kitchen, but this space is redefined.

_Nijû Seiki no Fujin_ (Women of the Twentieth Century), was established in 1904. Its founders - Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko¹¹¹ - were connected with the Heiminsha and also founded a women's organization known as the Hokkaidô Fujin Dôshi Kai (Hokkaidô Women Comrades Society).¹¹² Although the journal does not display a clearly articulated socialist philosophy, there was a willingness to consider women as workers, and in roles which could not fit easily into the framework of "good wives and wise mothers".¹¹³

As this was at the height of the Russo-Japanese War, several articles were devoted to a consideration of the theme of Women and War. Imai Utako - the journal's editor - pointed to the dangers of excessive excitement about Japan's military engagements on the mainland.¹¹⁴ She warned that Japan must also take responsibility for what happened _after_ the war with Russia, and her discussion of this issue reveals an implicit support for Japanese imperialism. This passage supports Suzuki Yûko's view of Imai as a

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¹¹²Despite its name, the _Hokkaidô Fujin Dôshikai_ was based in Tokyo. See the promotional statement on the founding of the organization, which bears an address in the Kôjimachi ward of Tokyo; reproduced in Suzuki, _Shiryô: Heiminsha no Onnatachi_, p31.


¹¹⁴Imai Utako, 'Fujin to sensô', _Nijûseiki no Fujin_, No 2, 1904,pp2-3.
proponent of women's rights (jokenshugisha) and nationalism (kokkenshugisha), rather than of socialism.  

Unlike most other writers in the socialist press, Imai saw the charitable activities of the Patriot Women's Association in a positive light. In other words, she did not go very far in challenging the notion of woman as helpmate. Unlike Kôtoku, Imai valorised the activities of nurses, and displayed an emotional attitude towards bereaved families. Imai and other women also pointed out one of the consequences of women's role as passive supporters of militarism. They were likely to become war widows, with little hope of receiving state support. 

While Imai was relatively cautious in her criticism of women's support for the militarist state, the issue of the relationship between individual and state was highlighted in a graphic way from another quarter. There were several anti-war poems written at the time of the Russo-Japanese War, the most prominent of which was "Kimi shini tamau koto nakare" (Do not give up your life for the Emperor) by Yosano Akiko. Yosano was castigated for the publication of this poem, which was described by a literary columnist as "an expression of dangerous thoughts which disparage the idea of the national family". Yosano was described as "a traitorous subject, a rebel, a criminal".

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116 See also the discussion of Imai's articles in section 3.4 above : Imai Utako, 'Tsuma to shite no Joshi'; Imai Utako, 'Ikeru Fujin'.
117 It was not until the late nineteen thirties that state support for widows and supporting mothers was achieved. The campaign for this legislation will be discussed in Chapter Six below.
who deserves the nation's punishment? It seems that Yosano's placing of personal loyalty above loyalty to the Emperor was what made the poem treasonable:

Do not offer your life.
The Emperor himself does not go
to battle.
The Imperial Heart is deep;
How could he ever wish
That men shed their blood,
That men die like beasts,
That men's glory be in death?

Dearest brother,
Do not offer your life in battle.
Mother, whom father left behind
This past autumn,
Suffered when
In the midst of her grief
Her son was called away....

Other women's anti-war poems at the time of the Russo-Japanese War were similar in their focus on private experiences of grief at odds with the prevailing mood of patriotism. The female narrators of these poems were constructed as passive observers of militarism. Although their private suffering was not linked to a political critique, there was radical potential in the mere suggestion that private and public interests could be at odds. Since the earliest years of the Meiji period, the words family and state had always appeared in conjunction, with the implication that family interests and state interests were identical. Women, in these poetic representations, could be

119Rubin, Injurious to Public Morals, p57.


said to be asserting particularistic claims based on family and community, in opposition to State interests. These anti-war poems provided an imaginative space for questioning the relationship between individual, family and state. Further questioning of this relationship was carried out in socialist writings on women's political participation, in their attempts to conceptualise a relationship between individual and state which was not mediated by the family.

In 1907 Fukuda Hideko established the fortnightly socialist women's newspaper Sekai Fujin (Women of the World). The author of Warawa no Hanshōgai and Warawa no Omoide had already explored the problems of female political activism from an individual point of view through the genres of the autobiography and the novel. In Sekai Fujin, she was able to place questions of women’s political participation in a broader societal context, and work towards the articulation of a socialist position on these issues. An early issue of Sekai Fujin (Women of the World), carried an editorial on 'Women and Political Freedom'. This included a scathing attack on the Patriotic Women's Association, in terms which echoed Kōtoku's speech of 1904:

... We have seen the activities of the Patriotic Women's Association from the time of the recent Russo-Japanese War. All of the tens of thousands of members of this organization, from the president down, are women without political rights under Japanese law. Yet everyone, from members of political parties to the general public praises the success of this organization. Recently, we often see press reports of the interesting fact that women have been described as "servants of the state" (hanninkan no ninmei), but I feel that people should look critically at [such statements]. After all, the law of Japan which designates women as 'incompetents' (munôryokusha) is the

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same law which appoints women to the role of serving the state. In the midst of the "success of the Patriotic Women's Association" and "the appointment of women as servants of the state" - of all this glory and recognition for women - it should be said that women are not free. The "success" of women who are not free is the success of slaves. . .

As we shall see below, the issue of women's political participation was followed closely in the pages of Sekai Fujin. Although Sekai Fujin also carried columns on cookery and sewing, the title of the journal (Women of the World) signalled that women's interests went far beyond the confines of the home - indeed to the whole world. In addition to articles on women's issues, fiction and poetry, and articles on sewing and cooking, each issue carried columns of domestic and overseas news. Although Inoue Kiyoshi accuses Sekai Fujin of ignoring Japan's woman workers, an examination of the news columns disproves this. There is coverage of the conditions of women workers, and reportage of strikes by woman factory workers. The problems of professional women are also considered, and at least one article reports on Karayuki-san - the women sent to Southeast Asia to work as prostitutes. Struggles by other workers were also reported, such as the actions of the mine workers at Ashio, an early site of labour activism in Japan. Thus, the journal emphasised the fact that women were workers as well as carrying out a domestic and mothering role. International news included coverage of suffragist and women's labour

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123 Shasetsu: Seijyō ni okonu Fujin no Jiyū, in Sekai Fujin, No 2, Jan 15, 1907; a slightly different translation appears in Sievers, Flowers in Salt, p114.


125 Sekai Fujin, No 2, p52; No 3, p20; No 15, p116; No 27, p234.

126 Sekai Fujin, No 1, p2; No 5, p86.

127 Sekai Fujin, No 30, p 270.

128 Sekai Fujin, No 4, p28; No11, p 84; No 12, p92.
movements in Europe, Australasia and America.\textsuperscript{129} There were articles on
labour conditions and political activities of women in these countries,\textsuperscript{130} and
reportage on suffrage conferences, international socialist conferences, and
peace conferences.\textsuperscript{131} The front page often carried a profile of some
famous woman (such as Madame de Stael,\textsuperscript{132} Florence Nightingale,\textsuperscript{133}
Sappho,\textsuperscript{134} Jenny Lind,\textsuperscript{135} Harriet Beecher Stow,\textsuperscript{136} or Joan of Arc).\textsuperscript{137} A
concern with the working conditions of Japanese women was thus linked to
a consciousness of the existence of an international feminist movement and
an interest in the history and conditions of women in other countries. This
consciousness also extended to socialism, pacifism and unionism as
international movements.

Many of the contributors to \textit{Sekai Fujin} were male members of the socialist
movement. In addition to articles by Kôtoku Shûsui, Sakai Toshihiko and
Abe Isoo\textsuperscript{138} on socialism and the woman question, Ishikawa Sanshirô

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{129}Almost every issue carried reports on women’s political activities, not only in Australasia,
America and the United Kingdom, but in such places as Iceland, Finland, Hungary, Turkey and
India.
\item \textsuperscript{130} \textit{Sekai Fujin}, No. 4, p. 29; No. 11, p. 85; No. 14, p. 108; No. 16, p. 124, etc.
\item \textsuperscript{131} \textit{Sekai Fujin}, No. 6, p. 45; No. 13, p. 100; No. 16, p. 124; No. 28, p. 247; No. 30, p. 271, etc.
\item \textsuperscript{132} \textit{Sekai Fujin}, No. 2, p. 11.
\item \textsuperscript{133} \textit{Sekai Fujin}, No. 5, p. 37.
\item \textsuperscript{134} \textit{Sekai Fujin}, No. 6, p. 49.
\item \textsuperscript{135} \textit{Sekai Fujin}, No. 7, p. 53.
\item \textsuperscript{136} \textit{Sekai Fujin}, No. 4, p. 27.
\item \textsuperscript{137} \textit{Sekai Fujin}, No. 24, p. 197.
\item \textsuperscript{138} \textit{Sekai Fujin}, No. 4, p28; No. 14, p107; No. 18, p139; No. 20, p155; No. 21, p164; No.
24, p197; No. 29, p257, etc.
\end{itemize}
translated Kropotkin's thoughts on anarchism, Stendhal's attack on the family, and introduced the works of Marx. Tanaka Shôzô, the leader of the people's struggles at the Ashio copper mine, and Futabatei Shimei, a well-known literary figure also contributed articles.

The eclectic roots of early Japanese socialism are apparent in the cover illustration of Sekai Fujin, No 32. An image of "the dawn of socialism" has been adapted to the Japanese context with the addition of vertical banners bearing the words "liberty" (jīyū) and "community" (kyōsan) in Chinese characters. The sword-bearing female figure in the illustration is reminiscent of Joan of Arc, a figure idolised by Fukuda herself, and often employed in European socialist and feminist iconography. The illustration is bordered by quotes from William Morris, Robert Blatchford and Kropotkin. (Appendix 1, Figure 1).

The producers of Sekai Fujin, in common with other left-wing journalists of the time, were subject to constant police harassment. Several issues were banned, and the writers and publisher were fined or imprisoned several times.

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139 Sekai Fujin, No. 25, p209; No. 35, p348; No. 36, p360.
140 Ishikawa Sanshiro introduced the life and works of Marx in issues 26 to 29.
141 Sekai Fujin, No 1, p1.
142 Futabatei translated several literary works from Russian.
143 Sekai Fujin, No 32, 5/1/1909, p1.
144 c.f. Lisa Tickner's discussion of Caroline Watts' poster 'The Bugler Girl': "The Artists' Suffrage League primed the Manchester Guardian to explain to its readers how the Amazon who stands on the battlements of the fort may be said to be heralding the new day of which the sun is just seen rising."Lisa, Tickner, The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-1914, London: Chatto & Windus, 1987, p211; Eric Hobsbawm discusses the image of the dawn of socialism in 'Man and Woman: Images on the Left', In Worlds of Labour: Further Studies in the History of Labour, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1984, p74, p89.
times. Finally, in 1909, the journal was forced to close. Unfortunately, Fukuda was not backed by a strong organization, so that the journal's fate depended on the energy and endurance of Fukuda and a few of her socialist comrades. However, in addition to the role of this journal in attempting to bring together two strands of oppositional thought - socialism and feminism - Sekai Fujin provided a focus for the campaign for the repeal of Article Five of the Peace Police Law.

3.6 The campaign for the repeal of Article Five

Criticism of the activities of the "patriotic women" in the socialist press challenged the construction of woman as "helpmate" to the state. A logical conclusion of this criticism of women's position was a campaign for the modification of Article Five of the Peace Police Law: the regulation which prevented women from attending public political meetings or joining political parties. This campaign, carried out by women connected with the socialist movement between 1904 and 1909, has been described as the first group action by Japanese women for the purpose of the attainment of political rights.145

Imai Utako, Kawamura Haruko and Matsuoka [Nishikawa] Fumiko led the first stage of the campaign for the revision of Article Five. Their petition of 460 signatures was presented to the Lower House by two sympathetic Diet members (Ebara Soroku and Shimada Saburō) on January 24th 1905.146 A second petition of 227 signatures was presented on February 1st 1906. A

145 Miki Sukako, 'Meiji no Fujin Zasshi o Tadoru', p88; Suzuki, Shiryō: Helminsha no Onnatachi, pp14-16. Several writers point out that, although Iwamoto Zenji and Shimizu Toyoko had expressed criticism of the provisions of the Shūkai oyobi Seisha Hō (Law on Political Assembly and Association) of 1890 (the precursor of the Peace Police Law) in the pages of the Jogaku Zasshi, this did not develop into an organised movement.

further petition of 233 signatures, collected by Sakai Tameko, Kôtoku Chiyoko, and Fukuda Hideko was presented on March 13th 1907. At this stage a proposal for an amendment to the law was presented to the Lower House. A further attempt was made on March 24th 1908 when Endô Kiyoko was able to collect 64 signatures. Each petition was discussed in the Diet and an amendment to allow women to attend political meetings actually passed the Lower House, but failed to pass the House of Peers.147

Justification for the amendment of Article Five in the socialist press generally used the logic of liberalism and the rhetoric of progress. Writers emphasised the similarities between men and women, pointing to the illogicality of a system which denied women political rights but required certain obligations of them.148 It was pointed out that women, like men, were subject to the obligation to pay taxes, women were liable for punishment by the criminal system, and women were subject to the effects of government legislation. The demand for such rights was described as 'natural' (shizen na yôkyû) and 'reasonable' (tôzen na kenri no yôkyû).149

In one article, this law is presented as anachronistic, a hangover from former customs of "seclusion of women" (fujin heikyo). This writer points to improvements in women's education, and the increased interest shown in

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149 Shasetsu: Seijirô ni okeru Fujin no Yôkyû', Sekai Fujin, No 1, 1/1/1907.
politics by women as justifications for extending women's political rights. These arguments were reproduced in petitions and statements on the issue. Petitions and articles on this issue also reproduced the list of categories of people prevented from engaging in political activities: military and naval personnel, police, Shintō and Buddhist priests, students and teachers of public and private schools, women, minors, and those whose "rights had been removed or suspended".

While some members of the bureaucracy had attempted to use the example of police, teachers and other public servants to argue that women were excluded because of the important public implications of the service they performed in the home, the socialist women concentrated on the category of "minors", and pointed out the insulting implications for women. The abovementioned editorial on 'Women and Political Freedom' in Sekai Fujin brings together all of these themes. In an attack on the hypocrisy of a state which denies women political rights while expecting them to perform state functions, the writer questions the fashion for describing women as "servants of the state" (hanninkan):

Recently, we often see press reports of the interesting fact that women have been described as "servants of the state" (hanninkan no ninmei), but I feel that people should look critically at [such statements]. After all, the law of Japan which designates women as 'incompetents' (munôryokusha) is the same law which appoints women to the role of serving the state.

This editorial presents one of the few attempts at this stage to go beyond liberal arguments for women's political rights. If this editorial was authored

\[150^{'}\text{Fujin no Yókyû}', Shûkan Heimin Shinbun, No 62, 13/1/1905; in Suzuki, Shiryô: Heminsha no Onnatachi, pp291-292.\]

\[151^{'}\text{Fujin no Yókyû}'.\]

\[152^{'}\text{Seiji jû ni okon Fujin no Jiyû}'.\]
by Fukuda, as has been assumed, she has obviously had access to some of the European socialist writings on the "woman question" in the three years since the publication of her autobiography. The editorial refers to the work of Morgan on "primitive" societies where men and women participate equally in the political life of the group, and uses the argument that women's decline in status is linked to the defeat of matriarchy and the development of patriarchy.¹⁵³ Modern Japanese society is contrasted with 'barbarian' societies (yabanjidai) where women had political rights. However, she sarcastically attempts to reassure her readers that what she and her fellow campaigners are asking for is much more modest than what women had in these 'primitive' societies. They are only asking for the freedom to attend political meetings and form political organizations.¹⁵⁴ Like many socialist and feminist writers since Engels, we can see anthropological evidence of radically different forms of social organization being used to argue for the possibility of transforming present-day society for the better.¹⁵⁵


¹⁵⁴ 'Seiji no okeru Fujin no Jiyu'.

An editorial in *Sekai Fujin* entitled 'The Dual Struggle' provides another perspective on the issue of women and politics. Here, it is argued that women have two enemies - the class of men (*otoko no kaikyû*) and the class of 'aristocrats and the rich' (*kizoku-fugó no kaikyû*). It is argued that 'the class structure of society' (*shakai no kaikyûteki soshiki*) is responsible for women's need to fight against the two enemies. However, because the same word 'class' (*kaikyû*) is used to describe the two sets of relationships (man/woman and propertyed/propertyless), it is at first glance difficult to distinguish this 'double struggle' from an argument which simply gives primacy to the class struggle. Socialists in Japan were still searching for suitable language in which to describe the issues and struggles specific to women, and were still trying to formulate specific strategies for the resolution of the 'woman question'.

The progress of the petitions and proposals for reform of Article Five was followed in the *Heimin Shinbun* and in *Sekai Fujin*. When the reform proposal was rejected by the House of Peers, the *Heimin Shinbun* reported to its women readers (in an unsigned article called 'The Women and the Peers') that they had been dealt a grave public insult by "an organization made up from members of the male class [*danshi kaikyû no ichi dantai*], an organization called the House of Peers [*Kizokuin*]. The whole article

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156 Shasetsu: Nijû no Tatakai', *Sekai Fujin*, No 4, 15/2/1907, p1. Maruoka Hideko has identified the influence of Bebel's ideas in this editorial. Excerpts from August Bebel's *Woman Under Socialism* were translated by Sakai Toshihiko and Kôtoku Shîsui in 1904 under the title *Fujin Ron*. A more complete translation by Yamakawa Kikue appeared in 1923. Maruoka Hideko, *Fujin Shisô Keisei Shi Noto*, Volume 1, p53-55

157 Maruoka Hideko recognises that this editorial represented an advance on previous understandings of the woman question, but points out that there is no specific solution offered. Rather, the writer expresses faith that the destruction of class society will result in the emancipation of women. Maruoka Hideko, *Fujin Shisô Keisei Shi Noto*, Volume 1, pp54.

explains the defeat of the Bill in terms of a distinctive interpretation of class politics similar to the abovementioned editorial in *Sekai Fujin*. The members of the ruling class

do not see women as human individuals (*ikko no jinrui*) or as citizens of the nation (*ikko no kokumin*). They treat their wives and [other] women as slaves and concubines, and turn them into ornaments and playthings.

They can do this because "it is men who hold economic power". The solution to these issues is, of course, socialism. Although socialism is seen to be relevant to both men and women, a specific appeal is made to women. In addition to "collectivization of the land and capital", women will benefit from "independence and freedom in romantic matters".

While socialism prevents the exploitation of workers by the capitalist class, it also stops the arrogance of the male class against women. It gets rid of the rich and poor classes, and removes sexual discrimination. We will collectivise the land and capital, and we will also guarantee women independence and freedom in romantic matters.\(^\text{159}\)

In socialist writing on the "woman question", the analogy of man/woman and worker/capitalist appeared quite regularly, and this analogy is made quite explicit in the above extract. What is striking in the above articles, however, is that men are described as a 'class.' However, a clear distinction is not really being made between ruling class power and what we would now call patriarchal power. It is difficult to separate patriarchal power from class power in the case of members of the House of Peers, who are described as *kizoku-fugō* "aristocrats and wealthy [men]".

Several features of the participation of women in the early socialist movement can be understood from an analysis of this campaign for the

\(^{159}\text{Fujin to Kizoku}.$
repeal of Article Five. We can perhaps detect a middle-class bias in this campaign, and a blindness to the class differences between women. We can see that, with a few exceptions, women within the socialist movement at this stage tended to see the woman question in terms of liberal discourse, in terms of rights which should be extended equally to males and females. In criticising the activities of the Patriotic Women’s Association, and campaigning for the repeal of Article Five, socialist women were attempting to reconstruct women as citizens.

The conduct of the campaign also followed liberal political practice. The women wrote articles, collected signatures, lobbied, and (with the help of sympathetic parliamentarians) presented their demands to the Diet. The activities and demands of these socialist women may seem quite moderate when compared with the militant activities of the British suffragettes - roughly contemporaneous with this campaign. The Japanese women’s proposal was defeated, however, by the unelected Upper House, proof that Japan was a long way from the liberal democratic society whose ideals these women espoused.

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Some socialist writers could, and did, argue that a focus on parliamentary politics was a distraction from the main goal of transforming society according to socialist ideals, while for others the women's campaign was congruent with the earliest socialists' emphasis on social democracy. Katayama Sen and his colleagues in the Rōdō Kumiai Kiseikai had formed the League for the Attainment of Universal Suffrage (Futsū Senkyo Kisei Dōmeikai) in 1900, and several socialist men were involved in collecting signatures for petitions for Universal Suffrage at around the same time as the socialist women's campaign for the repeal of Article Five.

In the early nineteen hundreds, Kōtoku Shūsui had had no objection to using the language of rights and citizenship with respect to women's political activity. By 1907, Kōtoku's own position had shifted from social democracy to anarcho-syndicalism. This was reflected in his criticism of the Article Five campaign, in an article on 'Women's Liberation and Socialism':

Kōtoku indicated that for women to use parliamentary tactics, as they were doing in the Article 5 campaign, was useless: working men in Europe and America had the vote, but were still treated like draft animals and slaves in the capitalist system, moreover, women had the vote in some parts of the United States, but that had certainly not freed them from bondage.

Others, however, realised that, under present conditions, the repeal of those regulations which limited women's political activities was necessary for women to participate fully in the socialist movement.

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165See the discussion of Kōtoku's early articles on women and politics above.
3.7 Two Incidents

The government, far from modifying the provisions of Article 5 of the Peace Police Law, invoked Article 16 of this same law in 1908 to prosecute several male and female socialists for the crime of carrying red flags bearing the slogans 'Anarchism' (Museifushugi) and 'Anarcho-communism' (Museifu Kyōsanshugi). This incident is referred to as the Red Flag Incident (Akahata Jiken).\(^\text{167}\) The incident took place on 22nd June, 1908. After a gathering to celebrate Yamaguchi Koken's release from jail, participants sang socialist songs and carried red flags bearing the slogans 'Anarchism' (Museifushugi) and 'Anarcho-communism' (Museifu Kyōsanshugi) into the street at the end of the meeting. Ten men and four women were arrested in the incident. Two of the women, Kanno Suga and Kamikawa Matsuko, were not involved when the incident broke out, but were arrested when they went to the police station to enquire after their comrades. Ōsuka Satoko and Ogure Reiko had already been arrested.\(^\text{168}\) The first response to the incident in Sekai Fujin was an article explaining the significance of the red flags. The writer explains that the red flag is used to signify socialism and a black flag for anarchism. Later editions included reports on the imprisoned comrades and their associates.\(^\text{169}\)


\(^{168}\) For biographical details of Ōsuka Satoko and Ogure Reiko, see, Suzuki, *Shiryo: Heiminsha no Onnatachi*, pp46-49.

\(^{169}\) Sanshirō, 'Sekishokki, Kokushokki', *Sekai Fujin*, No 26, 5/7/1908, p4; 'Nishikawa Fumiko shi no Kikoku', *Sekai Fujin*, No 27, 5/8/1908, p2, etc.
The defendants were placed on remand until the trial, and the verdicts were handed down on August 15th of the same year. Ōsugi Sakae, Sakai Toshihiko, Yamakawa Hitoshi and Arahata Kanson received sentences of between eighteen months and two and a half years. Two of the women, Ogure Reiko and Ōsuka Satoko received suspended sentences of one year, and the other two women, Kanno Suga and Kamikawa Matsuko, were found not guilty. Although Kanno was found not guilty, it is said that at the time of her arrest she was subject to brutal interrogation, and this was the turning point where she renounced peaceful parliamentary tactics for reform, and came closer to the philosophy of "direct action" espoused by Kōtoku Shūsui.170

Kanno would go on to become one of the martyrs to the oppositional political cause through her involvement in the Taigyaku Jiken (Great Treason Incident).171 Kōtoku and Kanno were executed with ten others in January 1911 for their involvement in a plot to assassinate the Emperor. The combination of the Red Flag Incident and the Great Treason Incident showed the lengths to which the State would go in the suppression of socialism.

Kanno Suga is one figure who, in her writings and in her actions, transcended the role of woman as helpmate in the socialist movement.172

170 Suzuki, Shiryō: Heminsha no Onnatachi, p42. When questioned about her radicalization in the Great Treason Trial, she explained: "I was put in jail in the Red Flag Incident. Though it was not a major incident, socialists were given severe sentences: Sakai Toshihiko was sentenced two years for no reason. From these experiences, my anger grew, and I came to realize that ordinary methods could never be successful; against such a government...". Sievers, Flowers in Salt, p160.


172 In her early writings in the Murō Shinpō, Kanno describes herself as a "socialist", in the all-inclusive sense of the word in the early 1900s in Japan. Although her anarchist philosophy at
Descriptions of Kanno, however, have too often focused on her relationships with her male comrades, at the expense of a serious consideration of her writings and ideas. This picture of Kanno has recently been challenged by Sharon Sievers and Helene Bowen, who have been critical of the portrayal of Kanno in writings on the socialist movement and on the Great Treason Incident.  

3.8 Beyond the Helminsha Family

Within the socialist movement, the publication of separate socialist women's journals in the early nineteen hundreds, and the campaign for the repeal of Article Five, marked a transition. In many ways, women were still seen as helpmates to male activists within the socialist movement (a role which unfortunately duplicated dominant constructions of womanhood in mainstream society). However, when it came to what were seen as specific women's issues, socialist women conducted their own campaigns. They now had their own publications, their own political agenda, and their own experiences of organizing a political campaign. Although we may criticize the lack of class consciousness, and the lack of a clearly articulated socialist feminist philosophy, we can see this as an important stage in the development of a movement of socialist women.

Socialist women challenged the dominant construction of woman as helpmate to the state at a conceptual level, but also provided a visible challenge to this construction, as women took their activities into public

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the time of her death was probably outside the bounds of what was understood as socialism in 1910 in Japan, she deserves mention in this study for her connections with the Helminsha, and for the effects of the Great Treason Incident on the socialist movement as a whole. For a detailed study of Kanno's life and works see Helene Bowen, 'Victims as Victors'.

173 Sievers, Flowers in Salt, p140, pp221; Helene Bowen, 'Victims as Victors'.

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space. Women in the socialist movement engaged in such activities as selling socialist newspapers and distributing leaflets in public places. In the campaign for the repeal of Article Five, they were also involved in the collection of signatures for a petition, in lobbying, and in having this petition presented to the Imperial Diet. The activities of the women of the Heiminsha were thus not only important for the development of a feminist and socialist critique, but also in building up experience of political practice. Writing, distributing leaflets and selling newspapers, collecting signatures and petitioning the Diet were activities which would be repeated in future campaigns.

Women could also be subject to repression in the form of censorship, through the experience of police surveillance, or through arrest and imprisonment. Even those women who escaped imprisonment themselves were likely to have the experience of visiting friends and

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176 I have found Andrew Gordon's concept of the development of a "dispute culture" among the working class useful in this context. Gordon traces how disputes were organized, and "how the dispute culture of the 1920s, consisting of knowledge of this form of action and the ability to carry it out, spread among workers concurrently with the building of a union movement." Gordon, Labor and Imperial Democracy, p159.


178 See chapter Six below.
partners in prison, or observing court proceedings.\textsuperscript{179} Many of the extant photographs of men and women in the socialist movement commemorate the ritual of farewelling comrades entering prison and welcoming comrades on their release.\textsuperscript{180} Women were still supporters within the \textit{Heiminsha}; and men were still able to pontificate on women's issues; but women also produced their own publications, an implicit recognition that women's struggles could not simply be subsumed under the class struggle.

It should also be remembered that the legal restrictions on women's political activity prevented them from full participation in the activities of the socialist movement, and necessitated the creation of separate quasi-political organizations for socialist women. These organizations may have been seen as placing women's issues in a "ghetto", but it could also be said that they created a space for the discussion of women's issues. Although socialist women engaged in activities which involved the use of public space for such activities as distributing leaflets, collecting signatures for petitions and selling publications, the restrictions on participation in public meetings meant that writing was the major means for the communication of feminist and socialist ideas to other women. In all of the abovementioned activities, socialist women challenged the dominant discourse of women as "good wives and wise mothers."


\textsuperscript{180} Sievers, \textit{Flowers in Salt}, p121: "And the tiny band of socialists developed a new routine: sending off and welcoming back their comrades on the way to prison."
The second decade of the twentieth century is often presented as the *fuyu no jidai* (winter years) for socialism in Japan, as socialist activities were restrained by the consciousness of the repressive power of the State after the Great Treason Incident. Many of the social policy issues which had been discussed by the government since the late nineteenth century were also acted upon in the this decade, in the form of Factory Legislation and policies on trade union activity. From within the socialist movement, there were some important developments in the refinement of socialist views of the "woman question" in this decade, as we shall see in Chapter Four below. The second decade of the twentieth century also saw the beginnings of women's involvement in the organised labour movement.
CHAPTER FOUR: MOTHERS (1911-1918)

Until the turn of the century, as we have seen, official policies on women concentrated on the family - an implicitly middle-class family where women were not expected to engage in waged labour, and could devote attention to the fulfilment of the role of 'good wife'. Official policy, as Nolte and Hastings have pointed out, "exhorted women to contribute to the nation through their hard work, their frugality, their efficient management, their care of the old, young, and ill, and their responsible upbringing of children."\(^1\) By the time of the Russo-Japanese War, it had become apparent that the only public role afforded to these women was as helpmate to the militarist State through patriotic women's organizations, a role which was criticised by socialist writers. The other side of the slogan 'good wives and wise mothers' involved constructions of women as mothers. Nolte and Hastings suggest that, until around 1910, official interest was focused mainly on women as wives rather than as mothers. This seems to be broadly true for middle class women, but anxiety about working class women's role as mothers commenced well before the promulgation of the Factory Law in 1911.\(^2\)

In the second decade of the twentieth century, the development of labour policy on the part of the bureaucracy, and the development of an organised labour movement were accompanied by further discussion of the relationship between individual and State in several spheres. As far as women were concerned, they became the objects of State concern in the form of protective legislation specifically directed at women workers. The

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official construction of women as 'mothers' tended to position women as passive recipients of the protection of the State, and as more or less passive supporters of militarism.

At the State level, the progress of industrialization meant that questions of the management and protection of labour became harder to ignore. From the latter half of the Meiji period 'social problems' (shakai mondai) had become an increasingly important part of public discourse. However, the enactment of the Public Peace Police Law of 1900 and the trial and subsequent execution of activists in the Great Treason Incident had demonstrated that there were limits to acceptable public discourse on political issues. Writers could also be subject to harassment for unsuitable criticism of the family system, suggesting that the family was still seen to be basic to the political structures of the society. With respect to labour, official discussion focused firstly on the supply of labour, and only later was attention focused on working conditions and trade unionism. The promulgation of factory legislation in 1911, however, was a sign that the government could no longer be seen to be ignoring social problems.

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5 Garon, The State and Labour in Modern Japan, p12.
The Meiji Emperor died in 1912, after fortyfive years of rule. The new era was called Taishô (Great Rectification) and is remembered as the time of "Taishô democracy". The applicability of the term "Taishô democracy" has been debated in recent years. A narrow interpretation of Taishô democracy refers to the alternation of party governments in the years from 1918 to 1932. A broader interpretation refers to the development of mass political activity in the years after the Russo-Japanese War, including the development of labour organizations and the public discussion of feminist issues. Indeed, it has been suggested that the Taishô period saw the development of political interest groups representing "previously unorganized sections of Japanese society", such as the outcaste class, farm labour, students, and even business groups. Several historians have, however, rejected the use of the term "Taishô democracy" altogether.

A new kind of labour organization appeared with the formation of the Yûaikai (Workers' Friendly Society) on August 1st 1912. The founder of the

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6For interpretations of the significance of the death of the Meiji Emperor and the end of the Meiji era, see: Gluck, Japan's Modern Myths, pp213-246; Harootunian,'A Sense of an Ending and the Problem of Taishô', pp3-28.


9Andrew Gordon, who describes the term Taishô democracy as "chronologically inaccurate and analytically empty", prefers to use the term "imperial democracy" to describe the contradictory nature of mass political activity in the years from 1905. Gordon, Labour and Imperial Democracy, p5.

organization was Suzuki Bunji, a Christian and former journalist who had been a member of the Social Policy Association. Several members of this Association were advisers to the Yûaikai. The organization was modelled on the early British friendly societies, and took a non-confrontational approach based on "harmony between capital and labour". The union's members were kept informed through the journal, Yûai Shinpô (Yûai News).

In the background to many of the developments of the Taishô period was the First World War, Japan's participation in the international economy, and the effects of the war on the domestic economy. The economic effects of the War included expansion in industry, trade, and shipping, accompanied by inflation. Worker dissatisfaction at the gap between price rises and wage rises resulted in industrial unrest. The Russian Revolution of 1917 also provided inspiration to socialists who had survived the 'winter years' after the Great Treason Incident. In the context of the post-War inflation, demonstrations against the rising price of rice erupted all over the country in 1918. For the socialist movement, the rice riots were evidence of a growing class consciousness. For the government and bureaucracy, the rice riots were a harbinger of just the kind of working class militancy they wished to discourage. By 1919, the Yûaikai had been transformed into the

11Garon, The State and Labour in Modern Japan, p33.
12The journal's name was changed to Rôdô oyobi Sangyô in 1915.
Sôdômei, a rather more militant labour organization with affiliated unions organized along industrial rather than regional lines.\textsuperscript{15}

In parallel with these developments in the labour movement there were further developments in feminist thought. 1911 saw the establishment of the Bluestocking Society (Seitôsha) and the beginnings of discussion of the 'new women' (atarashii onna, atarashiki onna). Although the 'new women', as we shall see below, burst on to the public stage in a rather more flamboyant way than the socialist women whose activities we discussed in the previous chapter, we can see a continuity in their concerns with questions of marriage, free love and women's financial independence. Their concern with freedom for sexual expression for women, however, also led to a concern with such issues as contraception and abortion.

The discussion of the 'new women' showed that there was a public eager for discussion of 'women's issues', and several intellectual journals, including Taiyô (The Sun) and Chûô Kôron (Central Review) ran special editions on women's issues. A new intellectual journal for women, Fujin Kôron (Women's Review) was established in 1916. These publications provided a public space for the discussion of issues related to women's financial independence and the care and financial maintenance of children, particularly in the 'motherhood protection debate' (bosei hogo ronsô) at the close of the decade. This debate would provide an opportunity for the discussion of alternative visions for social change. The discussion of women's economic independence, in the context of motherhood and the

\textsuperscript{15}In 1919, The name of the organization was changed to the Dai Nihon Rôdô Sôdômei Yûaikai (Friendly Society Greater Japan General Federation of Labour). In 1921, Yûaikai (Friendly Society) was dropped from the title. On the transformation of the Yûaikai see: Large, The Rise of Labour; Gordon, Labour and Imperial Democracy, pp146-148.
desirability of State financial support for mothers and children, would inevitably lead to a consciousness of the class differences between women.

Women's reproductive capacity thus became the subject of discussion in several different spheres. The identity of 'mother', however, received different interpretations, whether in the context of official discourses of 'good wives and wise mothers', or the oppositional discourses of socialism and feminism. In this context, some feminist writers tried to transform 'motherhood' into an image of power and creativity. The second decade of the twentieth century, then, saw major developments in both socialist and feminist thought. But before surveying these developments in the socialist and feminist movements in the second decade of the twentieth century, it is necessary to consider official discourses on women as workers and as mothers. State policies provided the context for the feminist and socialist discussions of the relationship between individual and State.

4.1 The Factory Law
The first group of workers to be the object of State policy were the mining workers. Regulations concerning miners were issued as early as 1872, and a Mining Law (Kôgyô Jôrei) was promulgated in 1890. The first regulations were devoted to ensuring employers' control over workers, through the use of 'mine police'. The Kôgyô Jôrei, however, also included several articles on the 'protection' of workers. On the subject of women working in mines, the Ministry was given the power to limit the working hours of women and

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children under the age of fourteen, but the range of suitable working hours was not specified in the law itself.¹⁷

Discussion of the need for protective legislation in factories had begun in the eighteen eighties. As early as 1882, surveys of factory production were being carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture and Trade, and draft Factory Operatives Legislation was drawn up between 1883 and 1887. These draft regulations were submitted to the Chamber of Commerce in 1891 and submitted to prefectural governors in 1895.¹⁸ In 1896, when draft legislation was submitted to the First Higher Council on Agriculture, Commerce and Industry, the government provided the following justification for the drafting of a Factory Act, demonstrating an anxiety about the relations between labour and capital:

With the recent industrial development in our country, the old-fashioned domestic industry has gradually given way to the newly introduced factory industry. It is therefore of urgent necessity for the furtherance of the progress of our industries to enact a law with a view to bringing into harmony the relations between capital and labour, and eradicating every cause of conflict between these two factors of industry, thus safeguarding the interests of both sides...¹⁹

Draft factory legislation was submitted to the Third Higher Council on Agriculture, Commerce, and Industry in 1898.²⁰ However, employers' representatives opposed the proposed legislation, at times arguing that the profitability of industry would be affected by restrictions on working hours,


¹⁹Abe Isoh [Isso], 'Socialism in Japan', in Fifty Years of New Japan, Volume II, p504.

²⁰These Councils included representatives of bureaucracy, business, and academia. Garon, State and Labour in Modern Japan, p21.
and at times denying the need for State regulation of employment practices. Kojima Tsunehisa quotes "capitalists" who complained that "a Factory Law would destroy the relations between worker and employer which are based on the good customs and ways of our history".  

The draft which was approved by the Higher Council on Agriculture, Commerce, and Industry in October 1898 referred to safety measures, restrictions on child labour, factory inspection, and apprenticeship systems, but had little to say about women workers. In Chapter Five, on inspection, Article 27 stated that the Ministry would have power to prohibit or restrict the use of women and minors in dangerous industries.

Katayama Sen and the Rōdō Kumiai Kiseikai carried out a campaign to expose the limitations of this draft, which was only applicable to factories employing more than fifty workers, and was selective in the problems it chose to address. Their criticism, however, did not focus on women workers. This draft was also criticised from within the bureaucracy. Saitō Kashiro, who published a book (in French) on Japan’s attempts at regulation of labour, commented that he had never seen in practice those "familial and


22 Garon, State and Labour in Modern Japan, p23.


affectionate relations" which were often spoken of. Saitō also reiterated the need for protection of women workers:

[Saitō] also regrets that the Draft does not prescribe for women whether married or single, shorter hours than for men, since by nature they demand more care. In France they limit work to ten hours a day for children under 16 years, male or female; to 60 hours a week for women and girls between 16 and 18; and to 11 hours a day for women and girls over 18. Some such discrimination is needed in Japan, where the cotton mills employ so many females, and at such hard work.

