Hatta Shūzō and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan

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This book is dedicated to Derek and Marjorie Crump, who taught me that no things are more important than mutual love, social justice, and decency in human relations.

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In Europe my thanks are mainly due to friends and comrades whose interest in my research encouraged me to believe, even when the going was tough, that the project was worthwhile. I cannot mention them all by name, but it would be churlish to omit the following four. Adam Buick in London and Peter Nicholson in York were kind enough to comment on early chapters of my manuscript. I am grateful for their useful and informed criticisms. Alain Pengam in Paris read the entire manuscript and thus I benefited from his detailed knowledge of anarchist communism. Mark Shipway in Leeds also read the entire manuscript and his many helpful comments were unfailingly meticulous in their attention to detail and their communist content. I am pleased to be able to use this opportunity to pay tribute to Mark as an exemplary friend and comrade. Last, but not least, come the three women in my life. With good humour. Emily Midorikawa Crump and Erica Midorikawa Crump put up with their father's strange enthusiasms for visiting obscure bookshops, for paying respect at the graves of fallen revolutionaries, and for interminable discussions on the minutiae of anarchist communism. Their only resistance as they traipsed behind me across the length and breadth of a very different Japan from that which features in the glossy brochures was to rename Hatta Shūzō 'Hatta Shoesore'. Midorikawa Taeko helped me in more ways than she knows or I can record. Her just being there was no less important than her obvious role of checking my translations of the pure anarchists' Japanese on the many occasions when they expressed themselves in language which was even more convoluted, polemical or jargon-ridden than usual. The best compliment I can pay to these women in my life is that, if

ever we do achieve a society which is both anarchist and communist, it will be inhabited by people like them.

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Author's Note

Japanese names are given in the customary East Asian form, i.e. family name (e.g. Hatta) followed by personal name (e.g. Shūzō). Long vowels in Japanese words are indicated by macrons (e.g. ō).

Introduction: the Importance of Pure Anarchism

'Pure anarchism' was the dominant current within Japanese anarchism during the interwar years. Its adherents were anarchist communists who wished to rid anarchism of the 'impurity' of syndicalism. It might well be asked: why write a book on these pure anarchists? After all, did they not ultimately fail in their attempt to establish an anarchist communist society and are they not largely forgotten today even within Japan? Besides, was it not Spain where anarchism's life-and-death struggle was fought in the 1930s? Why, then, should we in Europe pay much attention to what happened during roughly the same period in an East Asian country, far removed from the drama in Spain?

In reply, I can give at least three reasons why a study of Japanese pure anarchism is worthwhile. First, the image of the Japanese (including Japanese working men and women) which has prevailed in the West during recent decades has been of an overwhelmingly conformist and docile people. The oft-repeated epithet 'economic animals' has been used to describe the apparent character of the Japanese during much of the postwar period and has conveyed their seeming indifference to political principles or ethical questions. At an early stage of my research into pure anarchism I read a paper on 'The Communist Idea in Japan' at a seminar in Oxford, where I was criticised because I had supposedly overlooked the 'fact' that the Japanese are the most unrevolutionary, order-loving and conformist people in the world. Of course, this widely held image derives from attributing to all Japanese in all eras certain characteristics which, even if present today (and it is arguable that they are nowhere near as universal as is often claimed), are of very short historical duration. Not only does this image conflict with the perception of the Japanese as a revolutionary people, which was widespread throughout East Asia in the years following the upheaval of 1868, but it also clashes with the supposedly unJapanese concern for political principles and ideological clarity which was demonstrated by the pure anarchists of the interwar years. Hence one reason for writing a book on the pure anarchists is that I think it is instructive to draw the attention of Western readers to those 'other Japanese', those whose very existence (irrespective of their concrete achievement) modifies the negative image projected by their depressingly conformist countrymen and countrywomen.

A second reason for my interest in the pure anarchists is that they represent an authentically Japanese expression of the universal principles of communism. By communism I mean, of course, not the system of bureaucratic power, party domination, and state manipulation of the economy found in countries such as (until recently) Russia and China, but the project to reorganise society so as to achieve a community of social equals who would control the means of production communally, cooperatively organise production for the direct satisfaction of needs, and consume by taking freely from the commonly held wealth of society. Such a vision of social reorganisation got its first fully worked-out presentation in Japanese when Petr Kropotkin's (1842–1921) *The Conquest of Bread* was translated in 1909. Although *The Conquest of Bread* struck a responsive

chord among many radical Japanese of that era, it remained very much a Japanese translation of an essentially European work. The very title *The Conquest of Bread* (as opposed to *The Conquest of Rice*) indicates the (for many Japanese) exotically European flavour of Kropotkin's passionate arguments for communism. Kropotkin remained the dominant influence on the pure anarchists during the interwar years and this was reinforced when his *Collected Works* were published in Japanese from 1928. Nevertheless, by that period communism had been fully assimilated by its Japanese exponents, so that by then the pure anarchists were able to relate it thoroughly to Japanese society and present it to a Japanese audience in an authentically Japanese form. Thus, when the pure anarchists wrote texts of their own to popularise communism, the commune which they, like anarchist communists everywhere, advocated as the unit of communist society had ceased to be a European transplant from Kropotkin's texts and was clearly a Japanese farming village, transformed by an anarchist revolution no doubt, but none the less Japanese for that. Likewise, those who were expected to bring about this social transformation were not cosmopolitan revolutionaries expressing European concepts in *katakanaesque* Japanese, but flesh and blood products of Japanese society, such as the tenant farmers.

Several years ago Maximilien Rubel and I edited a volume of essays under the title *Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*.[1] 'Non-market socialism' was a synonym for what I have referred to here as 'communism'. Although in that earlier book we chose not to use the word 'communism' because of our concern that it might be misinterpreted as having a connection with the political systems formerly or actually found in Russia, China and elsewhere, there is no alternative to employing the term here, since 'anarchist communism' was the declared aim of the pure anarchists. Our theme in *Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* was that, although a communist society has so far never been achieved anywhere, communism has nevertheless had a constant, if unsteady, existence during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a challenge to the ideology of capitalism. For as long as there has been industrial capitalism, groups of working men and women have reacted to its existence, and to the indignities and irrationalities which inevitably accompany it, by formulating a communist alternative. The book argued that neither social democracy nor bolshevism represented communist challenges to capitalism, since both were variations on the capitalist theme, in that they left intact the principal constituent elements of capitalism (the wages system, commodity production, state power and so on). The real challenge to capitalism has come from quarters other than social democracy or bolshevism, and the currents we examined as different versions of this communist challenge in the various chapters of our book were the following:

1. Anarchist communism, represented from approximately 1880 onwards by a string of thinkers and activists, such as Kropotkin and Alexander Berkman (1870–1936).

2. The impossibilism of currents such as the Socialist Party of Great Britain, which was founded in 1904 in the course of the split between 'possibilists' and 'impossibilists' in the ranks of the Social Democratic Federation in Britain.

3. The council communism associated with the German Revolution of 1918 and its aftermath, which was articulated by theoreticians such as Anton Pannekoek (1873–1960), Otto Ruhle (1874–1943) and Paul Mattick (1904–81).

[1] Rubel & Crump (1987).

4. Bordigism, which takes its name from Amadeo Bordiga (1889–1970), the first leader of the Communist Party of Italy, before the leadership of that party passed in 1924 to others more acceptable to the Comintern, such as Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937).

5. The situationism of the Situationist International, whose activity spanned the period 1957 to 1972 and was one of the streams feeding the upheaval in Paris in May 1968.

Considered in isolation, it is tempting to dismiss any one of these five currents as too weak to be of much significance. Taken together, however, they represent a sustained critique of capitalism and a consistently posed, communist alternative to it. Naturally, there have been differences between these currents, which have kept them divided and over which they have argued (particularly with regard to the question of means), but each in its own way has effectively kept alive the goal of a communist society and has thus prevented capitalism from enjoying unchallenged ideological supremacy. What gives these currents added significance as a collective phenomenon is that they have emerged largely independently of one another at different historical junctures and in different geographical locations. Bordigism is as recognisably the product of Italian influences and circumstances as impossibilism owes much to its Anglo-Saxon origins. The repeated emergence of these organisationally separate and culturally distinct formulations of what still remains essentially the same communist alternative to capitalism suggests that it is in the nature of capitalism, wherever it exists, to evoke a communist response which does not vary in its fundamentals. From the standpoint of the late twentieth century, it may look as though capitalism rules the world untroubled and has successfully countered all attempts to replace it by communism. Yet, as the existence of these communist currents demonstrates, despite its apparatus of ideological domination, capitalism has proved unable to eradicate an alternative communist vision of how society could be organised. As long as varieties of this communist alternative remain to haunt capitalism, its supremacy is less than total and the possibility of achieving communism cannot be discounted.

It is with these considerations in mind that I have approached the study of the Japanese pure anarchists. Since capitalism is a world phenomenon, it would be strange indeed if communist ideological challenges to capitalism were all of European origin, like the five currents mentioned above. Obviously, of the European communist currents which I have identified, Japanese pure anarchism had most in common with European anarchist communism. Nevertheless, as I indicated earlier, the pure anarchists did not simply repeat parrot-fashion lessons learnt by rote from the European anarchist communists. The ability of the pure anarchists to take account of the way in which capitalism had developed in Japan, and to respond creatively to its special features by offering an alternative which was no less communist for being rooted in Japanese conditions, is further confirmation of the argument that capitalism invariably evokes a communist response from within the ranks of those whom it oppresses and exploits. Hence, despite Japanese pure anarchism's lack of concrete success, its very existence can be regarded as significant when it is set within the international context outlined above. Particularly if one's knowledge and experience of communism hitherto have conspired to give it the appearance of a predominantly European ideological construct, it can be more than a little exciting to recognise the pure anarchists as the Japanese equivalent of the European currents to which I have alluded.