This draft was not presented to the Diet. However, with an increase in labour disputes (by workers who presumably were not so attached to 'traditional' relations between worker and employer), and increased attention being paid to the conditions of factory workers, the need for a Factory Law was added to the list of social problems.

Several works appeared which exposed the conditions suffered by factory workers - women and children in particular. Shokkō Jijō (The Conditions of Factory Workers) was a five volume report commissioned by the Department of Agriculture and Industry in preparation for the drafting of factory regulations. This was an internal departmental report which was not made widely available until after World War Two. The report was, however, influential within the Ministry. The journalism of Yokoyama Gennosuke, and his book, Nihon no Kasō Shakai (The Lower Classes of Japan) brought the conditions of factory workers to a wider audience.

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25 Saitō, p18, cited in Foxwell, p108: "...quand j'ai visité des diverses provinces, je n'ai jamais constaté en pratique ces relations familières et affectueuses dont on nous parle."


27 Kublin, Asian Revolutionary, p125; Foxwell, p106.

The conditions of factory workers were also mentioned in the progressive women's newspaper *Fujo Shinbun*. In an editorial on the mistreatment of factory workers it was said to be scandalous that such violation of the human rights (jinken) of women workers could take place under a constitutional system (rikkenjika), and the women readers of *Fujo Shinbun* were enjoined to show compassion and listen to the complaints of the factory women. It is interesting to note how the appeal made in this editorial is addressed specifically to women. First, a link is made between the clothing worn by the (presumably middle-class) readers of *Fujo Shinbun* and the labour of the factory workers who have produced the fabric for this clothing. Secondly, women are enjoined to show the compassion (dôjô) which is a specifically feminine vocation (tenshoku). Finally, women are enjoined to show compassion to the factory workers because they are of the same sex (dôsei). In other words, compassion is seen to override the class differences which divide women. This editorial is quite distinctive in its discussion of the human rights of women workers rather than competing notions of the "national interest".

A new draft Factory Bill was prepared in 1902, but was not presented to the Diet immediately. The passage of the Law was further postponed by the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. At this very time, several British writers were promoting Japan as an imperialist power which promoted "motherhood" and realised the importance of children for the strength of the Empire. In fact, the Japanese "national interest" in the form of increased exports and increased military power, was used as justification for the delay

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30 Shasetsu: Kôjo no Gyakutaï', *Fujo Shinbun*, No 121, 1/9/1902, p1.
in the introduction of protective legislation for women and child workers.\textsuperscript{31} The next attempt to present a Bill to the Diet was in 1909, but this Bill was soon withdrawn. Business representatives were critical of the proposal to phase out night work by women and children.\textsuperscript{32}

A Ministry pamphlet on the "Explanation of the Factory Bill" was distributed in 1909. Among comments on the issue of night work by women, the Central Hygiene Institute proposed that night work for women be prohibited within five years of the institution of the law.\textsuperscript{33} In other discussion of the issue, reports on the health of factory workers appeared which linked factory work with the spread of tuberculosis in the villages, and the infection of potential military recruits.\textsuperscript{34} With respect to the prohibition of night work by women and children, both sides referred to the national interest.\textsuperscript{35} Employers argued that the national interest would be served by postponing the introduction of restrictions on working hours in the interest of the profitability

\textsuperscript{31} c.f Anna Davlin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood', \textit{History Workshop Journal}, Spring 1978, p 17: "Comparisons could also be made with imperial rivals, who without accusations of socialism had successfully turned the attention of the State to national and particularly children's health. Japan (a very recent newcomer to the club of imperialist powers) was often quoted in this context, as at the annual congress of the Sanitary Institute in 1904, where members were told apropos of the medical inspection of schoolchildren) that in Japan every schoolchild was under medical supervision, and that first aid and hygiene were taught in school. Japan also was 'in no danger of race suicide', mothers there were not 'shrinking from maternity as in other lands'."

\textsuperscript{32}Garon, \textit{State and Labour in Modern Japan}, p28.

\textsuperscript{33}Ayusawa, \textit{A History of Labor in Modern Japan}, p107.


of export industries. Reformers argued that the national interest would be served by protecting the health of the mothers of future recruits.36

Finally, after thirty-odd years of discussion, and opposition by industrialists, the Factory Law (Kôjô hô) was promulgated in 1911. The law, however, would not become effective until 1916,37 and there was extensive provision for the granting of exemptions. In August 1916 an imperial Ordinance for the Administration of the Factory Act was promulgated, and the Act came into force in September 1916.38

Protective provisions of the Factory Law prevented women and children under the age of fifteen from working more than twelve hours a day, prevented them from working between the hours of 10 p.m. and 4 a.m., and allowed for at least two days leave per month. The minimum age for workers was set at twelve years, except in light industry, where the minimum age of workers was ten.39 However, there was provision for particular industries to apply for exemption, and some provisions would not become effective until fifteen years after the law became effective in 1916. With respect to night work, these provisions could be waived where a factory worked on a shift

36Nolte and Hastings have argued that Japan did not have the same anxieties about the fitness of working class mothers as was apparent in turn of the century Britain. However, it seems to me that the anxiety about the danger of the spread of tuberculosis from female factory workers reflects a similar anxiety about the health of the recruits who would support Japan's imperialist ambitions. Nolte and Hastings, 'The Meiji State's Policy Towards Women', p173; Anna Davin, 'Motherhood and Imperialism', passim.

37 Kojima, Hataraku Josai, pp54-5.

38 Ayusawa, A History of Labor in Modern Japan, p111.

39 Kanatani, 'Rôdôsha hogohô henkô shi ni miru bosen hogo', pp47-48; Large, Organized Workers and Socialist Politics in Interwar Japan, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p54; Hane, Peasants, Rebels and Outcasts, p183. The 1923 amendment reduced the maximum working time to eleven hours, raised the minimum age of workers from twelve to fifteen, and extended the jurisdiction of the law to cover all factories employing more than ten workers.
system, meaning that night work for women workers continued until it was prohibited completely in 1929.\textsuperscript{40}

In justification of the protective provisions of the Factory Law, women workers are described as the "women who will be the mothers of the nation" (kokumin no haha naru beki fujo), and protection of women and children is linked to Japan's status as a military power (gunkoku).\textsuperscript{41} Article Nine of the Law concerned maternity provisions. Employers were prevented from allowing pregnant women to work for five weeks after parturition (or three weeks with a doctor's approval), and women were entitled to nursing leave on their return to work.\textsuperscript{42} However, this was not framed in terms of women's rights to maternity leave. Rather, the State was preventing employers from the exploitation of pregnant women. In other words, the paternalistic State was 'protecting' women as a labour force from excessive exploitation by industrialists. The Factory Law only covered workers in factories of a certain size, and regulation of working conditions in other industries could only be achieved on an industry-by-industry basis.\textsuperscript{43}

Women were seen as the objects of State protection, rather than as workers with rights. This attitude appears explicitly and implicitly in writings on the Factory Law. In one commentary, the numbers of workers are enumerated, and divided into two categories, those who need protection, and those who

\textsuperscript{40}Sakurai Kinue, \textit{Bosei Hogo Undôshi}, Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1987, pp41-42.

\textsuperscript{41}Oka Minoru, \textit{Kôjóhô Ran}, p210.

\textsuperscript{42}Kanatani Chieko, 'Rôdôsha hogohô henkô shi ni miru bosei hogo', \textit{Agora}, No 89,10/8/84, pp39-66; Tanino Setsu, \textit{Fujin kôjô kantoku kan no kiroku}, Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, Tokyo, 1985, pp269-277. The 1926 amendment increased maternity leave to four weeks before parturition, and six weeks after; although a women could return to work after four weeks with a doctor's approval, Sakurai, \textit{Boseihogo Undôshi}, p41.

\textsuperscript{43}The attainment of these provisions in various industries is listed in Yamaguchi Miyoko and Maruoka Hideko (eds)\textit{Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryô Shûsei}, Volume 10, Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, Tokyo, 1981.
do not. Adult male workers are not seen as needing protection, while women and children belong to the category of workers "needing protection" (hogo o yósuru shokkō). The duty of the State to protect women workers was, however counterbalanced by the desire to protect the profitability of industries employing women workers, as evidenced by the delay in enacting many provisions of the Factory Law.

Women were not seen as potential unionists or strikers. In contemporaneous commentary on the Factory Law, it is asserted that in Japan, it has been mining and shipbuilding, rather than the textile industry, that have seen the most strikes, and this is attributed to the high number of women workers in textiles. This perceived lack of militancy on the part of women workers is given as further justification for the necessity of factory legislation. It is necessary for the State to protect these less assertive workers. This highlights the differing views of male and female workers from within the bureaucracy. While male workers were seen as potentially militant, and in need of social control in the form of restrictions on union activity, women were seen as needing protection. Despite the extreme exploitation under which these women worked, and some history of strike activity, they were constructed as harmless, passive, and in need of protection. In the earliest days of the labour movement, such attitudes were shared by labour organizers. The gendering of relationships between individual and State affected the kinds of political demands which could be made by men and women in early twentieth century Japan.

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44 Oka, Kōjōhō Ron, p208.
46 Several writers have recently discussed the relationship between citizenship and waged work. Given the different relationship of men and women to waged work in early twentieth century Japan, it is unsurprising that they should also have differing relationships to the concept of citizenship. c.f. Nancy Fraser, 'What's Critical about Critical Theory? The Case of Habermas and Gender', in Seyla Benhabib & Drucilla Cornell (eds), Feminism as Critique, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987; Nancy Fraser, 'Women, Welfare and the Politics of Need
It has been pointed out that the Factory Law was formulated with little input from organised labour. Indeed, it was suggested at the time that the Factory Law was granted by the Emperor from above, in the same manner as the Meiji Constitution. Although the members of the League for the Promotion of Labour Unions (Ródó Kumiai Kiseikai) did attempt to influence the bureaucracy, there appears to have been little attempt on the part of the bureaucracy to engage in formal consultation with labour representatives.

The Yûaikai (Workers' Friendly Society) was not established until after the promulgation of the Factory Law. Although the Yûaikai could have no input into the creation of the Factory Law, the organization took a great interest in campaigning for its proper implementation, particularly with respect to the abolition of night work by women, which had been postponed because of pressure from business.

4.2 The Yûaikai

The Yûaikai was founded on August 1, 1912 by Suzuki Bunji, a member of the Shakai Seisaku Gakkai (Social Policy Association). Several members of the Association were advisers to the Yûaikai, including Kuwata.

Garon, State and Labour in Modern Japan, p30, citing Oka, Kôjûhôron: 'Oka likened the legislation to "our imperially bestowed Constitution [of 1889] which was granted to, rather than demanded by, the people".'

This criticism was made by Suzuki Bunji in 1916. See: Large, The Rise of Labour, p73, citing Suzuki Bunji, 'Sangyô no riken seiji', Ródó oyobi Sangyô, 1/3/1916, pp2-9: "[Suzuki stated that] in Japan, feudal notions about society made a mockery of constitutional government. He added that in the industrial world, too, the capitalists dominated the workers with disdain for their rights. He accused the government of failing to consult the persons most affected by factory legislation - the workers themselves. He concluded, 'such autocratic, feudal, bureaucratic ideas point up the fallacious notions which contradict the execution of constitutional government in contemporary society.' In other words, Suzuki's criticism questioned the very legitimacy of the State which valued capital accumulation above the democratic rights of the people.

Kumazô, Takano Iwasaburô, and Soeda Juichi. The name of the organization referred to the British ‘friendly societies’, after which it was modelled. The society’s activities were based on “harmony between labour and capital”. The platform of the organization stated:

1. We will harmonize with one another and endeavour to attain the objective of mutual aid through unity and co-operation.

2. We will abide by the ideals of the public and endeavour to develop intelligent opinion, cultivate virtue, and make progress in technical arts.

3. We will depend on the power of co-operation and endeavour to improve our status through sound means.\(^{50}\)

The growth of the Ōyaitai was impressive, when compared with earlier attempts to form union organizations.\(^{51}\) A women’s division was created in 1916, with Inaba Aiko as secretary.\(^{52}\) Until 1917, however, women could only be associate members of the association.\(^{53}\) The activities of the women’s division included the publication of the journal Ōyai Fujin (Ōyai Woman), the holding of public lectures for the education of workers, the awarding of prizes to model union members, and the provision of advice on naishoku (home-based work) to the wives of male workers.\(^{54}\)

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\(^{50}\) Translation in Ayusawa, A History of Labour in Modern Japan, p99.

\(^{51}\) The growth of the Ōyaitai has been traced by Stephen Large: “By 1913 it had expanded from a fifteen-man organization in Tokyo into one claiming 1,295 members in a growing network of branches throughout Japan. By the end of 1915, the membership was 7,000 and by April 1917, it had climbed to over 20,000. In 1919, the Ōyaitai rolls numbered around 30,000 workers.” Large, Organized Workers and Socialist Politics, p17.


\(^{53}\) Initially there was no restriction made, but in 1913, a category of “associate member” was created for women. This was revised in 1917, after protest by women workers. Large, The Rise of Labour, p72; Gordon, Labour and Imperial Democracy, p92; Tsurumi, ‘Female Textile Workers’, p26.

\(^{54}\) Ōyaitai Fujinbu Kisosu, reproduced in Suzuki, Josei to Ródô Kumiai, pp45-46.
Major contributors to the women's journal were Suzuki Bunji, Hirasawa Keishichi, Yutani Jirôshichi, Miura Gakudô, Sakamoto Masao, and Inaba Aiko. Yoshioka Yayoi, Kawaguchi Aiko and Misumi Suzuko also contributed articles at times.\(^55\) The women's journal, with a print run of around 3,000, appeared monthly between August 1916 and June 1918. There was a gap between February and July 1917, when the women's journal was replaced by a supplement in the union journal *Rôdô oyobi Sangyô* (Labour and Industry).\(^56\)

In the second edition of *Yûai Fujin*, Yûai adviser Soeda Juichi advised that women who had some spare time could engage in home-based work, and he suggested spinning, weaving, artwork, sewing or other crafts. This suggests a recognition that most families could not survive on one wage. However, the advice that women engage in 'naishoku' (casual, home-based work) rather than more permanent employment, also implies that women's work was seen to be secondary to the work of the male breadwinner.\(^57\)

The creation of the women's division at this time has been linked with impending enactment of the Factory Law.\(^58\) One of the important activities of the Women's Division was providing women workers with information about their rights under the new legislation. Both women workers, and wives of male Yûai members could join the women's division. The reasons for setting up the women's division were set out as follows:

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\(^{56}\)Suzuki, *Josei to Rôdô Kumiai*, pp58-59. Contents of the supplement to *Rôdô oyobi Sangyô* are listed in on pp60-62 of Suzuki's book. At the time of writing, no extant issues of the women's supplement had been found.

\(^{57}\)Soeda Juichi, 'Ikka no Shufu no Suru Koto', *Yûai Fujin*, No 2, pp38-39.

The world is not made up of men only, and is not supported by men only. Half of humanity are women, and the world can be made light or made dark according to the work of women and the attitude of women. The *Yūaikai* is an organization which has been formed in order to raise the dignity of work, and improve the conditions of workers. But, up till now, [the *Yūaikai*] has mainly worked for men. Recently, however, it has also become apparent that we should also do something for the women who are working alongside men in factories and other workplaces, and for the women who support men by their work in the home. For this reason we have established the *Yūaikai* women's division, and wish to carry out various activities from now on.59

While the Women's Division did play a role in advising and informing women workers of their rights, female workers were still seen primarily as women: as wives, daughters and sisters. This emphasis on femininity over class consciousness was given visual expression on the cover of the journal. Like more mainstream women's magazines, the covers of early editions of *Yūai Fujin* were decorated with flowers (Appendix 1, Figure 2).

Suzuki Bunji in particular addressed the readers of *Yūai Fujin* as wives and as mothers. Suzuki's editorial in the founding issue of *Yūai Fujin* made much of women's support activities for husbands and children.60 Thus, even within the labour movement women were initially contained within the role of 'good wives and wise mothers', a phrase which was used approvingly by Suzuki Bunji. Suzuki's support for *ryōsai kenbo* ideology contrasts with the men and women of the *Heiminsha*, who had been critical of attempts to contain women's activities in the ideology of 'good wives and wise mothers', and critical of the mobilization of women for nationalist purposes without the granting of rights to match their obligations.61

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60 C.f. Suzuki Bunji, 'Makoto no Onna no Fumiyuku Beki Michi', *Yūai Fujin*, No 1, 6/7/1916, p5: "A true woman's true value is in having an internal attitude of determination and power, but in appearing outwardly gentle, and consoling and encouraging her husband."

61 See Chapter Three above.
The Yûai kai policy of non-confrontation with capital was also linked with a support for nationalist goals. A message from the editor in the first edition combined the conventional seasonal greetings about the weather with a homily about the pleasures of working for the country:

The rainy season has come to an end, and it will get gradually get hotter from now on. It might be hard for all of you to keep working [in this heat], but if you remember that the wealth of the country will be increased thanks to your efforts, then work will be a pleasure, don't you think?62

Both the union journal Rôdô oyobi Sangyô (Labour and Industry),63 and the women's division journal Yûai Fujin carried commentary on the Enactment of the Factory Law. The second edition of Yûai Fujin reported that the provisions of the Factory Law would soon become effective, and explained these provisions for the benefit of women workers. The article explains the restrictions on working hours for women and children and the provisions for two days holiday per month. The exceptions to the applicability of the law are explained in relentless detail, as if to emphasise the inadequacy of the protection offered by the Law.64 Compensation provisions are also explained in some detail, and women are enjoined to register any irregular relationships, as a de facto spouse may not be able to receive compensation on the death or injury of her partner. It is also explained that a worker may receive compensation if unable to continue work, and that a woman whose looks have been spoilt by facial injury may claim the equivalent of one hundred days' pay.65

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62‘Henshû dayori’, Yûai Fujin, No 1, 6/7/1916, p96.
Thus, in early labour movement publications, women were constructed either as wives of workers or as women workers in need of protection. This attitude towards women was common to the official discourse which underpinned the protection of women workers by the Factory Law, and the discourse of labour organisers who cast the union in the role of 'protector' of weak women workers. In the following sections, I shall consider how some feminist writers in the second decade of the twentieth century theorized the relationship between individual and State. Did feminist writers share the view of women as needing the protection of a strong State?

4.3 The New Women

In 1911, the women's literary journal Seitō (Bluestocking) was established by Hiratsuka Raichō, with Yasumochi Yoshiko, Nakano Hatsu, and Kiuchi Tei. Despite the fact that Seitō was predated by several socialist women's journals, it is the Bluestockings who have received most attention in both Japanese-language and English-language scholarship on early Japanese feminism.

The first editor of Seitō, Hiratsuka Raichō, was a woman who had links with literary circles. Hiratsuka's father came from a samurai family and was a

66 The representations of women in labour movement publications will be analysed in more detail in Chapter Five, on women as workers.


member of the Meiji bureaucracy. He studied constitutional law in Germany under Hermann Riessler. Hiratsuka's mother allowed Raichō to use the money set aside for her trousseau to set up the journal. Hiratsuka had already created a scandal in 1908 by her attempted double suicide with a married literary figure, Morita Sōhei. This contrasts with Fukuda Hideko's appearance on the public stage as the heroine (joketsu) of the Ōsaka Incident. Fukuda was already a well-known figure in oppositional political circles when she established Sekai Fujin.

The title of the journal Seiitō, was a direct translation of 'Bluestockings', the name given to women who attended Elizabeth Montague's literary salon of the 1750s. As the choice of this name might suggest, this journal had an international emphasis, but the focus was, at first, literary rather than political in the narrow sense. In particular, the Bluestockings had links with the Naturalist school of writers. The first issue was almost entirely devoted to short stories and poetry, often with a romantic theme. Although some of the early contributions to Seiitō may seem naive in their emphasis on individual liberation, it is also possible to interpret these discussions in terms of what we would now call "consciousness raising".

69 Andrew, 'The Seiitōsha', p50.
70 Andrew, 'The Seiitōsha', p. 53.
71 Lippit, 'Seiitō and the Literary Roots of Japanese Feminism' p155.
72 Notte, Liberalism in Modern Japan, pp95-97; Notte, 'Individualism in Taishō Japan', pp672-677.
73 Other writers have also compared the early Seiitō writings to "consciousness raising". See: Tachi Kaoru, 'Kenkyū Nōto: Hiratsuka Raichō to Ofudesaki', Ochanomizu Joshi Daigaku Josei Bunka Shiryōkan Hö, No 7, 1986, p105; Kanda Michiko, 'Jiritsu no Keisei to Katai - Hiratsuka Raichō o Chūshin to Shite', in Onnatachi no Yukue, Tokyo: Keisô Shobô, 1982.
Two contributions to the first edition of *Seifō* made a great impression on the women of the time and continue to be quoted as rallying cries for modern Japanese feminists. The first was a series of linked verse by Yosano Akiko, already an established poet.\(^74\) The first section, *Yama no Ugoku Hi Kitaru*, uses the metaphor of the volcano to describe the hidden power of women which will burst forth one day. This poem has been translated as "Mountain Moving Day", or "The Day the Mountains Move":

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The day the mountains move has come.
I speak but no one believes me.
For a time the mountains have been asleep,
But long ago they all danced with fire.
It doesn't matter if you believe this,
My friends, as long as you believe:
All the sleeping women
Are now awake and moving.\(^75\)
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The evocative natural imagery in this section of the poem has been much quoted, but other verses include an evocation of the difficulties of Yosano's life, references to Nietzsche's 'Thus Spake Zarathustra', and a passionate assertion of individual identity. Yosano claimed the right of women to speak:

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I would like to write only in the first person
I am a woman!
I would like to write only in the first person
I am! I am!\(^76\)
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The first edition of *Seifō* also carried Hiratsuka Raichō's poetic essay "In the beginning, woman was the sun ..." (*Genshi Josei wa Talyō de atta*).

\(^74\)See the discussion of Yosano's pacifist poem, 'Kimi shinitamau koto nakare', in section 3.5 above.


\(^76\)Yosano Akiko, 'Sozorogoto', p.2: "Ichininshō nite nomi monokakabaya/ ware wa onago zo/ ichininshō nite nomi monokakabaya/ ware wa ware wa". See the discussion of the later verses in Ide, *Seifō no Onnatachi*, pp12-16.
Hiratsuka also uses evocative poetic language to lament the hidden power of women and call for a retrieval of this power. Here, women's former powerful status is represented by the sun which shines from its own energy, while her present condition is evoked by the moon, which can only shine by reflected light:

In the beginning woman was the Sun.  
An authentic person.  
Today, she is the moon.  
Living through others.  
Reflecting the brilliance of others....77

Once again, women are exhorted to retrieve their former power, their "genius".78 The metaphor of the sun has particular resonance in the Japanese context, with its echoes of Amaterasu, the sun goddess in Japanese mythology.79 The other striking element of this manifesto is the use of maternal imagery. Seitô's emergence is described as the cry of a newborn baby (ubugoe), and this metaphor is elaborated upon, as Hiratsuka wonders how her child will develop.80

77 Hiratsuka Raichô, 'Genshi Josei wa Taiyô de atta', Seitô, Volume 1, No 1, p37. For discussion of the use of metaphors of the sun and the moon for the feminine, see Tachi Kaoru, 'Kenkyû Nôto: Hiratsuka Raichô to Ofudesaki', Ochanomizu Joshi Daigaku Josei Bunka Shiryôkan Hô, No 7, 1986, pp103-112. Similar polarities appear in European thought, where the sun may also be used as a metaphor for individual creativity and transcendance, while the moon's reflected light has been linked with women's imitative nature. Bram Dijkstra has outlined the use of these images in Fin-de-Siècle European culture: "[T]he moon had come to stand for everything that was truly feminine in the world. The moon, too, after all, existed only as a 'reflected entity'. It had no light of its own, just as woman, in her proper function had existence only as the passive reflection of male creativity. The sun was Apollo, the god of light, the moon, Diana, his pale echo in the night." Bram Dijkstra, Idols of Perversity: Images of Feminine Evil in Fin-de Siècle Culture, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, p122.

78 Hiratsuka Raichô, 'Genshi Josei wa Taiyô de atta', p41; p49; p50; p52.

79 The metaphor of the sun, however, had multivalent connotations in Japan, which also drew on the Taoist cosmology, whereby the Sun represented the masculine principle of Yang, and the moon represented the feminine principle of Yin. Hiratsuka could thus draw on a complex series of associations from Japanese, Taoist and European traditions.

80 Hiratsuka Raichô, 'Genshi Josei wa Taiyô de atta', p38.
Both of these texts portray an assertion of individual creativity, and the meaning of liberation is imagined through the genre of the poetic essay. Hiratsuka, in particular, is interested in meditation as a way of focusing the attention for the purpose of engaging in creative activities. She complains that women's responsibility for housework affects their ability to concentrate.\(^8\) Liberation is initially seen as an individual matter. While Hiratsuka recognises the importance of social issues such as higher education for women, she asserts that such matters as education and the suffrage are simply means to an end. For Hiratsuka, the words 'freedom' (jīyō) and 'liberation' (kaihō) are primarily understood in terms of individual genius and creativity.\(^9\)

\(Seitō\) appeared around the same time that Ibsen's plays were being performed in Tokyo, and the image of such women as Ibsen's Nora was soon connected with the image of the Bluestockings.\(^8\) The scandal surrounding the first production of \(A\ Doll's\ House\) became connected, in newspapers and magazines, with images of the "new women" of the Bluestocking journal. Examples of the scandalous behaviour of the "Bluestockings" included such activities as the women's visit to the Yoshiwara licensed district,\(^8\) or their sampling of exotic Western liqueurs.\(^8\)

The appellation 'New Woman' gained currency after Tsubouchi Shōyō lectured on 'The New Woman in Western Theatre' using as his examples

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\(^8\) Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Genshi Josei wa Tałyō de atta', p42.
\(^9\) Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Genshi Josei wa Tałyō de atta', p47.
\(^8\) Rodd, 'Yosano Akiko and the Taishō debate over the "New Women"', p175.
\(^8\) On the Bluestockings' visit to the Yoshiwara, see Horiba, \(Seitō no Jidai\), pp112-113.
\(^8\) On this incident, see: Horiba Kiyoko, \(Seitō no Jidai\).
Ibsen's Nora, Sudermann's Magda, and Shaw's Vivie. In January 1912 the Bluestockings ran a special edition devoted to discussion of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, and several mainstream publications ran special issues on the 'new women'. Hiratsuka defiantly adopted this label in her 1913 manifesto, "To the Women of the World" (*Yo no Fujintachi ni*), in which she defended women's choice not to marry, stressed the importance of women's economic independence, attacked the existing family system, and declared proudly that she was a 'new woman':

I am a New Woman. I am the Sun!
I am a unique human being.
At least, day after day I desire to be so.
The New Women not only desire the destruction of the old morality and old laws built on men's selfishness, they also try day after day to build a new world where there will be a new religion, a new morality, and new laws...

Successive issues of the journal carried translations of stories by Edgar Allen Poe, Maupassant, Chekhov and Alfred Musset. In later issues Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* and *A Doll's House* and Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* stimulated discussion of marriage, divorce and prostitution.

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88 *Seitō*, Volume 2, Nos 3, 5, 6, 7, 11 and 12.

89 *Seitō*, Volume 2, Nos. 7; Volume 2, No. 12.

90 *Seitō*, Volume 2, No 10 to Volume 3, No 1.

91 *Seitō*, Volume 1, No 1, p110; Volume 2, p. 91; Volume 2, No 1, supplement.

92 *Seitō*, Volume 4, No 1, supplement.
There was a gradual shift in emphasis in the journal, from an interest in individualism to an engagement with social issues. In generic terms, essays and debates appeared alongside fictional and poetic writings. Unlike the early socialist women's journals, however, little attention was paid to the situation of working women in Japan. When Sekai fujin looked overseas, attention had been directed to international feminist, pacifist and socialist movements, but translations in the pages of the early editions of Seito were more likely to be from literary or intellectual figures.

4.4 The Bluestockings and the Socialists

In 1913, Fukuda Hideko contributed an article to Seito on 'The Solution to the Women's Question' in which she emphasised the importance of socialism for women's emancipation, and reiterated some of the themes addressed in her writings in Sekai Fujin. In this article, Fukuda casts herself as an elder of the women's movement, reflecting on her time with the liberal movement. The liberals, she explains, had identified women's liberation with simple equality between men and women, a limitation which she elaborates on. Fukuda refers to Hiratsuka's manifesto, agreeing that it would be fine if everyone could feel that "I am the sun" (Jibun wa Taiyô de aru). Liberation, Fukuda points out, must be for both men and women, and she believes that the establishment of a 'communal system' (kyōsansei) will bring liberation for both men and women. Implicit in Fukuda's criticism is a recognition that individual liberation can not be achieved without social transformation. In Fukuda's case this implies transformation along socialist lines.

93 Andrew, 'The Seltôsha', p56.

Unlike many other socialist and communist writers, however, Fukuda is not committed to the destruction of the existing family system. She is confident that the destruction of the private property system will modify the economic relationships implicit in marriages under the existing system, and believes that science and technology may be used to relieve the burden of domestic labour.95

Itô Noe took over as editor in 1915.96 Two strands of feminist thought were represented by the two editors. Hiratsuka was influenced by the maternalism of Ellen Key, while Itô identified with the anarchism of Emma Goldman. The journal now carried translations of the writings of Emma Goldman,97 Olive Schreiner98 and Havelock Ellis.99 Itô also engaged in debates with other writers, including socialist Aoyama [Yamakawa] Kikue on the issues of prostitution and abortion,100 Yamakawa also participated in the "motherhood protection debate" to be discussed below.

In the pages of Seitô, women were initially presented as 'new women', as single women free from the ties of a repressive family system. Such criticism of the family system was obviously seen as potentially subversive, for

95 Fukuda Hideko, 'Fujin Mondai no Kaiketsu'.
96 Itô's life is discussed in Stephen S. Large, 'The Romance of Revolution in Japanese Anarchism and Communism During the Taishô Period', Modern Asian Studies, Volume 11, No 3, July 1977, Miyamoto Ken, 'Itô Noe and the Bluestockings', Japan Interpreter, Volume 10, No 2, Autumn 1975, pp190-204. For the reasons for the change in editorship, see Ide Fumiko, Seitô no Onnatachi.
97 Seitô, Volume 3, No 9, supplement, p 1; Volume 3, No. 11, p 53.
98 Seitô, Volume 3, Nos11-12; Volume 4, Nos 7-10; Volume 5, No 2.
99 Seitô, Volume 4, No 5, supplement.
100 Lippit, ' Seitô and the Literary Roots of Japanese Feminism', p161; Seitô, Volume 15, No 8, p 30; Volume 6, Nos 1-2. On prostitution, see interview with Yamakawa in Rekishi Hyôron Henshûbu, Kindai Nihon Joseishi e no Shôgen, pp16-17.
several issues were banned. However, an interest in sexual freedom led the women of Sei tô to deal with issues related to women's reproductive capacity, including contraception and abortion. Motherhood, for contributors to Sei tô, could be a metaphor for individual creativity, as in Hiratsuka's poetic essay, 'In the beginning, woman was the sun'. For other women, the capacity for motherhood represented feminine qualities of compassion and nurturance, which could be opposed to the masculine qualities of militarism. This is apparent in Saika Kotoko's comment on World War One, an event which otherwise received little attention in the pages of the journal:102

Who was it who said that if it were women who stood on the battlefield, then war would surely stop -- no woman could bear to watch the cruelty of war. That is absolutely true! How could women, who live for love and mercy, be able to kill? I believe that women, who have the ability to be mothers, would never be able to line up on the battlefield and witness the spilling of blood. 103

Saika, like several other Sei tô writers, links maternity with an essentialist view of women's compassionate nature. The social meaning of motherhood was also explored, however, and it was in this context that the Bluestockings drew on the writings of Ellen Key, a theme to be explored in more detail in section 4.6 below.

101 Two issues of 1913 were banned -- one carrying Fukuda's article on the solution to the woman question and one carrying Raicho's article attacking the family system. Andrew, 'The Sei tôsha', p56.

102 Although the period of publication of Sei tô (1911 to 1916) includes the beginnings of the First World War, the Sei tô group was distinguished by an almost complete lack of interest in issues of war and peace. Hiratsuka herself notes this lack in her autobiography. Hiratsuka Raicho, Gen shi Josei wa Tai yô de atta, Tokyo: Ôtsuki Shoten, Tokyo, 1971, Volume 2, pp568-570.

103 Saika Kotoko,'Senka', Sei tô, Vol 5, No 10; quoted in Hiratsuka Raicho, Gen shi Josei wa Tai yô de atta, Volume 2, pp568-570.
4.5 Shin Shin Fujin

Some themes of the early socialist women's journals were continued by former Heiminsha member Nishikawa Fumiko in the journal Shinshin Fujin (The True New Woman). In the popular press of the time, Shinshin Fujin was presented as a rival to Seitō, but this is denied by Nishikawa. However, the title 'The True New Woman' suggests a re-evaluation of the meaning of 'New Woman'. Although Nishikawa no longer called herself a socialist (after her husband's renunciation of socialism), her writings show a continuity with the writings of some of the early socialist women discussed in Chapter Three.

Nishikawa explicitly linked family and State, calling for a "democratization" of the family, and a "maternalization" (boseika) of society. Unfortunately she did not elaborate on what this 'maternalization' would involve. Nishikawa extended the definition of politics to include what went on in the home, and linked reform of the family with reform of society at large:

We think it most important to raise the consciousness of women, and we will study all things from the standpoint of women, for the purpose of (on a large scale) bringing peace to the world, and (on a small scale) improving everyday life. We will devote our energies to this purpose, for the sake of the home, for society, and for the peace and happiness of mankind.

While the Bluestockings had used motherhood as a metaphor for women's individual creativity, Nishikawa used the maternal as a metaphor for a caring

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104 Shin shin Fujin was established in 1913, and published for just over ten years. Few issues of this journal survived the Tokyo Earthquake of 1923, but some issues are held in the Ōhara Social Research Institute. Nishikawa's writings have been collected as an appendix to her autobiography: Nishikawa Fumiko, Heiminsha no onna: Nishikawa Fumiko Jiden, Tokyo: Aoyama Kan, 1984, edited by Amano Shigeru.

105 Nishikawa Fumiko Jiden, p.361.

106 Aims of the Shinshin Fujin kal, Nishikawa Fumiko Jiden, p137.

107 'Fujin to Heiwa', Shinshin Fujin: Heiwa gō, 1/10/1914.
society. Since her earliest writings, Nishikawa had identified socialism as a compassionate philosophy which was particularly congenial to women.\textsuperscript{108} Nishikawa's vision of a compassionate society was linked with pacifism. In later writings, Nishikawa praised the contribution of European feminists who had 'humanised' (jindôka) politics,\textsuperscript{109} and lamented that Japan had not yet produced a great feminist pacifist leader.

Nishikawa questioned the sexual division of labour in society,\textsuperscript{110} and predicted an end to the 'male-centred' ideologies which limit women's activities:

I believe, without doubt, that men have a thoroughly male-centred philosophy. This philosophy will, of course, follow the same fate as such ideas as "humans are the centre of the universe" and "the earth is the centre of the universe" - such a philosophy will certainly fall apart. At this stage, however, such ideas still lurk in the hearts of men.\textsuperscript{111}

She saw the necessity of changing masculine as well as feminine behaviour, and criticised 'old-fashioned men' who had failed to change as women were changing. Men were said to be 'ignorant' (mukyôiku) in emotional matters, and education for ryôfu kenfu (good husbands and wise fathers) was just as necessary as ryôsai kenbo kyôiku.\textsuperscript{112} Nishikawa, in her advocacy of the "maternalization" of society and the "democratization" of the family, tried to reconceptualize the relationship between family and State and tried to rethink the sexual division of labour.

\textsuperscript{108}See section 3.2 above.

\textsuperscript{109}Fujin to shakai mondai', Shinshinfujin, 1/3/1920, Jiden, p 271.

\textsuperscript{110}Atarishiki onna no yoku beki michi, 19??, pp. quoted in Jiden, pp. 377-8.

\textsuperscript{111}Nishikawa Fumiko, Atarishiki onna no yoku beki michi; quoted in Jiden, pp. 377-8.

\textsuperscript{112}Nishikawa Fumiko, 'Nihon shôrai no katei', Shinshin fujin, 1914 reprinted in Nishikawa Fumiko Jiden, pp244-47. The phrase ryôfu kenfu was also used by a writer in Fujo Shinbun, No 159; and by Kanno Suga in Muro Shinpô, 15/4/1906. I am indebted to Helene Bowen for pointing out Kanno's use of this phrase.
4.6 The Motherhood Protection Debate

Seitō ceased publication in 1916, but several contributors to the Bluestocking journal went on to engage in various kinds of feminist activism. The new intellectual journals such as Taiyō (The Sun), Chūō Kōron (Central Review) and Fujin Kōron (Women's Review) also provided a forum for further discussion of issues related to women's independence. The so-called *bosei hogo ronsō* "motherhood protection debate" in Taishō Japan centred on the issue of State financial assistance for working mothers, rather than the maternity or protective provisions encoded in the Factory Law.\(^{113}\) The first reference to the possibility of such State support that I have found is in the women's newspaper *Fujo Shinbun* \(^{114}\) at the time of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5). Here the issue is the support of war widows and their families. The debate between Yosano Akiko, Hiratsuka Raichō and others discussed State assistance for supporting mothers in more general terms. Articles related to this issue appeared in several journals from 1915 to 1919, but I will focus on several contributions around the end of the decade in which the different feminist positions on this issue are crystallized.\(^{115}\)

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\(^{115}\)For documents related to this debate, see *Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryō Shūsei*, Volume 8 pp231-262, Kōuchi, *Shiryō: Bosei Hogo Ronsō*, passim.
The issue of "motherhood protection" was also alluded to in two editorials in the progressive women's newspaper Fujo Shinbun as early as 1917. Fukushima Shirō refers to a recent incident where a widow had committed suicide with her children on being unable to support her family. This incident is used to argue for the necessity of legislation to look after such families. Fukushima notes that in Europe two movements had developed: a women's rights movement (fujin sanseiken undō) and a mother's rights movement (boken yōgo undō). In Japan, argues Fukushima, the more pressing need is a movement for the protection of motherhood (bosei hogo undō).