A third reason for writing a book on the pure anarchists is the sophisticated theoretical level which the best among them were able to achieve. Writing from a European perspective in his

chapter in *Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Alain Pengam claimed that after Kropotkin's death in 1921 the theory of anarchist communism survived for a while, 'but was consigned to isolation by the unfolding counter-revolution from the 1920s onwards'.

> Unlike the Italian Left [Bordigists] and the German-Dutch council communists (the latter above all, with their criticism of the whole workers' movement and their analysis of the general tendency for a unification of labour, capital and the state), the partisans of anarcho-communism did not really try to discover the causes of this counterrevolution; nor did they perceive its extent. As a result, their contributions amounted to little more than a formal defence of principles, without any critical depth. Moreover, these contributions ceased very rapidly. Sebastien Faure's *Mon Communisme* appeared in 1921, Luigi Galleani's *The End of Anarchism?* in 1925 and Alexander Berkman's *What Is Communist Anarchism?* (better known in its abridged form as the *ABC of Anarchism*) in 1929.[2]

Even with regard to Spanish anarchism, Pengam was sceptical whether the collectivisations in Spain from 1936 contained any anarchist communist potential, since he regarded Spanish 'libertarian communism' of the 1930s as an 'empty phrase'.[3]

The contrast between the withering of anarchist communist theory in Europe after the First World War and its flowering in Japan during the interwar years is striking. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 1, in Europe after 1918 anarchist communists were largely content to echo Kropotkin's writings and even tolerated a dilution of theoretical clarity, with the result that eventually anarchist communism ceased to have a coherent identity of its own and was incorporated into the wishy-washy cocktail of nondescript 'anarchism'. By way of contrast, in interwar Japan the confrontation between anarchist syndicalists and their pure anarchist opponents forced the latter to define ever more clearly the theoretical bases of their activity. As a result, the interwar years were a period of intense theoretical innovation in Japan and, in contrast to what happened in Europe, anarchist communist theory did not stagnate at the points at which Kropotkin had left it or, worse still, even regress. There is a tendency among Japanese commentators to regret the confrontation that occurred between anarchist syndicalists and pure anarchists, and to regard it as the suicide of a movement already beleaguered by the twin enemies of capitalism and bolshevism. Yet, without such intense polemics between anarchist syndicalists and pure anarchists, anarchist communism would probably have withered on the bough in Japan as in Europe, so that there would be no particular reason today for studying a movement which displayed the same fading qualities as its contemporaries in Europe.

Among the theoreticians of pure anarchism none was more innovative or determined to rid anarchist theory of extraneous elements, derived from syndicalism or elsewhere, than Hatta Shūzō (1886–1934). Even in Japan, Hatta is largely forgotten these days outside of anarchist circles. I spent several months in Japan in 1990, engaged in research for this book, and I was struck by the fact that mention of my research theme prompted most scholars with whom J came in contact to dive for the biographical dictionary on their shelves to discover who on earth was Hatta Shūzō. Needless to say, in the West the situation is bleaker still and Hatta is totally unknown. This is incongruous, since in the West at least something is known about Japanese anarchism and, for

[2] Ibid., p. 77.
[3] Ibid., p. 76.

example, both Kōtoku Shūsui (1871–1911) and Ōsugi Sakae (1885–1923) have had (albeit unsympathetic) biographies written on them by American scholars.[4] In Chapter 2 I explain Kōtoku's and Ōsugi's contributions to anarchism in Japan and it is certainly far from my purpose in this book to belittle either of them. Both are towering personalities in the history of Japanese anarchism. Yet it is also fair to say that neither can be considered to have made a significant, original contribution to anarchist theory. On the international level they are secondary figures, since the roles they fulfilled were mainly to introduce and popularise Western theories of anarchism in Japan. By way of contrast, fate has not been kind to a gifted and original thinker like Hatta. Language has acted as a barrier to an appreciation in the West of his stature as a theoretician, while in Japan the prevalence of bolshevism within the relevant scholarly circles has caused him to be ignored. Hopefully, the publication of this book, which is the first full-length study of Hatta Shūzō and pure anarchism to appear in any language, will belatedly bring to Hatta and his comrades a little of the recognition they richly deserve.

At any rate, to return to my first two reasons for writing this book, the reader can be assured that the chapters which follow will focus on a refreshingly rebellious breed of Japanese, one of whom was Hatta, and on theories which challenge every assumption on which the capitalist state in Japan (and elsewhere, for that matter) currently rests. Those disinclined to gawp in open-mouthed admiration at the soulless consumerism of modern Japan should read on. The pure anarchists make a welcome change from the human automata featured in the ubiquitous manuals on Japanese management techniques. Likewise, their ideas stand in complete contrast to the unquestioning acceptance of hierarchy and profit which, if the same sources were to be believed, is supposed to be a genetically imprinted characteristic of the Japanese. Happily, what the pure anarchists demonstrate is that there is nothing about being Japanese which prevents men and women from recognising the shortcomings of capitalism or which inoculates them against the vision of an alternative system of free, communist social relations.

[4] Notehelfer (1971) and Stanley (1982).

1. Anarchist Communism

Europe was the source of the anarchist communism that was introduced to Japan early in the twentieth century. In this chapter I shall give an account of anarchist communism as it developed within the political and intellectual milieu of Europe in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Yet, although my focus in this chapter will be primarily European, bearing in mind the theme of this book, I shall pay particular attention to those aspects of anarchist communism which were to become controversial in the different setting of Japan in the 1920s and 1930s.

Anarchist communism is a revolutionary theory and practice which seeks to establish, by means which from the outset transcend the state, a society where individual freedom is reinforced by communal solidarity and mutual aid. It is probably most convenient to see anarchist communism as a tendency which crystallised within the wider European anarchist movement during the 1870s. This is not to say that prior to then there was nobody who combined commitment to anarchism (abolition of the state) with advocacy of communism (common ownership of the means of production and the social product). Théodore Dézamy (1808–50) and Joseph Déjacque (1822–64) were two such thinkers,[1] and Maximilien Rubel has pointed out that, contrary to popular opinion, Karl Marx (1818–83) was, in the senses given above, just as much of an anarchist as he was a communist.[2] However, self-proclaimed anarchist communism emerged within the anti-Marxist wing of the International Working Men's Association (the First International) during the period 1876–80. François Dumartheray (1842–1931) was the first to use the term 'anarchist communism' when he wrote a pamphlet *To the Manual Workers, Partisans of Political Action*, which was published in Geneva in February 1876, and Elisée Reclus (1830–1905) is said to have delivered a speech from an anarchist communist standpoint in Lausanne in March of the same year. Similar ideas were spreading among the Italian anarchists, who adopted a communist resolution at their congress held near Florence in October 1876. Anarchist communism gained a further important victory when the Jura Federation, which was an influential anarchist grouping that had been active in the French-speaking area of Switzerland throughout the 1870s, proclaimed itself for communism at its congress held at La Chaux-de-Fonds in October 1880. Carlo Cafiero's (1846–92) speech on 'Anarchy and Communism' at this congress was published in the Geneva journal *Le Révolté* in November 1880 and was one of the earliest written statements of anarchist communism.[3]

Cafiero explained that a communist society would function in line with the principle 'from each according to his faculties to each according to his needs' or, as he alternatively put it, 'from each and to each according to his will'.[4] This was a break with the principle of collectivism which had previously prevailed in anarchist circles and which advocated that everyone's share of the

[1] Rubel & Crump (1987), pp. 61–7.
[2] Rubel (1983).
[3] Nettlau (1986), pp. 136–42.
[4] *The Raven* vol. II no. 2 (1988), p. 180.

collective product should be proportional to their contribution to production. Cafiero recognised that communism was dependent on abundance, but he did not regard this as an obstacle 'because in the future society production will be so abundant that there will be no need to limit consumption or to demand from men more work than they would be able or willing to give'.[5] He was confident that communism would create the conditions for such an abundance for several reasons, the chief of which were that cooperation would replace competition, there would be an immense extension of the use of machinery, and economies would result from the elimination of dangerous or useless sectors of production. Of course, there might be certain temporary shortages during the initial stages of communism but, if so, these would be handled by adopting a system of rationing which accorded with people's needs, rather than with the hours of work they contributed to society. Two other features of Cafiero's exposition of anarchist communism to which attention ought to be drawn are, first, that those who were to bring about the new society were the people themselves and not some inspired minority acting for them or leading them: 'the taking of possession and the enjoyment of all the existing wealth must be, according to us, the deed of the people itself'.[6] Second, while Cafiero made it clear that he thought in terms of a worldwide society of communism, he nevertheless seemed to regard 'countries' as the natural units of organisation:

> Since the common wealth is spread over the whole earth, and since all of it belongs by right to the whole of humanity, those who find this wealth within their reach and are in a position to use it will use it in common. The people of some country will use the land, the machines, the workshops, the houses, & c., of the country, and they will make use of it in common. Since they are part of humanity, they will exercise here, by deed and directly, their right to a share of the human wealth. But if an inhabitant of Peking came into this country, he would have the same rights as the others: he would enjoy, in common with the others, all the wealth of the country, in the same way that he had done in Peking.[7]

Although Petr Kropotkin crossed the dividing line between collectivism and communism rather more tardily than some of his comrades, by 1883 he had become the most able exponent of anarchist communism.[8] In a series of articles which appeared between 1886 and 1891 in the Paris-based journals *Le Révolté* and *La Révolte*, Kropotkin thought through the implications of anarchist communism in a far more systematic manner than earlier attempts, such as Cafiero's, had done. When these articles were collected in book form to become *The Conquest of Bread* (first published in Paris in 1892), they became what was to be for many years the best known and most persuasive elucidation of anarchist communist theory and strategy. As a trained geographer, Kropotkin was anxious to bring to the investigation of social phenomena the same scientific method that underpinned his geographical studies and not to indulge in metaphysical speculation of the kind which he associated with Marxism.[9] Hence he was at pains to demonstrate that anarchist communism was not a utopian presentation of an ideal society

[5] Ibid., p. 181.
[6] Ibid., p. 180.
[7] Ibid., pp. 180–1.
[8] Cahm (1989), p. 63.
[9] See his *Modern Science and Anarchism* in Baldwin (1927) pp. 146–94.

but a theoretical reflection of practical initiatives and tendencies that were at work throughout society. Ultimately, however, his ethical preference for liberty and decentralisation proved stronger than his scientific objectivity, causing him to misread the evident trend of the times: 'everywhere the State is abdicating and abandoning its holy functions to private individuals. Everywhere free organization trespasses on its domain.'[10]

Despite this flaw in the scientific foundation, which Kropotkin attempted to give to anarchist communism, in other respects the theory which he constructed had a coherent logic to it. Kropotkin's understanding of radical social change derived from the experiences which dominated European revolutionary thought throughout most of the nineteenth century – the French Revolution of 1789 and the various attempts to restage it (albeit with an outcome other than bourgeois power) at junctures such as 1848 and 1871. The revolutions which constituted Kropotkin's main points of reference were essentially local uprisings of an insurrectionary people, often confined to a single centre such as Paris. In Kropotkin's view, the reason why initially successful revolutions had repeatedly led to the consolidation of authoritarian regimes of one hue or another was their failure to guarantee in the shortest possible time well-being for the people. Unless a future revolution could swiftly eliminate the privations (such as hunger) which had caused the popular uprising in the first place, the people would rapidly become disillusioned and fall prey to a new leadership eager to install itself in power by means of plausible promises to establish a caring government. To avoid this outcome of revolutionary hopes being dashed against the rocks of reconstituted governmental power, the means of production within the revolutionary area would have to be expropriated immediately and set to work so as to produce an ample supply of the goods people needed. Food, clothing and shelter would be distributed by the people without regard to buying capacity, whether measured in terms of conventional money or some substitute for it, such as labour vouchers. Thus everyone would be secure in the knowledge that they had a right to receive from the common wealth free supplies of consumer goods. In the light of the demoralising hunger that past revolutions had brought with them, which had caused people to lose faith in their ability to run society efficiently in their own interest, the most pressing need was for the bakeries to be communalised and operated to produce bread in such plentiful amounts that it would be freely available to all. Such a state of affairs would constitute the 'conquest of bread', which was the image that the title of Kropotkin's book was designed to conjure up in people's minds, and which was intended as a symbol of a society of plenty achieved by communal solidarity.

Naturally, Kropotkin was not so unrealistic as to imagine that a revolution could immediately usher in a condition of universal abundance of all the numerous goods that people might choose to consume. Hence the principle which was to govern distribution was 'no stint or limit to what the community possesses in abundance, but equal sharing and dividing of those things which are scarce or apt to run short'.[11] But in the case of essentials, such as food, Kropotkin considered that abundance could be attained rapidly and his expectation was that, over time, the proportion of goods needing to be rationed would dwindle to zero. The anarchist communist project thus had nothing in common with the plans of some perhaps well-meaning but nevertheless authoritarian revolutionaries to take over the existing process of production and use revolutionary power so

[10] Kropotkin (1972), p. 158.

[11] Ibid., p. 92. (The word *commodities* in the English translation has been changed to *things,* since Kropotkin did not use the term *commodities* in the original French.)

as to divide up the social product more equitably. Kropotkin believed that what made anarchist communism distinctive was that its approach would be not to take production as a given and then decide how the cake should be divided, but to start with the people entirely rethinking their consumption needs and then reorganising production so as to achieve the required output of goods. In other words, in contradistinction to conventional economics, which he saw as proceeding *from* production *to* consumption, anarchist communism would reverse the sequence, so that consumption determined production. When Kropotkin returned to this theme several years later in *Modern Science and Anarchism* (1903) he expressed himself as follows:

> Anarchism understands therefore that in political economy attention must be directed first of all to so-called 'consumption,' and that the first concern of the revolution must be to reorganize that so as to provide food, clothing and shelter for all. 'Production,' on the other hand, must be so adapted as to satisfy this primary, fundamental need of society.[12]

When political economy was conceived in this fashion, it would become a science whose essence was captured by the term the 'physiology of society', since its attention would be directed towards 'the study of the needs of mankind, and the means of satisfying them with the least possible waste of human energy'.[13]

Clearly, the degree of social restructuring which would be a consequence of setting production on a scientific footing would be immense. But, given the conditions that were likely to apply in the event of revolution, there was an even more pressing need for social reorganisation than the somewhat abstract requirement to introduce scientific rationality into the realms of consumption and production. Since Kropotkin expected future revolutions, as in the past, to occur in limited geographical areas, production within a revolutionary commune would need to be reorganised swiftly so as to make the territory it held largely self-sufficient and not fatally reliant on surrounding areas, which might still be in the hands of the counter-revolution. To restate this in more concrete terms, if revolution were to break out in an urban, manufacturing centre, such as Paris, the city could not afford to remain dependent on the surrounding countryside for its food supplies. Kropotkin expected revolutions to occur unevenly in different localities and different countries, and this was a telling, practical reason why production would need to be diversified. with agriculture spreading into the towns, and industrial workshops being set up in those rural locations which opted for revolution. Max Nettlau was thus quite right when he described *The Conquest of Bread* as 'the utopia of a large city in revolt, proclaiming its autonomy, besieged by enemies and working out its own complete social life by its own resources. It was—the Commune of Paris, as Kropotkin wished that it should act when it would happen the next time.'[14]

In addition to the exigencies of revolution leading to the emergence of decentralised communes practising diversified production, there was a further reason why Kropotkin spoke out against specialisation in production and the division of labour within society. Not only did such arrangements create social imbalances, but they also resulted in lopsided individuals, rather than the well-rounded men, women and children whom Kropotkin expected to inhabit an anarchist communist society. No less important than achieving a combination of agriculture and industry

[12] Baldwin (1972), p. 193.
[13] Kropotkin (1972), p. 191.
[14] Walter & Becker (1988), p. 9.

in each locality was the desirability of bringing about a merging of 'the husbandman and the mechanic in the same individual'.[15] Participation in, and taking an intelligent interest in, varied forms of production would be the guarantee that society would be made up of people healthy in body as well as mind. Work was to be restructured not only in such a way as to achieve the required levels of consumption but also so as to make it interesting and enjoyable. If such changes were made, then even urbanised 'men, women and children will gladly turn to the labour of the fields, when it is no longer a slavish drudgery, but has become a pleasure, a festival, a renewal of health and joy'.[16]

Despite the crucial need for a 'city in revolt' to be able to feed itself, it would be wrong to think that Kropotkin envisaged anarchist communist society as a collection of autarkic communes. Revolution was expected to be an ongoing process so that, whereas initially a revolutionary commune might have to exist entirely by its own efforts, surrounding areas would sooner or later be influenced by the revolutionary example in their midst. While an urban commune should endeavour to plough up 'the parks and pleasure grounds of the landed gentry' that fell within its area of control, and hence become self-sufficient in food production, it should also make practical efforts to win over to the revolution the peasantry in the surrounding countryside.[17] It is worth quoting Kropotkin at some length on how this should be done, because the following passage exposes his lack of clarity on economic relations between different areas:

> We must offer the peasant in exchange for his toil not worthless paper-money, but the manufactured articles of which he stands in immediate need …
>
> Let the town apply itself, without loss of time, to manufacturing all that the peasant needs, instead of fashioning geegaws for the wives of rich citizens … Let the factories and foundries turn out agricultural implements, spades, rakes and such-like …
>
> … let them [the towns] send friendly embassies to the country folk and bid them in brotherly fashion: 'Bring us your produce, and take from our stores and shops all the manufactured articles you please.' Then provisions would pour in on every side. The peasant would only withhold what he needed for his own use, and would send the rest into the cities, feeling *for the first time in the course of history* that these toiling townsfolk were his comrades—his brethren, and not his exploiters …
>
> This, then, is our view of the whole question. Cheat the peasant no longer with scraps of paper—be the sums inscribed upon them ever so large; but offer him in exchange for his produce the very *things* of which he, the tiller of the soil, stands in need. Then the fruits of the land will be poured into the towns. If this is not done there will be famine in our cities, and reaction and despair will follow in its train.[18]

The precise nature of the relationship between town and countryside which is described here is open to interpretation. On the one hand. the repeated use of the expression 'in exchange' suggests that it is a quid pro quo exchange relationship (even if not mediated by money) that Kropotkin envisages. On the other hand, the invitation from the townspeople to the peasants

[15] Kropotkin (1972), p. 104.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., p. 103.
[18] Ibid., pp. 100–1 (emphases in the original).

to '*bring* us your produce, and *take* from our stores and shops *all* the manufactured articles you please' implies that the relationship is to be based on free distribution, without regard for equivalent exchange. Kropotkin's later writings did little to resolve this ambiguity and hence, on this important question, it was an ambivalent legacy which he left to later generations of anarchists.

Other areas of ambivalence in Kropotkin's theory of anarchist communism are the roles to be played by anarchist groups and by the labour movement. As we have seen, Kropotkin's image of revolution essentially consisted of the people rising in insurrection. Yet, if the people as a whole were to carry out the revolution, what room did this leave for either anarchist groups or labour organisations to engage in struggles of their own? As far as anarchist groups were concerned, Caroline Cahm's careful study of Kropotkin's thought in the context of the revolutionary anarchist movement between 1872 and 1886 led her to conclude that 'Kropotkin stressed the role of heroic minorities in the preparation for revolution.'[19] The key words here are *in the preparation for revolution.* By their courage and daring in opposing capitalism and the state, anarchist minorities could teach by example and thereby draw increasing numbers into the struggle. But Kropotkin was not advocating substitutionism; the idea that a minority might carry out the revolution in place of the people was as alien to him as the notion that a minority would exercise rule after the revolution. In fact, Kropotkin recognised that the former would be a prescription for the latter.