In March 1918 Yosano Akiko published a short article in the progressive women's journal Fujin Kōron criticising calls for State protection (i.e. financial assistance) for mothers on the grounds that this displayed a "dependence mentality" irai shugi. Yosano continued the theme in a series of articles in the journal Taiyō, where she stated that no woman should marry or bear children until she was capable of financial independence. Yosano placed women who asked for State support in the same category as the "aged or disabled who require institutional care".

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117 Fukushima, 'Bosei o hogo seyo', p161.

118 Fukushima, 'Bosei o hogo seyo (futatabi)'; p162-163. The theme would be continued in several subsequent editorials. See: 'Bosei hogo no hoken', Fujo Shinbun, 28/6/1918; reprinted in Fujinkai Sanjūgonen, pp165-167; 'Bosei no kakuchō', Fujo Shinbun, 10/1/1926; reprinted in Fujinkai Sanjūgonen, pp167-169; 'Bosei Hogo no Kyūyō', Fujo Shinbun, 7/2/1926, reprinted in Fujinkai Sanjūgonen, pp171-172; 'Joken setsu to Bosei hogo setsu', Fujo Shinbun 26/4/1931, reprinted in Fujinkai Sanjūgonen, pp175-176; 'Bosei no kakuchō (futatabi)’, Fujo Shinbun, 16/4/1933; reprinted in Fujinkai Sanjūgonen, pp169-170. Later editorials refer to the creation of a committee to lobby for the creation of a Mother and Child Assistance Act. See the discussion of this campaign in Chapter Six below.

Yosano's view has resonance for more recent feminist discussions of gender and the welfare state. Yosano recognised the dilemma of women who must choose between dependence on an individual male or dependence on a patriarchal State, but believed that it was possible for women to reject both alternatives.\textsuperscript{120}

Hiratsuka Raichō, in the next issue of \textit{Fujin Kōron}, accused Yosano of simplifying complex social problems, and jumping to subjective conclusions on the basis of her own - rather atypical - experience.\textsuperscript{121} Yosano, she said, talked as if "she knew nothing about the physical and mental situation of women, or the economic life of women under the present system".\textsuperscript{122} Hiratsuka pointed out the difficulty of women achieving financial independence in the present labour market, where their job opportunities are restricted, and wages low. In such a situation, the State has a responsibility to provide assistance. Hiratsuka also included discussion of illegitimate children, showing that she recognized that some women raised children outside the conventional family system.

Hiratsuka tried to explore the social context of decisions concerning reproduction and childcare, rejecting the extreme individualism espoused by Yosano:

\begin{quote}
The mother is the source of life, and when a woman becomes a mother, she moves from the realm of private existence to an existence which is part of society, the nation, and humanity. For this reason, the protection of the mother is not just a matter of individual happiness. Rather, because it ensures the livelihood
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{120}Yosano Akiko, 'Nendo Jizō', \textit{Tairyō}, Volume 24, March-August 1918; excerpts in \textit{Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryō Shūsei}, Volume 8, pp233-239.

\textsuperscript{121}Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Bosei hogo no shuchō wa irai shugi ni arazu - Yosano, Kaetsu Joshi e', \textit{Fujin Kōron}, Vol 3, no 5, 1918, in \textit{Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryō Shū sei}, Volume 8, p231.

\textsuperscript{122}Hiratsuka, 'Bosei hogo no shuchō wa irai shugi ni arazu', p231.
of the child, it is necessary for the whole of society and all of humanity. Because the maternal function has such a social meaning, I think it is mistaken to equate the demand for State protection for a mother who, through childbirth, has lost the ability to work, with "the care of the aged and disabled in institutions". Even if there is such a similarity, this is no reason for denying protection to such women."123

Hiratsuka's emphasis on the social meaning of motherhood showed that her thought had progressed from the individualist emphasis of her Seitō writings to include a recognition of the social context of individual decisions on the care and maintenance of children. While official ideology articulated the family and State, and expected women's support for State policies, there had been little suggestion that the State should intervene in the financial maintenance of mothers and children. Rather, this was seen to be the responsibility of the family unit.

A different perspective on the relationship between women and the State appeared in an editorial in Fujo Shinbun in 1918. In this editorial Fukushima Shirō makes an argument sometimes found in European and Australian discussions of the necessity for State support for motherhood. He argues that bearing children is analogous to military service.124 While men risk their lives in combat, so that enemy forces will be reduced by one; women risk their lives in childbirth, so that our own forces will be increased by one. Therefore, one could argue that women who die in childbirth should be honoured in the same way as war dead, and women who survive childbirth should be treated like war heroes. In European and American magazines, according to Fukushima, such proposals are already being put


124 See the discussion of these issues in Marilyn Lake, 'Mission Impossible: How Men Gave Birth to the Australian Nation - Nationalism, Gender and Other Seminal Acts, Gender and History, Volume 4, No 3, Autumn 1992, pp305-322.
forward quite seriously. Fukushima calls for the creation of a system of "mothers' insurance" on the model of Italy, which treats pregnancy as a form of disability. However, he realises the difficulty of arguing for such a system in Japan, which still does not have a proper workers' insurance system. This does not, however, decrease the urgency of the need for a mothers' insurance system. So far, however, I have seen little evidence that this particular argument was influential in the Japanese context, although the participants in the motherhood protection debate were keenly interested in theorizing the relationship between women and the State.

Hiratsuka's call for State assistance for supporting mothers could be seen as pointing out the contradictions of the official discourse on the relationship between family and State. Similar discussions in other national contexts often led women to demand political rights commensurate with their responsibility in rearing children for the support of State policies. Hiratsuka, too, became involved in the demand for women's political rights in her subsequent activities in the New Women's Association.

The July issue of Taiyō carried Yosano's reply where she refuted Hiratsuka point by point. Yosano could not agree with Hiratsuka's faith in the State, and reiterated her faith in individualism. Change at the national level could only be brought about by first achieving change at the individual level. Hiratsuka, according to Yosano, was guilty of glorifying motherhood. Yosano

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125 Fukushima, Hoken, p166.
126 Fukushima, Hoken, p166-167.
127 C.f. Caroline Rowan, 'Mothers. Vote Labour! The State, the Labour Movement and Working-Class Mothers, 1900-1918', in Rosalind Brut & Caroline Rowan (eds) Feminism, Culture and Politics, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1982, pp82: "If childrearing and housewifery were civic duties, they could demand civic rights in return."
128 Yosano Akiko, 'Nendo Jizō', Taiyō, vol 24, no 7, 1918, in Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryō Shusei, Volume 8, p233-239.
was perceptive in pointing to the dangers of an excessive glorification of motherhood, and emphasised that motherhood was only one part of women's lives:

Hiratsuka gives motherhood "absolute respect". I do not think that being a father or mother is the most highly valued part of human life. For this reason, I am opposed to kenbo ryōsai shugi. Of course I do recognise that being a mother or father is one aspect of human life which has its relative value. But I do not think that becoming a mother is the means for a woman to achieve supreme happiness. 129

Yamada Waka, another former contributor to the Bluestocking journal,130 entered the debate by emphasising the family as the basic unit of society, and emphasising the different contributions made by men and women.131 Yamada affirmed the principle of the family wage, assuming that if men received a wage which would support a wife and family, then the problem of "motherhood protection" would be obviated.132

Although Yamada's emphasis on the the positive evaluation of women's capacity for motherhood had something in common with Hiratsuka, her emphasis on an idealised form of the family was incompatible with Hiratsuka's rejection of the family system. The rejection of the family system and conventional marriage meant facing the question of how to reconcile the desire of the 'new women' for independence and autonomy with the realities

129 Yosano, ibid, p234.


131 Yamada Waka, 'Kongo no Fujin Mondai o Teishōsu', original publication details unclear, reproduced in Kōuchi, Shiryō: Bosai Hogo Ronsō, pp91-95. See also Yamada Waka, 'Fujin o Madowasu Fujinron', Bunka Undō, No 100, October/November 1918, in Kōuchi, Shiryō: Bosai Hogo Ronsō, pp168-176.

132 Yamada Waka, 'Kongo no Fujin Mondai o Teishōsu', pp91-95.
of reproduction and childcare. Hiratsuka had also recognised that not all women bear children within the 'protection' of the family system.

The debate on "motherhood protection" raised several issues which were to recur over the next few years.\textsuperscript{133} What is the social significance of procreation - is it an individual matter, or a social, public matter? Who should bear financial responsibility for the support of children - the individual or the State? What is the relationship between State and individual? Yosano represented a form of bourgeois individualism, where each person's situation depended on individual effort. Hiratsuka recognised the inequities of capitalism, but relied on welfare provisions to redress these inequities. Yamada relied on an idealised family system supported by a family wage. Socialist Yamakawa Kikue's contribution to the debate brought out the competing visions of political change implicit in the views of Hiratsuka and Yosano, and placed the other writers in historical context.\textsuperscript{134}

Yamakawa identified Yosano with the "women's rights" (joken) movement espoused by Wollstonecraft and others in eighteenth century Europe. Such ideas as individual rights, educational freedom, equal employment opportunities, financial independence, and suffrage were congenial in capitalist society. Hiratsuka, on the other hand, represented the "mother's rights" (boken) theory of Swedish feminist Ellen Key.\textsuperscript{135} Maternalist


\textsuperscript{134} Yamakawa Kikue, 'Yosano, Hiratsuka Ryôshî no ronsô', Fujin Kôron, Volume 3, No 7, 1918, in Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryô Shûsei, Volume 8, p239-248.

\textsuperscript{135} For discussion of Ellen Key's influence on Japanese feminism, see Kaneko Sachiko, 'Taihôki ni okeru seiyô josei kaihô ron juyô no hôhô - Ellen Key Ren'bai to kekkon o tegakari ni', Shakai Kagaku Jaanaru, No 24, October 1985.
feminists recognised the sacrifices made by women under waged labour in the capitalist system, and attempted to compensate for these sacrifices. Key and her followers have, said Yamakawa:

gone beyond the [women's rights campaigners] in recognising the problems brought about by capitalism, but [have] no program for basic political change - rather they rely on policies of financial assistance which only provide partial solutions.136

Yamakawa recognised the strengths of both arguments, while cautioning on the dangers of maternalism. She admitted, however, that striving for financial independence, or asking for State assistance were necessary short-term measures. Yamakawa noted that neither Yosano nor Hiratsuka challenged the capitalist system, and stated that only the destruction of existing economic relations would solve these problems:

As someone who does not expect, or even believe in, the continuation of the present economic system, I do not give economic independence the same absolute value as Yosano, but I recognise that economic independence is necessary in the present situation. And I realise that the sacrifices made in the name of financial independence must be recognised as the price we have to pay - as a stage we must go through - in the process of creating a higher society - a better society. At the same time, I recognise that there is some truth in the insistence of Key and her followers on motherhood protection as a way of lessening the burden of mothers and children - the ones most likely to have their needs sacrificed in the introduction of such measures...

Unlike Yosano, I have little faith in suffrage as a way of bringing about an ideal society, and unlike Hiratsuka, I do not believe in waiting on the benevolence of the State - on these points I should state that I differ from both writers.137


137 Yamakawa, 'Yosano, Hiratsuka Ryôshi no ronsô', p245.
What these women were debating involved competing visions for social change.\textsuperscript{138} Yosano Akiko had faith in liberal individualism and rejected dependence on men or on a patriarchal State. Hiratsuka Raichô valorised motherhood but emphasized the social meaning of motherhood and expected the support of a welfare State. Neither Yosano nor Hiratsuka challenged the capitalist system. Yamakawa Kikue saw the measures proposed by Hiratsuka as basically reformist - useful in the short term but failing to contribute to the long-term transformation of society according to socialist principles. Yamakawa also identified the class basis of these debates, accusing Yosano of being bourgeois through and through.\textsuperscript{139}

In contrast with the above writers, Yamada Waka provided little challenge to existing gender relations. She emphasised an idealised family system and a gendered division of labour. In Yamada’s later writings, she would make explicit links between maternalist values and nationalist values. In an article on women’s liberation in the journal \textit{Fujin to Shinshakai} (Women and the New Society), which she edited from 1920, Yamada eulogised a mother’s love as “the fount of all that is good, the seedbed of human compassion, the source of patriotism - the source of social order.”\textsuperscript{140}

What brings together the Meiji discussion of protective legislation for women workers, and the Taishô debate on State assistance for supporting mothers is a view of women as needing the protection of a strong State. Both of these aspects of social policy are referred to as \textit{bosei hogo} “protection of


\textsuperscript{139}Yamakawa, ‘Yosano, Hiratsuka Ryôshi no ronsô’

\textsuperscript{140}Yamada Waka, ‘Fujin no Kaihô to wa’, \textit{Fujin to Shinshakai}, No3, May 1920, p10. Some copies of \textit{Fujin to Shinshakai} are held in the Ôhara Social Research Institute. (Nos 3-9 (May - November 1920), 11-13 (January - March 1921)).
motherhood" in the Japanese literature. However, I shall argue below that there are in fact several distinct areas of social policy involved here. It would perhaps be simplistic to attempt to summarise these debates in terms of recent feminist discussion of "equality versus difference". What is at stake is more than the issue of biological differences between men and women. Rather, these debates involve several features of the social organization of waged labour, domestic labour, childcare, and the financial support of children. These discussions also highlight the fact that the relationship between individual and State is a gendered relationship, and that this recognition must form part of strategies for social change. As other writers have pointed out, discussions of the relationship between family and State inevitably highlight the intersection of class and gender politics.

4.7 Discourses of Protection

What is normally referred to in the Japanese literature as *bosei hogo* "motherhood protection" actually refers to several distinct areas of social policy, each of which implies a different definition of motherhood. I have

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142 Barbara Molony, in 'Equality versus Difference: The Japanese Debate Over Motherhood Protection, 1915-1950', concentrates on the notion of equality versus difference, and discusses what she calls the "body-centred" emphasis of much of the discussion of 'motherhood protection' from 1915 to 1950. In the following, I shall argue that the use of the one label, *bosei hogo*, for several different areas of social policy obscures the fact that what is often being discussed has more to do with social structures than biological difference.

143 c.f. Rowan, 'Mothers Vote Labour!', p60: "If one regards the family as a key site of patriarchal power relations, albeit as a result of historical development, rather than biological inevitability, then state intervention in the family can be seen as the point of intersection of class and gender struggle and the point at which tensions and contradictions between the two are likely to be most evident."
isolated four separate areas: maternity provisions, protective provisions, financial assistance for supporting mothers, and childcare.

*Maternity provisions* refers to maternity leave and nursing leave provided by employers during pregnancy and breastfeeding. *Maternity provisions* are directed at the biological mother - the woman who faces the physical conditions of pregnancy, parturition, and feeding, and as such are relatively uncontroversial. Such provisions were encoded in the Factory Law of 1911, although it is questionable how many women were actually able to take advantage of these provisions.

Other regulations prevent women workers (whether or not they are mothers) from working late at night, from working overtime, or from working in dangerous industries such as mining. I shall reserve the phrase *protective provisions* for these regulations, which are at least partly concerned with protecting the safety of women workers. *Protective provisions* are directed at all women workers, on the premise that they are *potential* mothers. This is revealed by the fact that legislation does not distinguish between women who do and do not have children. All women are protected from shift work or late night work on the grounds that they potentially have responsibility for childcare. The health of young women is protected for future childbearing. *Protective provisions*, then, are directed not at the physical conditions of pregnancy for any individual woman, but rather at an abstract potential.

There was also discussion of the issue of the provision of financial assistance by the State for mothers without the financial means to support their children because of such reasons as widowhood or desertion. *Financial assistance for supporting mothers* is directed at the person who
has financial responsibility for the day-to-day care and upkeep of children. This woman is theoretically distinct from the biological mother, and the person who actually carries out the labour of childcare. Social policy should also consider the problem of childcare, but this problem was not addressed explicitly in the initial stages of the motherhood protection debate.

There are several reasons for trying to disentangle the disparate meanings subsumed under the phrase *bosei hogo*. Each of the above policies implies a different definition of the word *bosei* "motherhood". Where the biological facts of pregnancy are involved, it is necessary to implement policies directed solely at women. Protective provisions are directed not at an individual woman, or mother, but rather at an abstract potential for "motherhood". This is revealed by the fact that protective legislation is directed at all women, not just pregnant women or those with children. Where childcare and financial support are concerned, however, several approaches are possible, including individual responsibility, communal solutions, partial State assistance, or full State responsibility.

The use of the word *hogo* "protection" for such provisions as maternity leave is also problematic - implying that pregnancy is a handicap suffered by women, rather than a socially useful function which should be supported by society as a whole. In the case of what I have called *protective provisions*, the implication is that women are physically weaker than men, and therefore need protection. This impression is reinforced by the fact that

factory legislation groups women and minors together. Where financial assistance is concerned, it seems that women and children are the target of legislation; presumably it is the effects of poverty they are being protected from. Once again, there are several possible solutions to this issue, including individualist solutions, communal solutions, State solutions, or reliance on the attainment of a "family wage".

By conducting this debate according to the language of bosei hogo, The feminists of the Taishō period unwittingly reinforced the notion that the normal relationship between the State and individual women is one of "protector" and "protected". Thus, a common ideology lay behind the discussion of the "protection" of women workers and the discussion of State financial assistance in the "motherhood protection" debate. As we have seen above, labour organizers shared this view of women as the objects of protection. The use of the language of protection places women in the position of seeking protection from a strong State, rather than as citizens who can demand rights from the State.

Other writers have referred to such a view of the relationship between women and the State as the "discourse of protection".145 While men are positioned as workers or as citizens with rights, women, according to the discourse of protection, are positioned as weak, and as supplicants, in need of the protection of the State.146 The implication is that the category of

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146On the implications of discourses of protection, Fraser quotes Judith Stiehm: "As Judith Stiehm has argued, this division between male protectors and female protected introduces further dissonance into women's relation to citizenship. It confirms the gender subtext of the citizen role. And the view of women as in need of men's protection "underlies access not just to ... the means of destruction, but also [to] the means of production - witness all the 'protective' legislation that has surrounded women's access to the workplace - and [to] the means of reproduction, [-witness] women's status as wives and sexual partners"."; Judith Stiehm, "The Protected, the Protector, the Defender," in Judith Hicks Stiehm, ed., Women
"woman", and the categories of "worker" or "citizen" are mutually exclusive. Only men are constructed as citizens, while only women are constructed as supplicants in need of protection.

Another feature of these discussions concerned different views of social transformation. Yosano Akiko espoused an individualist view of the relationship between individual and State. She resisted State intervention and saw individual independence as the solution to problems related to the care and maintenance of children. Hiratsuka Raichō, while valorizing 'motherhood' as an image of women's creativity and power, also discussed the social meaning of motherhood, and was led to seek State support for the resolution of women's problems. At this stage, however, Hiratsuka did not seek the transformation of the capitalist system. She would go on to found the New Women's Association (Shin Fujin Kyōkai) with Ichikawa Fusae in 1920.

Yamakawa Kikue brought a socialist perspective to discussion of the relationship between individual and State, rejecting individualist solutions, and rejecting solutions which failed to challenge the capitalist system. For Yamakawa, this meant an engagement with socialist and labour politics. This debate highlighted the issue of class differences between women, an issue which would become important in socialist discussions of women as workers. The debate also allowed Yamakawa to continue the process of defining the differences between socialist and liberal feminist positions on women's issues. This process would continue into the 1920s and 1930s, with further refinement of the socialist position in debates with anarchist women.


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4.8 Speaking as a Mother

According to official ideology, women were positioned as wives and as mothers. For middle class women, this involved promotion of their activities as educators of their children and as supporters of the militarist State through semi-official patriotic organizations. For working class women, the focus of official policies on motherhood became the production of healthy recruits. When the reproductive needs of the State conflicted with the needs of industry for women workers, the working conditions of female factory workers became a social issue, and this was linked to the enactment of factory legislation. For labour organizers, too, women were primarily seen in familial terms, as wives, mothers, and daughters rather than as workers. Unions, like the bureaucracy, took a protective attitude to women workers.

For feminist writers, however, the capacity for motherhood was what made women distinctive, and there were attempts to link women's reproductive capacity with creativity, power, and genius. While such imagery was powerful, there were limitations in a view of women's creative power which was not linked to a consciousness of the social. Others used the maternal as a metaphor for a caring society and attempted to give legitimacy to what were seen as 'feminine' values.

Hiratsuka argued for the importance of the social meaning of motherhood, and attempted to use this position in order to make demands on the State. However, while motherhood was linked to the concept of protection, women were inevitably constructed as supplicants, rather than as citizens who could make demands. Given this view of women, it was necessary for women to reposition themselves as workers and as citizens, in order to gain legitimacy to approach the State with demands rather than as supplicants. In socialist discourse, while women were primarily seen as
wives and as mothers, discussion of the "woman question" could be restricted to issues of marriage, the family, and reproduction. If women could be seen as workers, then all aspects of socialist theory and strategy could be seen to be relevant to women.

The Taishô debates on motherhood and related issues were important in clarifying the differences between liberal feminist, maternalist feminist and socialist views of social change. These debates highlighted the relationship between State policies and the supposedly individual matters of reproduction and childrearing. For someone like Yamakawa Kikue, this was an important stage in the definition of a socialist position on the 'woman question', a quest she would continue throughout her life. For a woman such as Hiratsuka Raichô, these debates brought a realization that writing alone was not enough to effect changes in women's situation. It was time for organized group action by women, although this was by necessity carried out within the limitations of Article Five of the Peace Police Law. Article Five was modified in February 1922, and this made possible the formation of organizations devoted to the cause of women's suffrage. Meanwhile, socialist women attempted a closer engagement with working women.

In the next two chapters, I will explore women's attempts to go beyond polemic and attempt to implement social change in various ways. Chapter Five will focus on women as workers. The contradictions involved in the disjunction between the identities of 'woman' and 'worker' led many

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148 Ichikawa Fusae and others formed the League for the Attainment of Women's Political Rights (Fujin Sanssainen Kakutoku Kisei Dômeikai) in 1924. The League's name was changed to Fusen Kakutoku Dômei (Women's Suffrage League) in April 1925. The issue of women's suffrage will be discussed in Chapter Six below.

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women to participate in labour activism, a path which brought women as workers into conflict with capital. Other women's activism, however, led them to attempt to engage more directly with State institutions, a theme which will be explored in more detail in Chapter Six, on women as activists.
CHAPTER FIVE: WORKERS (1919-1930)

In February 1919, Yamakawa Kikue contributed an article entitled, 'The Present and Future Situation of Working Women', to the journal Nihon Hyôron.¹ Yamakawa would become one of the major theorists of women's position within the socialist movement in the nineteen twenties, and had attempted to bring a socialist perspective to the 'woman question' in her debates with the 'Bluestockings'. Yamakawa now contributed to various intellectual journals and socialist publications. In this article, Yamakawa describes two encounters with working women. In the most recent incident, she is woken early in the morning by her baby, and takes him on a walk so as not to disturb the other members of her household. She observes the young female factory workers going to work. Yamakawa describes the "factory girls" (jokô) from the position of an outsider. She describes the poor women, dressed inadequately for the cold weather, going from the dormitory to the factory at the change of shifts. Yamakawa does not enter the factory, but describes the incessant noise of the machines which emanates from the factory at all times of the day. One young girl whom Yamakawa glimpses snatching a bite to eat on the way to work is described as being like "a cross between human, machine, and animal".² Yamakawa's distance from the young women is intensified when she describes the songs sung by the factory women. The songs, she says "have the same monotonous, detached tone as soldiers' songs". She only catches the phrase, "I was left at Ômori Station, and sold to the factory". For Yamakawa, this phrase "seems to tell the whole story of their lives."³


²Yamakawa, 'Rôdô Kaikyû no Shimai e', p55.

³Yamakawa, 'Rôdô Kaikyû no Shimai e', p56.
This scene takes her back to an earlier encounter with factory women. Seven or eight years earlier, she had accompanied a group of Salvation Army members on a factory visit. They taught the factory workers hymns, which preached that work was sacred, and that those who worked hard would be blessed by God. On this occasion, Yamakawa was angered by the inefficacy of religion in helping these women. But she, too, felt helpless. Sitting on a platform with the representatives of the Salvation Army, she was unable to bridge the gap between the evangelists and the workers. The spatial distance between Yamakawa and the factory workers dramatizes the gulf of class which separates them. Yamakawa is also, however, aware of her own position as a middle-class beneficiary of the exploitation of the working-class:

I wanted to leave the platform where I sat with the other visitors and join the factory girls. I wanted to apologise to these women. I wanted to prostrate myself before them. I wanted to do this because I was tormented by the guilty feeling that I - we - are the ones who have corrupted them, who have cheated them, who have trampled on them. So, I wanted to apologise to them, to tell them that I was their friend. Instead, I sat on the platform with their enemies. From the heated platform, I looked down on them, as they knelt, barefoot, in the unheated hall. I have never forgotten those feelings of guilt and distress.

Yamakawa then attempts to link the plight of the young women, who told her how much they hated night work, and how they wanted to go back to their home towns, with the broader question of organizing women in the labour movement. Yamakawa mentions the opinion that the large number of women workers had handicapped the development of the labour movement.

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4 Class difference is also dramatised in spatial terms in Fukuda Hideko's encounter with a female beggar. See section 1.1 above.


6 Yamakawa, 'Ródô Kaikyô no Shimai e', p58. This incident is also described at length in Yamakawa's autobiography, *Onna Nidai no Ki*, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1972.
in Japan. Yamakawa recognises the problems involved in organizing workers who are always under strict supervision and control, but affirms the possibility of making the slogan "Workers of the world unite" mean something for Japan's women workers.  

This article encapsulates the dilemma of the intellectual who cannot share the experiences of working women, but who wishes to use her intellectual understanding of the mechanisms of exploitation in the service of the working class. In the nineteen twenties, the socialist movement employed several strategies to organize proletarian women. These included the formation of socialist women's organizations such as the Sekirankai (Red Wave Society) and the Yôkakai (Eighth Day Society), the formation of women's divisions in union federations, and the formation of women's organizations affiliated to the socialist parties which were formed after the enactment of Universal Manhood Suffrage in 1925. For Yamakawa, attempts to bridge the gulf between intellectuals and working women included support for these socialist women's organizations and fighting for space for the inclusion of women's issues in the platforms of the proletarian parties and left-wing union federations. Such activities, however, were carried out in the context of a labour movement subject to constant repression and surveillance, and fragmented by factional disputes.


8 Yamakawa was most active, however, as a writer, translator, and interpreter of socialist ideas. In 1919 she published The Triumph of Women, a work heavily indebted to the ideas of August Bebel. (Yamakawa Kikue, Fujin no Shôri, Tokyo: Nihon Hyûronsha, 1919). Although Bebel's ideas had been influential since the days of the Heiminsha, it was not until 1923 that Yamakawa's full translation of Woman and Socialism appeared, under the title, Fujinron (On Women). By 1928, Yamakawa had also translated works of Gorky, Radek, Lenin and Kollontai. For a full listing of Yamakawa's writings, see: Sotozaki Mitsuhiro & Okabe Masako (eds) Yamakawa Kikue no Kôseki, Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1979.
Socialist thought underwent further refinement in this decade, as socialists and anarchists discussed political strategies and political theories, in debates known as the *ana-boru ronsō* (anarchist-bolshevist debates). Debates on socialist strategy intensified towards the end of the Taishō period, as more of the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin were translated into Japanese. In the 1930s, further debates, known as the *Rônô-Kôza* controversy, centred on the correct interpretation of the Meiji Restoration, and the implications for the implementation of socialist revolution in Japan. If the Meiji Restoration was seen as a bourgeois revolution, then Japan was ready for a proletarian revolution. If the Meiji Restoration was simply seen as an élite coup-d'état, then a two-stage revolutionary strategy would be necessary. With respect to women’s issues, these different perspectives affected the emphasis given to “feudal remnants” as an explanation for women’s present-day situation.

Workers in Japan celebrated May Day publicly for the first time in 1920, and thousands of workers gathered in Ueno Park in Tokyo. Women

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10 The reign of the Taishō Emperor ended in 1926. His successor, the Shōwa Emperor, reigned from 1926 to 1989.


14 Although 1920 was the first time May Day had been celebrated with a public demonstration, the members of the *Heiminsha* had marked May Day in a modest fashion from 1905. See: Tanaka Sōgorō (ed) *Shiryō: Nihon Shakai Undō Shi*, Tokyo: Tōzai Shuppansha, 1948, Volume 1, pp508-9.

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participated in May Day activities from the second May Day in 1921, when an estimated 10,000 workers marched. The *Nihon Shakai Shugi Dômei* (Japan Socialist League), a broad-based left-wing organization, was formed in December 1920, but an official opening could not be held due to the provisions of the Public Peace Police Law. The League was disbanded within six months. Other activities connected with the proletarian movement included the formation of a Birth Control Institute, whose members included Ishimoto Shidzue, Matsuoka Komakichi and Abe Isoo. The *Suiheisha* (Levellers' Society), an organization devoted to the liberation of the former outcast class, was also formed in 1922, as was the *Nihon Nômin Kumiai* (Japan Farmers' Union), an organization of tenant farmers, and the *Musan Seinen Dômei* (the Proletarian Youth League).

The Japan Communist Party was formed in July 1922. Leaders of the party included Sakai Toshihiko and Yamakawa Hitoshi, and women connected with the Party included Yamakawa Kikue, Nakasone Sadayo.

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20 For details of Nakasone Sadayo's life, see: Ezashi,*Sameyo Onnatachi*, pp96-120; Watanabe & Suzuki, *Tatakai ni Ikite*, pp34-35.
and Sakai Magara.\textsuperscript{21} The party was disbanded in 1924 after government crackdowns in the summer of 1923, and was not reformed until December 1926. Even though the party itself disbanded and re-formed several times, and largely operated as an underground organization, communists were active in the union federations. The extension of communist influence in the \textit{Sodomei} union federation culminated in the split of 1925. Communist elements were expelled from the \textit{Sodomei} and formed the \textit{Nihon Rodo Kumiai Hyogikai} (Japan Labour Unions Council, abbreviated as Hyogikai) on May 25th, 1925 \textsuperscript{22} A second split occurred in December 1926, resulting in the formation of the centrist \textit{Nihon Rodo Kumiai Domei} (Japan Labour Union League), and leaving the \textit{Sodomei} in the hands of the most moderate elements of the labour movement.\textsuperscript{23}

Left-wing political activity in the nineteen twenties, then, was characterised by acrimonious intellectual debates, accompanied by increased factionalism in the unions, proletarian parties, farmers' organizations, tenants' unions, and the women's divisions and women's leagues which followed the factionalism of the 'malestream' organizations. To simplify an immensely complicated picture, there were three major "cliques" involved: the Social Democratic clique,\textsuperscript{24} the centrist \textit{Nichiro} clique,\textsuperscript{25} and the left-wing Labour-


\textsuperscript{22}For a detailed discussion of the split, see Large, Organized Workers and Socialist Politics, pp62-71.

\textsuperscript{23}Refer to Appendix 2, Figure (a), for the factions of the prewar union movement.

\textsuperscript{24}The Social Democratic (Shaminkei) clique was based in the \textit{Sodomei} Union Federation and the \textit{Shakai Minshu To} (Social Democratic Party).

\textsuperscript{25}The centrist (\textit{Nichiro}) clique was based in the \textit{Nihon Rodo Kumiai Domei} (Japan Labour Union League) and the \textit{Nihon Rodo Nomin To} (Japan Labour-Farmer Party).
Farmer clique.26 Each one of these cliques was involved with one of the major union federations, which in turn formed the support base for an affiliated political party.27 While some communists continued to operate underground in the illegal Japan Communist Party after it was reformed, others operated in the left-wing of the legal proletarian party movement.

For women within the socialist movement, the nineteen twenties brought attempts to theorize the class position of women workers, and discussion of the best ways to mobilize these women. While women had largely been seen as "wives" and as "mothers", the "woman question" was thought to involve formulating a socialist position on issues related to marriage, the family, and reproduction. If women were recognized as "workers" then it would become apparent that all areas of socialist theory and strategy would affect women, and that effective mobilization of women workers was necessary for the success of the socialist movement.

While the Yûaikai (Friendly Society) had established a women's division in 1916, and this activity was carried on sporadically by the Sôdômei union federation, the communist-influenced Hyôgikai federation was the site for debate on the necessity of a separate women's division - a debate which went to the heart of questions of the relationship between socialist and feminist demands. Such debates on the most appropriate ways to organize women were continued with the formation of proletarian political parties after the enactment of Universal Manhood Suffrage in 1925. While the labour

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26 The left-wing (Rônô-ha) clique was based in the left-wing Hyôgikai union federation and the Rôdô Nômin Tô (Labour Farmer Party).

27 These factions are discussed in detail in Large, Organized Workers and Socialist Politics, pp 111-118. In this chapter I will mainly be concerned with women's participation in the labour organizations, and the debates surrounding strategies for mobilizing women workers. The proletarian political parties and their affiliated women's leagues will be discussed in the next chapter.
leaders of the Yûaikai/Sôdômei had primarily seen their female constituents as women rather than as workers, the 1920s saw attempts to theorize the class position of women workers, and the proper strategies for their mobilization.

State policy on labour was carried out in the context of Japan's participation in the Paris Peace Conference at the end of World War One, and the government's stated commitment to supporting the aims of the International Labour Organization as part of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. The Yûaikai and other Japanese union federations attempted to use the government's official support of the I.L.O. to put pressure on the government for the official recognition of unions and the improvement of working conditions. The agenda of the first I.L.O. conference in Washington in October 1919 included discussion of the eight hour day and the prohibition of night work by women and minors.\(^{28}\)

Modifications to the Factory Law were carried out in 1923 to become effective in 1926.\(^{29}\) The abolition of night work for women and minors was postponed a further three years, eventually being abolished in 1929.\(^{30}\) In other aspects of social policy related to labour, in 1926 there were


\(^{29}\)The minimum size of factory covered by the law was changed from fifteen workers to ten workers, meaning that 11% more factories came under the jurisdiction of the law. The minimum age of workers was raised from twelve to fifteen years old. The maximum permissible hours to be worked by women and minors was lowered from twelve hours to eleven hours. The principle of the abolition of night work for women was reiterated, but postponed again. *Large, Organized Workers and Socialist Politics*, p54; Sakurai Kinue, *Bosei Hogo Undôshi*, Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1987, pp42-48.

unsuccessful attempts to pass a union bill which would have legalised union activity. A conciliation bill was passed, however, and Article 17 of the Peace Police Law was repealed. The Health Insurance Law which had been passed in 1922 did not become effective until 1926.31

The government continued to view left-wing political activity with suspicion. In addition to official surveillance of socialists, several labour activists were murdered by police in the disorder following the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923. Other victims of this "white terror" were anarchist Ōsugi Sakae and his partner, former Bluestocking Itō Noe, who were murdered with their nephew in the aftermath of the earthquake. Ōsugi and Itō had moved to the industrial neighbourhood of Kameido as a sign of their commitment to the workers' movement.32

The enactment of Universal Manhood Suffrage in 1925 was counterbalanced by the enactment of the repressive Peace Preservation Law (Chian Iji Hō) of 1925. Communists and other leftists operated in a context of surveillance, censorship, and regular purges in the 1920s. Workers came into direct conflict with capital and State in strikes, and this activity intensified at the end of the decade. From 1929 to 1931, depression resulted in layoffs in the textile industry, and women workers were in the vanguard of some of the most militant labour disputes of the pre-war years.

Before considering in detail socialist views of women as workers, and women's participation in the socialist movement as workers, it is necessary to make some comments on the kinds of work performed by women in the first decades of the twentieth century.

31 Gordon, Labour and Imperial Democracy, pp140-141; Garon, State and Labour, pp123-130.

5.1 Women in Industry

For the period for which we have reliable statistics, roughly a third of women were classified as being engaged in gainful employment. The figures are 36.7% in 1920, and 32.69% in 1930. These figures do not, however, include women engaged in unpaid farm or domestic labour. Until at least 1936, the majority of gainfully employed women were in agriculture, although this proportion declined between 1906 (65.5%) and 1936 (57.4%). The high proportion of the population employed in the agricultural sector posed problems for the articulation of a form of socialist theory relevant to early twentieth century Japan, while the proportion of women engaged in agricultural labour presented particular problems for the conjunction of socialism and feminism. According to figures assembled by Odaka, mining workers were less than 1% of gainfully employed women between 1906 and 1936.

The next highest proportions of women gainfully employed were women working in factories or as domestic servants. Although women consistently formed a high proportion of the total number of workers in factories, there was a significant degree of gender segmentation according to industry.


34 One attempt to address this problem is: Maruoka Hideko, *Nihon Nôson Fujin Mondai*, Tokyo: Köyó Shoin, 1937.

35 Odaka, 'Redundancy Utilized', p17.
1909, for example, women comprised 85.2% of workers in textiles, but only 2.0% in machinery and metal manufacturing. In food, chemicals, and other industries, women were around a third of total employees.\textsuperscript{36} By 1930, 40% of women in manufacturing were married, suggesting that the stereotype of the young farm girl filling in time before marriage was no longer applicable.\textsuperscript{37} Home-based piece work was an important source of income for married women in urban areas. One survey in Tokyo in 1926 found that 90% of piece-workers were or had been married.\textsuperscript{38}

Although the labour movement concentrated on factory labour (after belatedly recognizing the importance of the high proportion of women workers),\textsuperscript{39} domestic servants formed a significant proportion of women engaged in waged work from the turn of the century. Between 1906 and 1936, between 5% and 8% of gainfully employed women were engaged in domestic work, fewer than the number of women engaged in manufacturing as a whole, but roughly comparable with the proportion of women engaged in textile work. It was not until 1916 that the proportion of domestic servants was overtaken by textile workers. Given that domestic service is likely to be perceived as a gender-typed occupation, and does not fit the model of waged labour addressed in Marxist theory, it is perhaps unsurprising that the labour movement initially paid little systematic attention to the possibility of mobilizing domestic workers. We can, however, see demands for...

\textsuperscript{36}Odaka, 'Redundancy Utilized', p17.