As for the labour movement, Kropotkin paid virtually no attention to workers' organisations in the articles which constituted *The Conquest of Bread.* With the passage of time, however, he not only took note of the spread of labour unions but was loath to surrender these organisations, and the opportunities they provided, to social democrats and other opponents of anarchism. There was thus an increasing tendency for Kropotkin to see labour unions as organisations in which workers could become aware of the shortcomings of capitalism and, through struggle, could become conscious of their collective ability to run the economy without recourse to either the capitalists or the state. Positive evaluation of labour unions appeared both in the 1903 work *Modern Science and Anarchism,* where Kropotkin wrote:

> As to anarchist communism, it is certain that this solution wins more and more ground nowadays among those working-men who try to get a clear conception as to the forthcoming revolutionary action. The syndicalist and trade union movements, which permit the workingmen to realize their solidarity and to feel the community of their interests much better than any elections, prepare the way for these conceptions.[20]

and in a letter to L. Bertoni (dated 2 March 1914) where he put it as follows:

> The *syndicat* is absolutely necessary .. It is the sole force of the workers which continues the direct struggle against capital without turning to parliamentarism.[21]

Nevertheless, Kropotkin was also aware that by no means all unions fulfilled this function. In a letter to Max Nettlau (dated 5 April 1895) he also argued:

[19] Cahmn (1989), p. 276.
[20] Baldwin (1927), p. 174.
[21] Quoted in Miller (1976), p. 177.

> There are trade unions which egotistically struggle for higher wages or shorter hours [to achieve] emancipation. These unions are wrong, and often as monopoly-striving as capitalists. But labour unions, with the view of fighting against capitalism directly are different things.[22]

Hence once can say that, even when Kropotkin's earlier indifference towards the labour movement was replaced by recognition of the growing importance of workers' organisations, his enthusiasm was qualified by acute awareness of the shortcomings of many unions.

It was the rise of the labour movement which brought about changes not merely in Kropotkin's ideas, but in the character of the anarchist movement in countries such as France. In France national union federations developed in the 1880s and 1890s, and not a few anarchists found that the labour unions provided a congenial environment for their activity. From the unions' point of view, sections of their membership felt the need for a political philosophy which would give further meaning to the day-to-day struggles in which they were engaged and, indeed, would sustain them through the hardships which such conflicts often involved. The result was the hybrid doctrine of anarchist syndicalism.

From anarchism, anarchist syndicalism derived its distrust of political parties and parliamentary politics, its preference for federal organisation rather than centralisation, and its anticipation of an approaching social revolution. Despite these anarchist elements, the importance which anarchist syndicalism accorded to the union form of organisation ensured that it was distinct from other varieties of anarchism. Anarchist syndicalists believed that unions (*syndicats* in French) had a potential which extended far beyond their primary function of defending workers' interests within capitalism. Struggles by unions for limited objectives within the framework of capitalism were held to have a vital educative role, teaching workers the importance of solidarity and raising their sights beyond partial work stoppages to the ultimate objective of revolution in the form of the social general strike. On this reading of their significance, unions became the means of social revolution. In fact, even this formulation understates the importance attributed by anarchist syndicalists to the labour unions, since they believed that not only were the unions destined to carry out the revolution, but they would also provide the framework for administering the new society of the future. It was this set of linked propositions which lay behind the oft-repeated assertion made by anarchist syndicalists that, in organising labour unions, they were constructing the core of a new society within the shell of the society they sought to replace.

Anarchist syndicalist influence increased within the French union movement throughout the 1890s and early 1900s, as was demonstrated by the Charter of Amiens, which the Confédération Générale de Travail (General Confederation of Labour or CGT) adopted in 1906. This charter was a declaration of the union movement's independence from all political parties and it became a very influential statement of anarchist syndicalist principle. As we shall see, when the Zenkoku Rōdō Kumiai Jiyū Rengōkai (AlI-Japan Libertarian Federation of Labour Unions or Zenkoku Jiren) was formed in Japan in 1926, the influence of the Charter of Amiens on the platform it adopted at its founding conference was striking. However, initially the CGT's influence was evident closer to home, as shown by the formation of the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (National Confederation of Labour or CNT) in Spain in 1910.

Organisational successes, such as the stamping of an anarchist syndicalist character on the CGT and the founding of the CNT, were matched by corresponding developments in the realm

[22] Ibid.

of theory. Yet here there were many anarchists who resisted the anarchist syndicalists' tendency to see the unions as the be-all and end-all of the struggle for a new society. One famous debate was that which occurred at the International Anarchist Congress in Amsterdam in 1907 between the Italian anarchist communist Errico Malatesta (1853–1932) and Pierre Monatte (1881–1960) of the CGT. Monatte's uncritical enthusiasm for union activity was such that it leaned towards a 'pure syndicalism' from which anarchism had been drained entirely, whereas Malatesta, while not opposed to anarchists being active in labour unions, was not prepared to allow the anarchist communist vision of a new society to be eclipsed by the immediate tactical concerns of unions engaged in the class struggle. This was a theme to which Malatesta was to return repeatedly in later years, as when he wrote:

> There are those who call themselves 'anarcho-syndicalists'; or when they link up with others who are really not anarchists, they take the name of 'revolutionary syndicalists'. It is necessary to explain what is meant by 'syndicalism'.
>
> If it is a question of the sought-after future, if, that is, by syndicalism is meant the form of social organisation which should replace the capitalistic and statal organisation, then either it is the same as anarchy, and is therefore a term which only serves to confuse matters, or it is different from anarchy and cannot therefore be accepted by anarchists. Indeed, among the ideas and plans for the future put forward by this or that syndicalist, there are some which are genuinely anarchist, but there are others which present, under different names, and in different guises, the authoritarian structure which is the cause of the evils which today we complain of, and therefore can have nothing in common with anarchy.[23]

As the cases of both Kropotkin and Malatesta demonstrate, anarchist communism was not completely overwhelmed by anarchist syndicalism, but it was put on the defensive, since it could not match the organisational achievements of the mass union federations, such as the CGT. The typical form of anarchist communist organisation was the 'group' of like-minded individuals, which would be infused with a recognisable ideological orientation but would lack a defined membership, officials, procedural rules and so forth. The only other elements which gave any semblance of structure to the anarchist communist movement were the journals they published. Apart from their obvious propaganda function, these journals provided the movement with its public 'face', and acted both as channels of communication and foci for coordinated activity by the otherwise dispersed anarchist communist groups. While most journals led a precarious existence, both due to lack of funds and the oppression of the authorities, they replaced one another in more or less continuous succession and hence were a constant presence in the collective sense, no matter how short-lived the majority of such publications might be.

The reason for the tension which developed between anarchist communism and anarchist syndicalism during the 1890s and 1900s is clear enough. The anarchist communists lacked the mass following of the *syndicats,* but they could point out that there was a price to pay for attracting a membership that was primarily interested in the day-to-day struggle. Again, Malatesta's writings of the 1920s provide us with one of the most quotable examples of the kind of arguments that were already circulating twenty years earlier:

[23] Richards (1977), p. 122.

> it would be a great and fatal illusion to believe, as many do, that the workers' movement can and must on its own, by its very nature, lead to such a revolution. On the contrary, all movements founded on material and immediate interests (and a mass working class movement cannot be founded on anything else), if the ferment, the drive and the unremitting efforts of men of ideas struggling and making sacrifices for an ideal future are lacking, lend to adapt themselves to circumstances, foster a conservative spirit, and the fear of change in those who manage to improve their conditions, and often end up by creating new privileged classes and serving to support and consolidate the system which one would want to destroy.[24]

Nevertheless, other factors were also at work which had the opposite effect of muting anarchist communist criticism of anarchist syndicalism and fostering a sense of common identity among anarchists of all persuasions. Faced with the frequently vicious repression mounted by the capitalist state, disputes between anarchists over the relative merits of communism and syndicalism often seemed like a luxury which neither side could afford, particularly when the authorities made no distinction in their attempts to suppress all shades of anarchist opinion. In addition, the capitalist state was not the only enemy with which the anarchists had to contend. It was galling to observe social democratic parties and reformist unions acquiring mass followings and thereby, to the anarchists' way of thinking, raising new obstacles to social revolution. Confronted by the evident success of social democracy and reformist unionism, many anarchist communists, whatever their reservations about anarchist syndicalism, took comfort from the fact that at least some who called themselves anarchists were able, in certain contexts, to build a mass movement and outperform those who were using the labour movement as a means to advance their careers or gain political power.

The trend towards diluting anarchist communism's theoretical clarity, to which we have alluded here and which we noted earlier in Kropotkin's writings, was already under way before the First World War, but the outcome of the 1917 Russian Revolution gave fresh momentum in that direction. The Russian Revolution raised enormous hopes among anarchist communists, to the extent that some, like Alexander Berkman, who was deported from the USA to Russia in 1919, initially cooperated with the bolsheviks. In a *Letter to the Workers of Western Europe,* which Kropotkin wrote two years after his return to Russia in 1917, he expressed enthusiasm for the *soviets* or councils of workers and peasants: 'the idea of soviets, that is to say, of councils of workers and peasants ... controlling the economic and political life of the country is a great idea. All the more so, since it necessarily follows that these councils should be composed of all who take a real part in the production of national wealth by their own efforts.'[25] As Berkman and Kropotkin were well aware, however, the bolsheviks were relentlessly tightening their grip on state power, misappropriating the title *soviet* and persecuting the anarchists. The year 1921 saw Kropotkin's death, the brutal suppression of the Kronstadt rebellion, and Berkman's decision to leave Russia.

Now the situation for anarchists everywhere was considerably worse than it had been prior to the First World War. Nothing had changed as far as the oppression enforced by capitalist states and the opportunistic manoeuvring of labour leaders were concerned. But the difficulties confronting anarchists were now compounded by the existence of a bolshevik regime which not

[24] Ibid., pp. 113–14.