\textsuperscript{37}Barbara Molony notes that relatively few women in factories in the 1920s returned to villages after leaving one place of employment. Most went on to other factory employment, or other kinds of waged work, or stayed in the city as housewives after marrying a fellow worker. Molony, 'Activism among Women in the Taishô Textile Industry', p224.

\textsuperscript{38}Uno, 'One Day at a Time', pp41-2.

\textsuperscript{39}See section 5.2 below.
"Improvement in maids' working conditions" in the policy statements and newsletters of the women's leagues formed in the early Shôwa period.40

Other categories of work engaged in by women included various kinds of service work: in retailing, restaurants, and entertainment. These industries, too, were initially neglected by the labour movement, but we can see attempts to organize waitresses in the early Shôwa period. Prostitution, in socialist writing, served as a metaphor for the exploitation and degradation suffered by workers under the capitalist system, but these workers did not become obvious targets for the attention of labour organizations.41

It is difficult to quantify the numbers of "professional women" (shokugyô fujin), as the methods of categorizing white-collar occupations changed from survey to survey. However, the category of shokugyô fujin was a recognizable one in the popular and academic discourse of the Taishô and early Shôwa periods. For women, growth was particularly conspicuous in the categories of nursing and teaching; and the number of white-collar women employed in government offices almost doubled between 1920 and 1930.42 The visibility of these new categories of women workers in urban areas can perhaps be connected with the developing public discourse on the "modern girl", the successor to the "new woman" of the Taishô period.43

40See section 6.2 below.
41The number of licensed prostitutes remained around 50,000 in the Taishô and Shôwa periods. Similar numbers worked as geisha, or as waitresses. Sheldon Garon, 'The World's Oldest Debate? Prostitution and the State in Imperial Japan, 1900-1945', American Historical Review, June 1933, p714.
42Nagy, 'Middle-Class Working Women', pp201-204.
5.2 Organizing Women

The task of mobilizing women in socialist organizations involved several stages: the theorization of the class position of women workers; debates on the most effective way to mobilize these workers; the creation of effective organizational structures for this task; and a conceptual shift in the way women workers were imagined in labour movement writings. Much of the theorization of these issues was initially carried out by educated, middle-class leaders of the socialist movement. However, it soon became necessary to use the union movement to nurture labour leaders - both men and women - from within the ranks of working people.

5.2.1 The Sekirankai and the Yôkakai

In 1921, Japanese socialists celebrated May Day for the second time. At this second May Day socialist women participated for the first time, and this was one of the first activities of the socialist women's group, the Sekirankai (Red Wave Society), established in April 1921. The founding members of the Sekirankai included Sakai Magara and her step-mother Sakai Tameko, Takatsu Tayoko, Kutsumi Fusako, Akitsuki Shizue, Kitagawa Chiyo.

44 For the development of the Sekirankai, see Ezashi, Akiko Sameyo Onnatachi; passim; interview with Kondô [Sakai] Magara in Watanabe & Suzuki Tatkaei ni Ikite; pp8-33; interview with Yamakawa Kikue in Keiishi Hyôron Henshûbu, Kindai Nihon Joseishi e no Shôgen, pp42-43; Tajima, Hitsuji no Michi, pp61-66; Kondô, Watashi no Kaisô, Volume 1, pp185-189; Volume 2, pp7-62, pp98-134; Shapcott, 'The Red Chrysanthemum'; Yamakawa, Fujin Undô Shôshi, pp137-141.

45 For details of Sakai Tameko's life and work, see: Ezashi, Sameyo Onnatachi, pp30-50; Kondô, Watashi no Kaisô, Volume 1, pp101-103.


47 For details of Kutsumi Fusako's life and work, see: Makise Kikue, Kutsumi Fusako no Kayomi: Meiji Shakai Shugi kara Zoruge Jiken e, Tokyo: Shisô no Kagakusha, 1975; Ôtake Hitoko, Haha to Watashi: Kutsumi Fusako to no Hibi, Tokyo: Tsukiji Shokan, 1984; Ezashi, Sameyo Onnatachi, pp162-192; Watanabe & Suzuki, Tatkaei ni Ikite, p34; Kondô, Watashi no Kaisô, Volume 1, pp122-138. Kutsumi was first inspired to come to Tokyo by the example of Fukuda Hideko, and helped Fukuda in the production of the magazine Sekai Fujin.
Hashiura Haruko and Hashiura Riku, with Yamakawa Kikue and Itô Noe acting as advisors. It has often been pointed out that many of the members of the Sekirankai had connections with male activists in the socialist movement. Even Yamakawa herself has described the Sekirankai as being like 'the Women's Division of the Socialist League'. However, this does not seem to be any reason to belittle the contributions of Yamakawa Kikue, Sakai Magara and others to the socialist movement.

In preparation for May Day, the Sekirankai manifesto was written by Yamakawa Kikue, and this was distributed as a leaflet enjoining women to participate in May Day and join the socialist movement. In this leaflet, Yamakawa Kikue employs the language of class struggle:

May Day is the day for the proletarians, for we workers who are oppressed. For centuries and centuries, women and workers have endured together a history of oppression and ignorance. But the dawn is approaching. The morning gong that was struck in Russia signals the first step in the victory that will minute by minute banish the darkness of capitalism from the face of the earth. Sisters, listen to the power of women that is embodied in the sound of the gong. Let us exert the utmost of our strength and, together with our brothers, strike the gong that will signal the liberation of the proletariat of Japan. Women who have been awakened, join the May Day march! The Sekirankai is a women's organisation that plans to participate in the enterprise to destroy the capitalist society and build a socialist society. The capitalist society turns us into slaves at home and oppresses us as wage slaves outside the home. This is a society which has driven many of our sisters

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48 For details of Akitsuki Shizue’s life and work, see: Ezashi, Sameyo Onnatachi, pp234-241; Watanabe & Suzuki, Tatakai ni Ikite, p33.

49 For details of Kitagawa Chiyo’s life and work, see: Ezashi, Sameyo Onnatachi, pp194-211; Watanabe & Suzuki, Tatakai ni Ikite, p36.


51 For details of Hashiura Riku’s life and work, see: Ezashi, Sameyo Onnatachi, pp74-93;

52 Yamakawa Kikue, Fujin Undô Shôshi, p123.
into prostitution, and for the sake of its own aggressive ambitions has taken away our beloved fathers, lovers, children and brothers - a society which for the sake of its own greedy profiteers, greets the proletariat of other countries with artillery and slaughter...
The Sekirankai declares all-out war on this cruel, shameless society. Women who wish to be liberated, join the Sekirankai. Socialism offers the only way to save humankind from the oppressions and abuses of capitalism. Sisters, who love justice and humanity, join the socialist movement.53

Because Yamakawa was writing a pamphlet for a political demonstration, rather than a closely argued academic article, we should not treat this as a clearly articulated statement of her political position, but it is still interesting to consider how she framed the meaning of socialism for women for this particular audience (i.e. possible participants in the May Day march).

The stated enemy is "capitalist society" (shihon shugi shakai), rather than individual males, patriarchy, individual capitalists, or the State as an autonomous entity. Exploitation under capitalist society is seen in gendered terms. Women are not only "wage slaves", but are also exploited as "slaves at home". In addition, exploitation takes on a corporeal dimension, as women are forced into prostitution, while men are forced into military service. Official discourse drew analogies between textile work and military service: different ways in which women and men could work for the nation.54 Socialists, on the other hand, drew analogies between prostitution and military service: different ways in which working class women and men were exploited in the interests of the ruling class.55

53 'Fujin ni Gekisu', held in Ōhara Social Research Institute, reproduced in Ezashi, Sameyo Onnatachi, pp23-24; Kondō, Watashi no Kaisō, Volume 2, pp58-59; translation in Shapcott, 'The Red Chrysanthemum', p13. Note the use of the metaphor of "the dawn" of socialism, a convention from European socialist writing which was also regularly employed in the Japanese context.

54 See section 5.3.1 below.

55 The prostitute could also serve as a metaphor for the exploitation of the proletarian class as a whole. See Shea's discussion of Hayama Yoshiki's story, 'Inbailu' (Prostitute), which appeared in the proletarian literary journal Bungei Sensei in November 1925: Shea, Leftwing Literature in Japan, pp154-156.
Although there is some recognition that exploitation takes gendered forms, it is also possible to argue that feminist struggle has here been assimilated into the class struggle, with "women and workers" united in a common struggle. Similarly, the evocation of class consciousness may be seen as being somewhat ritualistic. It is hard to escape the feeling that Yamakawa's belief in class consciousness is a matter of faith, rather than a keenly felt identity with the needs of male and female workers. As in Fukuda Hideko's writings, there is a sense of distance from the concrete struggles of working people. Yamakawa is still, in effect, gazing on the factory women from outside. While the logic of Fukuda's autobiographical text was that of liberal individualism (despite her protestations of faith in socialism), the logic of Yamakawa's manifesto is that of class struggle. The violent language of class struggle employed in this text also contrasts with the gentle and caring version of socialism espoused by Nishikawa Fumiko in the early nineteen hundreds.

About twenty women marched under the red and black flags of the Sekirankai on this May Day. The flags were made by Hashiura Haruko, enrolled in a dressmaking school at the time. All of the women were arrested. A photograph of Hashiura Haruko's arrest appeared in the next day's newspaper, and this photograph resulted in her harassment, and eventual withdrawal from the school. In addition, Akitsuki Shizue and Nakanomyô Ine were arrested for violation of press regulations after the distribution of the pamphlet bearing Yamakawa's manifesto, and the next major activity of the organization was fundraising for their fines of 20 yen.

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56 See section 1.1 above.
57 See section 3.2 above.
58 Ezashi, Sameyo Onnatachi, pp87-88.
A lecture meeting was held on June 12th. Kutsumi Fusako introduced veteran speakers Ishikawa Sanshirō and Akita Ujaku, who were joined by Itō Noe, Fujimori Seikichi, and Sakai Magara. Sakai Magara's first speech in public was a great success. She lightheartedly explained the conditions of her recent arrest, making fun of a policeman who had first referred to her as "o-tafuku" (a comical figure with chubby cheeks), and then made things worse by referring to her as "o-jōsan" (young lady). She resented the comparison with (middle-class) "young ladies", who do nothing at home, while waiting for someone to come along and marry them.

In July of the same year, a series of lectures was held over five evenings. The list of speakers in this series tells us something about the genealogy of the Sekirankai. In addition to the women of the Sekirankai, several male socialist activists contributed lectures to the series. Several of these speakers, including Sakai Toshihiko and Ishikawa Sanshirō, had contributed to the Heiminsha lectures on the "woman question" in the nineteen hundreds. Indeed, the topics of many of the lectures in

59 Watanabe & Suzuki, Tatakai ni Ikite; p9-10.

60 For accounts of this evening, see: Ezashi, Sameyo Onnatchi, pp39-41; interview with Kondō (Sakai) Magara in Watanabe & Suzuki Tatakai ni Ikite; pp19-20; Yamakawa, Nihon Fujin Undō Shōshi. Yamakawa reports that the speeches were stopped by police, but this does not match Ezashi's account, which includes details of Sakai Magara's speech, based on contemporary newspaper accounts. Yamakawa may have confused this meeting with the first International Women's Day meeting which was disbanded by police (see below).

61 Ishikawa Sanshirō spoke on "My View of Women".

62 Akita Ujaku spoke on "Biological Development and Women."

63 Itō Noe spoke on "A Difficult Passage for the Women's Movement".

64 Popular left-wing writer Fujimori spoke on "The Awakening of Japanese Women."

65 Ezashi, Sameyo Onnatchi, pp40-41.

66 See section 3.3 above.
the *Sekirankai* series followed on directly from the *Heiminsha* series. Sakai Toshihiko now continued his exposition of the thought of Friedrich Engels, Lewis Henry Morgan, Lester Ward, and Edward Carpenter. Itô Noe was a former editor of the Bluestocking journal, *Seitô*, and had been responsible for translations of the work of anarchist feminist Emma Goldman. She now, however, distanced herself from the "Bluestockings" with her criticism of the "Mother's Rights" theorists. Yamakawa Kikue contributed a discussion of the First International and the Third International.67 The new generation of activists was represented by Sakai Magara, nineteen-year-old daughter of Sakai Toshihiko. Other speakers included Kutsumi Fusako, Nakasone Sadayo,68 Fujimori Seikichi, Eguchi Kan, and Akita Ujaku. A consciousness of the *Sekirankai*’s place in history is evident in the themes of two of Sakai Toshihiko’s lectures. On the first night he discussed the ideas of Lester Ward, and added reflections on the women’s movement in the days of the *Heiminsha*. On the final evening, he spoke on "The history of the women's movement in the Meiji and Taishô periods, and the function of the *Sekirankai*."69

These years offered further opportunities to clarify the differences between the socialist and liberal feminist positions on the "woman question". Both Yamakawa Kikue and Itô Noe were critical of the activities of the *Shin Fujin Kyôkai (New Women's Association)* formed by some of the former Bluestockings. Yamakawa, as part of her efforts to delineate a socialist position on the "woman question", was scathing about the activities of the


New Women. Yamakawa was critical about the reformist emphasis of the Association, stating that the New Women wanted "equal opportunity to enjoy themselves". However, instead of presenting a viable socialist alternative, much of the article is taken up with personal criticism of Hiratsuka Raichô. The article also displays the tendency of Yamakawa and other socialists of the time to idealize post-revolutionary Russia. Oku Mumeo's response, by contrast, was measured and dignified, showing her consciousness of the problems of working women, and refraining from personal criticism of Yamakawa.

The activities of the Sekirankai were, however, relatively short-lived, for several members suffered arrest and imprisonment. Takatsu Tayoko and her husband were charged with lèse majesté for allegedly producing a publication which included threats against the imperial household. Sakai Magara and Nakasone Sadayo were among a group of socialists placed on remand for forty-odd days in an incident which involved the distribution of subversive material to soldiers billeted in Tokyo for manoeuvres. Sakai and Nakasone were among the seventeen found guilty. They were

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70 The conflict between the New Women's Association and the Sekirankai is discussed in Shapcott, 'The Red Chrysanthemum', pp16-23. See also: Kondô, Watashi no Kaisô, Volume 2, pp98-101; Yamakawa Kikue, Fujin Undô Shûsei, Volume 8, pp265-269.


72 Yamakawa, 'Shin Fujin Kyôkai to Sekirankai', p268.

73 Oku Mumeo, 'Watashitachi no Shuchô to Tachiba: Yamakawa Kikue no "Shin Fujin Kyôkai to Sekirankai" o Yomite', Tairô, Volume 27, No 21, August 1921; reprinted in Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryô Shûsei, Volume 8, pp269-272.

74 In addition to those who suffered imprisonment in various incidents, Hashiura Riku died suddenly in 1923, while Hashiura Haruko and Nakasone Sadayo withdrew from the socialist movement for personal reasons.

75 Ezashi, Sameyo Fujin, pp65-68.

sentenced to four months imprisonment, the first women to be imprisoned for offences related to dangerous thought since Kanno Suga's involvement in the Great Treason Incident in 1910.77

In the summer of 1922, socialist women engaged in fundraising for famine relief in Russia. Three thousand yen was raised by a group of women led by a student of Tokyo Women's Medical College, and supported by such prominent women as Yosano Akiko, Ishimoto Shidzue, and Kawasaki Natsu.78 In 1922 socialist women in Japan also prepared for the celebration of International Women's Day, and the Yôkakai (Eighth Day Society) was formed for this purpose.79 The Yôkakai included not only former Sekirankai members, but also such women as Tajima Hide,80 who had been involved with the New Women's Association as well as labour organizations.

International Women's Day was celebrated for the first time on March 8th 1923,81 and marked with a lecture meeting, opened by Yabe [Shimano] Hatsuko.82 Kaneko Hiroko spoke on "The Possibilities of Professional Life for Women", but was interrupted by anti-communist agitators as soon as she mentioned Russia. The meeting became disordered, and was broken up by

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77Sakai Magara was conscious of the personal and historical links between herself and Kanno. See chapter Six, below for discussion of Sakai's account of her imprisonment.

78Yamakawa, Fujin Undô Shôshi, p139; Tajima, Hitosuji no Michi, p85.

79International Women's Day is celebrated on the 8th of March, hence the name "8th Day Society".

80For details of Tajima Hide's life and work, see: Tajima, Hitosuji no Michi. Tajima for a time worked in both the liberal women's movement and the socialist movement, but eventually concentrated her activities in the left of the socialist movement, moving to the illegal Communist party in the late nineteen twenties.

81For accounts of this evening, see: Tajima, Hitosuji no Michi, pp77-81; Yamada Seizaburô, Puroretaria Bungaku Shi, Tokyo: Rironsha, Volume 1, pp344-345.

82For details of Yabe [Shimano] Hatsuko's life and work, see Makise, Hitamuki no Onnatachi, pp30-46.
the police. Other speakers were to be Yamakawa Kikue, Tanno Setsu, Tajima Hide and Nakasone Sadayo. International Women's Day was also marked by a special women's edition of the proletarian arts journal *Tane Maku Hito (The Sower)*, one of the sponsors of the meeting.

The Sekirankai and the Yōkakai were important as relatively autonomous socialist women's organizations, devoted to exploring the possibilities of a socialist answer to the "woman question". Although these organizations had intellectual importance, their existence was too brief for them to work for building a mass base among proletarian women. The Sekirankai and the Yōkakai could not successfully bridge the gap between intellectuals and working women.

5.2.2 The Seiji Kenkyūkai and Women

After the dissolution of the Japan Socialist League in May 1921, the splits between anarchists and bolshevists had resurfaced. Many of the leaders of the Japan Communist Party, formed in 1922, were former anarchists, and the next few years were marked by conflict between the anarchists and the communists. Within the socialist movement, Yamakawa Hitoshi came out on the Bolshevik side of the "ana-boru ronsō", publishing his article 'A Change

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84 Several of the speakers used pseudonyms. Kaneko Hiroko was the pseudonym of woman doctor Sasaki Haru. Tajima Hide used the name Miyake Hideko; Tanno Setsu used the name Minato Chie; and Kawakami Ai used the name Takeda Toshi. The names of Nakasone Sadayo and Yamakawa Kikue appeared on the brochure, and it may have been Yamakawa's name which attracted the attention of the anti-communist agitators. Tajima, *Hitosuiji no Michi*, pp78-79.


86 Such criticisms have been made by several of the activists of the nineteen twenties. See: Tajima Hide, *Hitosuiji no Michi*, pp63-64; Yamakawa Kikue, *Fujin Undō Shōshi*; and comments by Shapcott, 'The Red Chrysanthemum'.
of Direction in the Proletarian Movement' in the summer of 1922. For many socialists, this also marked a shift from the hitherto intellectual and theoretical emphasis of the socialist movement. Under the slogan "to the masses", many individuals moved to a closer engagement with the labour movement, including such women as Kutsumi Fusako and Tanno Setsu. Members of the Yōkakai also briefly participated in the Tōkyō Fujin Rengōkai (Tokyo Federation of Women's Organizations), a broad-based federation, initially formed to co-ordinate women's relief activities in the aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923. The context for women's political activities had improved slightly in 1922 with the modification of Article Five of the Public Peace Police Law. Women could now attend and speak at political meetings, but could not vote or become full members of political parties.

The Communist Party was disbanded in 1924, the result of severe police repression before and after the Earthquake of 1923. In addition to mass arrests of communists in the summer of 1923, several labour leaders were murdered by police in the aftermath of the earthquake in September 1923. Anarchists Ōsugi Sakae and Itō Noe also became martyrs to the left-wing cause after their murder at the hands of a policeman. The party was not reformed until 1926.

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87 Yamakawa Hitoshi, 'Musan Kaikyū no Hōkō Tenkan', Zen'ai, July-August 1922.

88 Large, 'The Romance of Revolution', p453.

89 Ezashi, Sameyo Onnatachi, p135. On Tanno Setsu's life and work, see Large, 'The Romance of Revolution'; Tajima, Hitosuji no Michi, pp96-98; Tanno Setsu: Kakumei Undō ni Ikiru; excerpts translated in Hane, Reflections on the Way to the Gallows.

90 The decision to participate in this federation was influenced by the new policy of going "to the masses". Yamakawa Kikue, after her scathing attack on such bourgeois feminist organizations as the New Women's Association, was now advising the infiltration of mainstream organizations by socialist women. Tajima Hide, Hitosuji no Michi, pp104-109.

91 Large, Organized Workers and Socialist Politics, p53.
Other members of the proletarian movement worked towards the creation of legal proletarian political parties, in anticipation of the enactment of Universal Manhood Suffrage. The *Seiji Mondai Kenkyūkai* (Political Issues Research Association) was formed in December 1923, under the leadership of left-wing intellectuals including Abe Isoo and Kagawa Toyohiko. The members of the organization were preparing for the formation of a proletarian political party which would represent both workers and tenant farmers. Initially, the only part of the *Seiji Kenkyūkai*’s platform which specifically mentioned women, however, was the call for suffrage for both men and women. Yamakawa Kikue and other women connected with the Kōbe branch of the *Seiji Kenkyūkai* worked to ensure that women’s demands would be included in the platform of the organization. These demands included:

1. the abolition of the household head system,
2. the abolition of all laws which treat women as incompetents; and equality in grounds for divorce for both sexes,
3. the granting to women and colonized peoples the same rights to education and employment as mainland males,
4. a standard living wage regardless of sex or race,
5. equal wages and equal treatment for all regardless of sex or race,
6. nursing time (30 minutes per 3 hours worked) and nursing room for working women,
7. sacking of women on grounds of marriage or pregnancy should be prohibited,
8. the abolition of the public prostitution system.

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92 The name of the organization was later shortened to *Seiji Kenkyūkai*, the Political Research Association.

93 Large, *Organized Workers and Socialist Politics*, p55.

94 The following policies were approved at the Second Convention of the *Seiji Kenkyūkai*, in April 1925: "the society should (1) prepare a draft program for the proletarian party to be, (2) speed the organization of such a party, (3) campaign for the abolition of the newly passed Peace Preservation Law, and (4) demand that women be given the right to participate in politics". Totten, *The Social Democratic Movement*, p55.
These demands were criticised as 'petit-bourgeois' by the men of the Seiji Kenkyūkai, but they were supported by Yamakawa in an article on 'women's special demands'. Yamakawa argued that women's so-called 'special demands' (tokushu yōkyū) were in fact basic to the interests of both men and women. The removal of laws which discriminate against women and uphold feudal ideology are seen to be necessary for the political awakening of the whole proletarian class. One of the things which prevents women from full participation in the proletarian movement, argues Yamakawa, is the feudal ideology which sees women subject to the vigilance of supervisors in factory dormitories, and the control of parents in the home.

In her discussion of the treatment of working mothers, Yamakawa was able to build on the insights gained through her debates with the Bluestockings in the previous decade. With respect to working mothers, Yamakawa argued for the necessity of eight weeks paid leave before and after parturition; the creation of nursing rooms in workplaces; the provision of thirty minutes nursing time for every three hours work; state responsibility for expenses related to childbirth; and state provision of living expenses for the mother. The proposal for State provision of living expenses was aimed at putting working women and other women on an equal footing, and was justified with reference to British health insurance.

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95Yamakawa Kikue, 'Fujin no Tokushu Yōkyū ni tsuite', June 1925; later published in Yamakawa Hitoshi & Kikue, Musansha Undō to Fujin no Mondai, Tokyo: Hakuyōsha, 1928; reproduced in; Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryō Shūsei, Volume 8, pp275-286. Subsequent citations refer to this version.

96Yamakawa Kikue, 'Fujin no Tokushu Yōkyū ni tsuite', p277-279.

97See sections 4.4 and 4.6 above

98Yamakawa Kikue, 'Fujin no Tokushu Yōkyū ni tsuite'.
Yamakawa links the situation of women workers with workers in Japan's colonies. She argues that both women and non-Japanese workers should have equality of opportunity with Japanese male workers. In answer to the 'craft unionist' anxiety that such workers will undercut the wages of male workers, she argues for equality of pay, and equality of education so that these workers may compete equally as skilled workers. While Yamakawa has already devoted some attention to the 'feudal ideology' which helps determine women's subordinate place in the labour market, she does not, in this article, attempt to tease out the specificities of sexist and racist ideologies. Rather, she sees the position of women workers and colonized workers as analogous, and as requiring similar political strategies.

Much of Yamakawa's criticism in this article is directed at the new Hyôgikai Union Federation, which up till now had failed to address women's issues seriously. Yamakawa addresses some of the arguments used against her by Hyôgikai representatives. In response to the criticism that it is not necessary to add "regardless of race or sex" to demands for minimum wages, Yamakawa counters that, although this may go without saying in a society run on "proletarian principles", the present society is run on "bourgeois principles" which take discrimination against women for granted. Thus it is necessary to add this phrase to demands for equal pay, or suffrage. Her critique of universalist language has relevance to late twentieth century debates on this issue:

Even in a proletarian country, it is necessary to make explicit [the principle of equality regardless of sex, race or religion],

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99By this time Japan has control of both Korea and Taiwan, with trading interests in Manchuria.

100Yamakawa Kikue, 'Fujin no Tokushu Yôkyû ni tsuite', p279-280.

because, in a society with deep-rooted customs of discrimination, if we simply say "the people" [minshū], there is a danger that this will be taken to mean only people of the ruling race [shihaitekina minzoku], and people of the ruling sex [shihaitekina sei].\(^{102}\)

Maruoka Hideko points out that many of the policies now espoused by Yamakawa were similar to those she had criticised as "bourgeois" during the motherhood protection debate.\(^{103}\) Yamakawa, however, distinguishes demands which will benefit the whole proletarian class by allowing the full participation of proletarian women, from those of "bourgeois feminists", "shallow maternalists", and "sentimental humanists". In her criticism of the public prostitution system, for example, Yamakawa is keen to dissociate herself from the "sentimental humanists" of the Nihon Kirisutokyō Kyōtōkai, (Japan Women's Christian Temperance Union) suggesting that the prostitution issue has not been taken seriously because of its espousal by the Kyōtōkai.\(^{104}\)

Yamakawa sees prostitution first of all as a labour issue, seeing the sexual labour of indentured prostitutes as a particular kind of unfree labour. She also points out the violation of human rights under enforced medical inspections.\(^{105}\) Another feature of this article is Yamakawa's consciousness of the imperialist context of Japanese politics, a significant advance from the discussions of the previous decade.

\(^{102}\)Yamakawa Kikue, 'Fujin no Tokushu Yōkyū ni tsuite', p281.

\(^{103}\)Maruoka Hideko, Fujin Shisō Keisei Shi Nōto, pp145-146. On the Motherhood Protection Debate, see section 4.6 above.

\(^{104}\)Yamakawa Kikue, 'Fujin no Tokushu Yōkyū ni tsuite', p283.

5.2.3 Women's Divisions in Unions

The next task of socialist women involved creating the organizational structures for the participation of women in the labour movement. While the Yūaikai/Sōdōmei had had a women's division since 1916, women connected with the Hyōgikai had to argue afresh for the necessity for special organizations for women.106

5.2.3.1 The Yūaikai/Sōdōmei Women's Division

The first labour organizations had tended to pay most attention to workers in heavy industry.107 In early labour movement writings, as we have seen in section 3.1 above, the worker was implicitly constructed as masculine. When women workers were written about in such publications as Rōdō Sekai (Labour World) or the journalism of Yokoyama Gennosuke, it was often as victims, as objects of pity and compassion. This convention of writing about women workers would continue into the nineteen twenties, particularly with the publication of Hosoi Wakizō's book Jōkō Aishi (The Pitiful History of the Female Factory Workers) in 1925.108

In the pages of Yūai Fujin, the journal of the Yūaikai, the first labour organization to create a women's division, women were primarily portrayed as wives and mothers. Articles often focused on cooking and housekeeping, and women were encouraged to be supporters for their husbands. Union leader Suzuki Bunji, in particular, unashamedly addressed working women

106 On the activities of women in the Sōdōmei/Yūaikai, see: Suzuki, Josel to Rōdō Kumiai. passim; On the activities of women in the Hyōgikai, see: Sakurai Kinue, 'Hyōgikai Fujinbu no Katsudō ni tsuite', Parts 1-3; Rekishi Hyōron, March 1976; March 1977; October 1977.


in the language of "good wives and wise mothers." When women's work was considered in the women's division journal, it was often in the context of casual, home-based work, and advice was given on suitable home-based work for housewives. The Friendly Society also, however, acknowledged that some women were working alongside menfolk in factories, and the union attitude to these workers was initially a protective one, as we have seen in section 4.2 above.

It was not until 1917 that women could become full members of the organization, and in the time after the 1917 annual conference, some attempts were made to mobilize working women. The women's division would hold meetings and lectures in local areas, and after contacts had been built up among the working women, leaders would be chosen from among them. Such women as Nomura Tsuchino\textsuperscript{109} and Yamanouchi Mina,\textsuperscript{110} became active in the Yûaikai in this way. These local leaders would then be responsible for broadening the contacts of the union, and ensuring communication between local factories and the union branches.\textsuperscript{111}

The Friendly Society was extensively reorganized at the 1919 Conference, held from August 30th to September 1st. The organization was renamed the \textit{Dai Nihon Rôdô Sôdômei-Yûaikai} (Greater Japan General Federation of Labour-Friendly Society), and transformed into something closer to a union federation.\textsuperscript{112} The new Federation was administered by a Central Executive

\textsuperscript{109}For details of Nomura Tsuchino's life and work, see: Suzuki Yûko, \textit{Josei to Rôdô Kumiai}, p80.


\textsuperscript{111}Suzuki, \textit{Josei to Rôdô Kumiai}, p69.

\textsuperscript{112}In 1920, the prefix "Greater" was removed on the grounds of connections with imperialist tendencies. In 1921, "Yûaikai" was removed from the name.
Committee, and an Executive Committee which comprised twentyfive members elected to represent the regional councils.\textsuperscript{113} Two women, Yamanouchi Mina and Nomura Tsuchino, were elected to the Executive Committee. The twenty stated objectives of the revamped organization included several which were directly relevant to working women: equal pay for equal work; the prohibition of night work; the appointment of inspectors for women's work; and the abolition of indentured work.\textsuperscript{114}

The women's division was now chaired by Ichikawa Fusae, and allocated a separate budget. The name of the women's journal was to be changed from \textit{Yûai Fujin} (Friendly Society Woman) to \textit{Rôdô Fujin} (Labour Woman), and it seemed at first that this new title might signify a changed attitude towards the women members of the \textit{Sôdômei-Yûaika}.\textsuperscript{115} One of Ichikawa's first activities was to chair a public meeting on October 5th 1919 about issues of importance to working women. Around 1000 attended, mainly workers involved in the textile industry. The distinguished guests, including Tanaka Takako (who was due to be the Government's adviser on women workers at the forthcoming International Labour Conference),\textsuperscript{116} Hiratsuka Raichô, Kaneko Shigeri, and Itô Noe, heard testimonies from several women currently working as factory operatives.\textsuperscript{117}


\textsuperscript{114}Large, \textit{Organized Workers and Socialist Politics}, p26.

\textsuperscript{115}Suzuki, \textit{Josei to Rôdô Kumiai}, pp76-77.


\textsuperscript{117}Suzuki, \textit{Josei to Rôdô Kumiai}, pp78-81.
Yamanouchi and Nomura were already involved in *Sōdōmei-Yūaikai* politics, but for most of the factory women it was their first time to speak in public.\(^\text{118}\) Kikuchi Hatsu's speech made a great impression. She spoke of the problems of working mothers while cradling her baby. Kikuchi and several other speakers called for a reduction of the working day to eight hours. The other demand which was heard several times on this evening was for the abolition of night work for women.\(^\text{119}\) Versions of these speeches appeared in the November 1919 issue of the union journal, *Rōdō oyobi Sangyō*.\(^\text{120}\)

Ichikawa’s tenure as Secretary of the Women’s Division was to be short-lived, however, for she resigned in November 1919 over conflict with the union leadership about who would be women’s advisor for the Japanese delegation to the International Labour Conference. Ichikawa’s resignation meant that the journal *Rōdō Fujin* did not appear as planned.\(^\text{121}\) The Women’s Division was further weakened after the defeat of the *Sōdōmei-Yūaikai* affiliated spinning workers' union in the Fuji Gas Spinning Factory Dispute at Oshiage in July 1920. Nomura Tsuchino and other leaders were sacked from the factory as a result of this dispute. This was an important strike which involved demands for the recognition of the union by

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\(^\text{121}\)On Ichikawa’s resignation, see Suzuki, *Josei to Rōdō Kumiai*, pp81-86; interview with Ichikawa Fusae in Rekishi Hyōron Henshūbu, *Nihon Kindai Joseishi e no Shōgen*, pp52-53.
management. It also involved dormitory workers, but their action was suppressed by the management's preventing workers from leaving the dormitory, and preventing Tsuchino from entering the dormitory after she had been sacked. Although this particular dispute ended in failure, Suzuki Yūko points out its importance in developing a more assertive attitude in the women workers, and training them for future activities. It should also be noted that the strikers received support from such prominent feminists as Hiratsuka Raichō, Ichikawa Fusae, and Wada [Oku] Mumeo.\textsuperscript{122}

Other women would attempt to carry on the activities of the Women's Division, but it seems that they were initially faced with the incomprehension of the male leaders of the union. Yamanouchi remembers that the attitude of \emph{Sōdōmei-Yūaikai} leader Suzuki Bunji and his colleagues was that what most women involved with the union really needed was to find a good husband, and they would attempt to find suitable partners for such women as Yamanouchi. It is also possible to infer from Yamanouchi's reminiscences that part of the reason that Ichikawa did not fit in with the \emph{Sōdōmei-Yūaikai} leadership was that she did not meet their expectations of suitable feminine behaviour.\textsuperscript{123}

In April 1923 the issue of the now moribund Women's Division was raised at the Kantō (Eastern Japan) and Kansai (Western Japan) regional conferences of the \emph{Sōdōmei} by Nozaka Ryō\textsuperscript{124} and Kutsumi Fusako. The decision was delegated to a committee by the Kansai conference, but

\textsuperscript{122}Suzuki, \textit{Josei to Rōdō Kumiai}, p87.

\textsuperscript{123}Tajima, \textit{Hitosuji no Michi}, pp116-120.

\textsuperscript{124}Tajima, \textit{Hitosuji no Michi}, pp88-91. See also Tajima Hide's comments on the 'feudal' attitudes of men in the labour movement. Tajima, \textit{Hitosuji no Michi}, p97.
passed at the Kantō conference. The proposal for the revival of a central Women's Division was taken to the Sōdōmei annual general conference in 1924, but the decision was postponed until 1925. The Kantō Women's Division continued its activities, and Nozaka Ryō was responsible for producing a women's supplement to the union journal Rōdō (Labour) from April 1924.

Just when the Women's Division seemed to be on a firm footing once again, the first of two major splits occurred. In April 1925, the first split resulted in the establishment of the Hyōgikai. In May 1926, the second split resulted in the establishment of the Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Dōmei. With the breakaway first of communist-influenced elements to the Hyōgikai, and then of centrist elements to the Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Dōmei, the Sōdōmei was left in the hands of the most conservative elements of the labour movement, who continued their activities under the slogan of "realism" (genjitsu-shugi). The first split also, however, resulted in the loss of many of the major women leaders from the Sōdōmei. Kutsumi Fusako, Komiyama Tomie, Yamanouchi Mina, Nozaka Ryō, and Tanno Setsu left to join the new Hyōgikai Federation. Within the Sōdōmei, the activities of the Women's Division were first carried on by Matsuoka Komakichi, and then by Iwauchi Zensaku, leader of the newly created Kantō Bōshoku Rōdō Kumiai (Kantō Textile Workers' Union). In 1926, the Sōdōmei and the Kantō Textile Workers' union were active in a campaign for the immediate banning of night work for women. A petition of 50,000 signatures was presented to the

125 The Sōdōmei was administered by two large regional councils in Eastern and Western Japan. For further details of the Sōdōmei administrative structure, see: Large, Organized Workers and Socialist Politics.


127 Tajima, Hitosuji no Michi, p118.
Diet in March 1926.\textsuperscript{128} Petitions were supported by the distribution of pamphlets in the streets of Tokyo.\textsuperscript{129}

Iwauchi and the textile workers, however, left the Sôdômei at the time of the second split. While the Sôdômei had a Women's Division which had operated sporadically from 1916 on, within the new Hyôgikai federation, the necessity for a women's division had to be debated again from first principles, this time under the influence of Comintern pronouncements.\textsuperscript{130}

5.2.3.2 The Hyôgikai debates on the Women's Division

In September 1925, a two day meeting of representatives of local women's divisions of the Hyôgikai was held, which produced the "Women's Division Thesis". This sets out the relative numbers of male and female workers, and demonstrates that because women are the majority of factory workers, it is they who "hold the key to the labour movement in Japan". The development of class consciousness in women, however, has been hampered by their place in the feudalistic family system, and by the feudal attitudes of both men and women. It is stated that women are bound by the twin shackles of sex and class; that they are exploited as women and as workers; and thus women must promote their own special demands.\textsuperscript{131} This document owes an obvious debt to Yamakawa's paper on women's "special demands".\textsuperscript{132}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[128] Saitô Ken'ichi, 'Yagyô Kinshi no Hanashi', \textit{Seigi no Hikari}, No 5, 18/8/1926, pp14-16; 'Fujin Yônên Rōdōsha no Yagyô Kinshi', \textit{Seigi no Hikari}, No 13, 15/11/1926.

\item[129] Sakurai, \textit{Bosei Hogo Undôshi}, pp48-49.

\item[130] Sakurai Kinue notes the influence of the third annual meeting of the Profintern in 1924, which produced a list of ten demands related to the struggle of working women. Yamakawa Kikue was responsible for translating Profintern and Comintern policy on women and work into Japanese. Sakurai Kinue, \textit{Bosei Hogo Undôshi}, p54.


\item[132] See section 5.2.2 above.
\end{footnotes}
and the whole debate can be seen as an attempt by socialists to address the question of "equality versus difference".  

The demands listed in the thesis are: a 6 hour working day for women; the prohibition of night work, overtime, and dangerous work for women; the abolition of the dormitory system, with existing dormitories to be managed by unions; the abolition of enforced savings; the abolition of wage differences according to sex; nursing leave for working mothers of 30 minutes for 3 hours work. These specific demands, as Inumaru Giichi has pointed out, were a great advance on previously vague union policies on working women. Many of the practical proposals for organizing women, however, were quite similar to activities which had been carried out by the Sōdōmei-Yūaikai: the holding of tea parties and lecture meetings, the publication of pamphlets directed at women, the inclusion of a women's section in union publications, the training of of women organizers, and the creation of a central women's division.