[25] Baldwin (1927), p. 154.

merely outstripped the other states in the thoroughness with which it imprisoned and crushed the anarchists, but whose consolidation of state power and systematisation of exploitation was made easier by the aura of 'socialism' and 'communism' which it employed its vast resources to cultivate. Fighting for the lives of their movements, and beset by enemies on all sides, the anarchists' pursuit of theoretical clarity now took second place to their struggle to survive. The result was that, in Europe at any rate, the distinctive theory of anarchist communism was subsumed into an increasingly ill-defined catch-all of 'anarchism'. Even in Spain, which after the First World War had the largest anarchist movement in Europe, the slide towards theoretical imprecision took place, resulting in 1936 in the ultimate absurdity of 'anarchist' ministers accepting portfolios in the Republican Government.

The tendency for anarchist communists to give ground in their theory can be illustrated by the case of Alexander Berkman. Berkman remained an anarchist communist until his suicide in 1936, and in 1929 he wrote *What Is Communist Anarchism?* (which, symbolically, is better known in its abridged version as the *ABC of Anarchism*). While *What Is Communist Anarchism?* remained a recognisably anarchist communist text, Berkman incorporated into his account of communist society and the means to achieve it, elements which were drawn from anarchist syndicalism and elsewhere. According to Berkman, 'the social revolution can take place only by means of the General Strike' and he considered factory committees and labour unions to be important training grounds for the revolution, since they provide the setting within which 'preparation for a new economic system, for a new social life' can take place.[26] Not surprisingly, this led him to a positive evaluation of the anarchist syndicalists:

> Large numbers of progressive working-men are coming to this understanding: the Industrial Workers of the World and the revolutionary anarchist-syndicalists in every country are devoting themselves to this end.[27]

The familiar elements of communism, as it had been envisaged by Cafiero, Kropotkin and others, were present in Berkman's sketch of the new society. These included abolition of the state, decentralisation, voluntary labour, free distribution of products and so forth. Yet although there were passages in *What Is Communist Anarchism?* that could be interpreted as references to the type of self-supporting communes which Kropotkin had described in *The Conquest of Bread,* the process of revolution which Berkman envisaged was clearly different from that which Kropotkin had anticipated. Whereas Kropotkin had extrapolated from previous revolutionary experience and had therefore thought in terms of localised insurrections, Berkman expected revolution to take place on the terrain since established by capitalist industry. The reason why Berkman identified the general strike as the key to revolution was that, for him, the crucial step in any revolution had become the workers taking over 'their' industries and operating them under their own control. Thus miners were to take over the mines, steelworkers the steel plants, railwayworkers the railways, and so on. When it came to running these industries, Berkman had the following suggestions to make:

> Every factory, mine, and mill should have its special workers' council, separate from and independent of the shop committee, for the purpose of familiarising the workers with the various phases of their particular industry, including the sources of raw

[26] Berkman (1977), pp. 52, 59 (emphasis in the original).
[27] Ibid., p. 60.

> material, the consecutive processes of manufacture, by-products, and manner of distribution. This industrial council should be permanent, but its membership must rotate in such a manner as to take in practically all the employees of a given factory or mill … In this manner the whole factory or mill can consecutively acquire the necessary knowledge about the organisation and management of their trade and keep step with its development. These councils would serve as industrial colleges where the workers would become familiar with the technique of their industry in all its phases.[28]

Berkman anticipated that by such means industrial production would be democratised. It was not, however, merely the how but also the *why* of industrial production that was to be radically redefined. To take a concrete example:

> The coal miners, for instance, will deliver the coal they mined to the public yards for the use of the community. In their turn the miners will receive from the community's warehouses the machinery, tools, and the other commodities they need. That means free exchange without the medium of money and without profit, on the basis of requirement, and the supply on hand.[29]

While these suggestions represented a fundamental break with the methods and objective of industrial capitalism, the extent to which Berkman's new society would bear the imprint of the society from which it sought to escape should not be underestimated. In contrast to Kropotkin's hope that each individual in the society of the future would combine the skills of 'the husbandman and the mechanic', Berkman envisaged a society still populated by miners, steelworkers', railwayworkers and so forth. Similarly, in contrast to Kropotkin's idea of transcending the division of labour by dispersing industry into the villages and bringing agriculture into the cities, the physical and social structure of communist society as Berkman imagined it was still to consist of distinct foci of industry and of separate urban and rural locations. In this sense, it was no mere rhetorical turn of phrase when Berkman admitted that 'capitalism is the parent of the new society'.[30]

The image of communism which Berkman's text projected is one which replicates many of the structures of capitalism, even if strenuous efforts are made to democratise them. One can interpret this development in different fashions. Either the trend which Berkman exemplified was a case of anarchist communists coming to terms with industrialisation, recognising that some of the changes which capitalism had brought about were here to stay irrespective of the capitalist or communist nature of society, and adjusting their strategy in line with the increasing proletarianisation of the workforce. Or it was a case of anarchist communists watering down their theory, retreating from their earlier determination to achieve an entirely different society to that based on economic specialisation and industrial concentration, and hence diluting their opposition to capitalism's division of labour.

One final development within European anarchist communism that needs to be noted for later comparative purposes was the publication of the *Organisational Platform of the General Union*

[28] Ibid., p. 62.
[29] Ibid., p. 69.
[30] Ibid., p. 64.

of Anarchists by the Group of Russian Anarchist Communists Abroad in Paris in 1926. This group consisted of anarchist communists who had been driven into exile by the bolsheviks and included Petr Arshinov (1887–1937), the principal author of the *Organisational Platform,* and Nestor Makhno (1889–1934), whose guerilla forces had fought against the bolsheviks and the Whites and had controlled large areas of the Ukraine between 1918 and 1921. Reflecting the defeat which the anarchists had suffered in Russia at the hands of the better organised bolsheviks, the *Organisational Platform* sought to establish a General Union of Anarchists equipped with 'a general and tactical and political line which would serve as a guide to the whole movement'.[31] What was distinctive about the *Organisational Platform* was that, while the ends to which the anarchist struggle was directed were defined as libertarian communism, whose 'fundamental economic, social and juridical principle' would be 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs', the means to be employed were totally at odds with those traditionally advocated by anarchist communists.[32] The strategy which the *Organisational Platform* recommended essentially consisted of adopting bolshevik means in order to compete more effectively with bolshevism and thereby achieve anarchist ends. The essence of this strategy is captured in the following passage:

> Every organisation adhering to the [General Union of Anarchists] represents a vital cell of the common organism. Every cell should have its secretariat, executing and guiding theoretically the political and technical work of the organisation.
>
> With a view to the coordination of the activity of all the Union's adherent organisations, a special organ will be created: the executive committee of the Union. This committee will be in charge of the following functions: the execution of decisions taken by the Union with which it is entrusted; the theoretical and organisational orientation of the activity of isolated organisations consistent with the theoretical positions and the general tactical line of the Union; the monitoring of the general state of the movement; the maintenance of working and organisational links between all the organisations in the Union; and with other organisations.
>
> The rights, responsibilities and practical tasks of the executive committee are fixed by the congress of the Union ...
>
> Born out of the heart of the mass of the labour people, the General Union must take part in all the manifestations of their life, bringing to them on every occasion the spirit of organisation, perseverance, action and offensive. Only in this way can it fulfil its task, its theoretical and historical mission in the social revolution of labour, and become the organised vanguard of their emancipatory process.[33]

Berkman's rejoinder to this proposal was that it amounted to advocating an Anarchist Communist Party.[34] This was a perceptive comment, for in 1934 the Nihon Museifu Kyōsantō (Anarchist Communist Party of Japan) was formed on a similar platform and attempted, with disastrous consequences, to press bolshevik methods into the service of anarchism.

[31] Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists (1972) p. 2 (emphasis in the original).
[32] Ibid., p. 6.
[33] Ibid., p. 21 (emphases in the original).
[34] Berkman (1977) p. xii.

What this chapter has sought to do is to give a brief account of anarchist communism's emergence in Europe in the 1870s, its subsequent development into a political doctrine of considerable depth and sophistication in the writings of Kropotkin and others, and its accelerated decline after the Russian Revolution. As will become clear from the chapters which follow, the very period which in Europe saw the dilution of anarchist communist theory, and its absorption into the increasingly vague and amorphous hotchpotch of 'anarchism', was in Japan a time of intense organisational confrontation and theoretical controversy between 'pure anarchists' (as the anarchist communists were often known in Japan) and anarchist syndicalists. Instead of regressing, as in Europe, in Japan anarchist communist theory was developed further and pushed beyond the theoretical frontiers established by Kropotkin and his comrades. In so doing, the Japanese pure anarchists not merely built up a movement which bravely challenged the militaristic state and made important contributions to anarchist communist theory. In their criticisms of industry, science and urbanisation, they anticipated by half a century several concerns which have been at the heart of the modern Green movement, and which, indeed, have recently given a new lease of life to anarchist communism in the shape of 'ecological anarchism'. All of these are good reasons why a Western-language study of Japanese pure anarchism is long overdue.

2. Japanese Anarchism to 1923

It is an arbitrary decision where one locates the historical origins of anarchism in Japan. After the implantation of Western anarchism into Japan, Japanese anarchists identified a native anarchist tradition within their own culture. For example, the *Nihon Heimin Shinbun* (Japan Common People's Newspaper) of 20 January 1908 carried an article on the eighteenth century thinker Andō Shōeki, describing him as 'an anarchist of 150 years ago', and in 1979 the Tōkyō-based Libertaire group referred to Andō as an advocate of 'agricultural communist anarchism'.[1] For the purposes of this book, however, it is not necessary to go back further than 1906. In 1906 the most influential socialist of his generation, Kōtoku Shūsui, returned from six months spent in California and astounded his social-democratic comrades by questioning the usefulness of contesting parliamentary elections in a speech which he made at a public meeting held in Tōkyō on 28 June to welcome him back to Japan.[2]

Kōtoku Shūsui and Anarchism

Kōtoku had been a founder member of the Shakai Minshutō (Social Democratic Party) when it was formed in May 1901, although this venture had proved abortive since the party was immediately banned. He originated from Kōchi Prefecture which, under its pre-revolutionary name of Tosa, had been one of the cradles of the Japanese Revolution (the 'Meiji Restoration') of 1868. After moving to Tōkyō for higher education, Kōtoku had become a journalist in 1893. Ten years later, in October 1903, he resigned from his newspaper when it came out in support of the impending Russo-Japanese War (1904–5). The following month, Kōtoku and his comrades launched an anti-war journal, the weekly *Heimin Shinbun* (Common People's Newspaper), as a result of which he was imprisoned for five months in February 1905 on charges arising from the Draconian press laws. It was Kōtoku's direct experience of state repression, and his disgust with the way in which the figurehead of the Emperor was used to justify exploitation at home and militaristic aggression abroad, that led him from social democracy towards anarchism. For these reasons, his stay in the USA can be said to have brought to a head a development in his political ideas that was discernible even before he left Japan.[3]

Kōtoku's speech on 28 June 1906 was followed by various articles written by him for the socialist press in which he expounded his new ideas. In one article he analysed the results of the general election held in Germany in January 1907:

> What the European working class needs is not to elect a majority of deputies but to gain the assurance of food and clothes and shelter. It does not need the eloquent phrases of Bebel or Jaures. What it does need is to achieve the social revolution. It is

[1] *Nihon Heimin Shinbun* no. 16, 20 January 1908, p. 15. Le Libertaire Group (1979), p. 3.
[2] *Hikari* no. 16, 5 July 1906, p. 1.
[3] See Crump (1983), ch. 8.