However there was immediate criticism of the proposal for a separate women's division to address these issues. Opponents of this proposal included some of the major male socialist activists of the time - Yamamoto Kenzō, Sugiura Keiichi, Mitamura Shirō, and Nabeyama Sadachika - with Yamakawa Hitoshi and Watanabe Masanosuke being distinguished by their continued support for the women's division. Opponents argued that the

133 For a discussion of similar issues with respect to the Australian Communist Party, see Joy Damousi, "The Woman Comrade": Equal or Different?", Women's History Review, Volume 2, No 3, 1993, pp387-394.

134 Fujin Kyōgikai Tēze, p425.


136 Fujin Kyōgikai Tēze, p425.

137 Inumaru, 'Nihon ni okeru Marukusu shugi Fujiinron', pp157-158.
creation of a women's division would create a consciousness of division between men and women which would militate against the development of class consciousness; that women's issues were problems that should be solved outside the union movement; that the functions of a women's division could be met simply by having more women organizers; and that the creation of a women's division would make the organization itself more complicated.\textsuperscript{138}

Watanabe Masanosuke responded to these criticisms in an article published under the pen-name Itô Manabu. He argued that men and women must work together against the common enemy: capitalists (shihonka). Because women have been disadvantaged by years of feudal strictures (hōkenteki na sokubaku), they need education and training. It is awakened women (jikakuseru fujin), who are best able to carry out this work, and they can best do this work with the support of the proper organizational structures, that is, with the support of a women's division. The women's division will have the function of facilitating communication between women members and the other specialist divisions: the education division, the political division, the recruitment division.\textsuperscript{139} Yamakawa Hitoshi also published a defence of the Women's Division proposal.\textsuperscript{140}

The proposal was also defended by the Hyōgikai Printers' Union, who argued that the failure to support the women's division demonstrated a failure to recognise the special situation of women. Features of women's

\textsuperscript{138} Yoshimura-sei, 'Fujinbu to lu Dokuritsu Bumon no Hitsuyō Ikaga', \textit{Rōdō Shinbun}, No 19, 1926.

\textsuperscript{139} Itô Manabu [Watanabe Masanosuke], 'Rōdō Kumiai no Fujinbu wa Naze ni Hitsuyō ka' Fujinbu Fuhitsuyō Ronsha ni Hanatsuru', Tokyo Gōdō Rōdō Kumiai Shuppanbu, March 1928; in \textit{Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryō Shūsei}, Volume 8, pp286-289.

\textsuperscript{140} Yamakawa Hitoshi, 'Musan Seito to Fujin no Yōkyū', in Yamakawa Hitoshi & Kikue, \textit{Musansha Undō to Fujin no Mondai}, Tokyo: Hakuyōsha, October 1928.
social situation included: the short-term nature of much women's work, which made them harder to organize; the extra commitments of women which made it harder for them to take part in union activities; the fact that women were in unskilled positions meant that they tended to work longer hours for lower wages. Because unions have not taken these conditions into account, they have been unable to organize women effectively (for example, union meetings tend to be held at times which suit men who have free time after work). Thus, a special women's division is necessary to reflect the particular needs of women workers and to carry out propaganda and education among women.141

The draft proposal for the setting up of a women's division in Hyōgikai headquarters was presented to the second annual conference, held in April 1926.142 Tanno Setsu, who had been involved in the setting up of women's divisions in local branches of Hyōgikai affiliated unions, led this discussion. She pointed out that on its founding the Hyōgikai had recognized the importance of organizing women, who were the majority of factory workers in Japan. Most local unions and regional branches had responded by setting up women's divisions. In the general headquarters, however, activities related to women were carried out under the auspices of the Recruitment Division (soshikibu), and that this had not been satisfactory. Tanno called for clarification of the functions of the women's division, and for national co-ordination of the activities of women's divisions. Tanno's proposal clearly set out the functions of each level of the organization. The proposed central women's division would be responsible for formulating strategies for

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142 Tōkyō Gōdō Rōdō Kumiai [Tanno Setsu], 'Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Hyōgikai Sōhonbu Fujinbu Setchi narabni Fujinbu Katsudō Tōitsu ni Kansuru Ketsugian', April 1924; reproduced in Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryō Shūsei, Volume 8, pp296-297.
organizing and training women workers; for guidance and co-ordination of regional women's divisions; and for collating information. The regional women's divisions would be responsible for maintaining contact with local unions; for relaying information from the general headquarters; and for the gathering of information. Women's divisions in local unions would be responsible for contact with women members; education and training of women members; promotion of the union, and recruitment of non-unionized workers.  

The 1926 Conference was unable to make a decision on the proposal, and the discussion was delegated to affiliated unions. The proposal was finally passed at the third annual conference in May 1927.

Although the creation of the Women's Division may be seen as a victory for women in the Hyōgikai, the actual implementation of the proposal was somewhat different from what the women had demanded. A new Women's League (Fujin Dōmei) was to be created, which would work in parallel with the union Women's Division. Rather than directing the union federation's policies on women, the Women's Division's main task was to be liaison with the Women's League which would organize working women and farming women outside the union movement.  

In Yamakawa Kikue's comments on this issue, she chooses to argue directly with Yamamoto Kenzō, who had argued that women's issues should be handled outside the union organization: that is, through a separate "Women's League". Yamakawa, however, is firmly opposed to the idea of a separate women's league, arguing instead that all proletarian organizations should strive to increase the membership of women, and increase

143 Fujinbu Katsudō Tōitsu ni Kansuru Ketsugian', ibid.

educational activities directed at women. While Yamakawa had been pleased to argue for the creation of a women's division within the union federation, in order that the organization could mobilize women more effectively, she is not willing to argue for autonomous women's organizations outside the union movement. It is interesting that she uses the *Sekirankai* (with which she was involved at the beginning of the decade) as a negative example of an autonomous women's organization.

Yamakawa also cites the example of women's organizations in the United States which organized solely on the basis of sex, but she sees such organizations as basically bourgeois. For bourgeois women, she argues, the basic conflict is between men and women (*seibetsu ni yoru tairitsu*). For proletarian women, however sex can not take primacy over the class struggle. Even though we may talk of the "proletarian women's movement" (*musan fujin undō*), what we really mean is "the activities of women in the general proletarian class movement" (*ippantekina musan kaikyū undō ni okeru fujin no katsudō*). Yamakawa then goes on to explain the phrase "work among women", which was the standard Comintern position on organizing women.

Behind these debates on how to organize women were implicit theories of the relationship between class politics and feminist politics. Until the mid-

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146 Yamakawa, 'Fujin no Tokushu Yōkyū'; see section 5.2.2 above.

147 Yamakawa, 'Fujin Dōmei to Kumiai Fujinbu', p301; p302.

148 Yamakawa, Fujin Dōmei to Kumiai Fujinbu, p298. The phrase is presented in both English (work among women) and Japanese (*fujin no aida ni okeru shigoto*).
1920s most of those involved in unions had almost unconsciously given primacy to the class struggle. Male union organizers had either ignored women workers or assumed that the liberation of the working class would automatically mean the liberation of women, too. In Yamakawa's early writings we can also see this tendency to assimilate women's struggles into the class struggle.

The debates over women's divisions in unions introduced the possibility that women may have different needs from men. Although women within the socialist movement were willing to argue for women's "special demands", or to argue that women's "special situation" meant that different strategies were necessary to mobilize women effectively, these demands were always presented in terms of allowing men and women to co-operate more effectively in fighting for the liberation of the proletariat.\(^{149}\)

Yamakawa's thought on these issues had gained in subtlety since her earlier, rather ritualistic dismissal of the demands of bourgeois women. She was thus able to argue cogently for the creation of women's divisions within unions, in order to strive for some of the objectives she had previously criticised as "bourgeois". Yamakawa still, however, gave primacy to the class struggle and did not stray far from the Comintern line on "work among women". There were, however, problems with this position, as Yamakawa herself realized. Women were still prevented by Article Five of the Peace Police Law from becoming full members of political parties. Thus, Yamakawa could argue for the full integration of women into labour unions, farmers' unions, youth groups, and other proletarian organizations, but

\(^{149}\)It is also possible to question how far these debates influenced the activities of the "malestream" organizations and publications. Inumaru Gilichi reports that the Marxist journal *Mankusushugi* only ran five articles on women's issues between 1926 and 1929, while its successor, *Purotetaria Kagaku* carried only one article on women's issues. Inumaru Gilichi, 'Nihon ni okeru Mankusu shugi Fujinron', p159.
women's integration into political parties was impossible without the complete repeal of Article Five.  

In effect, what happened in the 1920s and the 1930s was that each of the major union federations had a women's division, while each of the proletarian political parties (which roughly corresponded with the structure of the union federations) had an affiliated women's league. Thus, women's activities within the proletarian movement were divided between these different organizations, and generally followed the splits and alliances of the "malestream" organizations. A further layer of organization involved the mobilization of rural workers.

150 It will be remembered that the 1922 revision of Article Five had made it possible for women to attend and speak at public meetings, but women were still prevented from becoming members of political parties.

151 While socialists in urban areas attempted to mobilize factory workers, there were also attempts to mobilize tenant farmers and farm labourers. As the majority of the population was still engaged in agricultural labor, this was obviously an important constituency for the socialist movement, and the best strategy for organizing rural workers was a vital question for socialist theory. Those in rural areas were often seen to carry the remnants of feudal ideology most strongly, particularly with respect to women. Rural areas were also, however, the site for various militant protests: rice riots and tenant farmer disputes in the contemporary period, and a history of peasant uprisings dating back to the Tokugawa period. The Nihon Nômin Kumiai (Japan Farmers' Union) was formed in 1922, and a women's division was established in 1927. A statement on the activities of the women's division was produced in June 1927. The specific situation of rural women is set out first of all. Rural women, who work alongside their husbands in farm labour, are said to be an integral part of the rural movement. While women have often shown their bravery in disputes, they have not always been mobilized effectively. They should be seen as part of a special action unit (tokubetsu katsudô butai), rather than simply as a reserve army of labour (rōdōryoku no hojô butai). In this document the question of the sexual division of labour is addressed more directly than in most of the union documents. While union documents often mentioned women's double burden, they rarely mentioned strategies for addressing this problem. The farmers' union, however, states that there is no reason to take the sexual division of labour for granted. When men and women are engaged in a common struggle, it may be equally appropriate for men to cook and for women to take up the hoe. Policies of the women's division also address the question of childcare, specifically mentioning the need for communal creches for the busy season. Other policies mentioned are similar to the other proletarian women's organizations: female suffrage, paid maternity leave for working women, and the provision of free clinics for pregnant women. However, it is seen to be most appropriate for a Women's League (Fujin Dômei) to address these issues. The Women's Division of the Farmers' Union should support the activities of the consumers' co-operative and the women's league, and facilitate the participation of women in rural disputes. This statement makes several advances in its portrayal of women as equal partners in rural struggles. A full discussion of socialist attempts to mobilize women and men in rural areas is unfortunately outside the scope of the present study, but the importance of rural areas for any political movement in Japan should be remembered. Maruoka, Nihon Nôson Fujin Mondai; Maruoka, Fujin Shisô Keisei Shi Nôto, pp155-156; Watanabe & Suzuki, Tatakai ni ikite, pp139-141; Makise, Hitamuki no Onnatachi, pp116-130; Nihon Nômin Kumiai Chûdô
After the ratification of the women's division proposal in 1927, the women's division acted to support women engaged in disputes. A statement issued in June 1927 listed the kinds of demands already being pursued, and a new demand for the "protection of women during menstruation". In September 1926, the Hyôgikai and theLabour Farmer party held a meeting which called for the enactment of five pieces of legislation: an Unemployment Benefits Law, a Minimum Wage Law, an Eight Hour Day Law, a Health Insurance Law, and a Working Women's Protection Law. A national movement for the institution of such legislation was started, but the Hyôgikai eventually succumbed to government suppression, and was dissolved in April 1928. The successor to the Hyôgikai, the Japan Labour Union National Conference (Nihon Rôdô Kumiai Zenkoku Kyôgikai: abbreviated as Zenkyô) was formed in December 1928.

The "realists" of the Sôdômei continued in their efforts to mobilize working women. The creation of the Rôdô Fujin Renmei (Working Women's League) in 1927, was one important step. The leader of the League was Akamatsu Akiko. In 1927, Akamatsu Tsuneko joined the Sôdômei Women's Division, where she would continue her efforts on behalf of working women

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152 The first dispute calling for menstruation leave was carried out by women conductors on Tokyo public transport in July 1928. Sakurai, Bosei Hogo Undô Shi, pp56-59.

153 Sakurai, Bosei Hogo Undô Shi, p57.

154 Akamatsu Akiko was the wife of Akamatsu Katsumaro. For details of Akamatsu Akiko's life and work, see interview with Akamatsu Akiko in: Watanabe & Suzuki, Undô ni Kaketa Onnatachi, pp81-106.

155 Akamatsu Tsuneko was the sister of Akamatsu Katsumaro. While Akamatsu Katsumaro and his wife Akiko moved towards national socialism, Tsuneko continued in the social democratic movement. For details of Akamatsu Tsuneko's life and work, see: Akamatsu Tsuneko Keshôkai, Zassô no Yô ni Takumashiku: Akamatsu Tsuneko no Ashiato, Tokyo, 1977.
until 1940. One of Akamatsu Tsuneko's achievements was the publication of the long-awaited women's journal *Rôdô Fujin* (Labour Woman).\(^{156}\)

### 5.2.3.3 Women in the Nichirô Unions

In the centrist *Nihon Rôdô Kumiai Dômei*, Iwauchi Zensaku continued his efforts to mobilize women workers through the Japan Textile Workers' Union, and its journal, *Seigi no Hikari* (The Light of Justice).\(^{157}\) The Nichirô group also created adult education classes for women workers. The *Rôdô Jojuku* (Labour Women's School) was led by Orimoto [Tatewaki] Sadayo, a labour activist who would go on to be an important writer on the history of working women in Japan.\(^{158}\) From November 1927, the Japan Textile Workers'Union co-operated with the National Women's League (*Zenkoku Fujin Dômei*)\(^{159}\) on a Committee calling for the abolition of night work for women.

### 5.3 Imagining Women Workers

We have seen above that participants in left-wing organizations had largely failed to see women as workers and thus as potential comrades and unionists. Part of women's struggle for recognition within the socialist movement involved the creation of specific organizations devoted to the attainment of women's 'special demands'. It was also, however, necessary

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\(^{157}\) The textile workers' union affiliated with the Sôdômei was the Kantô Textile Workers Union. After the second split Iwauchi left to join the Nihon Rôdô Kumiai Dômei, and organized textile workers under the Japan Textile Workers'Union. *Seigi no Hikari* continued under the umbrella of the Japan Textile Workers' Union. Relevant documents and newsletters of both these unions are held in the Ôhara Social Research Institute.


\(^{159}\) On the Nichirô affiliated National Women's League, see section 6.2.3 below.
to transform the conventions of writing about women. It was, in other words, necessary to imagine women as "workers", as "comrades", and as "unionists". In the next sections, I will consider the representations of women in union publications.

I will be drawing on publications directed at women workers in the nineteen twenties, including a journal called Seigi no Hikari (The Light of Justice), produced by the Nichirô affiliated Japan Textile Workers' Union.160 I will also refer to such publications as Rôdô Fujin (Labour Woman), the journal of the Sôdômei Women's Division, and Mirai (Future), produced by Tajima Hide, from the left of the proletarian movement.161 Representations of women in such publications highlight the difficulty of a woman trying to speak from the position of "worker", and once again dramatise the tensions found in Fukuda's autobiography, between being a woman, and trying to be a political activist at the same time. This discussion will be organized around recurrent themes in the representation of women workers.

5.3.1 Loyal Subjects: Working for the Nation

Since the 1870s, work in cotton and silk spinning factories had been presented as a patriotic activity. Factory work for women was presented as being analogous to military service for men. That is, patriotic activity was seen in gendered terms. Companies played on notions of patriotism in propaganda directed at women workers, through company songs which

160 Copies of the journal of the Nihon Bôshoku Rôdô Kumiai, Seigi no Hikari, 1926-1935 are held in the Ôhara Social Research Institute.

161 Tajima established the Women's Work Research Institute (Fujin Rôdô Chôsajo) and started publishing the monthly journal Mirai, in March 1926. Extant issues of Mirai are held in the Ôhara Social Research Institute. Tajima, Hitosuji no Michi, pp124-138; Maruoka, Fujin Shisô Keiseishi Nôto, p141-143.
described women spinning and reeling "for the nation," and through special publications directed at women workers.\textsuperscript{162}

Propaganda about factory work as patriotic activity, however, was not matched by concomitant respect for the factory women. In discussion of the need for factory legislation, as we have seen in section 4.1 above, different conceptions of the national interest were played off against each other. The national interest in maintaining profitable industry was, for a long time, deemed to be more important than the national interest in maintaining the health of the mothers of the next generation.

Well into the 1920s, factory owners attempted to exploit workers more effectively through appeals to patriotic feeling, although workers themselves were cynical about such appeals.\textsuperscript{163} Union organizers, also, however, used the language of patriotism. This was particularly true of Sôdômei affiliates. As Stephen Large and others have pointed out, Sôdômei leader Suzuki Bunji and his followers always affirmed the values of patriotism.\textsuperscript{164}

While workers were cynical about appeals to self-sacrifice in the name of patriotism, they were able to find other justifications for their work. The fact that they were working for the good of their families made their sacrifices worthwhile for at least some of the factory workers.

\textsuperscript{162}Company songs and publications are analysed in Tsurumi, Factory Girls, pp93-96.

\textsuperscript{163}See, for example, women workers' accounts of company moral training sessions, published in the July 1929 issue of Rôdô Fujin. Hikichi Harue, 'Shînyagyo ni kawaru Shûyôdan'; Takagi Toshiko, 'Shûyôdan no Naimaku', Rôdô Fujin, No 20, July 1929; reproduced in Suzuki, Josei to Rôdô Kumiai, pp156-159.

\textsuperscript{164}Large, The Rise of Labour: Suzuki, Josei to Rôdô Kumiai.
5.3.2 Daughters and Brides: Working for the Family

In the factory workers' songs collected by labour historians and reproduced in union journals, there are frequent references to the workers' families.\textsuperscript{165} This may take the form of a lament, in songs which describe feelings of homesickness. In other cases women workers are portrayed as martyr figures, engaging in self-sacrifice for the sake of their families. Factory owners attempted to redirect these feelings of familial obligation. In company propaganda, the factory could be presented as a surrogate family, with the factory owner as a father figure. Once again, however, workers were cynical about such appeals, and had no trouble in exposing the dubious logic behind these appeals to familial feeling.

Union organizers also identified female workers with the family in various ways. This could take the form of a paternalistic attitude towards women workers, seen most strikingly in the case of textile union leader, Iwauchi Zensaku, who referred to women workers as his "children" and who was in turn addressed as "father".\textsuperscript{166} The family could also serve as a metaphor for a community based on solidarity and co-operation, as it had for the early socialists.\textsuperscript{167} A poem which appeared in the fifth edition of \textit{Seigi no Hikari}, invited women workers to see the union as a surrogate family:

\begin{quote}
... We will be saved by the union
The union will become our brother and sister and our parent
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{165}C.f. 'Jokô no Uta: Jokô Aishi no NakaYori', \textit{Seigi no Hikari}, No 3, pp24-8.

\textsuperscript{166}Iwauchi revealed his attitudes to women workers in a later interview with Watanabe Etsuji. While sincere in his efforts to reach women workers through the Japan Textile Workers Union, through the journal \textit{Seigi no Hikari}, and through a pamphlet directed at women workers (Iwauchi Zensaku, \textit{Jokôsan ni Okuru}, Tokyo: Nihon Rôdô Sôdômei Kantô Bôshoku Rôdô Kumiai, 25/7/1926; held in Ôhara Social Research Institute), Iwauchi believed that these women were different from male workers, and that any discussion of socialism had to be introduced carefully. In speeches, he would commence with funny stories, before steering the discussion to a simplified explanation of socialism and unionism. Watanabe & Suzuki, \textit{Tatakai ni Ikite}, pp180-185.

\textsuperscript{167}See Chapter 3 above.
We will join hands with our brothers and sisters in the union
Brandishing the union flag
We will advance on the path to justice
Towards a bright future\textsuperscript{168}

Both factory owners and union organizers tended to see women workers as future brides, filling in time before marriage. For factory owners, this meant that women workers were an expendable temporary workforce, to be exploited for a few short years and easily replaced by other young women. For union organizers, this meant that women were not seen as providing a firm foundation for the creation of a strong base for the union movement\textsuperscript{169}

In the contributions of the male union organisers to the journal \textit{Seigi no Hikari}, it is possible to discern a reluctance to see women as "workers". Women workers were seen as daughters, wives, or potential brides, so that the union organisers tended to address women in these positions, rather than simply addressing them as fellow workers. This often led to some convoluted and original arguments for the necessity of unions. A worker from the Azuma branch, writing under the initials Y.S., reinforced the stereotype that women were only working for a few years before marriage, and expressed sympathy with women who might not be able to find a husband on their return to their villages.

He argued, however, that if they would only support the union's campaign for the abolition of night shift, they would be able to use their evenings to

\textsuperscript{168}Kawamatsu Kaneko, 'Watashi no Kokoro no Yorokobi', \textit{Seigi no Hikari}, No 5, p11.

\textsuperscript{169}This picture of women workers was no longer accurate by the 1920s and 1930s. Barbara Molony points out that many workers stayed in factory employment after marriage, and "even during the depression-ridden 1930s, only 22.5 percent of the mill workers of rural origin returned to the farm." Barbara Molony, 'Activism among Women in the Taishô Cotton Industry', \textit{op. cit.}
learn cooking, flower arranging, and all of the other skills which would help them to find a good husband!

If we can get the people of Tokyo to sign our petition, this will contribute to your happiness. Please think of any help you give to our movement as being part of your training for marriage. Before long we will see the abolition of night work and the reduction of working hours. Then, if you use your evenings for training in various accomplishments, you will give all the young men a surprise when you return to your village.¹⁷⁰

After the abolition of night work for women in 1929, both companies and unions offered evening classes for women workers. In both cases, sewing, cooking, flower arranging and tea ceremony featured strongly. In other words, both companies and unions presented these evening classes as providing women workers with training in feminine accomplishments. Each set of activities, however, masked another ideological agenda. Company classes would be accompanied by lectures on moral training, which would emphasize patriotism, feminine values, loyalty to company and family, and hard work. Union classes would be accompanied by education in the ideas behind unionism. In the case of the Sōdōmei affiliates, patriotic values would be melded with social democratic unionism. In the case of the centrist Nichirō affiliates, such as the Labour Women's School run by Orimoto [Tatewaki] Sadayo in the Kameido region of Tokyo, Marxist ideas would be presented in simplified form.¹⁷¹

The labour schools were thus negotiating a contradictory set of ideas about women workers. They used feminine stereotypes in order to attract women to the labour schools, and taught sewing and cooking as promised. Once in the schools, however, women were also trained as more or less militant

¹⁷⁰ Seigi no Hikari, 2, 18/5/1926.
unionists. Participants in some of the strikes of the early depression years later acknowledged the influence of the labour schools. 172

5.3.3 Caged Birds

Women in factories often worked twelve hour days in dark and steamy factories, spending the remaining hours of the day in cramped dormitories, their freedom severely restricted. These conditions were particularly prevalent in textile factories.173 Such conditions were described in numerous songs figuring factory workers as caged birds:

Factory work is prison work,
All it lacks are iron chains.

More than a caged bird, more than a prison,
Dormitory life is hateful.

...I want wings to escape from here,
To fly as far as those distant shores.174

It seems that the major way of imagining liberation from this situation was to imagine escape. Indeed, the fantasy of escape in these songs matches the workers' preferred way of changing their situation in the earliest days of industrialization. 175

The songs of the factory workers provided solidarity and comfort during the long working day. We could perhaps see these songs as forms of

172 Watanabe & Suzuki, Tatakai ni ikite, pp204-207.

173 Conditions were often more bearable in other industries. See interviews with women workers in Watanabe & Suzuki, Tatakai ni ikite, Makise, Hitamuki no Onnatachi.


175 In 1897, it was estimated that 45 per cent of female workers, and 42 per cent of male workers in cotton factories left their jobs before a year was up. Tsurumi, Factory Girls, p154.
resistance,\textsuperscript{176} as one of the "weapons of the weak".\textsuperscript{177} What happens, however, when such songs are taken away from the immediate context of the working day and recycled as texts?\textsuperscript{178}

These songs were collected by labour historians and became part of the cultural resources available to represent women workers. Labour organizers recycled the imagery of workers' songs and re-presented this imagery in union journals directed at women in the textile mills. They reproduced the songs about caged birds and this trope was reinforced by visual imagery. The metaphor of the caged bird is one which is constantly referred to in the songs, illustrations and articles in union journals.\textsuperscript{179}

\textit{Seigi no Hikari} drew on journalistic representations of women workers, from such works as \textit{Jokô Aishi} (The Pitiful History of the Factory Girls). This book, written in 1925 by Hosoi Wakizô, a male factory worker who was connected with the Proletarian Arts Movement, has become one of the classics of modern Japanese labour history.\textsuperscript{180} One of the most heart-wrenching features of Hosoi's story of the textile workers is his collection of the songs

\textsuperscript{176} On songs used as weapons of resistance by nursemaids, see Mariko Asano Tamanoi, "Songs as Weapons: The Culture and History of Komori (Nursemaids) in Modern Japan", \textit{Journal of Asian Studies}, Volume 50, No 4, November 1991, pp793-817.


\textsuperscript{178} Factory workers' songs have been used by E.P. Tsurumi in \textit{Factory Girls}, as an archive from which to gain evidence of working conditions and attitudes of women workers during the Meiji period. In this chapter I am interested in the transformation of this aspect of oral culture into text. Once the women workers' songs have been reproduced in works of labour history or in union journals, they become part of the cultural repertoire of images of women workers, and are divorced from their immediate context. It is the use of such imagery within labour movement writings in the nineteen twenties that I analyse in this chapter.

\textsuperscript{179} See, for example, the diary of a female factory worker illustrated by a caged bird. Ogura Michiko, 'Jokô no Nikki', \textit{Seigi no Hikari}, no 3, pp12-13.

\textsuperscript{180} Hosoi Wakizô, Jokô Aishi, Tokyo: Iwanami Bunkô, 1954. Workers' songs were also collected in: Taishûtô Jigyôbu (eds) \textit{Puroretaria Kashû}, 23/5/1931.
sung by the women workers, which represent their extreme repression and exploitation. It is these songs which are re-presented to the textile workers in the pages of the union journal. The following song, collected by Hosoi, was reproduced in the textile workers' journal in 1926:

I am a mill girl: rain that falls in spring  
  Silently sobbing on my own  
  When will the sky clear?  
  My pillow is wet with endless tears

I am a mill girl: a frail bird  
  Even though I have wings I can't fly away  
  Even though I can see the sky I'm stuck inside a cage  
  A tiny bird with broken wings

I am a mill girl: a fragile flower  
  A bud spoiled by frost  
  Even though spring is here I won't bloom  
  A tiny, tiny bud

I am a mill girl: a lonely star  
  Far away from my family  
  Twinkling in the dark, night sky  
  A tiny star brimming with tears.\(^{181}\)

This song was thus part of a complex cycle of representations: first of all sung by the textile workers themselves, then collected by Hosoi in a work of popular journalism, and finally re-presented to the textile workers in the union journal. What does the recycling of these images of fragility, pathos, and loneliness tell us about union attitudes to women workers?

It is possible to argue, as Patricia Tsurumi has done, that these songs reflect a consciousness of these women's identity as jokô (factory girls).\(^ {182}\) It might also be possible to argue that by recycling these workers' songs, the union journals were showing respect for women's own self-representations. However, I am interested not only in the description of oppression, but in the

\(^{181}\) Seigi no Hikari, No 2, 18/5/1926, p25.

\(^{182}\) Tsurumi, Factory Girls, p194-197.
linguistic and cultural resources available to imagine the possibility of liberation. Can these images of fragility and pathos (spring rain, fragile flowers, frail birds, lonely stars) be used to imagine the possibility of shared political action, as the basis for a political movement? As bell hooks has pointed out:

Literature emerging from marginalised groups that is only a chronicle of pain can easily act to keep in place existing structures of domination.183

In the writings of at least some activists, there were attempts to appropriate the imagery of these songs for political ends. Male union leader Asô Hisashi referred to the "caged bird" song, which was apparently popular outside the factories. Asô used this imagery to argue that all workers were in the position of caged birds. In the case of women workers, however, they were seen to suffer double imprisonment by the twin cages of class and sex. In the case of women, even if "with their feeble strength" they were able to break out of the cage of class exploitation, they would still be subject to exploitation as women. Once again, however, this imagery laments the seriousness of women's oppression, rather than providing a means to imagine the transformation of that situation.184

However, the trope of imprisonment was more than a mere metaphor. Women workers were literally prevented from leaving dormitories outside working hours, and this was one focus of union writings on women workers. Hyôgikai organizer Watanabe Masanosuke (writing under the pen-name Itô

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184 Asô Hisashi, 'Nijû no Kusari', Seigi no Hikari, No 3 pp4-6. See also Kamijô Aiichi's article on Japan's working women, where, in discussing the problem posed for the union movement by the relative inaccessibility of women in dormitories, he quite naturally uses the caged bird metaphor to describe these women. Kamijô Aiichi, 'Nihon no Fujin Rôdôsha', Seigi no Hikari, no 4, 15/7/1926, p4.
Manabu), for example, described the situation of women workers in factory dormitories as "a system of imprisonment which accompanies the traffic in human beings" (jinshin baibai o tomonau kankan seido). 185 The abolition of the dormitory system was a standard item in union policies on women workers, and often featured as a demand in labour disputes involving women workers. It was also argued that the reform or abolition of the dormitory system was a necessary condition for the development of the union movement. 186

One dispute, which occurred in Hodogaya in November 1925, was referred to as the "caged birds" strike. 187 Several of the strikers' demands referred to restrictions on the freedom of women in dormitories. In addition to calling for a reduction in working hours, they demanded freedom to leave the dormitory and to meet visitors, and freedom to withdraw their own savings at will. The demand that "workers should be allowed to return home immediately on receipt of a telegram reporting a family illness or other problem" suggests how severely workers' freedom was restricted. 188 In this particular dispute the workers were only successful in having their working hours reduced. 189

The issue of dormitories, however, would recur in labour disputes involving women workers. Eventually, in a dispute at the Tōyō Muslin factory in Kameido in May 1927, women workers did gain the right to leave the dormitory at will. 190 Suzuki Yūko has described this victory as having the


186 Kamijō Aichi, 'Nihon no Fujin Rōdōsha', p6.

187 Makise, Hitamuki no Onnatachi, p54.

188 Makise, Hitamuki no Onnatachi, p55.

189 This, however, was an important concession for women workers with domestic responsibilities; Makise, Hitamuki no Onnatachi, ibid.

190 Suzuki, Jokō to Rōdō Sōgi, p28; Gordon, Labour and Imperial Democracy, p225.

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force of a "declaration of human rights" (jinken sengen) for women workers.191

5.3.4 Sexual Exploitation
The imagery of caged birds was also used to describe another group of workers: those who had been indentured into prostitution.192 Once again, the trope of imprisonment was more than mere metaphor. As Yamakawa pointed out in her advocacy of the abolition of licensed prostitution, prostitution was a particular kind of unfree labour. Prostitution could also be used as a shorthand term for the exploitation of women under the capitalist system: women are forced into prostitution while men are forced into military service.193

For factory women, there was a feeling that very little separated them from the fate of the prostitute. As E.P. Tsurumi has pointed out, in the early days of industrialization, there was little choice between being sold to a brothel and being sent to a factory to work off payments advanced to the worker's family. For later generations, women workers who left the factories were likely to end up as waitresses or in other jobs in the mizu-shôbai (entertainment and hospitality industry) which often slid into prostitution.

191 Suzuki, Jokô to Rôdô Sôgi, p27.
192 See Nishikawa Fumiko, 'Yoshiwara Kenbutsu no KI', in section 3.4 above. See also Iwauchi Tomie's account of women from the licensed quarters who came to the Airindan for help after the earthquake of 1923. They were described in the press as "caged birds who had been set free" (hanatareta kagi no tori). The Airindan was a Christian socialist organization in the Nippori region of Tokyo, managed by Iwauchi Zensaku and Iwauchi Tomie. Watanabe & Suzuki, Tatakai ni ikite, p127-128.
193 See section 5.2.1 above.
Even for factory women, who were not explicitly engaged in sexual labour, sexual harassment was always a possibility, as dramatised in the following song:

This company is like a brothel  
We are whores who live by selling our faces  
in Hida geisha get thirtyfive sen  
Common prostitutes get fifteen sen  
Spinning maids get one potato

5.3.5 Working Mothers

As we have seen, the stereotypical image of a woman worker was a young girl, fresh from the country, filling in a couple of years before marriage. When motherhood was mentioned it was as a potentiality, as the future of these young women. The future role of these women as "mothers of the nation" was one of the justifications for the implementation of protective legislation for women workers. Early socialists used the maternal as an image which encapsulated the caring values of a socialist society, while others linked maternal values with pacifism.

In reality, however, depending on the region and industry, an increasing number of women workers in factories were married and had children. In the 1920s, the pages of *Seigi no Hikari* started to reflect this reality. The maternal image often, however, involves conflict. The potential contradiction involved in being both mother and worker is dramatised in a visual representation of a mother leaving her child behind as she departs for the factory (Appendix 1, Figure 3). A similar sense of conflict is expressed in Gotô Miyoko's poetry from the late nineteen twenties:


195 For a detailed discussion of the use of maternal imagery, see Vera Mackie, 'Motherhood and Pacifism in Japan, 1900-1937', *Hecate*, Volume 14, no 2, 1988, passim.

196 Kamijō Aiichi, 'Nihon no Fujin Rōdōsha', *Seigi no Hikari*, no 4, 15/7/1926, pp5-6.
A haggard mother runs to the factory, her child racing after her; no time to wipe his nose.

At last the baby sucks firmly, but the afternoon work-siren snatches away the breast.

Children clinging left and right the mother washes rice. The western sun shines on her breasts.

Do not leave those women behind. Their steps are slow because they carry those who will build tomorrow's world.¹⁹⁷

In the journal *Seigi no Hikari*, labour organizer Iwauchi Zensaku employs rather extravagant imagery to show that he values the contribution of women workers:

Factory sisters! How fine you look! You should realise you are the mother [goddesses] of humanity. What would happen to the world if you were to stop working! You are responsible for producing beautiful fabrics, weaving, and spinning - the products which make up a large part of our country's wealth. And that is not all - goddess sisters! If you were to refuse to bear and bring up children, the human race would disappear from the face of the earth. What a frightening responsibility! You should be proud of being women and of being mill girls! You, who have the pride of being workers, and the important job of being mothers, should be worshipped as goddesses!¹⁹⁸

Visual imagery from labour movement publications portrays an uneasy amalgam of socialist realism and allegory. Do the nursing mothers in these illustrations represent actual working class mothers, or the abstract values of compassion which were thought to be a feature of the socialist movement? (Appendix 1, Figures 4-5)¹⁹⁹

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¹⁹⁸ Iwauchi Zensaku, *Seigi no Hikari,*

5.3.6 Factory Girls

Women workers were described as jokó (female operative, factory girl). Jokó was often a rather derogatory label, but there were also attempts to turn this label into a positive form of identity.²⁰⁰ One such attempt was Nagai Chôzô’s contribution to an early edition of Yûai Fujin. Nagai argued that jokó should be respected rather than looked down on. However, in his attempt to dispel negative stereotypes of factory girls, he reinforces a few more stereotypes of feminine qualities:

Rather, women workers are serious and patient, and work steadily without shirking. Because they pay attention to detail, and have nimble fingers, they don’t make careless errors, and always tidy up properly.²⁰¹

There were also attempts to validate the identity of factory girls in songs:

Don't dismiss us as factory girls
Factory girls are a treasure chest for the company (kaisha no senryôbako)

Don't look down on us as factory girls
When we go home we are the apple of our parents' eyes (hakoiri musume).²⁰²

One woman, however, described a transformation of her consciousness of her identity as a “factory girl” (jokó). Umezu Hagiko had been the subject of an article in the company magazine Fujin no Homare (The Pride of Women), for the speed of her reeling. On this occasion she was asked to speak to the other women working in the factory. Given this opportunity, she did not give the expected homily on the virtues of hard work. Rather, she told

²⁰⁰ Both Suzuki Yûko and E.P. Tsurumi have traced the transformation of the identity of jokó. In particular, see: Tsurumi, Factory Girls; Suzuki, Josei to Rôdô Kumiai.


the other women that it was up to them to become awakened. She would look back on this occasion and reflect:

At that time factory girls (jokô) were looked down on, and all the feelings pent up in my heart must have just come out spontaneously. At that time, I wasn't at all abject.203

Thus, gaining in assertiveness was one aspect of the transformation of the identity of "factory girls". Could the identity of woman worker be transformed into an identity which gave equal weighting to the fact that the factory women were workers, members of the working class, and potential unionists?

5.3.7 Women of the Working Class

One step in the validation of women workers' identity involved an assertion of the difference between women of the working class and women of other classes. A textile workers' song pointed up the difference between factory workers and the new professional women (shokugyô fujin):

If a woman working in an office is a willow,  
A poetess is a violet,  
And a female teacher is an orchid,  
Then a factory woman is a vegetable gourd.204

In the following poem from Seigi no Hikari, there is an implicit notion of class consciousness, employing images of the differences between women:

My eyes have been opened  
The clothes worn by that young lady  
Have been produced by the sweat of my labour205

203Interview with Umezu Hagiko, in Makise, Hitamuki no Onnatachi, p53.


The exploitation which is the basis of the relationship between the working class and the ruling class was presented graphically in the following song. Here, everything which shines, sparkles, or glistens is connected with the representatives of class privilege: the rich man, the general, and the rich man's mistress.

What is it that sparkles in the glasses of the rich?
Champagne??
No, no, it's the sweat of the poor farmer.

What is it that glistens on the face of the rich man's mistress?
Diamonds??
No, no, it's the bloody tears of the poor female factory worker.