> not laws which produce food and clothes, any more than it is votes which can be the means of revolution. We believe that if the European socialist parties persist in their adherence to nothing but a parliamentary policy, they will in the end be incapable of functioning as the revolutionary parties of the working class. They will end up as nothing more than alternative bourgeois parties. As a result, the workers themselves will all desert them and turn to anarchist communism.[4]

A few days later, in the most famous of these articles, entitled 'The Change in My Thought', Kōtoku asserted

> A real social revolution cannot possibly be achieved by means of universal suffrage and a parliamentary policy. There is no way to reach our goal of socialism other than by the direct action of the workers, united as one.[5]

Additional weight was added to Kōtoku's pronouncements by a letter he received from Kropotkin, which was also published in the socialist press. During the six months Kōtoku had spent in the USA he had come under the influence of various anarchists, not the least influential of whom was his Russian-born landlady in San Francisco, a certain Mrs Fritz. Mrs Fritz had thoughtfully decorated the room that she let to Kōtoku with a picture of Mikhail Bakunin (1814–76) on one wall and a picture of Kropotkin on another, and it was she who forwarded to Kropotkin a letter that Kōtoku wrote in San Francisco, a letter in which he asked Kropotkin's permission to translate some of his works into Japanese. By the time Kōtoku received a reply to his letter he had already returned to Japan, and it was published in the journal *Hikari* (Light) on 25 November 1906. Kropotkin's letter was polite rather than stirring, but perhaps its most interesting feature, in view of the later anti-syndicalist direction taken by the pure anarchism which he inspired in Japan, was that his remarks reveal him at his most generous towards syndicalism. To the best of my knowledge, the original text of Kropotkin's letter has been lost but. translating back into English from the Japanese, it read:

> Bromley, England
> 25 September 1906
>
> Dear Mr Kōtoku,
>
> Mrs. Fritz has forwarded your letter to me and also informed me that you stayed with them in San Francisco.
>
> I have shown your letter to several comrades and, when they saw that already in Japan too a start has been made on libertarian propaganda, I do not need to tell you how delighted and elated they were. A few years ago I heard that a number of young people in America had made a study of the development of the labour movement. Consequently, they became interested in the libertarian movement and were fond of reading various works of mine. I wonder if among them are any of your acquaintances? …

[4] *Heimin Shinbun* no. 13, 1 February 1907, p. 1.
[5] Ibid. no. 16, 5 February 1907, p. 1. (There is a translation of this article in Crump [1983], pp. 341–51.

I am sure that you will be pleased to hear that from 1 November next we should start to publish a new English language journal called the *Voice of Labour*.[6] By calling with all its strength for the solidarity of the workers, this newspaper should be able to rid itself of any political taint. In other words, it will be an organ of what in France and Switzerland is called anti-political syndicalism. (In France, the newspaper *Voix du peuple* represents this tendency. In Lausanne too, the newspaper of the same name advocates this.) It is this which is the striking thing about the current movement—that a labour movement which has no connection with the parliamentary camp of social democracy is springing up everywhere. This movement is, in other words, anti-parliamentary unionism in the tradition of the old-time International Working Men's Association. Even though this movement is more socialistic than the existing unions in Britain, it is not in the same camp as parliamentary social democracy. Our newspaper will aim to represent this movement and we have high hopes for its success. Meanwhile, the magazine Freedom will continue to be published as before.

You have asked permission to translate my writings and it gives me great pleasure to assign that permission to you. If you require any of my works, I would be happy to send whichever of them you need.

Yours fraternally,

P. Kropotkin[7]

Kōtoku's new ideas created a sensation within the Japanese socialist movement and were soon taken up by many younger activists. A Nippon Shakaitō (Socialist Party of Japan) of some two hundred members had been organised on 24 February 1906 while Kōtoku was in the USA and, shortly after the appearance of 'The Change in My Thought' article, it held a conference in Tōkyō on 17 February 1907. This conference provided a forum for a vigorous debate between pro- and anti-parliamentarians, and the state reacted to the radicalism of some of the views expressed by banning the Nippon Shakaitō on 22 February 1907.[8] Then, on 14 April 1907, a short-lived experiment to publish a socialist daily newspaper came to an end after a struggle to survive over the previous three months, and the daily *Heimin Shinbun* (Common People's Newspaper) was replaced by two separate journals, representing the social democrats and the direct actionists respectively. The direct actionist paper was a bimonthly, known as the *Ōsaka Heimin Shinbun* (Ōsaka Common People's Newspaper) after the city where it was published, and it appeared on 1 June 1907. Later renamed the *Nihon Heimin Shinbun* (Japan Common People's Newspaper), it survived until 20 May 1908. Another bimonthly which also acted as a vehicle for spreading anarchist ideas was the *Kumamoto Hyōron* (Kumamoto Review), which was published in Kumamoto on the southern island of Kyūshū between 20 June 1907 and 20 September 1908. The short life of both journals was due to harassment by the authorities. Their editors were repeatedly fined and imprisoned, and various techniques were employed to hinder their distribution. Even the ostentatiously law-abiding social democrats were hounded by the authorities, so it was little wonder that public meetings organised by anarchists were regularly broken up. In the 'red flag incident'

[6] In fact, *Voice of Labour* proved to be a short-lived publication which appeared as a weekly in February 1907 and continued until September of the same year.

[7] *Hikari* no. 28, 25 November 1906, p. 3.

[8] Crump (1983), pp. 250–5.

of 22 June 1908, demonstrators with red flags bearing the slogans 'Anarchy' and 'Anarchist Communism' were beaten up by the police and some, like Arahata Kanson (1887–1981), Ōsugi Sakae and Yamakawa Hitoshi (1880–1958) (who were all able. young activists in their twenties and under Kōtoku's influence), were subsequently given prison sentences of several years.

It was under such repressive conditions that the pioneers of the anarchist movement in Japan absorbed Western theories of anarchism and attempted to relate them to the realities of Japanese society. Two key texts which Kōtoku was determined to translate into Japanese after his return from the USA were *The Social General Strike* and *The Conquest of Bread. The Social General Strike* was a short pamphlet which Kōtoku had acquired in the USA, where it had been published in 1905. Its author was the German anarchist Siegfried Nacht (1878–1956), who was better known by the pseudonym 'Arnold Roller', which was the name which appeared on the cover of *The Social General Strike.* Translated into Japanese, it was mimeographed in 1907 and distributed under the deliberately innocuous title *Keizai Soshiki no Mirai* (The Future of Economic Organisation). Circulated secretly from hand to hand between trusted comrades, it became an extremely influential text within the nascent anarchist movement in Japan. Work on a Japanese version of *The Conquest of Bread* got under way in 1907 and extracts appeared in the *Nihon Heimin Shinbun* and *Kumamoto Hyōron* as they were translated during 1907–8. Ōsugi and Yamakawa translated sections of *The Conquest of Bread*, but their imprisonment in 1908 prevented their further involvement in the project. Eventually Kōtoku completed the entire translation and 1,000 copies were printed in 1909. Police raided the publishing house but were able to seize only twenty copies since, in a similar fashion to *The Social General Strike,* the rest had already been distributed among students and workers throughout Japan.

In contrast to Kropotkin's account of anarchist communism in *The Conquest of Bread*, which was discussed in the previous chapter, Arnold Roller's pamphlet was unambiguously anarchist syndicalist. It presented unions as the means both for effecting revolutionary change and for administering the new society. Capitalist production was to be paralysed by a coordinated strike which would spread to all industries, so that 'the whole class of workers finally refuse to work for the whole class of capitalists'.[9] Revolution was thus envisaged as the culmination of the class struggle between workers and capitalists, the confident expectation being that neither the accumulated wealth of the capitalist class nor their control of state power would be an adequate match for the determination of the working class and its organised strength.