What is it that shines on the chest of the Minister and the General?
A medal??
No, no, it's the bones of the poor soldier.206

A contributor to the journal Seigi no Hikari (The Light of Justice) plays on the imagery of light and darkness in order to argue for women's strength.207 Tajima Hide begins with an evocation of the actual conditions of working women, who leave home before sunrise and come home from the factory after dark. These conditions are contrasted with the "young ladies" of the middle classes:

Some people say that factory girls work for the nation, that they are the nation's treasure. But it is the young ladies who go to girls' schools who wear beautiful clothes, eat good food, and

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207 Tajima Hide, 'Hikari ni Mukai te', Seigi no Hikari, 2; 18/5/1926.
who grow up bathed in light. And what about the factory girls, who are said to be the nation's treasure? They are hidden away in the darkness, drained of blood and sweat, and collapse one by one.208

This imagery of deprivation and envy, however, is transformed into an image of strength, as Tajima assures her readers that the light of justice, like that of the sun, can never be extinguished but only hidden, and that it is in their power to regain their strength through solidarity:

It is factory girls who are doing the most important work. If all of the 730,000 factory girls were to stop working, we would find out how much power we have. Until now we have been unaware of our power. It will be easy to drive away the clouds if we use the power of unity. Until now we had forgotten about our own power. The people have chosen not to see us. Now is the time for us to show our power. Let us show our strength, to ourselves, and to the world. Let us be proud of our strength. Only then will the light which has been hidden for so long emerge from the clouds. And then let us bring this light to all of the people.209

In Tajima's writing, the conventional images of pathos have still been used, but she has attempted to transform an image of deprivation into an image of power.

Some women, however, rejected the "politics of envy".210 For Taijiri Okaya, a participant in a rural dispute, a focus on the differences between women of different classes diverted energy away from the struggle to transform society:

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Women are the most wretched victims of the evils of capitalism. We are not only mothers of families, but mothers of humanity. We women, who have the responsibility of future life, have a mission even more precious than that of men. Our mission is a great one.

Instead of envying wealthy women, we should wake up to the reality around us, and turn our attention to the reformation of society, for the attainment of women's demands.²¹¹

Union leaders, too, could occasionally transcend their paternalistic and patronizing attitudes. In Yamane Kenjirō's exhortation to the textile workers to join the union, we can see a rare example of a union leader addressing male and female workers in similar terms. He suggests that it is unrealistic for young women to expect to go back to the village when village life is characterized by poverty. Yamane addresses the reality of work for most families, where men and women must both work and leave their children to be minded by others. Women workers are initially addressed as jokōsan, but it also clear from the content of his article that when he refers to bōshoku rōdōsha (textile workers) or warera rōdōsha (we workers) he is referring to both male and female workers. This writer, at least, was able to imagine women as fellow workers and as fellow unionists. In his explanation of exploitation, Yamane refrains from using words like "capital" or "capitalists".²¹² He simply explains that the motivation of the wealthy is to amass further wealth, and this is why they prefer to use the cheapest labour possible, which may involve dismissing male workers and employing female workers for lesser wages. For this reason both male and female workers must join unions and show solidarity against the arrogance and selfishness of the rich. Yamane was able to explain complex ideas in simple terms,

²¹¹Tajiri Okayo, Mirai, No 4, June 1926, in Maruoka, Fujin Shisō Keisei Shi Nōto, pp155-156.

²¹²Other contributions to Seigi no Hikari did offer explanations of terms like 'labour union', 'labour movement', 'strike', 'capital', 'proletariat', 'exploitation', 'class', etc. The first issue, for example, carried the start of a series on labour unions, an explanation of May Day (the "workers' festival"), a profile of Robert Owen, and a report on union activities. Later issues would have a similar range of educational articles alongside fiction and poetry.
without patronizing the women workers.\textsuperscript{213} Such images of solidarity are an obvious advance on the representations of women workers in the early \textit{Yûaikai} journal \textit{Yûai Fujin}.\textsuperscript{214} The visual representations of women workers had also evolved. The fourth edition of \textit{Seigi no Hikari}, for example, bore the slogan "Arise, factory women!", while the cover of another edition showed women under the union flag.\textsuperscript{215} Similar illustrations appeared in \textit{Rôdô Fujin} in this period (Appendix 1, Figures 6-7).

In Tajima Hide's statement on the formation of the Women's Work Research Bureau, she was able to transform the conventional representations of women's situation into images of solidarity and agency:

\begin{quote}
Just opening your eyes is not enough  
Stretch out your hand  
Spread your wings.

Use that hand, and that wing to open the eyes of the person next to you  
Oh! How many people have been forced to cover their eyes!  
It has been this hand and this wing which have restrained us.  

We will break the chains of oppression and submission  
Inaction is a crime!\textsuperscript{216}
\end{quote}

Tajima was able to go beyond images of escape, to imagine the caged birds not simply flying away, but joining in solidarity, and breaking their chains of submission. Could such imagery be transformed into political action? In the next section, I examine the representations of women workers in some strike pamphlets from the depression years of 1929 to 1931.


\textsuperscript{214}See section 4.2 above.

\textsuperscript{215}\textit{Seigi no Hikari}, No 4, 15/7/1926.

\textsuperscript{216}Kantôgen', Fujin Rôdô Chôsajô, in Maruoka, pp141-143.
5.4 Striking Women


This year saw an increase in the number of strikes involving women workers,\footnote{In 1930, it was reported that the number of women participating in strikes exceeded the number of males. In the dyeing and weaving industry, 14,444 women participated in disputes, about double the male figure of 7,616. Several strikes were said to involve women only, and strikes spread to such occupations as waitresses, actresses, dancers, models, nurses, shop assistants, and geisha. Hasegawa Kôichi, 'Honpô ni okeru Fujin Rôdô Undô no Sûsei to sono Kentô', Shakai Seisaku Jihô, No 135, October 1931, cited in Ishizuki Shizue, '1930nendai no Musan Fujin Undô', in Joseishi Sôgô Kenkyûkai (eds) Nihon Joseishi 5: Gandai, Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, p199.} including strikes at Kanegafuchi factories in Osaka and Kôbe,\footnote{2In 1930, it was reported that the number of women participating in strikes exceeded the number of males. In the dyeing and weaving industry, 14,444 women participated in disputes, about double the male figure of 7,616. Several strikes were said to involve women only, and strikes spread to such occupations as waitresses, actresses, dancers, models, nurses, shop assistants, and geisha. Hasegawa Kôichi, 'Honpô ni okeru Fujin Rôdô Undô no Sûsei to sono Kentô', Shakai Seisaku Jihô, No 135, October 1931, cited in Ishizuki Shizue, '1930nendai no Musan Fujin Undô', in Joseishi Sôgô Kenkyûkai (eds) Nihon Joseishi 5: Gandai, Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, p199.} and the Kishiwada factory in Sakai. The Tôyô Muslin strike was one of the most violent of strikes which involved thousands of workers, and has become famous as a "women's strike".\footnote{Such a connection between women's militancy and the danger of sexual promiscuity has been identified in other national contexts. See, for example, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, in} The Tôyô Muslin strike was one of the most violent of strikes which involved thousands of workers, and has become famous as a "women's strike".\footnote{Such a connection between women's militancy and the danger of sexual promiscuity has been identified in other national contexts. See, for example, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, in} The strike lasted over 60 days, from September 26th to November 21st. Violence erupted on October 24th between the workers and hired gangs.

While left-wing pamphlets and publications portrayed the women as heroic, indeed as the vanguard of the proletariat, companies attempted to manipulate the anxieties of parents. Companies wrote to the families of striking women workers that their daughters were likely to be engaging in unseemly relationships with men, warned of the danger of pregnancy and advised that they should take their daughters back to the country before their chances of marriage were ruined.\footnote{2Such a connection between women's militancy and the danger of sexual promiscuity has been identified in other national contexts. See, for example, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, in} The company also directed

\footnote{2Such a connection between women's militancy and the danger of sexual promiscuity has been identified in other national contexts. See, for example, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, in}
propaganda at the wives of male workers, at residents of the Kameido region, and at the striking workers themselves. 222

The strikers were supported by the Musan Fujin Dômei (Proletarian Women’s League),223 and Orimoto [Tatewaki] Sadayo's Labour Women's School provided a base for supporters of the strike.224 The following statements were produced by the Proletarian Women’s League:

To the Proletarian Women of Nankatsu
In this cold season, the depression is becoming more and more serious. And we are feeling the effects of this depression in the sad state of our pantries.
At this time 488 of the 3000 women workers at Tôyô Muslin have been retrenched and may be sent back to the countryside. However, in the country the conditions are even more severe than in the city.
In the country, they are eating snakes and tree roots and saving food and energy by going to bed early. Their meagre assets are being repossesed due to their inability to pay pay taxes. If unemployed women workers go back to the country, this will only increase the poverty in the countryside, and will mean that they will share the fate of starving to death.
Over 3000 of our brothers and sisters at Tôyô Muslin have . . . embarked on a strike in order to save themselves from starvation, and are fighting against the high-handedness of the company and the indescribable suppression by the police.
The enemy which has forced the factory women into such an extreme situation, and the enemy which has caused the increasingly sorry state of our pantries are the same - the finance capitalists.
So, the victory of the factory women of Tôyô Muslin, will, in the end, be a victory for all proletarian women.
Please help the poor factory women win their struggle!

‘Disorderly Women: Gender and Labour Militancy in the Appalachian South’, Journal of American History, September 1986, p375: "There is nothing extraordinary about this association between sexual misbehaviour and women's labour militancy. Since strikers are often young single women who violate gender conventions by invading public space customarily reserved for men (and sometimes frequented by prostitutes) - and since female aggressiveness stirs up fears of women's sexual power - opponents have often undercut union organizing drives by insinuations of prostitution or promiscuity."

222 Watanabe & Suzuki, Tatakai ni Ikite, p144. Suzuki, Jokô to Rôdô Sôgi, pp

223 The Proletarian Women’s League was one of the Women’s Leagues formed to mobilize proletarian women, who could not become full members of political parties. These women's leagues will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

224 Watanabe & Suzuki, Tatakai ni Ikite, p143.
We hope that you will come out of your kitchens, stand up together, and provide your wholehearted support.

October 1930
Proletarian Women's League

Blood and Prisons! Tears and Sacrifices! The Bitter Struggle Goes On! Save the 3000 Brothers and Sisters of Tôyô Muslin with the Power of the Masses!

Japanese imperialism, which is in its last throes, is attempting to save itself through capitalistic industrial rationalization, which shifts the burden onto workers and peasants. The working class of our country has been attacked by a wave of large-scale retrenchments and wage cuts.

In particular, it has been women workers - those who have the least power of resistance - who have suffered the most harm. Consider the 60,000 retrenchments in the textile industry, and the 80% cut in wages. There have been huge retrenchments in the woollen textile trade, and Kanebô has cut wages by 40%. We have seen this in innumerable places, such as Kashiwabara and Kyôto Muslin. However, all of these disputes have failed because of the lack of a strong organization.

For grade one spinning women - the ones with the weakest organization - the pay is a paltry three sen. In order to protect first of all their own livelihood, and, by extension, to stem the raging tide of rationalizations which threatens our one million sisters throughout the country, the three thousand sisters at Tôyô Muslin have been united in strike action for 26 days.

We of the Proletarian Women's League give our unqualified support to this struggle, in order to fulfil our duty to our class, and to defend all proletarian women against starvation.

The Tôyô Muslin dispute is now intensifying, and suppression by police and the Nihon Seigi Dan has turned Kameido into a street of violence.

Our 3000 brothers and sisters are paying a sacrifice in blood! Do not give them up to the enemy! Bring down a torrent of contributions to our fighting fund!

In these pamphlets, it is perhaps the close relationship between representation and political activism that is responsible for the strong representations of women to be found here. The reality of women's strike activity at this time made possible the representation of strong and active

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225 Pamphlet produced by the Proletarian Women's League (Musan Fujin Dômei), held in Ōhara Social Research Institute.

226 Musan Fujin Dômei, Tôyô Muslin Sôgi Õen Nyûsu, No 1, 8/10/1930; held in Ōhara Social Research Institute; reproduced in Yûko Suzuki, Jokô to Rôdô Sôgi, Tokyo: Renga Shobô, 19189, pp85-87. The Nihon Seigi Dan (Japan League of Justice) was an ultranationalist organization which was hired to intimidate the strikers.
women, and these representations made possible the imagining of future activism by women. In the labour movement writings, there is a depth which comes from references to the lived struggles of women workers. The authors of these pamphlets are intimately involved with the workers' struggle, rather than gazing on the factory women from outside. These contrast with the writings of Fukuda Hideko and Yamakawa Kikue examined above, where depth comes from intertextuality, from references to a shared cultural heritage and a literary education.

Such publications as strike pamphlets, of course, had a relatively limited circulation, restricted to the immediate area surrounding the dispute. However, the Tôyô Muslin strike, due to its length and scope, was widely reported in the media. In the Tokyo Daily News (Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shinbun), the strikers' representations of themselves as strong and brave became a feature of a report on the strike. The headline of this article quoted the posters and pamphlets seen around the factory "See the strength of the women workers!" "Liberation through struggle!", and closed on the following note:

I said goodbye to the factory girls with a feeling of respect for the impressive discipline shown by these awakened factory women. They farewelled me with the "comrades song" (dôshi no uta), complete with accompaniment.227

The account of the strike published in Chûô Kôron is perhaps more conventional, in its references to the "caged birds" song. This commentator asks what turned these "factory girls" (jokô) into "tigers" (tora), and concludes that it is economic conditions which are to blame.228

227 Tokyo Nichi Shinbun, 26/9/1930; cited in Suzuki, Jokô to Rôdô Sôgi, p18. The singing of revolutionary songs in this dispute has been commented on in reminiscences of the strike, suggesting that the labour movement had some success in countering the pathos of the women's own songs. Watanabe & Suzuki, Tataki ni ikite, p144.

228 Kawano Mitsu, 'Jokô Ketsuruiki', pp405-412.
Although the 1930 Tôyô Muslin strike was unsuccessful in terms of achieving the demands of the workers, it was important as an example of working class militancy, and of the militancy of women workers.\textsuperscript{229} Although the absolute numbers of organized women were still small, such strikes were significant in facilitating new ways of seeing working women: as workers and as comrades. The strong representations of women from within the labour movement even permeated the mass media and intellectual journals.

5.5. From Worker to Activist

While women in the socialist movement were primarily seen as wives and as mothers, socialism would be presented to women as mainly involving issues related to marriage, the family, and reproduction. If women could also be seen as workers, however, then they could be seen to have interests in common with their male comrades. The relationship between men and women in the socialist movement could be seen, not as a relationship between protector and protected, between activist and helpmate, but as a relationship based on comradeship. In the 1920s, male union leaders did not immediately give up their protective and patronizing attitude to women workers, as we have seen. Eventually, however, it became apparent that a labour movement which could not successfully mobilize the majority of its industrial work force - the women workers - would be doomed to failure. In the depression of 1929 to 1931, it was these women workers in the textile industry who bore the brunt of lay-offs, and it was these women who were forced into militant action against capital. The reality of these women’s

\textsuperscript{229}Suzuki Yûko also argues that the strikes of the early 1930s were part of the creation of a new view of the jokô: as a class-conscious, combative woman worker, rather than the pathetic figure portrayed by Yokoyama Gennosuke and Hosoi Wakizô. Suzuki also reminds us that, despite this militancy, the absolute numbers of unionized women workers was still small. Suzuki, Jokô to Rôdô Sôgi, pp116-117.
militancy (albeit under the guidance of a predominantly male union leadership) was reflected in new representations of strong working women. The early 1930s also saw attempts to mobilise women outside the factories which formed the "traditional" base for a union movement. In both Osaka and Tokyo there were attempts to form waitresses' unions, for example.230

Thus, the process of organizing working women was necessarily accompanied by new ways of imagining working women. It is for this reason that I have been interested not only in debates about the class position of women, and discussion of the best strategies for mobilizing these women, but also in the poetic, fictional and visual representations of working women. If women could first be imagined as workers and as comrades, this was an important step in the transformation of women into activists.231

One aspect of women's activism involved direct conflict with capital, as workers, and as unionists. In the next chapter I will examine socialist women's activities in engaging with state institutions: though co-operation with suffragists, in campaigns for social welfare legislation, and through collision with the repressive power of the state through the experience of surveillance and imprisonment. These activities were carried out in parallel with labour activities, and the time frame of the next chapter roughly corresponds with this chapter.


231My definition of activism differs from that employed by Barbara Molony in her article on "activism" in the Taishō cotton industry. Molony defines activism as "the opposite of passivity", a definition which seems unnecessarily broad, particularly as the term "agency" can be used to denote an individual's control over his or her own circumstances. I prefer to reserve the term activism to describe women's attempts to transform their situation through collective action. I argue that for women to see themselves as workers was a necessary first step in women's transformation into activists. It was also necessary for others to recognise women as workers before they could be recognised as potential comrades in collective action. c.f. Barbara Molony, 'Activism among Women in the Taishō Cotton Industry', p218.
CHAPTER SIX: ACTIVISTS (1920-1937)

When Nakasone Sadayo was arrested on May Day in 1921,1 the policeman mocked her,

"What sort of a woman are you! Demonstrating when you should be home looking after your children!"

Nakasone Sadayo's reply was:

"What sort of a man are you! A proletarian who works for the capitalists! Take a look at yourself!"2

This incident, which was reported in a socialist leaflet of the times,3 highlights one aspect of the relationship between socialist women and the State in Japan before 1945. Sekirankai member Nakasone Sadayo, on attempting to participate in a political demonstration, was subject to the repressive power of the State, through the agency of a policeman who questioned the feminine suitability of her behaviour. Nakasone's reply in turn reflected prevailing socialist views of the State. Her retort implied that the State represented the interests of business rather than the interests of workers or, indeed, women.

This incident illustrates that when we consider the relationship between women and the State,4 we often envisage a "top-down" relationship whereby it is the State which acts upon women, through repression of political activity, or through other policies related to education, work, welfare

1See section 5.2.1 above.

2Ezashi, Akiko, Sameyo Onnatachi, p 96.

3Nakasone Sadayo, Fujin Mondai, Tokyo: Musansha, 8/6/1921.

4This discussion has been informed by recent Anglophone discussions of feminist theories of the State, although the main focus of the chapter will be the ways in which Japanese socialist women engaged with the State as activists and what this implied about their views of the State. The relevant literature includes: Nira-Yuval Davis & Flora Anthias (eds) Woman: Nation: State, London: Macmillan, 1989; Anna Yeatman, Bureaucrats, Technocrats, Femocrats, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992; Sophie Watson (ed) Playing the State, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989.
or reproduction. Also implicit in this incident is an oppositional relationship between women and the State. However, in contrast with the "top-down" view of a State which acts upon women, it is also possible to look at the State from the point of view of women, to see how they understood the State, and how they attempted to influence the policies of State institutions.

In the case of middle-class members of such groups as the Patriotic Women's Association, no distinction was made between State interests and "women's interests". In contrast with groups such as the Patriotic Women's Association, which rarely challenged government policies, feminist and socialist groups often tried to influence the government. Different feminist ways of engaging with the State can perhaps best be illustrated by taking two extreme examples. In the case of suffragist Ichikawa Fusae, she came to see co-operation with the State as being in the interests of women, and was thoroughly co-opted by the militarist state. Anarchist Takamure Itsue, on the other hand, envisioned small autonomous communities and a withering away of the state.

Most socialist women lay somewhere between these extremes. While most argued for the transformation of the existing system in some way, many social democratic women were willing to engage in campaigns for more immediate reforms. While some socialist women concentrated their activities

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in the labour movement, supporting women workers in their struggles against capital, others engaged more directly with State institutions, through criticism of State policies, and through attempts to influence State policies in various ways. Socialist women also engaged with the State in their comments on the Manchurian incident of 1931, and in broader criticism of Japanese imperialism. While women in the labour movement came into direct conflict with employers through strike activities, women in the labour and socialist movements also addressed the State more directly, in campaigns for the implementation of effective labour legislation to supplement the inadequacies of the Factory Act of 1911 and the amended Factory Act of 1923. Whether active in the labour movement or in support of the party movement, however, socialist women first had to negotiate the factionalism of the socialist movement.

While socialists considered the class position of women, and debated the best way to mobilize women workers, liberal feminists began to move beyond individualist views of women's liberation and engaged in organized group action, although this was by necessity carried out within the limitations of Article Five of the Public Peace Police Law. Hiratsuka Raichō, Sakamoto Makoto, Ichikawa Fusae and Oku Mumeo formed the Shin Fujin Kyōkai (New Women's Association) in 1920. Like the early socialist women of the Heiminsha, these liberal feminists realized that the repeal of Article Five was necessary for women to participate fully in social movements, and the campaign for women's freedom to participate in political organizations was the first focus of the New Women's Association (Shin Fujin Kyōkai).

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8 See section 3.6 above.
Article Five of the Public Peace Police Law was modified in February 1922, and this made possible the formation of organizations devoted to the cause of women's suffrage. Several suffragists' organizations were formed in the years after the amendment of Article Five. In the nineteen twenties and nineteen thirties, there was some co-operation between suffragists and socialist activists on several issues, including conferences on women's suffrage, and campaigns for the implementation of social welfare measures. While the Taishō debates on "motherhood protection" had involved discussion of the relationship between individual and State, this had not immediately been translated into political action. In the nineteen thirties, however, liberal feminists and social democratic women co-operated as activists in attempting to pressure the government into the enactment of legislation to provide State assistance for supporting mothers - a demand which became more urgent with the escalation of conflict on the Chinese mainland.

By the nineteen thirties it had become apparent to the government and bureaucracy that women could be mobilized to support State policies in various ways. The modest patriotic organizations of the early twentieth century were now transformed into mass organizations, mobilizing women in both urban and rural areas. The patriotic women's groups were supported by Young Women's Associations, and educational activities directed at young people.9

A limited Bill for Women's Suffrage actually passed the Lower House in 1931, suggesting that in Japan, as in many European countries, it was

thought that women might provide a further source of support for conservative governments. The Bill, however, failed to pass the Upper House. Women were not successful in achieving full political rights in Japan before the end of World War II. Official discourse primarily constructed women as subjects who could be mobilized to support State policies, rather than citizens who had a right to participate in shaping those policies. Socialist women, did not, however, give up their aspirations to citizenship, and attempted to influence State policies in various ways during the nineteen thirties. Many women involved in the suffrage movement attempted to gain legitimacy for their demands through co-operation with State institutions. For socialist women, however, their attitude to the State was generally more cautious. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, socialists had been subject to surveillance, censorship, arrest and imprisonment, and this would intensify in the nineteen thirties.

6.1 Suffragism & Electoral Politics
After the formation of the The New Women's Association in 1920, liberal feminists carried on a campaign for the repeal of Article Five of the Public Peace Police Law. The 'New Women' also presented a petition to the Diet, asking that men carrying venereal diseases be prevented from marrying.¹⁰ The petition on venereal diseases had little impact, but modifications to Article Five of the Public Peace Police Law were eventually passed by both houses. The achievement of this amendment has been attributed to the success of the campaign of the New Women's Association, but recent analyses suggest that the government and bureaucracy were also finding it increasingly useful to mobilize women in public campaigns.¹¹

Article Five was modified in 1922, and this made possible the creation of associations specifically devoted to the attainment of women's suffrage.\footnote{Campaigns leading up to the modification of Article Five are discussed in Tajima Hide, Hitosuji no Michi: Fujin Kaihō no Tatakai Gojūnen, Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1968, pp56-61; 'Women's Rights and Society's Needs', pp695-705; Sheldon Garon, 'Women's Groups and the Japanese State', pp16-19.}

Suffrage was granted to all adult males over the age of twentyfive in 1925, and proletarian political parties were created to mobilize the men of the proletarian class. The removal of property qualifications for voting made it clear that women were being excluded from political participation on the grounds of sex alone. Although women could, after the revision of Article Five, attend public political meetings, they were still unable to join political parties, vote, or stand for public office. The League for the Attainment of Women's Political Rights (Fujin Sanseiken Kakutoku Kisei Dōmeikai),\footnote{13The name of the organization was changed to the Fusen Kakutoku Dōmei (Women's Suffrage League) in April 1925. The Association's monthly journal Fusen (Women's Suffrage) appeared from 1927, and had a print run of around 2,000 copies.} led by Ichikawa Fusae, was created in 1924.\footnote{14On the history of the pre-war campaign for women's suffrage, see: Kodama Katsuko, Fujin Sanseiken Undō Shōshi, Tokyo, Domesu Shuppan, 1981.} Other women's organizations which supported the cause of women's suffrage included the Japanese chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (Nihon Kirisuto Kyō Fujin Kyōfukai), The Tokyo Federation of Women's Organizations (Tokyo Rengō Fujinkai), and the All-Kansai Federation of Women's Organizations (Zen Kansai Fujin Rengōkai). Teachers were also well-represented in suffragists' organizations.\footnote{15Nolte, 'Women's Rights and Society's Needs', p692, pp697-699.} Most suffragists demanded political power within the existing system,\footnote{16c.f. Nolte's comments on the suffragists: “Guarding the public welfare verged perilously close to statism, and the suffragists asked for the vote in order to fulfill their duties as Japanese subjects.” Nolte, 'Women's Rights and Society's Needs', p701.} although reformers affiliated with Christian organizations wanted to use the vote to transform immoral relations between
men and women. Socialist women, however, wished to see the transformation of the whole society, and the vote was only useful if it could help women participate in this transformation.

Socialist attitudes to women's suffrage were, however, ambivalent. The goal of suffrage could be criticised as bourgeois, distracting socialist women from the main goal of transforming society according to socialist principles. It was also, however, apparent that women would be able to participate more effectively in the socialist movement if they could attain full political rights. After the creation of the proletarian parties in the mid-nineteen twenties, all of these parties eventually created affiliated "women's leagues" in order to mobilize the support of proletarian women. From 1928, some of these "women's leagues" were co-operating with the suffragists on various issues, as we shall see below.

6.2 Women's Leagues of Proletarian Parties

Several proletarian parties were formed after the enactment of Universal [Manhood] Suffrage in 1925. The parties were closely aligned with the union federations and followed similar factional lines, as discussed in Chapter Five above. The communist-influenced Hyōgikai union federation supported the Labour-Farmer Party (Rōdō Nōmin Tō) until its dissolution after the anti-communist purge of 1928. The centrist Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Dōmei (Japan Labour Union League) supported the Japan Labour-Farmer Party (Nihon Rōnō Tō), formed in December 1926. The Japan Labour Farmer Party was joined by groups from the right and left of the proletarian

\[17\] Refer to Appendix 2, Figure (b), for the factions of the pre-war proletarian party movement.

\[18\] This left-wing grouping is known as the Rōnō-ha clique. There were attempts to reform a legal left-wing party after the dissolution of the Labour-Farmer Party. The Proletarian Masses Party (Musan Taishū Tō) was formed in August 1928, but merged with the centrist group in December 1928. Remaining elements of the former Rōnō Tō made several short-lived attempts to form a new left-wing party.
movement in several mergers, and underwent several name changes in the years from 1928 to 1931. The moderate Sōdōmei supported the Social Democratic Party (Shakai Minshū Tō), formed in December 1926. The Shakai Minshū Tō merged with the centrist National Labour-Farmer Masses Party (Zenkoku Rōnō Taishū Tō) to form the Social Masses Party (Shakai Taishū Tō) in July 1932. While proletarian forces coalesced under the moderate social democratic banner of the Social Masses Party, the extreme right of the proletarian movement broke away to form the Japan National Socialist Party (Nihon Kokka Shakai Tō) under the leadership of Akamatsu Katsumaro in 1932. Another nationalist grouping formed the New Japan People's League (Shin Nihon Kokumin Dōmei) in the same year. The Social Masses Party gained 18 seats in the Diet in 1936, and in 1937 achieved 37 seats in the 466-member Diet, the highest of any pre-War proletarian party.

A broad-based women's political organization, the Fujin Seiji Undō Sokushinkai (Society for the promotion of Women's Political Movements) was established under the auspices of the magazine Shufu no Tomo in December 1926 but was soon superceded by the Women's Alliances attached to the various proletarian parties. The Kantō Fujin Dōmei (Kantō Women's League) was aligned with the communist-influenced Rōdō

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19This centrist grouping is known as the Nichirō clique. Subsequent mergers resulted in the formation of the Japan Masses Party (Nihon Taishū Tō) in 1928, National Masses Party (Zenkoku Taishū Tō) in 1930, and the National Labour-Farmer Masses Party (Zenkoku Rōnō Taishū Tō) in 1931.

20This Social Democratic grouping is known as the Shaminkai clique.


Nômintô (Labour-Farmer Party).23 The Kantô Women's League was formed on July 3rd 1927 but forcibly disbanded in March 1928 when official party policy argued against the existence of separate women’s divisions.24 The Zenkoku Fujin Dômei (National Women's League), formed on October 2nd 1927, was aligned with the centrist Nihon Rôdô Nômin Tô. 25 The Shakai Fujin Dômei (Social Women's League), formed in November 1927, was aligned with the moderate Shakai Taishû Tô. The Social Women's League changed its name to the Shakai Minshû Fujin Dômei (The Social Democratic Women's League) in July 1928.26

After the disbandment of the Kantô Fujin Dômei, those women who retained their allegiance to the "legal" left formed the Proletarian Women's Study Group (Musan Fujin Kenkyûkai) in June 1928. The study group became the Proletarian Women's Alliance (Musan Fujin Renmei) in October 1928, and this organization formed an alliance with the centrist National Women's League (Zenkoku Fujin Dômei) in January 1929, creating the Proletarian Women's League (Musan Fujin Dômei). The merger of the Musan Fujin Dômei and Shakai Minshû Fujin Dômei in August 1932 resulted in the creation of the Shakai Taishû Fujin Dômei (Social Masses Women's League). This organization was, in effect, the Women's League of the Social Masses Party. After the formation of the national socialist Kokka Shakai Tô, a women's league was formed under the leadership of Akamatsu Akiko, wife of Akamatsu Katsumaro. Akamatsu's sister Tsuneko, however, stayed with the Social Masses Women's League, which was active until 1936. The

23Members included Tajima Hide, Nozaka Taki, and Tanno Setsu: Maruoka, Fujin Shisô Kaiseishi Nôto, p151.
24Kondô, Watashi no Kaisô, Volume 2, p35.
25Members included Iwauchi Tomie, Kikugawa Shizuko, Orimoto [Tatewaki] Sadayo.
26Members included Akamatsu Akiko, Murakami Hide, Yamada Yasu, and Fujita Takako.

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activities of these women's leagues will be described briefly, in order of their factional alliances, before moving on to a discussion of socialist women's attempts to engage with State institutions in various campaigns of the 1920s and 1930s.

6.2.1 Women in the Rōnō Faction

In the previous chapter, I surveyed debates on the formation of a women's division in the Hyōgikai union federation, and proposals for the formation of a Women's League to mobilize women outside the union movement.28 Women of the Rōnō faction initially co-operated on the Society for the Promotion of Women's Political Movements (Fujin Seiji Undō Sokushinkai), and the first meeting of this society was chaired by Oku Mumeo and Tajima Hide. After factional disagreements at this meeting, however, the leftist women prepared for the creation of a women's league independently of the other factions. The Women's League Preparatory Committee issued a stirring statement in December 1926.29 This statement reads as a direct challenge to all of the representations of women as weak and ineffectual:

Who was it who decided that women are weak? We are not at all weak! The only reason for our weakness is that we have been shut up at home and relegated to the edges of society, and this has dispersed our strength. When all women stand up together in opposition to the discriminatory social and economic treatment [we have received] in this country, no one will be able to call us weak! That's right! When all women arise

27 For a diagrammatic representation of these organizations, see Ishizuki Shizue, '1930nendai no Musan Fujin Undō', in Joseishi Sōgō Kenkyūkai (eds) Nihon Joseishi 5: Gendai, Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, p195. A simplified diagram appears in Appendix 2, Figure (c).

28 See section 5.2.3.2 above.

29 Members of the preparatory committee included Tajima Hide, Nozaka Ryō, and Tanno Setsu, and members of the Women's Division of the Japan Farmers' League and the Women's division of the Hyōgikai. see: Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Hyōgikai Chūō Jōnin linkai, 'Fujin Undō ni Kansuru Ikensho', December 1926; in Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryō Shūsei, Volume 8, pp304-316. Documents relevant to this committee are also held in the Ôhara Social Research Institute.
in solidarity, that is when our strength will be radiant, that is when a new age for women will be born. Now is the time when women must fight for our freedom, and make demands with a new strength and solidarity. This is why we are now planning to establish the Women's League in order to unite women from all over the country. Volunteers from all over the Kantô region have formed a preparatory committee for the formation of the Women's League. The Committee has already started preparations for an inaugural meeting.

We have no doubt that this newly created Women's League is the organization that we have long been waiting for and hoping for - the organization which will fight for women's demands and women's freedom.

Our comrades from all over the country!
Join the Women's League!
Power to women! The Women's League will shine brilliantly!30

Despite this stirring manifesto, the activities of the group were still subject to the dictates of the Communist-influenced Hyôgikai union federation and the Labour-Farmer Party. The League was also supported by the Women's League of the Japan Farmers' Union. A leaflet prepared for International Women's Day in March 1927 made clear the factional position of this group. The leaflet affirmed support for the Labour-Farmer Party and criticised the moderate Social Democratic Party and the centrist Japan Labour Farmer Party.31

The Kantô Women's League (Kantô Fujin Dômei) was eventually formed in July 1927.32 The inaugural meeting, held on 3rd July 1927, announced a set of policies which will be familiar from the discussion of union women's divisions: full political rights for women, and freedom to join political parties;

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32 Documents relevant to the Kantô Women's League are held in the Ôhara Social Research Institute.
abolition of laws which discriminate on the grounds of sex; prohibition of night work and mining work for women; reform of the dormitory system; abolition of licensed prostitution; abolition of the indenture system; equal opportunity in education; abolition of sexual discrimination in wages; protection of children; maternity leave and provision of free creches. Perhaps the only distinctive clause concerns the "liberation from feudal restrictions in the family".

The activities of the League included support for strikes, support for the Labour-Farmer Party at the elections in 1928, and the production of a newsletter.

Regional committees were set up in preparation for a national structure for the Women's League, and a national meeting was planned for March 1928. After further changes in party policy on women's leagues, the Kantō Women's League was forcibly disbanded in March 1928, before this national meeting could be held. The League was accused of pursuing bourgeois objectives, and it was stated that women would best be occupied in mobilizing proletarian housewives and women in factories.

33 Rōnbo Fujin linkai Nyūsu, No 6, 1927, cited in Tajima, Hitosuiji no Michi, pp156-7. Tajima was Secretary of the Kantō Women's League, and the Steering Committee, chaired by Niizuma Itoko, included Tanno Setsu, Nozaka Ryō, Yamanouchi Mina, Nakada Koharu, Yanagi Tsuru and Hashimoto Kikuyo.

34 Tajima, Hitosuiji no Michi, pp159-163.


37 On the dissolution of the Kantō Fujin Dōmei, see: Tajima, Hitosuiji no Michi, pp163-170; Inumaru, 'Nihon ni okeru Marukusu shugi Fujinron', pp164-167. Behind this problem was the factionalism of the extreme left of the proletarian movement. After the dissolution of the Japan Communist Party in 1924, leftists had continued their activities in the Labour-Farmer Party and the Hyōgikai union federation. This group was split between those who wanted to re-form the Communist Party and those who wished to remain within the legal left of the party movement. After the Party was reformed, the Fukumoto faction concentrated their activities in the underground Communist movement, while Sakai Toshihiko, the Yamakawas and their followers were active in the Labour-Farmer Party and its successors. It was the reconstituted
members of the Kantô Fujin Dômei, including Tajima Hide and Tanno Setsu, continued as supporters of the underground communist movement, an occupation which became more dangerous after mass arrests on March 15th 1928.38 The Labour-Farmer Party, until now representing the legal face of the left of the proletarian movement, was banned by the Home Ministry in April 1928.39

6.2.2 The Proletarian Women’s League
After the disbandment of the Kantô Fujin Dômei, Tanno Setsu and Tajima Hide continued their activities in the underground communist movement. Other former members of the League kept up their connections with the left of the legal party movement. These women formed a study group known as the Musan Fujin Kenkyûkai (The Proletarian Women’s Study Group) in June 1928.40 In addition to studying socialist writings, these women assisted in the production of a women’s edition of the Labour-Farmer Party journal, Rônô.41 The study group became the Musan Fujin Renmei (Proletarian Women’s Alliance) in October 1928, and was affiliated with the Musan Taishû Tô (Proletarian Masses Party) one of the successors of the Labour-Farmer Party.42 The merger of the Proletarian Women’s Alliance (Musan

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38Kondô, Watashi no Kaisô, Volume 2, p35; Makise & Yamanouchi (eds) Tanno Setsu: Kakumei Undô ni ikiru, p147; Tajima, Hitosuiji no Michi.

39Large, Organized Workers and Socialist Politics, p142.

40Kondô, Watashi no Kaisô, Volume 2, pp140-144; p193. See also miscellaneous documents of the Proletarian Women’s Study Group in the Ōhara Social Research Institute.

41Kondô, Watashi no Kaisô, Volume 2, pp68-70; p141 p193; Rekishi Hyôron Henshûbu, Kindai Nihon Josei e no Shôgen, pp43-44.

42Kondô, Watashi no Kaisô, Volume 2, p144; Ishizuki, ‘1930nendai no Musan Fujin Undô’, p195. See also documents relevant to the Proletarian Women’s Alliance in the Ōhara Social Research Institute.
Fujin Renmei) with the centrist National Women's League (Zenkoku Fujin Dômei) resulted in the creation of the Proletarian Women's League (Musan Fujin Dômei) in January 1929.\(^{43}\) By 1930 the League had 100 members, increasing to 445 members in 1931.