There was considerable enthusiasm among Japanese militants for the anarchist syndicalist strategy outlined in *The Social General Strike,* despite the yawning gap between theory and practice. The 'Public Peace Police Law' of 1900 had outlawed union organisations, so that those inclined to anarchist syndicalism were restricted to theoretical discussion and prevented from any attempts to organise *syndicats* among the growing working class. Nevertheless, despite repression by the state, there was a feeling among some anarchists that syndicalism fitted the circumstances created by the increasing industrialisation of Japan. The forces of capital and the state were committed to transforming Japan into an industrial power and syndicalism was seen as a fitting response on the part of a working class which was as much the product of the drive for industrialisation as were factories and machinery. Even as syndicalist-inclined anarchists chafed under the restrictions imposed by the state, they could console themselves with the thought that, by encouraging industrialisation, the state was planting the seeds that would ultimately lead to

[9] Roller (no date), p. 16.

its overthrow. Evidently, this was the train of thought of a contributor to the *Kumamoto Hyōron* in 1908, who referred to Roller's pamphlet and wrote: 'when the time is ripe and somewhere a strike breaks out, it is bound to spread elsewhere and provoke a so-called general strike and the workers will set about expropriation'.[10] Insurrectionary strikes, such as that which occurred at the Ashio Copper Mine in February 1907, were also taken as pointers to the future. As the daily *Heimin Shinbun* commented:

> In Japan we do not know whether or not in the future revolutionary labour unions will be organised. But when we see the strikes which recently have been occurring in various places, we have no doubt that the working class is gradually becoming conscious of its solidarity and the strength of its direct action.[11]

Like *The Social General Strike*, *The Conquest of Bread* also evoked a ready response in Japan. The impact which Kropotkin's book made was due to the fact that, in addition to offering a vision of the future, there were obvious similarities between the anarchist communism which it portrayed and various features of traditional peasant life in Japanese villages. Rice cultivation, and the maintenance of the water system on which it depended, required a high degree of communal solidarity. Similarly, although the market economy increasingly impinged on the villages, there still remained areas of peasant life into which monetary transactions rarely intruded. Hence it is not difficult to see how experience of life in a peasant community, remote from the centres of commercial and governmental power, could have the effect of making readers of *The Conquest of Bread* receptive to its arguments for a society of autonomous communes engaged in decentralised production. A good example of the influence exerted by Kropotkin is provided by *The Peasant's Gospel*, which Akaba Hajime wrote in 1910. In this booklet Akaba sought to establish the connection between the 'village community' of a vanishing past and the local commune of the anarchist communist future. As Akaba put it:

> We must send the land robbers to the revolutionary guillotine and return to the 'village community' of long ago, which our remote ancestors enjoyed. We must construct the free paradise of 'anarchist communism', which will flesh out the bones of the village community with the most advanced scientific understanding and with the lofty morality of mutual aid.[12]

It would not do to leave Akaba's case without mentioning that he was forced to go underground after illegally distributing his booklet in 1910, was eventually apprehended, and died in custody in 1912.

There were various reasons why, in this earliest phase of the anarchist movement in Japan, the differences of goal and method that existed between anarchist communism and anarchist syndicalism went largely unnoticed. First, as we have seen, Kropotkin's letter had given an impression of unqualified support for 'anti-political syndicalism'. Kropotkin was then at the height of his prestige among anarchists everywhere and had not yet tarnished his name by taking sides in the First World War. In addition, there were cultural reasons why, in Japan, even anarchists

[10] *Kumamoto Hyōron* no. 19, 20 March 1908, p. 2.
[11] *Heimin Shinbun* no. 32, 23 February 1907, p. 1.
[12] *Meiji Bunka Shiryō Sōsho* vol. 5 (1960) p. 294.

tended to defer to those whom age and reputation endowed with supposed 'authority'. Many young anarchists looked up to Kōtoku, while Kōtoku in his tum habitually referred to Kropotkin as sensei ('master' or 'teacher'). Hence casual remarks by Kropotkin could assume a significance far beyond what was intended or envisaged.

Second, even as it attempted to establish itself, the anarchist movement in Japan was already fighting for its life against the state. The intensity of persecution by the state increased year by year, so that for many anarchists the battle for personal survival absorbed much of their energy, leaving little time for pondering over theoretical questions. Kōtoku accurately conveyed the situation that confronted many anarchists in the translator's note which he appended to *The Conquest of Bread* in 1909: 'Many of the comrades in Tokyo gradually lost their jobs and their houses. All were threatened by hunger.'[13] Clearly, a barely established movement experiencing this level of persecution did not provide the type of environment in which the clarification of theoretical issues could easily be pursued.

Third, from the very outset the Japanese anarchists were also fighting on a second front against the social democrats. Those who turned to anarchism in 1906 and succeeding years had virtually all previously been social democrats. As they detached themselves from social democracy, they were criticised by those among their former comrades who continued to adhere to social democratic theory and practice. In the words of Katayama Sen (1859–1933), writing in less than perfect English:

> The Socialist movement of Japan is somewhat crippled and hindered on account of anarchistic views held by some who profess to be ... socialists and hold some influence among their Comrades. Those who have gone over to Anarchism oppose legislative and parliamentary tactics and political movement, and preached so-called direct action or a revolutionary or destructive general strike. We are sorry that some of our best Comrades have changed to the above views and no longer go with us, the international Socialists![14]

Not surprisingly, such criticism from those whom they had previously regarded as their comrades stung the early Japanese anarchists and this explains why so much of their effort was directed towards justifying their new ideas. It was natural that the need they felt to explain why they had broken with social democracy took precedence over any inclination to probe for inconsistencies between different varieties of anarchism.

Finally, and most importantly, it was the state's prohibition of unions which defused any potential tension between anarchist communism and anarchist syndicalism. Only where unions existed, as in contemporary Europe, did the question arise of the extent to which the tactics which flowed from pursuing the day-to-day struggle over wages and working conditions were in harmony with the strategy required to achieve a stateless society. As long as unions were banned, notions such as the proletariat 'taking possession through its labor unions of all the means of production' (Roller) and 'a free society ... seeking in free groups and free federations of groups, a new organization' (Kropotkin) remained highly abstract propositions and the possibility that they might be in conflict was obscured.[15]

[13] Akiyama (1972), p. 37.

[14] *Shakai Shinbun* no. 16, 15 September 1907, p. 1.

[15] Roller (no date), p. 7 and Kropotkin (1972), p. 70.

High Treason and its aftermath

In 1910 Japanese anarchism met with disaster in the shape of the 'high treason case'. Frustrated by the intolerable repression which the state enforced, a handful of militants started to make plans for a bombing campaign. The state took advantage of this and rounded up hundreds of radicals, most of whom had no direct connection with terrorism. Eventually 26 were brought to trial in December 1910 and 12 of these were hanged in January 1911. Among those executed was Kōtoku, and also others who were certainly innocent of the charges brought against them. The remaining 14 defendants received long prison sentences (12 of them life terms). The round-up of 1910 signalled the start of the 'winter period' for anarchism in Japan, which was to continue until the end of the First World War.

During the 'winter period' the state suppressed all anarchist and socialist organisations and kept a careful watch on those whom it regarded as infected with 'dangerous thoughts'. Known militants had police tails assigned to them and were kept under observation twenty-four hours per day (a political police unit had been set up as early as 1904 at the time of the Russo-Japanese War). Under such conditions, overt activity, or even the publishing of recognisably anarchist literature, was impossible. Many former activists had no alternative but to withdraw from the cities and live quietly in the countryside, waiting for the opportunity to take up the struggle again, or even to go into exile. Yamakawa Hitoshi was one of the former. Having completed a two-year jail sentence arising from his involvement in the 'red flag incident', he retreated to the countryside in 1910 and did not reappear in Tōkyō until 1916. In Ishikawa Sanshirō's (1876–1956) case, after two spells of imprisonment in 1907–8 and 1910, he left Japan for Europe in 1913 and did not return until 1920. However, others such as Arahata Kanson and Ōsugi Sakae, both of whom emerged from prison in 1910, were determined to keep alive the spark of anarchism during the 'winter period', whatever the obstacles that confronted them.

With Kōtoku dead, a younger generation of anarchists now came to the fore and, in so doing, shifted the centre of gravity further towards anarchist syndicalism. As I have indicated, prominent among these anarchists were Arahata and Ōsugi, both of whom had been arrested in the 'red flag incident' and who, thanks to their imprisonment, had escaped the dragnet of the 'high treason case' and possible execution. Ōsugi Sakae was the most colourful personality among his generation of anarchists and, in conjunction with the sharpness of his intellect and his wide-ranging talents. this made him from now on the dominant figure in Japanese anarchism until his murder in 1923. He was the son of an army officer and had been sent to a military academy as a boy in anticipation that he would follow in his father's footsteps. A rebel from his early days, he was expelled from the academy, and went on to study principally French at the Tōkyō Foreign Languages School. (Ōsugi was a considerable linguist and one of the founders of the Esperanto movement in Japan.) It was as a student in Tōkyō that he became involved in the socialist movement at the time of the Russo-Japanese War. Ōsugi was one of the first to be influenced by Kōtoku's changed political position, so that by December 1906 Kōtoku was writing that 'Comrade Ōsugi is a young Anarchist student and a best friend of mine.'[16] From then on Ōsugi's knowledge of French made him the principal source of information in Japan about the CGT and European anarchist syndicalism generally.

[16] Shiota (1965), p. 440.

In October 1912, less than two years after Kōtoku's execution, Arahata and Ōsugi started to issue a monthly journal called *Kindai Shisō* (Modern Thought). Ostensibly a literary-cum-philosophical magazine, it nevertheless acted as a vehicle for surreptitiously explaining and discussing the theories of anarchist syndicalism. As Ōsugi put it, *Kindai Shisō* 'disseminated among young students revolutionary ideas under a scientific, literary and philosophical form'.[17] Encouraged by the relative success of *Kindai Shisō,* Arahata and Ōsugi then organised in Tōkyō a Sanjikarizumu Kenkyū Kai (Society for the Study of Syndicalism) in July 1913. Meetings were held at least monthly and lectures were delivered on the CGT and on the syndicalist movement associated with Tom Mann in Britain, although the ensuing discussions could not avoid being somewhat abstract since most of those attending were young intellectuals who had never ventured inside a factory. As the journal *Rōdō Undō* (Labour Movement) commented when it posthumously summarised Ōsugi's activity during the 'winter period', 'the workers were still totally unconscious and those who attended were principally literary youths'.[18]

Impressive though their achievements were in publishing *Kindai Shisō* and organising the Sanjikarizumu Kenkyū Kai, Arahata and Ōsugi were not likely to remain content with preaching to a largely intellectual audience. In October 1914 they suspended *Kindai Shisō* and attempted to replace it with a more combative journal whose title, *Heimin Shinbun* (Common People's Newspaper), recalled earlier struggles. Most issues of this journal were suppressed, leading to its discontinuation in March 1915, and although the attempt was then made from October 1915 to revert to *Kindai Shisō*, having blown its cover, this too was now repeatedly banned and ceased publication in January 1916. During the rest of the 'winter period', small groups of anarchists bravely attempted to launch publications with titles such as *Rōdō Kumiai* (Labour Union) [1916], *Bunmei Hihyō* (Critique of Civilisation) [1918], *Aofuku* (Overalls) [1918] and *Rōdō Shinbun* (Labour Newspaper) [1918]. All were suppressed and their editors were often imprisoned under the press laws.