Sakai Magara was an important member of this grouping. On many issues, the Proletarian Women's League retained a radical perspective, for example, in being one of the few groups to openly criticise the Manchurian incident.\(^ {44}\) Sakai and her colleagues also, however, displayed pragmatism in their willingness to co-operate with Social Democratic Women and liberal feminists in campaigns for women's suffrage\(^ {45}\) and for State benefits for supporting mothers.\(^ {46}\) Sakai was also committed to unity among the proletarian women's groups. As early as 1928, she had published an article pointing out the absurdity of operating with three proletarian parties, three union federations, and three women's leagues. It would take several more years, however, before such a coalition could be achieved.\(^ {47}\)

6.2.3 Women in the Nichirô Faction

The National Women's League (Zenkoku Fujin Dômei), formed on October 2nd 1927, was aligned with the centrist Japan Labour Farmer Party and the

\(^ {43}\)Kondô, Watashi no Kaisô, Volume 2, pp144-150. Copies of the League's newsletter, Musan Fujin Dômei Tôsô News, which appeared from February 1929, are held in the Ōhara Social Research Institute. The 1929 Committee was chaired by Iwauchi Tomie, with Ōshima Tokiko as Treasurer, and a central committee of 27 members. On the new committee in 1930, Iwauchi continued as chair, assisted by Sakai Magara as Secretary and Teramoto Tsuru as Treasurer. Ishizuki, '1930nendai no Musan Fujin Undô', p195.

\(^ {44}\)See section 6.4.1 below.

\(^ {45}\)Kondô, Watashi no Kaisô, Volume 2, pp70-71.

\(^ {46}\)Kondô, Watashi no Kaisô, Volume 2, pp173-176.

Japan Labour Union League. Office bearers included Orimoto Sadayo and Iwauchi Tomie. The group produced a newsletter and was active in supporting strike activities in affiliated unions, and supporting the Japan Labour Farmer Party in the 1928 elections. The League also co-operated with the Japan Textile Workers' Union on a committee lobbying for the banning of night work for women from November 1927, and participated in a Joint Committee for Women's Suffrage formed in March 1928.

Iwauchi Tomie and Orimoto [Tatewaki] Sadayo were particularly active in supporting the activities of the Japan Textile Workers' union. Iwauchi Tomie's husband, Zensaku, was leader of the union and the couple managed the Airindan, a Christian socialist charitable organization in the Nishi Nippori neighbourhood of Tokyo. Orimoto [Tatewaki] Sadayo managed the Labour Women's School (Rôdô Jojuku) and this provided a base for support of strike activities, in particular the Tôyô Muslin strike of

48 Members of the Committee included Orimoto [Tatewaki] Sadayo as Secretary, Iwauchi Tomie with responsibility for Recruitment and Publicity, and Kikugawa Shizuko as Treasurer. Supporters. On the activities of the National Women's League, see Watanabe & Suzuki, Tatakai ni Ikite, pp134-136: Rekishi Hyôron Henshûbu, Kindai Nihon Joseishi e no Shôgen, pp167-169. The Zenkoku Fujin Dômei News (Nos 2-4, November 1927-April 1928) and other relevant documents are held in the Ōhara Social Research Institute.


50 For details of Iwauchi Tomie's activities, see: Watanabe & Suzuki (eds) Tatakai ni Ikite, pp95-161.

51 Zenkoku Fujin Dômei News, No 4, April 1928.

52 The factory Act of 1911 had banned night work for women under the age of twenty between the hours of 10 p.m. and 4 p.m. The ban, however, was not to be implemented until fifteen years after the Act was promulgated in 1916. Exemptions could be granted which allowed women to work until 11 p.m., and night work was allowed where a two-shift system was in operation. The Revised Factory Act of 1923 provided for the abolition of night work for all women after 1926, but this too was postponed until an Imperial decree of June 1926 prohibited night work for women, to be effective on July 1st 1929. Janet Hunter, 'Factory Legislation and Employer Resistance: The Abolition of Night Work in the Cotton Spinning Industry', in Tsunehiko Yui & Keiichirô Nakagawa (eds) Japanese Management in Historical Perspective, Tokyo: University of Tokyo, 1989, pp247-248.
1930. Orimoto would also turn to the writing of the history of working women in Japan, publishing a pamphlet on working women in Japan and contributing articles on working women to the journal Fujin Sensen. The Zenkoku Fujin Dômei formed a coalition with the Proletarian Women's Alliance (Musan Fujin Renmei), creating the Proletarian Women's League (Musan Fujin Dômei) in January 1929. This merger was marked with a joint meeting on January 20th 1929.

6.2.3 Social Democratic Women

The Shakai Fujin Dômei (Social Women's League) was aligned with the moderate Shakai Minshû Tô. The Social Women's League, formed in November 1927, changed its name to the Shakai Minshû Fujin Dômei (The Social Democratic Women's League) in July 1928. The Social Democratic Women's League was active on working women's issues, and in the campaign for State benefits for supporting mothers. The pages of the League's journal Minshû Fujin express the moderate line taken by this group. The first issue, for example, proclaims:

*Minshû Fujin* will march under the banner of realism (*genjitsushugi*) and the light of legality will shine on the road which the proletarian working women will follow.

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53 See section 5.4 above.

54 Orimoto Sadayo, Rodô Fujin Mondai, Tokyo: Musansha, 19/9/1929.

55 This group was affiliated with the Proletarian Masses Party (Musan Taishû Tô), formed after the dissolution of the Rônô Tô. Relevant documents are held in the Ôhara Social Research Institute.

56 Members included Akamatsu Akiko, Murakami Hide, Yamada Yasu, and Fujita Takako.

57 Copies of *Minshû Fujin*, the journal of the Shakai Minshû Fujin Dômei (Nos 1-33: 25/11/1928-25/3/1932) and other relevant documents are held in the Ôhara Social Research Institute.

58 Minshû Fujin, No 1, 25/11/1928.
"Realism" was the slogan of the moderate Sōdōmei union federation and the Social Democratic Party, and signified a distancing from more radical elements of the left-wing movement. The contributors to the journal constantly reiterate that they are interested in mobilizing "proletarian and working women" (kinrō musan fujin).59

In this moderate socialist women's journal, "capital", or the "bourgeoisie", are blamed for poverty, retrenchments, unemployment, and the resulting mother-child suicide incidents. However, it is the State which is called upon to provide support through unemployment relief, removal of consumption taxes, the implementation of a Mother and Child Assistance Act, and the provision of free childcare facilities. The Mother and Child Assistance Act was discussed in the context of the necessity for birth control, and the League established the Birth Control Association (Sanji Seigen Kyōkai) in September 1930, under the guidance of former nurse Iwauchi Tomie. The Association was responsible for selling birth control equipment and information.60

The Social Democratic Women's League initially espoused policies of female suffrage, women's rights to political participation, a union law, a motherhood protection law, the prohibition of licensed prostitution, jobs for

59The use of this hybrid phrase is interesting. The Social Democratic clique tended to refer to the kinrō kaikyū (labouring class), which included not only the proletariat, but also salaried workers who may own a small amount of property. Their political strategies were closer to the liberal end of the spectrum. The centrist and leftist cliques, on the other hand, championed the musan kaikyū (propertyless class), and espoused a more revolutionary strategy. The use of the phrase kinrō musan fujin to describe the constituency of the Social Democratic Women's League, seems to speak a desire to be as inclusive as possible. On the distinction between kinrō kaikyū and musan kaikyū, see Large, Organized Workers and Socialist Politics, pp112-113.

60The issue of birth control is mentioned in Minshū Fujin from late 1929, and is often linked with the promotion of the Mother and Child Assistance Act. See also: Ishizuki, ‘1930nendai no Musan Fujin Undō’, p202. Documents relevant to this birth control association are held in the Ohara Social Research Institute.
the unemployed, the abolition of consumption tax on necessary goods, and the reform of women's education. By 1931, they had added calls for free creches and maternity clinics, and improvement in maids' working conditions. The Social Democratic women were quite specific in the kinds of reformist, legislative changes they called for. In January 1931, they held meetings and engaged in pamphleteering in both Tokyo and Osaka on the issues of women's suffrage and State assistance for supporting mothers.

As survival became more difficult in the years of economic depression, they also turned their attention to issues related to declining standards of living, calling for reduction in charges for gas, electricity, water, and provided support for several strikes by women workers in affiliated unions.

In May 1931, the Social Democratic Women's League merged with the Women's Labour Alliance (Rôdô Fujin Renmei), an organization they had been co-operating with for some time. The Social Democratic Women also co-operated with the Proletarian Women's League from 1930 on. The Joint Committee on Total Suffrage (Tettei Fusen Kyôdô linkai), established in October 1930, brought together women of the two groups. A public meeting held by this committee on 29th November 1930 linked two pressing concerns: suffrage and the protection of living standards. The groups also

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61 Zassô no Yô ni Takumashiku, p106.
62 Minshû Fujin, No 30, p1.
63 Zassô no Yô ni Takumashiku, p107; Minshû Fujin, No 18.
65 'Gôdô Taikai o Mukauru ni Saishita', Minshû Fujin, No 23, May 1931 The Working Women's League had been formed on July 10th 1927, under the auspices of the moderate Sôdômei Union Federation, and led by Akamatsu Tsuneko. The Committee of the amalgamated organization had Akamatsu Akiko as Secretary/Treasurer, Matsuoka Katsuyo responsible for Finance, and a management committee including Akamatsu Tsuneko, Abe Shizue and Nishio Fusano. A new committee in 1932 was chaired by Akamatsu Tsuneko, with Abe Shizue as Secretary and Matsuoka Katsuyo as Treasurer. Ishizuki, '1930nendai no Musan Fujin Undô', p195.
66 Ishizuki, '1930nendai no Musan Fujin Undô', p196-199.
co-operated on a Proletarian Women's Day in Tokyo and Osaka on February 8th 1931.67

By July 1931 the Social Democratic Women's League had 22 branches, representing a doubling in size in just a few months. The membership was 2,225 by October 1931, eight times the 1929 figure.68 In 1932, tensions came to a head in the right wing of the proletarian movement, resulting in a split which saw the creation of the National Socialist Party (Nihon Kokka Shakai Tō) on May 29th 1932. The National Socialist Party was led by Akamatsu Katsumaro, and his wife Akamatsu Akiko left the Social Democratic Women's League to lead the National Socialist Women's League (Nihon Kokka Shakai Fujin Dōmei), which was formed in July 1932, and changed its name to the Japan Women's League (Nihon Fujin Dōmei) in August 1933.69

Akamatsu's sister, Akamatsu Tsuneko, however, remained in the social democratic movement, and supported further coalitions in the moderate left. The Social Democratic Women's League merged with the Proletarian Women's League in August 1932, forming the Social Masses Women's League (Shakai Taishū Fujin Dōmei). The Social Masses Women's League provided support for the Social Masses Party, formed in August 1932 from the merger of the centrist and social democratic parties.70

67 Akamatsu Tsuneko, Abe Shizue, Sakai Magara, and Iwauchi Tomie were arrested on this day. Kondō, Watashi no Kaisō, Volume 2, p147; Zassō no Yō ni Takumashiku, p107.
68 Ishizuki, '1930nendai no Musan Fujin Undō'.
70 Kondō, Watashi no Kaisō, Volume 2, pp70-71.
6.2.5. The Social Masses Women's League

The merger of the Musan Fujin Dômei and Shakai Minshû Fujin Dômei in 1932, resulted in the creation of the Social Masses Women's League (Shakai Taishû Fujin Dômei) in 1932. This organization, affiliated with the Social Masses Party, was active until 1936.71 Akamatsu Tsuneko was chairperson and Sakai Magara was secretary, with Tanabe Tose as treasurer, assisted by Iwauchi Tomie, with a Central Committee of 60 members. The League called for the destruction of fascism, the granting of women's political rights, equal opportunity in education, abolition of the licensed prostitution system, paid maternity leave, nursing leave, menstruation leave, a mother-child support act, and the provision of childcare facilities.72

6.3 Co-operation between Socialists and Suffragists

One issue which brought together liberal feminists and women of the left was the issue of women's suffrage.73 Although some socialist groups criticized an excessive emphasis on the suffrage as "bourgeois", the policy statements of all of the left wing parties, unions, women's divisions, and women's leagues included demands for women's voting rights and women's rights to political participation. This was a particular focus of the Social Democratic Women's League.74

71Kondô, Watashi no Kaisô, Volume 2, p149.

72 A new committee, formed in 1935, was chaired by Iwauchi Tomie, with Sakai Magara as Treasurer, assisted by a sterring committee of Akamatsu Tsuneko, Abe Shizue and three others. Ishizuki, '1930nendai no Musan Fujin Undô', p195; Kondô, Watashi no Kaisô, Volume 2, pp70-71; Shakai Undô no Jûkyô, Volume 6, pp685-6.

73Liberal feminist activities and socialist women's activities are often presented as being antithetical, but examples of co-operation can be found in several national contexts. See, for example, Ellen Carol DuBois, 'Working Women. Class Relations, and Suffrage Militance: Harriot Stanton Blanch and the New York Women Suffrage Movement, 1894-1909', Journal of American History, Volume 74, No 1, June 1987.

74'Tettei Fusen no Kakutoku', Minshû Fujin, No 2, p1; Akamatsu Akiko, 'Moshi Fujin ni Kôminken ga Ataerareta Naraba', Minshû Fujin, no 2; Suzuki Haruko, 'Tettei fusen to wananka', Minshû Fujin, No 2; 'Kôminken no kikutoku e', Minshû Fujin, No3, p1; 5, 'Fujin Kôminken Enzetsukai', Minshû Fujin, No 5; etc.
Socialist women's groups also supported the campaigns of the Proletarian political parties, particularly at the first election held under Universal Manhood Suffrage in 1928. Even though women could not vote, they were exhorted to support the election of proletarian candidates who would represent the interests of the men and women of the proletarian class. Such sentiments could even be found in the left of the proletarian movement, for example in Tanno Setsu's contribution to the communist paper Akahata (Red Flag):

To the Revolution-Minded Comrades

...Women workers! Farm women! We must realize that our living conditions will not improve merely by fighting the capitalists and the landlords. The capitalists and the landlords, who are concerned only with ways to exploit the workers and tenants in order to make more money, have the advantage of favourable government policies. We women must achieve a real political consciousness and fight the government as well as the capitalists and the landlords. The Diet has been dissolved, and men over twenty five have been given the right to vote. Universal [manhood] suffrage will now enable us to send representatives of the workers and peasants to the Diet. But we women have not been given the right to vote. We do not have the right to choose our representatives. We have only a tiny bit of freedom, the freedom to get on the platform and support those who will represent the workers and the peasants in the Diet. Armed with this small freedom, women throughout the nation are battling in the electoral districts. We must win the right for women to take part in political activities and the freedom to join political parties. In order to participate in this movement, women - women workers and farm women - must stand on the platform and speak out during the election. We must join the men in the daily fight to eliminate the problems that affect us in the factories and on the farms. We must rally women workers and peasants under our party slogan "Bring down the government of landlords and capitalists - all the evildoers - and create a government of workers and peasants."

A joint women's suffrage committee (*Fusen Kakutoku Kyōdō linkai*) was set up in December 1928 and was active until 1929. This committee brought together three women's suffrage organizations and four of the left-wing women's leagues: the Labour Women's Alliance (*Rōdō Fujin Renmei*), the Social Women's League (*Shakai Fujin Dōmei*), the Japan Association for Women's Political Rights (*Nihon Fujin Sanseiken Kyōkai*), the Kantō Women's League (*Kantō Fujin Dōmei*), the League for Women's Political Rights (*Fujin Sansei Dōmei*), the Women's Suffrage League (*Fusen Kakutoku Dōmei*), the National Women's League (*Zenkoku Fujin Dōmei*). The group was responsible for a series of public meetings on the women's suffrage issue between March and May 1928.  

The First National Women's Suffrage Conference was held on 27th April 1930, under the auspices of the Women's Suffrage League, with the support of the Japan Association for Women's Political Rights, the Proletarian Women's League, and the All-Kansai Women's Federation. The Proletarian Women's League was also represented at the Second National Women's Suffrage Conference on 14th February 1931.  

There were several further attempts to set up joint committees. The Joint Committee on Total Suffrage (*Tettei Fusen Kyōdō Tōsō linkai*), established in October 1930, brought together women of the Social Democratic Women's League and the Proletarian Women's League, while the Allied Committee for the Attainment of Women's Suffrage (*Fusen Dantai Rengō*...
linkai), established in January 1931, brought together the Women's Suffrage League, the Japan Christian Association for Women's Suffrage (Nihon Kirisutokyō Fujin Sanseiken Kyōkai), League for Women's Political Rights (Fujin Sansei Dōmei), and the Proletarian Women's League. These four groups were represented at the third annual National Women's Suffrage Conference in May 1932, which produced a statement condemning fascism.80

Socialist women were represented at national women's suffrage conferences from 1930 on, and their influence can be seen in some of the declarations issued by these conferences. Some elements of the socialist movement were, however, critical of such co-operation. The Musan Fujin Dōmei's response to criticism of their co-operation with the suffragists was outlined in the League's Newsletter:

... It is not the case that we of the Musan Fujin Dōmei are simply interested in suffrage and nothing else. We are working for the day when [control of] today's politics will be seized by the workers and the farmers. All of our actions - strikes, workers' schools, electoral struggles - are in preparation for that day. So, in order to prepare properly, we will take every opportunity to put forward our ideas. That is [the nature of] our movement. We have no interest in the class of women who rush after the bait of women's suffrage, and think they can solve all problems through the power of women. We think that there is nothing to be gained by throwing insults at each other. We must communicate our class consciousness to that class of women who are being moved to fight for the cause of women's suffrage. We must call out to those women who can co-operate with the class of working women. Each of these opportunities is a site for our struggle! It is from this point of view that the Musan Fujin Dōmei proposes this joint struggle.81

Several bills for women's suffrage were introduced by individual members of the Diet during the nineteen twenties. By the end of the decade, women's suffrage had broad support within the government, culminating in a Bill presented by the Hamaguchi Cabinet in 1931. This Bill only allowed for women's voting in regional (city, town and village) assemblies, and provided for women to stand for office in local assemblies with their husband's permission. The Women's Suffrage League was opposed to this limited form of women's suffrage. Although this was passed by the Lower House, it failed to pass the more conservative House of Peers, and was subsequently overshadowed by events surrounding the Manchurian Crisis from 1931.82

Suffrage conferences continued until 1937, and fascism was criticised at the annual conferences, largely thanks to Proletarian members of the joint suffrage committee.83 Suffragists and socialists campaigned together for improved labour legislation for women workers, and for State benefits for supporting mothers. Although suffrage conferences made several feminist demands, relating to women's political participation, the only demands which were listened to in nineteen thirties Japan were those which reinforced women's maternal function. The Women's Suffrage League was forced to disband in 1940.84

Meanwhile, the government made its own attempts to mobilize women, in opposition to the developing alliances between socialists and suffragists. The Fujin Dōshikai, formed on 12th May 1930, attracted several women from the most conservative wing of the Women's Suffrage League. This was

83Suzuki, 'Manshū Jihen to Musan Fujin Undō', p60.
84Kano, 'Fusen Kakutoku Dōmei no Seiritsu', p69.
followed by the formation of the Japan Federation of Women's Associations (Nihon Rengō Fujin Kai) on 6th March 1931, and the formation of the Women's National Defence Organization (Nihon Kokubō Fujinkai) in March 1932.85

6.4 Engaging with the State

6.4.1 The Manchurian Incident

Even before the outbreak of the Manchurian Crisis in September 1931, the Proletarian Women's League had consistently opposed imperialism.86 At the time of the Manchurian incident, the Proletarian Women's League attempted to mobilize women's opposition to Japanese encroachment into China. The Proletarian women planned a day of speeches on the theme of 'Women and War', but were unable to enlist the support of other socialist or suffragist groups. The Proletarian women put out their own statement opposing militarism, which explicitly rejected the emotionalism and passivity which had often been a feature of women's pacifist writings since the publication of Yosano Akiko's "Kimi shini tamau koto nakare" in 1904:87

War is not a matter of individual likes and dislikes. It is something forced on us by the ruling class. For this reason it is no use saying to our husbands, brothers, and children "do not give up your life for the Emperor" (kimi shini tamau koto nakare). We must say to the promoters of war: "Do not wage war! Do not kill proletarians for the sake of your own profits!

85 All of these nationalist women's organizations, along with the pre-existing Patriotic Women's Association, were merged in the Greater Japan Women's Association (Dai Nihon Fujinka) in February 1942. Kano, 'Fusen Kakutoku Dōmei no Seiritsu', pp81-82.
86 Their stance was outlined in 'Rōdōsha Nōmin no Gyokusatsu Sensō Zettai Hantai', Zenkoku Taishū Shinbun Gōgai Musan Fujinban, 8/3/1931, and 'Teikokushugi Sensō Zettai Hantai', Musan Fujin Dōmei Tōsō Hōkoku, 2/4/1931; held in Ōhara Social Research Institute, and cited in Ishizuki, '1930nendai no Musan Fujin Undō', p204-205.
87 On Yosano Akiko's pacifist poem, see Section 3.5 above.
In the Social Democratic Women's League's statement on the Manchurian Incident in December 1931, they call on the Japanese State to take control of Manchuria from the bourgeoisie in the interests of the proletariat, and call for a special tax, the proceeds of which will be used for the families of servicemen.\(^8\)

Several feminist leaders commented individually on these events. Suffragist Ichikawa Fusae reiterated the pacifist view that international disputes should not be solved by military means, and referred to the children who would be sacrificed to military conflict on both sides. Ichikawa believed that women, who are the "mothers of humanity" would be most concerned to prevent such sacrifices.\(^9\) Yamakawa Kikue, on the other hand, was more cynical about linking pacifism with women's "peace-loving" nature:

> The refined kind of movement which calls on the peace-loving instincts of women to prevent war is, in short, nothing more than an amusement of peaceful times. Even though women may love peace and hate war, their socialization has strongly cultivated the habit of sacrificing one's personal emotion and personal benefit for the common benefit of the society one belongs to - for what is believed to be just. In every society in every age without exception, we can observe women's attitude of self-sacrifice and martyrdom. With the same passion and excitement that they have devoted to their child's upbringing, these women show no regrets in offering their children on the altar of war, in the name of justice and the common good. A simplistic maternal love, and an attachment to a peaceful home also:

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life is preparation for the act of sacrifice to the greater needs of
the group.91

Hiratsuka Raichō criticised the relative silence of women's groups on the
Manchurian issue. Takamure Itsue was also critical of the failure of most of
the proletarian women's groups to mount effective criticism of the incident,
and critical of those women who based their pacifism on their standpoint as
mothers. Takamure herself was working towards a more philosophical
understanding of war, quoting Heraclites, Plato and Marx.93 Perhaps the
most radical response was from anarchist Yagi Akiko, on the occasion of the
creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932. Yagi described
Manchukuo as a slave state which had simply exchanged one invader for
another, and called for opposition to imperialism.94

The failure of socialist groups to present united opposition to Japanese
imperialism in Manchuria in 1931 was a sign of the gradual capitulation of
the legal left. The Social Democrats in particular failed to promote principles
of internationalism, although there was some isolated criticism of the
Manchurian Incident from other proletarian groups. These tendencies were
foregrounded with the formation of the National Socialist Party in 1932, but
even those who stayed within the Social Democratic fold were muted in their
criticism of imperialism.95 Although the Proletarian Women's League and

91 Yamakawa Kikue, 'Manshū no Jūsei', Fujin Kōron, November 1931; in Suzuki (ed),
Yamakawa Kikue Josē Kahiō Ronshū, p 45. On related themes, see: Yamakawa Kikue,
'Nachisu to Fujin', Yomiuri Shinbun, 5/12/1935; 'Sensō to Fujin', Jiyō, November 1937; in

92 Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Manshū Jihen to Fujintachi no Taido', Miyako Shinbun, 27/12/1931,

93 Takamure Itsue, 'Heiwa to Fujin', Shūkan Fujin Shinbun, 31/1/1932 & 7/2/1932; cited in
'Shiryō: Jihen o kō Miru', Jūgoši Nōto, No 3, pp52-57.

94 Yagi Akiko, Manshūkoku Kensetsu to wa', Nōson Seinen, No 5, March 1932, cited in
'Shiryō: Jihen o kō Miru', Jūgoši Nōto, No 3, p57.

95 On the attitudes of proletarian parties and union federations to the Manchurian Incident,
see: Large, Organized Workers and Socialist Politics, pp153-156.
the Social Democratic Women's League merged in 1932, their different stances on issues related to imperialism were left unresolved.96

6.5.2 The Mother and Child Protection Act

The issue of State assistance for supporting mothers continued to be discussed after the debate on "motherhood protection" in the Taishô period. The progressive women's newspaper *Fujo Shinbun* referred to the issue throughout the 1920s, and set up a committee to promote the issue in 1926.97 After 1931, and the escalation of Japanese aggression in China, calls for State assistance for supporting mothers became more urgent, as families suffered from the effects of economic depression and the problems of surviving with fathers and brothers absent in the military. Incidents of mother-child suicides focused attention on this problem.98 Akamatsu Tsuneko reported in July 1932 that in the past two years there had been 492 incidents which had claimed the lives of 821 children.99

Although the need for such short-term measures as welfare provisions for supporting mothers may have been questioned by some individual socialist writers, this principle was one of the demands made by the *Shakai Taishô Fujin Dômei* (Social Masses Women's League) in 1932. Their platform specifically mentions a *Boshi fujo hô* (Mother and Child Assistance Act).100

96Ishizuki, '1930nendai no Musan Fujin Undô', pp224-225.
99Zassô no Yô no Takumashiku, p111.
while other proletarian groups refer to protective provisions or _bosei hogo_ in general. In other words, there were philosophical differences between individuals and groups, but most were willing to support pragmatic short-term measures such as the Mother and Child Assistance Act, while maintaining their separate positions on longer term objectives.

The Women's Suffrage League had always supported the various policies described as "motherhood protection", and the Fifth Annual Women's Suffrage Conference in 1934 specifically demanded the introduction of a _Boshi Fujo Hō_ (Mother & Child Assistance Act). Representatives from both liberal and socialist groups formed the Alliance for the Promotion of a Mother and Child Protection Act (_Bosei Hogo Hō Seitei Sokushin Fujin Renmei_) in September 1934. This committee was headed by former Bluestocking Yamada Waka. Yamada had been responsible for the early translations of Ellen Key in the journal _Seitô_, and was said to "embody" the principle of maternalism, although she had no children of her own. Yamada was against abortion, against contraception, and raised the ire of former colleague Hiratsuka in 1931 when she advocated that women should "return to their homes".

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101 See section 4.7 above on the disparate meanings of the phrase _bosei hogo_ (protection of motherhood).


103 The name was shortened to the Motherhood Protection Alliance (_Bosei Hogo Renmei_) in 1935. Relevant documents are reproduced in _Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryō Shūsei_, Volume 2, pp474-496.


Sakai Magara was one of the socialists represented on this committee. While Yamada's promotion of State support for motherhood was linked with antagonism towards contraception and abortion, socialists often linked the issues of birth control and State assistance for supporting mothers. They argued that women should not be forced to give birth to unplanned children, and that they should have the economic means to look after the children they chose to bear.106 Sakai had already had one confrontation with Yamada on the subject of contraception,107 and now voiced her concern about the philosophy behind the proposed legislation:

There is nothing wrong with being moved to feelings of sympathy, compassion or mercy by the problem of mother-child suicides. It is a different matter, however, when these feelings become the basis for a movement, and the spirit behind legislation. There is no need for the worship of motherhood... Rather than saying "Protect motherhood because it is something noble" this State, which is built by the people, should protect both motherhood and fatherhood. Nowadays, the members of the Movement for the Creation of a Motherhood Protection Act demand, support, and call for the protection of motherhood. Could we not say that the fact that the State does not provide such protection, is proof that the State does not belong to the people? When there is a war, and there are not enough soldiers, there are calls to bear children and to multiply. [In such times] mothers with children will be given financial assistance. Does this also come under the name of respect for motherhood, and protection of motherhood?108

The above polemic was written for the suffragist journal Fusen in October 1934. Sakai was perceptive enough to realise that such measures as the Mother and Child Assistance Act were most likely to be granted in war time,

106 Ishizuki, ‘1930nendai no Musan Fujin Undō’, p202
when the family unit was being threatened. She also realised the contradiction involved in "protecting" mothers and children, in order that they may later be sacrificed for the war effort. Given that the State is seen to be responsible for the exploitation of the proletariat as workers and as soldiers, she insists that the State should also take responsibility for women and children.

Sakai's writings on this issue show an ambivalent attitude to State institutions, which goes beyond the simplistic identification of State interests with capitalist interests, but is less sanguine about the benevolence of State institutions. By 1935 her rhetoric was framed in slightly different terms. Writing in the textile worker's paper *Seigi no Hikari*, Sakai now stated that such demands as the creation of a Mother and Child Assistance Act or an Unemployment Insurance System were worthwhile because they would cause cracks in the system, and hasten the defeat of capitalism.\(^\text{109}\)

The Mother and Child Protection Act (*Boshi Hogo Hō*) was promulgated on March 31st 1937, and became effective on January 1st 1938.\(^\text{110}\) The Act provided assistance for a mother (or grandmother) and child when the father had died, deserted the family, or become ill. A bill for the assistance of families of soldiers sick, wounded, or killed in war (*Gunji Fujo Hō*) was passed on the same day.\(^\text{111}\)

We should note that this law was enacted at a time when families were being shaken by the loss of husbands, fathers and sons, and the myth of the


\(^{110}\)Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryō Shūsei, Vol 2, pp488-490.

\(^{111}\)Vavich, 'The Japanese Women's Movement'.

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nuclear family with father as breadwinner could no longer be sustained. The State now looked after widows in place of the absent fathers, suggesting another possible relationship between women and the State, with the State cast as patriarch. This impression is reinforced by the title of the Act. Implied in the title "Mother and Child Protection Act" is an unequal relationship between women and the state, with women positioned as weak supplicants in need of "protection", to be provided by a strong and benevolent State.

Subtle differences in terminology appeared between different actors in this campaign. The women's newspaper Fujo Shinbun criticised the Home Ministry's use of the phrase Jidô Fujo Hô (Child Assistance Act) in draft legislation, arguing that this title ignored the issue of the welfare of mothers. Fujo Shinbun's emphasis on the links between the welfare of children and the welfare of mothers, however, suggests an inability to conceptualize issues of women's welfare independent of their roles as mothers. The women's committee formed to lobby for this legislation referred to a "mother and child assistance act", although the committee itself was called the "Motherhood Protection League" and articles and slogans on the issue often slipped back into the language of "protection of motherhood" (bosei hogo), suggesting the difficulty of transcending this way of viewing the relationship between women and the State.

Campaigns by socialist women on labour legislation in the 1920s and 1930s employed similar language. Proletarian women's leagues and unions called for legislation for the "protection" of women workers (Fujin Rôdôsha Hogohô). The proposed legislation was a response to the inadequacies of

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112 Bosei Hogo no Hon' [1926], reprinted in Fujinkai Sanjûgonen, pp172-174.
the Factory Act. These groups called for the immediate abolition of night work for women, proper paid maternity leave, and from the late 1920s also called for menstruation leave.\(^{113}\)

Like liberal feminists, many socialist women were willing to attempt to engage with State institutions in order to achieve reforms in the interests of women. However, because socialist women were always conscious of the possibility of political repression, and because they were conscious of the class interests of the bureaucracy and the government, this engagement with State structures was less likely to slide into co-operation or co-optation.

There was a fine line, however, between participation on committees formed to lobby the State for the implementation of feminist demands, and co-optation onto committees formed by the bureaucracy to mobilize women for government-defined purposes. The movements for civic participation in local improvement movements mobilized many progressive women who were critical of the more overtly nationalist organizations such as the Patriotic Women's Association and the Women's National Defence Organization. Yamakawa Kikue, however, was one socialist woman who continued to criticize women’s co-optation into organizations formed to promote State defined goals.\(^{114}\)


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6.4.3 Debates with Anarchist Women

While social democratic women and liberal feminists proposed statist solutions to many women's issues, anarchist women continued to question the role of the State in Marxist thought. These issues were considered in two women's intellectual journals which appeared around the turn of the decade. *Nyonin Geijutsu* (Women's Arts) and *Fujin Sensen* (The Women's Front) are usually presented as anarchist women's arts journals, but both journals published contributions from a broad spectrum of the left, including Communist Sata Ineko, Marxist Yamakawa Kikue, maternalist feminist Hiratsuka Raichô, as well as anarchists Yagi Akiko and Takamura Itsue.115

*Nyonin Geijutsu*, edited by Hasegawa Shigure, a former contributor to the Bluestocking journal, appeared from 1928 to 1931.116 *Fujin Sensen* appeared from March 1930 to June 1931.117

These journals provided a space for what could almost be called a feminist "*ana-boru ronsô*."118 Takamura Itsue and Yamakawa Kikue carried on a debate on the relative merits of anarchist and socialist solutions to the woman question in several intellectual journals, particularly *Fujin Kôron*.119 They were joined by several contributors to *Nyonin Geijutsu* and *Fujin

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118 The debates between anarchists and bolshevists of the 1920s are referred to as the "*ana-boru ronsô*". On the women's "*ana-boru ronsô*", see E.P. Tsurumi, 'Feminism and Anarchism', pp9-12.

119 Tsurumi, 'Feminism and Anarchism', pp9-11.
Sensen, including some articles which descended into personal attacks on male and female socialists.120

Contributors to Fujin Sensen pointed out some of the weaknesses of socialist attempts to solve the "woman question". Takamure Itsue argued that because socialist thought privileged labour and the economic sphere, those activities which were the responsibility of women (childbirth and childcare) were relegated to the private sphere and thus devalued. Takamure also rejected the socialists' advocacy of public provision of childcare facilities, arguing that this, too, represented a devaluation of motherhood, as children were taken away from their mothers.121 Takamure envisioned a society based on small autonomous communities (museifu kyōsan shakai) close to nature, where women would share responsibility for children; she identified such an anarchist tradition in Japanese village communities.122

Takamure, like Hiratsuka Raichō, tended to idolise motherhood.124 Takamure, however, identified motherhood with nature, and rejected the State support which had been advocated by Hiratsuka:

120 See, for example, Matsumoto Masae, 'Buru Otoko no Kamen o Hagu', Sumai Sueko, 'Maruha no Orekirei', Shōchi Saito, Wagakuni no Mankusu Fujin no Zunō Haken', parts 1-4, Fujin Sensen.


122 Takamure Itsue, 'Museifushugi no Mokuhyō to Senjutsu: Genka Museifushugi Sensen no Seiri ni Kansuru Shiken, Fujin Sensen, April 1930, pp30-36.

123 A similar idealization of village communities can be found in the writing of Itō Noe, who brought an anarchist perspective to the Bluestocking journal. See, for example, Itō Noe, 'Museifu no jijitsu', Itō Noe Zenshū, Vol 2, Gakugei Shorin, Tokyo, p464.

124 Hiratsuka also contributed to Fujin Sensen, and many similarities can be identified between Hiratsuka and Takamure. The connections between Hiratsuka and Takamure have been traced by Tsurumi. In addition to their philosophical affinities, they are also linked by their use of both polemical and poetic genres of writing in order to express their feminist ideas. See, for example, Takamure Itsue's "Leaving Home Poem" (Iede no Shi). Hiratsuka
[Takamure] called for establishment of community support and care for mothers and abolition of marriage as an institution... Believing that nature had its own order which must be honored, she argued that integral parts of nature like reproduction and childcare should be controlled by nature's own representatives - women, rather than by unnatural social institutions like marriage and the family.125

Contributors to Fujin Sensen attacked the family system in a series of articles.126 Although Takamure explicitly addressed the question of childcare, in her rejection of public childcare facilities and her advocacy of co-operative childcare in small autonomous communities, she did not question the sexual division of labour, whereby it was women who held primary responsibility for childcare.

In Hiratsuka's contribution to Fujin Sensen, she looked back on the two decades since the establishment of the Bluestocking journal, and traced the changes in her political position. Although she is now critical of "capitalist" exploitation, she is not ready to embrace socialist solutions to women's problems. Like Takamure, she seems to fear that socialist solutions tend to be authoritarian solutions. Hiratsuka has now become involved with the consumers' co-operative movement, and she identifies this movement as having the potential to transform society through the feminine principles of co-operation, rather than what she sees as the masculine strategy of class struggle. Although the forms of political strategy proposed by Hiratsuka had


125Tsurumi, 'Feminism and Anarchism', p8.

126Takamure Itsue, 'Katei Hiteiron', Fujin Sensen; No 2, Matsumoto Masae, Sei Seikatsu no Keizaigakuteki Kansatsu: Fujin Undô to shite no Katei Hitei, Fujin Sensen, No 9, pp14-19.
undergone several transformations, she still sought specifically feminine strategies for political change. 127

Like the motherhood protection debate of the Taishō period, these writings allowed further definition of the differences between socialist and other women’s strategies for political change. While the Taishō debates had allowed a clear definition of the differences between liberal feminists and socialist women, the contributions to Nyōnin Geijutsu and Fujin Sensen allowed discussion of the differences between anarchist and socialist views of women’s issues, and much of this discussion focused on the role of the State. While anarchist and socialist women differed in the degree to which they had faith in Statist solutions to women’s issues, they did share experiences of the repressive functions of State institutions.

6.4.4 The State and Repression
The experience of imprisonment appears in socialist women’s writings from the earliest days. One of the features of Fukuda Hideko’s autobiography is the extended discussion of her experiences in prison. Although her imprisonment on charges related to the Ōsaka Incident certainly reflects the repressive power of the Meiji State, her experience of imprisonment appears to have been relatively benevolent, perhaps because of her relatively privileged class background. 28

Kanno Suga, however, had a much more violent introduction to the powers of the police and judiciary. It seems that her poor treatment at the hands of the police in the Red Flag Incident in 1908 was one of the catalysts for her


128 See section 1.1 above.
subsequent radicalization.\textsuperscript{129} We have a relatively detailed account of her imprisonment during the trial for the Great Treason Incident, thanks to the survival of her prison diary.\textsuperscript{130} Kanno would become the first woman to be executed for treason in modern Japan.

The experience of imprisonment and police repression was something which united all participants in the socialist movement. Sakai Magara was conscious of this issue from her childhood, and her earliest memories included visiting her father Sakai Toshihiko in prison, and receiving a farewell letter and presents from Kanno Suga. When Sakai Magara and Nakasone Sadayo were imprisoned for distributing anti-militarist leaflets in the 1920s, Sakai was thus conscious of the links between herself and other activist women who had been imprisoned. All of these women were seen to have acted in ways which threatened the national polity: Fukuda Hideko's involvement in the Osaka Incident, Kôtoku and Kanno's treason plot, and Sakai and Nakasone's distribution of material containing "dangerous thoughts". Sakai was able to form a more tangible link, however, as she imagined Kanno's experience of imprisonment in a cell which was probably identical to her own, and remembered Kanno's poem about light shining through the barred prison window.\textsuperscript{131}

Most of our access to the experience of women under imprisonment comes from retrospective accounts like Sakai [Kondô] Magara's. There are the semi-fictional writings of Yamanouchi Mina\textsuperscript{132} and Sata Ineko,\textsuperscript{133} the

\textsuperscript{129} See the discussion of the Red Flag Incident in section 3.7 above.


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memoirs of such women as Tajima Hide,\textsuperscript{134} and the experiences recounted in the autobiographies and the oral history interviews of the post-war period.\textsuperscript{135} Occasionally, however, accounts of imprisonment appeared in contemporary publications. Tanno Setsu's letter to her mother from prison appeared in the women's journal Fujin Kôron,\textsuperscript{136} while Nyonin Geijutsu published the account of a "modern girl" who had ended up in prison after a demonstration.\textsuperscript{137} From 1933, the newspapers also published accounts of those former communists and socialists who had committed tenkô: public renunciation of their left-wing views. This provided a negative example for those who were brave enough to continue in oppositional activity. What all of these accounts did was to remind activists of the increasingly strict limits placed on oppositional activity, particularly after the enactment of the Peace Preservation Law (Chian iji Hô) of 1925.

6.5 Women as Activists

In addition to actively repressive policies, the government was increasingly involved in campaigns to mobilize ever-more clearly-defined sectors of the population, through youth groups, women's organizations, and other patriotic organizations. By 1937, Japan was at war with China, and moving towards a state of total national mobilization. The activities of the proletarian


\textsuperscript{134}Tajima Hide, Hitosui no Michi.

\textsuperscript{135}Makise Kikue, Hitamuki no Onnatachi; Watanabe & Suzuki (eds) Tatakai ni Ikite - Senzen Fujin Undô e no Shôgen; Watanabe & Suzuki(eds), Undô ni kaketa Onnatachi; Yamashiro Tomoe, Toraware no Onnatachi, Tokyo: Komichi Shobô, 1980, 11 volumes; Hane, Reflections on the Way to the Gallows.


women's divisions and suffragist organizations were soon overshadowed by these semi-official patriotic women's organizations. The Kokubō Fujin Kai (National Women's Defence Organization) was established in Western Japan in 1932. Although initially a private organization, the Association's fundraising activities were supported first by the media and then by the bureaucracy. While the Aikoku Fujinkai had largely remained an organization for (upper) middle class women, the Kokubō Fujin Kai was from the start a more broad-based organization. These two patriotic women's organizations worked in parallel until their merger in 1942. While the proletarian women's organizations tried to reach women from the grassroots level, the activities of the Kokubō Fujin Kai were increasingly organized from above.

The first campaign by socialist women examined in this thesis was the campaign for the revision of Article Five of the Public Peace Law, carried out by the women of the Heiminsha, in a relatively optimistic time of liberal idealism. In the next three decades, socialist women would gain confidence as workers and as activists, addressing employers with demands for improved working conditions, and addressing the State with demands for legislative changes to deal with the contradictory situation of women who were workers too. The last campaign to be analysed concerned the demand for State assistance for supporting mothers, and the achievement of this particular piece of legislation suggests the limits of public discourse on women and politics in this period.

State policies in the 1930s and 1940s showed contradictory attitudes to women and their reproductive capacity. The Mother and Child Protection

\[138^{\text{See section 6.4.2 above.}}\]
Act) *Boshi Hogo Hô*, which provided welfare assistance for supporting mothers, was passed in 1937. In the same year, Ishimoto Shidzue was arrested for her promotion of birth control, as part of a purge of left-wing activists. Ishimoto's promotion of birth control conflicted with increasingly pro-natalist policies. Abortion was allowed from 1940 on mainly eugenic grounds. The National Eugenics Law (*Kokumin Yûseihô*) of 1940 was followed by the 'Outline for Establishing Population Growth Policy' in 1941. This policy allowed for the sterilization of those suffering from hereditary diseases, and the prohibition of the practice of birth control by healthy couples.\(^{139}\)

In parallel with the mobilization of women for State purposes, there was an increased glorification of motherhood. In contradistinction to those feminists who had linked women's reproductive capacity with creativity and empowerment, official discourse increasingly linked maternity and nationalism. From 1940 women who produced large numbers of children were given official recognition,\(^{140}\) and motherhood was glorified in school textbooks and other official publications.\(^{141}\)

Socialist women had attempted to expand the representations of women, and were starting to be recognised as fellow workers and comrades within the socialist and labour movements. The strikes of the depression years brought representations of women engaged in militant labour activism out of the socialist press and into the mass media. These representations,

\(^{139}\)Yoshiko Miyake, 'Doubling Expectations: Motherhood and Women's Factory Work in the 1930s and 1940s', in Bernstein (ed) *Recreating Japanese Women*, p278. Miyake's article includes a survey of State policies concerned with women's maternal capacity in the late 1930s and 1940s, which is outside the scope of the present study.

\(^{140}\)Miyake, 'Doubling Expectations', p279.

however, had to compete with official representations which confined women within the bounds of a nationalist discourse which emphasized motherhood.

From the late 1930s, socialist women could choose public renunciation of their socialist beliefs, retreat from public activity, or engage in moderate reformist activities. Some continued in illegal underground activity, while others spent much of the war years in prison. For women who identified themselves as socialists, the relationship between individual and State, or between political organization and State, was necessarily an oppositional one. They had no illusions about the power of the State and the policing apparatus.

However, even groups and individuals who take an oppositional stance must frame their opposition in the language available to them. As E. Ann Kaplan has argued, "women, like everybody else, can function only within the linguistic, semiotic constraints of their historical moment - within that is the discourses available to them."\textsuperscript{142} In previous chapters I have, in a sense, been exploring the discourses available to socialist women in early twentieth century Japan. However, fictional genres of writing, and the tropes and metaphors of creative writing, may also be part of the process of imagining other political possibilities, as I have briefly alluded to in Chapter Five. In the final chapter, in addition to surveying the organizational and political strategies employed by socialist women in the years from 1903 to 1937, I will examine the discursive strategies of socialist women's writings, and the language used to describe situations of repression and exploitation, and to imagine the possibility of liberation.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
CREATING SOCIALIST WOMEN 1903 - 1937

Socialist women in early twentieth century Japan were active in a range of political groups, from the *Heiminsha* of the 1900s to the women's divisions and women's leagues of the left-wing union federations and the proletarian political parties of the 1920s and 1930s. A major activity of the members of these groups was writing in a variety of genres: autobiography, essays, manifestos, fiction and poetry. The process of "creating socialist women" was a threefold one, which involved the theorization of the class position(s) of women and the political strategies for mobilizing women in the socialist and labour movements; the creation of organizational structures in order to mobilize women effectively in the labour and socialist movement; and the process of imagining women in new ways: as workers, comrades and activists rather than as wives, mothers and subjects of the Emperor. In this final chapter, I will survey the development of a movement of socialist women according to these three themes: defining a socialist and feminist position, organizing socialist women, and imagining socialist women.

7.1 Defining a Socialist and Feminist Position
There were two parallel developments of the liberal movement of the 19th century: socialism and feminism. The development of a socialist position on the "woman question" came out of a conjunction of socialism and feminism, which involved bringing a gendered perspective to socialism, and a class perspective to feminism. This also involved the differentiation of a socialist position from liberal and anarchist positions.

7.1.1 Liberalism, Socialism and Feminism
Both socialism and feminism developed from the roots of the early liberal movement. A discursive space was opened up for feminism by the early
Meiji discussions of the relationship between family and State, and women were interpellated in new ways by official pronouncements on "good wives and wise mothers". The Meiji government privileged a patriarchal family where hierarchical gender relations were articulated into the power structures of the new State. In this system, the nature of subjecthood was gendered, with men serving the State through conscription into the military, while women's service to the State was located in the family. Liberal theorists of the family, however, wished to see egalitarian relationships within the family and society at large. Progressive men and feminist women within the liberal movement wished to see "freedom and people's rights" extended to include women's rights. The transformations of modernity and capitalist development provided the conditions for mobilization on the basis of gender as well as class. Both socialism and feminism developed as critiques of the limitations of liberal ideology.

As industrialization developed, this made possible mobilization on the basis of class, as workers came to realize the basic contradiction between the interests of capital and the interests of labour. While the bureaucracy looked to the German school of social policy for ways of controlling the supply of labour, and forestalling potential labour militancy, intellectuals looked to American labourism, British Utopian socialism, and European Marxism for an understanding of the relations between labour and capital. In the early days of socialist thought in Japan, however, there was little to distinguish socialism from liberalism, and one of the first focuses of the early socialist


2See section 2.2 above.
movement was the campaign for the removal of property qualifications for
the vote. Most of the early attempts at forming unions were short-lived, and a
union movement on explicitly socialist principles did not really develop until
after the First World War.

The first conjunction of socialism and feminism became apparent in the
Heiminsha (the Commoner's Society) in the 1900s. A major focus of the
organization was the production of several socialist newspapers: Heimin
Shinbun (the Commoner's News), Chokugen (Plain Talk), Hikari (Light),
and Shinkigen (New Age). The range of socialist thinkers referred to in
these publications attests to the eclecticism of the early socialists. Their
search for a socialist understanding of the woman question is reflected in
their speeches and articles on the thought of Bebel, Engels and Morgan.

While the members of the Heiminsha were keen to debate socialist answers
to the woman question, their answers were shaped by the dominant
discourses on women's place. In both mainstream society and in the
socialist movement, women were primarily constructed as wives: as helpmate within the patriarchal family, as helpmate to the State through
patr¡ot¡c women's organizations, and helpmate to their male comrades in the
socialist movement. In socialists' attempts to conceptualize a society based
on co-operative principles, the family was often invoked as a metaphor for
communal values, although the socialists were also willing to attempt to
conceptualize new forms of the family. As far as women were concerned,
however, they were rarely conceptualized outside this sphere, and articles
addressed to women in the socialist movement tended to address the
"feminine" concerns of marriage and family, romance and reproduction. The
sphere of interest was widened, however, when socialist men and women
criticized the Patriotic Women's Association, where women were constructed as "wives and mothers" of an increasingly militarist State.\(^3\)

Leftists reeled from the shock of the Great Treason Incident of the late Meiji period, and the years after 1911 are often referred to as the "winter years" of the socialist movement. This decade also, however, saw the creation of the Bluestocking Society, a group of "new women" who emphasised the power of feminine creativity. Socialist Yamakawa Kikue collided with these liberal feminists in the motherhood protection debate of the mid-Taishô period.

This debate provided an opportunity for the delineation of the differences between socialist and liberal solutions to the problems of the care and maintenance of children, and saw the beginnings of the articulation of a new way of linking questions of gender, State and welfare: the maternalist feminist position, initially espoused by Hiratsuka Raichô and Yamada Waka, but given further refinement in the 1930s by Hiratsuka and anarchist Takamure Itsue. The motherhood protection debate also introduced the question of class differences between women,\(^4\) an issue which would be addressed by socialist and communist discussions of the mobilization of women in the 1920s.

\section*{7.1.2 Class Struggle and "Women's Special Demands"}

By the end of the First World War Marxism had become the most influential form of socialist thought, and more and more of the classics of Marx, Engels and Lenin were translated in the 1920s. The first complete translation of Bebel's \textit{Woman Under Socialism} also appeared in this decade. The

\footnote{\(^3\)See section 3.5.}

\footnote{\(^4\)See sections 4.6.-4.8.}
Russian revolution was another major catalyst in the revival of the socialist movement after the "winter years" following the Great Treason Incident.

The first women's division of a union was created by the Yûaikai friendly society in 1916, but the Yûaikai view of women was essentially a protective one. They saw the State and the unions as having a paternalistic role in protecting women from the excesses of capitalist exploitation. The position of women in the socialist and labour movements was not effectively theorized until the Seiji Kenkyûkai debates on women's issues, and the Hyôgikai debates on women's divisions between 1925 and 1927. These debates considered the relationship between the class struggle and "women's special demands". Despite the intellectual advances made in discussions of what recent feminist theorists call "equality versus difference", and the belated recognition that women could be workers too; these theoretical gains could not immediately be translated into effective mobilization of women, due to the subordination of women's interests to the factions of the "malestream" movement and the dictates of Comintern policy.

The malestream leftwing movement was increasingly fragmented into Marxist, Social Democratic, and eventually National Socialist factions. Women within the socialist movement chose their allegiances to one or other of these factions, and became activists in the women's divisions of unions or the women's leagues which supported the proletarian parties.

See section 4.2.

Socialist women also defined their position in opposition to anarchist women and liberal feminists. The increasing refinement of these positions did not, however, preclude co-operation. A broad spectrum of anarchist, Communist and socialist women contributed to the women's arts journals *Nyonin Geijutsu* (Women's Arts) and *Fujin Sensen* (The Women's Front), and social democratic women formed alliances with liberal feminists to lobby for feminist demands.7

There was a fine line, however, between participation on committees formed to lobby the State for the implementation of feminist demands, and co-optation onto committees formed by the bureaucracy to mobilize women for government-defined purposes. Although the movements for civic participation in local improvement movements mobilized many progressive women, Yamakawa Kikue was one socialist woman who criticized women's co-optation into organizations formed to promote State-defined goals.8

### 7.1.3 Socialism and the State

The debates of the 1920s had focused on the relationship between class and gender: on the problem of integrating women's "special demands" into the class struggle. In the early *Shōwa* period, debates between anarchist and socialist women focused on an issue which had been implicit in all previous debates on gender issues: the role of the State. Social Democratic women were increasingly engaged in co-operation with liberal feminists in campaigns for State solutions to women's problems (suffrage, protective labour legislation, State assistance for supporting mothers, and the public provision of medical facilities for childbearing women, family planning, and childcare facilities). Anarchist women rejected Statist solutions and

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7See sections 6.2 & 6.3.

8See section 6.4.2.
envisioned autonomous, non-hierarchical communities where women could share responsibility for childcare. In the case of Takamure Itsue, this was linked with a utopian vision, as she placed women in a more natural sphere, in communities modelled on her image of traditional Japanese villages. Like Hiratsuka Raichô, Takamure emphasized the power of women's creativity as mothers.9

Socialist and anarchist women could not help but be conscious of the State. They and their comrades had been subject to the repressive power of the policing apparatus of the State from the earliest days of the leftist movement. This was usually through the sanctioned power of the bureaucracy, the police, and the legal system. Occasionally, however, they were subject to the actions of agents of the State who had gone out of control, as in the murder of Ōsugi Sakae, Itô Noe, and several labour activists by police in the disorder following the Great Kantô Earthquake of 1923.

As a result of increased repression in the 1930s, the more radical sections of the leftist movement increasingly moved underground, or even escaped overseas, while the moderate elements of the socialist movement coalesced in a united proletarian party. Some succumbed to repression and committed tenkô: public renunciation of their allegiance to the leftist movement.10 From this time on, the movement entered what Japanese historians call the “dark valley” of the 1930s and 1940s. Unfortunately, the light of socialism and feminism had limited power to illuminate the darkness of repression in this period.

9See section 6.4.3.

7.2 Organizing Socialist Women

The process of forging a theoretical conjunction of socialism and feminism was meaningless, however, without the creation of effective organizational structures and political practices which could mobilize the energies of those women who came to define themselves as "socialist women".

7.2.1 Women in the Heiminsha "Family"

The Heiminsha, as we have seen, was often constructed as a surrogate family. The Heiminsha "family" was seen as a space where communal values could be put into practice, in keeping with the relatively gentle brand of socialism espoused by this group. Values of co-operation and community were more apparent than the class struggle in this early socialist group. For women in the Heiminsha, however, the use of familial metaphors also had hierarchical connotations, and women in the socialist movement were primarily constructed as wives and lovers, daughters and sisters. This was reflected in a sexual division of labour in the day-to-day running of the Heiminsha, and in the different ways in which women and men contributed to the early socialist publications.11

There were also attempts to create autonomous spaces for women's activities, through the Socialist Women's Seminar,12 and through publications directed at socialist women: Nijû Seiki no Fujin (Twentieth Century Woman), Sweet Home, and Sekai Fujin (Women of the World). Through the Heiminsha, women learned to practice political activity, by producing publications and selling them in public places. The novelty of

11 See section 3.2.

12 Even the Socialist Women's Seminar, however, was relatively dominated by men, both as speakers and as audience members. The lecture series did, though, give some women their first opportunity for public speaking, and provided a forum for the discussion of feminist issues. See section 3.3.
these activities for women is evidenced in Matsuoka [Nishikawa] Fumiko's account of this activity in the Commoners' News.13

The liberal roots of the early socialist views of the woman question became apparent in the first public campaign by socialist women. Fukuda Hideko and her colleagues from the women's newspaper Sekai Fujin (Women of the World) carried out a campaign for the repeal of those articles of the Public Peace Police Law which prevented women from engaging in public political activity. These liberal demands were matched by liberal political strategies; these women wrote essays in socialist publications, lobbied politicians, collected signatures, and presented petitions to the Diet.

7.2.2 The Sekirankai and the Yôkakai

The women of the Sekirankai and the Yôkakai carried on some of the political practices developed in the Heiminsha: lecture meetings, and the contribution of essays to intellectual journals. They did not, however, produce any independent publications. The women of the Sekirankai also participated in a new performance of socialist solidarity - the May Day demonstration, and immediately suffered the consequences of this participation: arrest, police brutality, and prosecution for the distribution of pamphlets without permission. In a lecture meeting held to raise money for the fines incurred, Sakai Magara recounted her experiences of arrest in another incident, and used humour as a way of dealing with this experience.14 Nakasone Sadayo was also valorized for her feisty response to an arresting officer.15 The practices of celebrating May Day and


14See section 7.2.2.

15This incident is discussed in the opening to Chapter Six, above.
International Women's Day gave expression to the links between the Japanese socialists and an international movement.

These groups were important as relatively autonomous socialist women's organizations which provided further opportunities for the development of the theoretical tools and practical skills necessary for political action. The Sekirankai and the Yôkakai were not, however, successful in bridging the gap between intellectual women and working women. The unions and proletarian parties of the 1920s were engaged in attempts to bridge this gap.

7.2.3 Socialist Women and Unions

The first union women's division was created by the Yûaikai friendly society in 1916, but the Yûaikai and its successor the Sôdômei displayed an ambivalent attitude to women workers, taking some time to give women workers full membership. Male union organizers took a protective attitude to women workers, and were likely to see their role as providing advice on supplementary work for male unionists' wives, rather than fostering militancy among women workers - perhaps unsurprising in an organization initially devoted to promoting "harmony" between capital and labour.16

The Hyôgikai union federation devoted more attention to developing a socialist attitude to women workers, but the actual mobilization of women workers was hampered by the factionalism of the union movement in the 1920s. Eventually, however, women gained experience of strikes, picketing and pamphleteering, and the unions affiliated with the three main union federations - the Sôdômei, Nichirô and Hyôgikai - fostered a small

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16See section 4.2.
number of women organizers, whose activities were supported by the women's leagues of the proletarian parties.

The development of what Andrew Gordon has called a "dispute culture" among the women and men of the labour movement,\footnote{Andrew Gordon, Labor and Imperial Democracy, in Prewar Japan Berkeley: University of California, 1991, p159.} culminated in the militant strikes of the early depression years, when women workers in the textile industry bore the brunt of rationalization and retrenchments. Even in the strikes of the early 1930ws, however, where women were portrayed as heroic figures, these activities were hampered by the splits and factions of the union movement as several unions competed for control, and the numbers of women workers organized in unions remained small.\footnote{Ishizuki, '1930nendai no Musan Fujin Undô', p200. See section 5.4.}

### 7.2.4 Socialist Women and Political Parties

As women in the labour movement engaged in direct conflict with capital in the early Shôwa period, in order to gain improvements in conditions for their own workers, other women in the socialist movement supported the proletarian party movement through affiliated women's leagues, and also turned their attention to government policies. While women in the communist movement were increasingly forced underground, social democratic women moved to closer co-operation with liberal feminists, on campaigns for women's suffrage, state assistance for supporting mothers, and improved labour legislation. Like the women of the Heiminsha who had lobbied for the amendment of Article Five of the Public Peace Police Law, the participants in these campaigns employed essentially liberal strategies: writing, petitioning, pamphleteering, lobbying and speeches. The achievement of legislative reform, in the shape of the Mother and Child
Assistance Act in 1937, was one example of effective lobbying on liberal principles. This legislation, however, reinforced the role of a paternalistic and patriarchal State in "protecting" women and children.

7.3 Imagining Socialist Women

The intellectual process of creating a theoretical conjunction of socialism and feminism was thus carried out in parallel with strategies for creating suitable organizational structures for the mobilization of women in the socialist movement. Women within the socialist movement gained skills in writing and distributing publications and pamphlets, participating in demonstrations, picketing and strikes, and learning to deal with the repressive power of the State through encounters with the policing apparatus and the legal system. The proletarian arts movement was an important resource in providing the means to imagine new socialist futures peopled by new socialist women and men, through writing, theatre, and visual arts. In addition to specifically literary publications, most leftwing journals published poetry, fiction and illustrations alongside essays and theoretical discussions.¹⁹

Many socialist women have traced a shift in subjectivity gained in their experiences of these actions. Activist women have recorded the first speech in public, the first experience of selling magazines or distributing leaflets, or the moment when their attitude shifted from compliance to defiance.²⁰

Others have recorded their experiences of visiting comrades in prison, their


²⁰ See interview with Umezu Hagiko, quoted in section 5.3.6 above.
own experiences of arrest, imprisonment or police brutality, or the experience of interrogation in court.\textsuperscript{21}

Often the shifts in subjectivity occasioned by these experiences are constructed retrospectively, in memoirs, reminiscences, or oral history interviews. Socialist women were also, however, engaged in an ongoing process of reconstruction of subjectivity through the contemporary writings of the socialist movement, as they tried to imagine women in new ways, or tried to facilitate the shift in subjectivity of other socialist women, through essays and fictional and poetic writings which portrayed new possibilities for the activism of socialist women. The construction of new subjectivities was carried out not only though the propositional content of these writings, but also through the use of vocabulary and metaphor, and the transformation and adaptation of existing genres of writing and visual representations.

While dominant discourses positioned women as Imperial subjects, as wives and as mothers, women attempted to reposition themselves as workers and as activists. Women were positioned in various ways according to nationalist, liberal, socialist and feminist discourses. Each of these discourses provided a limited space for the discussion of feminist issues. Socialist women, through their writings, attempted to extend the limits of this discursive space.

7.3.1 Speaking Positions: From Subject to Activist

Women were officially constructed as subjects of the Emperor, in a system where family hierarchy was linked with societal hierarchy. The patriarchal family formed a crucial link in the chain of loyalty from subject to Emperor.

\textsuperscript{21}See section 6.4.4.
Nationalist discourses on gender and the family constructed women as helpmates - to the family and to the nation. Although liberals, feminists and socialists aspired to active citizenship rather than passive subjecthood, their discourses were often shaped by nationalist values.22

Nationalist discourse was gendered as men were trained to be good soldiers while women were trained to be "good wives and wise mothers". In patriotic organizations, women were seen as helpmates of the State, supporting nationalist and militarist programmes. In this context, women could attempt to speak as nationalist subjects, emphasizing their service to the nation. Within the earliest socialist organizations, too, women were constructed as helpmates to the socialist movement. While this did allow space for the socialist discussion of issues related to marriage, family, sexuality and reproduction, it was some time before it was recognized that all aspects of socialist theory and strategy could be relevant to women, who were also workers and potential activists.23

The other side of the slogan "good wives and wise mothers" involved constructions of women as mothers. Women were referred to as "mothers of the nation". Women as mothers, however, were primarily constructed as the objects of State protection. This attitude to the relationship between women and the State coloured both official constructions of womanhood, and the discussions of feminists who subsumed calls for State assistance for supporting mothers under the label of "protection of motherhood".24 Maternity could also be a powerful metaphor in a variety of contexts.

22See Chapter 2.
23See Chapter 3.
24See section 4.7.
Socialists used the maternal as a metaphor for the caring values of an ideal socialist society, while the "Bluestockings" used the maternal as a specifically feminine trope of creativity and empowerment. The maternal trope could also, however, be recuperated for nationalist ends, in the context of pro-natalist policies in the late 1930s and 1940s.25

Women were initially not seen as workers, whether in official ideology or in socialist publications. The first union federations took a protective attitude to women workers, emphasizing their identity as women rather than as workers. As women came to be recognised as workers, however, it became apparent that all aspects of socialist theory and strategy were relevant to women. It also became clear that women workers were potential comrades, unionists and activists. Women as workers gained legitimacy to engage with employers in disputes about working conditions. They also attempted to gain legitimacy to engage with the State in demands for legislative change.

To be a woman worker, however, was to embody a contradiction. Although women in the socialist movement gained legitimacy through being recognized as fellow workers, this did not solve the issue of women's difference from men, the existence of women's "special demands". Some strikes of the early Shōwa period addressed the special needs of women, through demanding that employers provide paid maternity leave and menstruation leave.26 Women's demands for legislative change in the 1930s were attempts to deal with these needs at a State level.


26 Sakurai, Bosei Hogo Undō Shi, pp56-59.
Women were recognized as activists through their participation in strikes, and through their participation in campaigns for legislative change. Woman as activist could also, however, be represented as a dangerous figure. The employers who warned of the sexual promiscuity of the workers of the Toyô Muslin factory were attempting to reassert the boundaries of acceptable feminine behaviour which had been transgressed by the striking women.27 For the women themselves, participation in disputes occasioned subtle shifts in subjectivity, as they came to see themselves as activists. These shifts in subjectivity can be traced through an examination of the imaginative resources of the genres of socialist writing.

7.3.2 Oppression, Liberation and Transformation

The first stage in the transformation of socialist women's subjectivity involved the recognition of their own oppression and exploitation, and this was expressed initially through metaphors of imprisonment, a trope which had been used from the late nineteenth century in Japan.28 The conditions of factory work were described in numerous songs figuring factory workers as caged birds, and a major way of imagining liberation from this situation was to imagine escape. Workers sang of breaking the bars of imprisonment and flying away. This fantasy of escape matched the workers' preferred way of changing their situation in the earliest days of industrialization. 29 Another textile workers song contrasted an un-natural state of oppression and exploitation with a more innocent state. In this song, the mill girl is a bird who cannot fly away; a bud, spoiled by frost, which will never bloom.30

27See section 5.5.

28See the discussion of Kishida Toshiko's 'Hakoiri Musume' in section 2.2 above.


30Seigi no Hikari, No 2, 18/5/1926, p25; discussed in section 5.3.3.
These songs provided a "chronicle of pain", a documentation of the exploitation of these workers. Could these images of fragility and pathos be used to imagine the possibility of shared political action, as the basis for a political movement? Or did they simply "act to keep in place existing structures of domination"?

Male union leader Asô Hisashi used the caged bird metaphor from the workers' songs to demonstrate his arguments about the relationship between different kinds of exploitation based on sex and class. He argued that all workers were in the position of caged birds. In the case of women workers, however, they were seen to suffer double imprisonment by the twin cages of class and gender. Even if women "with their feeble strength" were able to break out of the cage of class exploitation, they would still be subject to exploitation as women. Although Asô's article laments the seriousness of women's double oppression, rather than providing a means to imagine the transformation of that situation, it is a useful attempt to marry the imaginative resources of a local tradition, with the theoretical tools of Marxist analysis. Visual representations in the union journals of the 1920s and 1930s also reworked the conventions of European socialist iconography for the local context.

Another aspect of the development of a new subjectivity involved the consciousness of the differences between women of different classes, and a recognition that the privilege of the middle classes was achieved at the cost of the exploitation of the working classes. In her contributions to the textile workers journal, Seigi no Hikari (The Light of Justice), Tajima Hide played

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32 See the representations of "dawn" over the factories. (Appendix 1: Figures 8-9)
on the imagery of light and darkness in the title of the journal. Tajima contrasted the conditions of working women, who leave home before sunrise and come home from the factory after dark, with the "young ladies" who attend "ladies colleges", wear beautiful kimonos, eat good foods, and are said to "grow up bathed in light".33

Such imagery was often linked with what Carolyn Steedman has called a "politics of envy" where the situation of working class women was contrasted with that of middle class women.34 This sentiment is expressed in Sata Ineko's story, "From the Caramel Factory", in a scene where a thirteen-year old factory worker admires the silk kimono of the factory owner's wife.35

The imagery of deprivation and envy, however, could also be transformed into an image of strength, and the imagery of light and darkness could be used to describe the possibility of political transformation. In Tajima Hide's union movement writings, the politics of envy is transformed into the imagery of class struggle. Tajima used the conventional images of pathos, but attempted to transform an image of deprivation into an image of power and solidarity. The power of solidarity is expressed through the metaphor of the sun emerging from the clouds.36

In Nakamoto Takako's story 'The Number 2 Tôkyô Muslin Factory', a shaft of light through the factory window marks the women workers' transition from

33Tajima Hide, 'Hikari ni Mukaite', Seigi no Hikari, 2; 18/5/1926, discussed in section 5.3.7.
36See section 5.3.7.
uncertainty to militancy. The women are deep in thought about their situation:

'... We often complain privately. And we think seriously about getting our conditions improved. However, we crumple when we have to come forward, because we have had no experience of disputes until now. We just whispered in the shadows. If we don't solve our situation, who will do it for us? It's no use waiting on the person next to you. When has anyone else ever done the slightest little thing to help us? No one has!' 

The women were silent, deep in thought. Outside, the sky suddenly cleared, and a warm shaft of light came through a gap in the paper blinds.

Usiyama broke the silence [and outlined a strategy for future action].

In this text Nakamoto is quite self-conscious about the politics of artistic production. She also portrays the factory women attending a play performed by a proletarian theatre group, which contributes to their developing political consciousness. Other works of the proletarian arts movement portrayed women engaging in such activities as pamphleteering and strikes.

By the late nineteen twenties, the world depression which also affected the Japanese textile industry meant that women workers in the downtown region of Tokyo were in the vanguard of struggles between labour and capital. Strike pamphlets of the time make little use of poetic imagery. Rather the workers' struggle is expressed in simple language. An appeal to 'the proletarian women of Nankatsu', described the participation of women in the Tôyô Muslin strike of May 1930:

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Over 3000 of our brothers and sisters at Tōyō Muslin have... embarked on a strike in order to save themselves from starvation, and are fighting against the high-handedness of the company and the indescribable suppression by the police.

... So, the victory of the factory women of Tōyō Muslin, will, in the end, be a victory for all proletarian women...

Another pamphlet from the same strike referred to the militancy of the striking women and men:

... Our 3000 brothers and sisters are paying a sacrifice in blood!
Do not give them up to the enemy!
Bring down a torrent of contributions to our fighting fund!39

In the strike pamphlets of the late nineteen twenties, there is a close relationship between representation and political activism. The reality of women's participation in strikes at this time made possible the representation of strong and active women, and these representations made possible the imagining of future activism by women. In the labour movement writings, there is a depth which comes from references to the lived struggles of women workers.

7.4 The Rhetoric of Feminism and Socialism
This leads me to what is perhaps the most important question asked in this study. What is the relationship between the study of the language of political movements, and the study of other aspects of the mobilization of individuals under the banners of feminism, socialism, or other political ideologies? In the previous section, I have considered the imaginative resources of writings on women's situation and writings on the liberation of women from patriarchal and capitalist exploitation. In many of the writings that I have

39Strike pamphlets, held in Ōhara Social Research Institute, reproduced in Suzuki Yūko, Jokō to Rōdō Sōgi, Tokyo: Renga Shobō. See section 5.4.
analysed, depth has come from intertextuality, from the use of metaphors which have shared meanings in a particular cultural context, and the creation of metaphors which attempt to transform those shared cultural meanings. Another kind of depth, however, comes from the relationship between representation and political action. As bell hooks has reminded us "To imagine is to begin the process that transforms reality".40

Some of the writings examined employed the conventional imagery of femininity. This conventional imagery reinforced notions of passivity and decorativeness, particularly the use of floral imagery. Other metaphors contrasted the deformations of capitalist and patriarchal society with what was seen as a more natural state. This is the function of the images of the stunted flowers, the bud which will not bloom, the tiny bird who can not fly. The imagery of imprisonment forms a similar function in depicting an exploitative situation, and becomes linked with fantasies of escape.

It would be simplistic to argue for a simple congruence between a political position and a set of rhetorical images. At times, rhetoric and political strategy certainly were mutually reinforcing. The liberal individualism of the Bluestockings was indeed expressed through the assertiveness of the first person pronoun, and images of individual genius, albeit initially divorced from a consciousness of the social. The use of maternal imagery provided a specifically feminine trope of creativity and empowerment, although such imagery could also be co-opted for nationalist purposes.

However, when socialist Sakai Toshihiko described the women of the Heiminsha as flowers and birds, this was at odds with the actions of a man who devoted more attention to an understanding of the woman question

40bell hooks, 'Narratives of Struggle', op.cit.
than most of his male comrades. On the other hand, there seems to be a congruence between the pathetic imagery of fragility and imprisonment employed by early labour organisers, and the lack of a clear strategy for mobilizing the women workers whom they viewed as objects of pity and compassion, rather than as comrades in a common struggle.

Other kinds of natural imagery, however, presented a more dynamic picture. For the contributors to the feminist arts journal *Bluestocking* (Seitô), the imagery of nature was a means of imagining liberation. This is most striking in Yosano Akiko's often-cited poem, *Mountain Moving Day*, which uses the metaphor of subterranean volcanic activity to express the potential power of women's energy.41

The politics of envy, expressed in comparisons between middle class privilege and working class deprivation, were useful in dramatizing the inequalities of society. It was necessary for socialist women to link this envy, however, with a clear understanding of the explanations for this inequality, and strategies for transforming the society which is based on such inequalities.

The imagery of light and darkness in political and imaginative writings referred to the concept of enlightenment, "Keimô".42 In this context, light represented knowledge.43 In other writings, light was most often linked with

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43 See Sakai Toshihiko's account of his conversion to socialism, discussed in Chapter 3.

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the possibility of transformation. In the case of the Bluestockings, this referred to individual liberation, and the development of individual creativity. In labour movement writings, however, light and darkness took on class connotations, describing the contrast between middle class privilege and working class deprivation. Several writers used this imagery to imagine the possibility of social transformation. In the writings of Tajima Hide and Nakamoto Takako, light was linked to solidarity and the potential for shared political action.

All of these writers and activists were engaged in a complex struggle, in activities concerned with "the micropolitics of work, home, family and sexuality", and a parallel struggle which was waged at the level of ideology and discourse. Writing was an integral part of the process of forging "new political identities" for feminist and socialist women. In analysing these writings, it has thus been necessary to link representations with the specific political struggles engaged in by these women. I have also noted the generic constraints and possibilities of particular types of political writing.

Fukuda Hideko's autobiography presented the contradictory position of a female activist who aspired to the ideals of liberal individualism, while the poetic manifestos of Yosano Akiko, Hiratsuka Raichō and Takamure Itsue attempted to go beyond the boundaries of liberal political discourse. Labour organizers supplemented the hortatory tone of the political pamphlet and the

44 See section 7.3.2.


cool tone of political debate with the imaginative resources of the artistic products of the proletarian literary arts movement.

Similar imagery and rhetorical strategies often appeared across genres, and we can trace links between the speaking positions available to feminist and socialist women in early twentieth century Japan, the discursive strategies employed in their writings, and the political strategies they envisaged for changing their society and their own situation. We should also, however, consider the relationship between these marginal representations, and mainstream discourses on women and politics. How much power did socialist and feminist writers have to challenge dominant constructions of women as wives and as mothers?47

In the introduction to this thesis, I invoked the 1970s feminist project of uncovering something which has been "hidden from history".48 The existence of a movement of socialist women in early twentieth century Japan has indeed been relatively hidden, particularly in English language scholarship on Japan. This research has been made possible by the labour historians and feminist historians in Japan, who have attempted to preserve the documents of the labour, feminist and socialist movements, making many of them available in facsimile editions and document collections. It has thus been possible to trace the development of a movement of socialist

47As we have seen in section 5.4 above, representations of women engaged in labour activism did enter the mass media and intellectual journals at the time of the textile strikes of the depression years. Miriam Silverberg has also discussed the representations of the "modern girl", the successor to the "new woman" of the Taishô period. Silverberg argues that autonomy and militancy was one aspect of the representation of the "modern girl". Her discussion of the sexualized image of the modern girl also suggests that the modern girl was a dangerous figure who had to be recuperated into the acceptable bounds of femininity. Miriam Silverberg, 'The Modern Girl as Militant', in Bernstein (ed) Recreating Japanese Women, pp263-266.

women in early twentieth century Japan, and to map out the individuals, organizations and publications which made up this movement.

I have also, however, realized the limitations of the metaphors of "uncovering" in the writing of feminist history. Feminist historians do not simply reveal a pre-existing reality. They construct their own narratives of resistance and liberation. In my own case I have constructed a narrative of this movement of socialist women around a series of speaking positions, tracing a trajectory from subjection to activism. I have chosen to end this discussion with representations of strong women engaged in militant labour activism, structuring a narrative around my own desire for images of political transformation, which can replace the imagery of feminine passivity. Following Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, I acknowledge that "the discovery of resistance in women's writing also requires the investment of our desires and the acknowledgment of our politics as women/feminists reading."49

APPENDIX 1: ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Sekai Fujin, No 32, 5/1/1909, p.1.
Figure 2: Cover of Yûai Fujin, No 1
Figure 3: Cover of Seigi no Hikari, No2, 1926.
Figure 4: Cover of *Rōdō Fujin*.
Figure 5: Cover of Iwauchi Zensaku, Jokōsan ni Okuru, Kantō Bōshoku Pamphlet, No. 1, 1926.
Figure 6: Cover of *Seigi no Hikari*, No 5, 1926.
Figure 7: Cover of Rōdō Fujin.
Figure 8: Cover of Seigi no Hikari, No 8, 1926.
Figure 9: Cover of Seigi no Hikari, No 22, 1933.
APPENDIX 2:
LEFT-WING ORGANIZATIONS IN PRE-WAR JAPAN
(a) The Union Movement

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Fig. 1. Outline of main Japanese socialist labor organizations (adapted from George Totten, 'Lineages of Japanese Labor Unions', Social Democratic Movement in Prewar Japan (New Haven, 1966), p. 407).

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(c) Proletarian Women's Organizations

1. Primary sources

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**c. Document Collections**


d. Oral Histories


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