Whereas both anarchist communism and anarchist syndicalism remained discernible strands within Japanese anarchism during the 'winter period', various factors combined to induce the pendulum to swing further towards anarchist syndicalism. First, as the principal theoretician of anarchist communism, Kropotkin's reputation in Japan as elsewhere was diminished within revolutionary circles by the support he gave to France and its allies during the First World War. In Japan anarchists of all persuasions remained firmly committed to anti-militarism and rightly regarded Kropotkin's position on the war as a betrayal of anarchist principles.[19] Second, conscious of their exposed position as intellectuals who lacked any means of resisting persecution, there was a tendency among anarchists to look to the growing number of industrial workers as the social group which was best placed to turn the tide of state oppression. Industry was vital to the state's military as well as economic ambitions and, to many anarchists' way of thinking, this was potentially a trump card in the hands of the workers, once they became aware of their collective strength. It was argued that, although the state might seem to have enormous forces at its disposal, in the shape of the police, the army, the judiciary and so forth, all these could be neutralised once the workers organised themselves in syndicalist-style unions armed with the

[17] *Ōsugi Sakae Zenshū* vol. 5 (1964), p. 19.

[18] *Rōdō Undō* series 4 no. 2, 1 March 1924, p. 4.

[19] However, Ishikawa Sanshirō, who had left Japan for Europe in 1913, succumbed to the militarist sentiments of the Reclus family, with whom he stayed, and in 1916 signed the pro-war, so-called *Manifesto of the Sixteen* (there were actually 15 signatories) along with Kropotkin. (Itinéraire no. 3, June 1988, p. 32.)

crippling weapon of the general strike. Third, since distance and lack of accurate information added to its reputation, the example of the CGT's supposedly ever expanding organisation and activity in France excited many anarchists in Japan. Even though the CGT proved quite incapable of unleashing the general strike against the catastrophe for the working class of mass slaughter in the First World War, it still dazzled many anarchists in Japan and was seen by them as a role model for their movement.

Finally, due to his stature within the anarchist movement, Ōsugi's personal enthusiasm for anarchist syndicalism exerted considerable influence over his comrades. Ōsugi combined a passionate commitment to personal liberation, expressed as much in his lifestyle (for example, in his relations with women) as in his writing, with support for the aims and methods of anarchist syndicalism. The title of one of his articles in *Kindai Shisō*, 'The Labour Movement and Individualism', neatly captures the essence of his political creed.[20] In another article, entitled 'The Creation of Life', he wrote:

> In brief, this minority [the anarchists and syndicalists] is in this way gradually destroying the foundations of the existing society and developing elements of the new society within the framework of the old. And when this process has gone far enough, they will demolish in a last great struggle this edifice which they have undermined and build the new society which they have been constructing within themselves.[21]

In the morally and politically stifling climate of the 'winter period' it was hardly surprising that many young anarchists were attracted by Ōsugi's fusing of individual rebelliousness with support for anarchist syndicalism.

It was difficult for the anarchists during the 'winter period' to keep open lines of communication with other countries, but nevertheless they were aware that tension existed between anarchist communists and anarchist syndicalists in Europe. Yet although they could follow the dispute in intellectual terms, the absence of unions deprived the issues of any immediate relevance in Japan. The detached manner in which the anarchists viewed this dispute from afar during the 'winter period' is conveyed by the following remarks by Ōsugi:

> A long way away as we are, we can look calmly at the relationship between both parties. And it seems to us that the inevitable tendency in both cases should be for anarchists to become unionists and for unionists to become anarchists, so that in the end there is perfect agreement between them. The vague, abstract theories of Kropotkin and others have become clear and concrete in the unions. And the unions, which for a long time have been weak and uncertain of themselves, have learned through experience and, thanks to anarchism, are at last marching straight ahead in a definite direction.[22]

As the later course of events was to show, Ōsugi's recommendation that anarchists become unionists and vice versa, 'so that in the end there is perfect agreement between them', proved easier said than done. For the time being, however, many anarchists in Japan shared Ōsugi's belief that it was the combination of personal rebellion with the building of syndicalist unions that would bring about the realisation of an anarchist society.

[20] *Kindai Shisō* series 2 no. 3, December 1915, pp. 2–7.

[21] Ibid. no. 16, January 1914, p. 5.

[22] *Heimin Shinbun* no. 1, 15 October 1914 (collected in *Ōsugi Sakae Zenshū* supplementary vol. [1964] p. 84).

The End of the 'Winter Period'

The 'winter period' came to an end not because the state voluntarily suspended its repression, but because it was forced to give ground by a wave of struggles which engulfed Japan towards the end of the First World War. The years 1915–18 were boom years for Japanese capital due to the commercial stimulus provided by a war in which Japan was only peripherally involved militarily. Fortunes were made by Japanese companies, banks and investors, but little of this prosperity trickled down to ordinary men and women. There was runaway inflation in 1917 and 1918, in the face of which the harshly disciplined workforce in the factories found its wage levels progressively eroded. The result was that, even though the law prohibited strikes, tens of thousands of increasingly desperate workers were forced into often violent confrontation with their employers and with the state, since the police regularly became involved in labour disputes. According to available figures, 57,309 workers were involved in 398 disputes in 1917 and 66,457 workers in 417 disputes in 1918 (out of a total workforce in all factories of less than 1.5 million).

The rampant inflation particularly affected the price of the staple food, rice. This brought no benefits to most of the rice-growing farmers because much of the crop had to be handed over to landlords as rent in kind and the rest was often sold in advance in order to raise the money needed to pay taxes. When such farmers later came to buy back rice for consumption, they were confronted by the same relentlessly rising prices as afflicted working class families, the fishing communities and other non-farming sectors. It was against this background that rice riots swept across Japan in the summer of 1918. Hundreds of thousands of men, women and children were involved in these incidents, which look in most of Japan except for a few of the northernmost areas. In major cities, such as Ōsaka and Kōbe, there were pitched battles with the police, troops were mobilised, and destruction was on a considerable scale.

Persecution of the anarchists did not cease when the 'winter period' came to an end. Among other forms of continuing oppression, public meetings were still frequently ordered to close, issues of journals were often banned from sale and employers were invariably prompted to sack known activists. But the blanket suppression of all activity, which had previously been enforced, now became impossible to maintain. Nor were anarchists the only ones to find themselves with more room than previously in which to manoeuvre and one result of this changing environment was the emergence of a union movement. As early as 1912 a class-collaborationist body. appropriately known as the Yūaikai (Friendship Society), had been formed and had probably been tolerated by the police both because of its minuscule size (it started with 15 members) and because of its conciliatory objectives. Although the Yūaikai was initially derided by the anarchists, they started to pay more attention when, in the closing years of the First World War, it grew rapidly into a sizeable federation and became more combative under pressure from its rank and file. By the end of the war the Yūaikai had a membership approaching 30,000 and by 1921 it had changed its name to Nihon Rōdō Sōdōmei (Japanese Confederation of Labour), which was generally abbreviated to plain Sōdōmei.

When they were first formed, almost all unions were led by reformists of one type or another. Even though many of these reformists came to use the vocabulary of socialism when it was expedient to do so, they were not seeking any fundamental change in capitalist social relations. At worst, such reformist leaders were out to make a career for themselves by using the labour movement as a stepping stone; at best, they sought to improve the conditions of the workers *within* capitalism while leaving the wages system intact. A typical example of one of the more

high-minded leaders was Kagawa Toyohiko (1888–1960) who played a prominent role in the Kansai labour movement during its early years. As a Christian social reformer, Kagawa hoped for a gradual improvement in the social order, leading eventually to a system of institutionalised collaboration between the government, the unions and organs representing consumer interests. Following the Russian Revolution and the fascination which bolshevism started to exert over some Japanese radicals, the reformists were joined by a new type of aspiring labour leader who sought to imitate the strategy recently employed by Lenin's parry in achieving power. For Japanese bolsheviks the unions became targets for infiltration, with the aim of using the workers' struggles to undermine the established order, win power for the party and establish a similar regime to that already achieved in Russia.

Among the anarchists there was virtually unanimous enthusiasm for the emergence of a union movement. Even those anarchists who harboured doubts about the efficacy of anarchist syndicalism still viewed the formation of unions positively, believing that they provided a useful field of activity for anarchists and a means of self-assertion for the workers. Indeed, for the remainder of the period under discussion in this chapter the unions became the principal focus of anarchist efforts. Many anarchists threw themselves into the struggle to rid the unions, both inside and outside the Yūaikai/Sōdōmei federation, of their manipulative leaders. In view of the degree to which this struggle for the heart and soul of the union movement absorbed the energies of anarchists, it is tempting to characterise the years immediately following the First World War as a period when anarchist syndicalism predominated almost entirely. To put it this way would be an overstatement, however. The battle between the union leaders, whether reformist or bolshevik, and the anarchists was essentially over the issue of whether there should be centralised control and direction of the movement or a decentralised, federal structure allowing for initiative and autonomous action by the rank and file. Anarchists of all persuasions were drawn to the latter alternative and did not need to be committed anarchist syndicalists in order to join the battle to resist the union leaders. Hence, despite the enthusiasm for anarchist syndicalism on the part of Ōsugi and others, anarchist activity in the unions was pitched more at the level of resistance to centralised authority than strict adherence to syndicalist principles. The struggle to defeat the reformists and bolsheviks within the unions actually worked to defer any attempt to implement a syndicalist strategy. Only later, when the union movement split irrevocably, with reformists, bolsheviks and anarchists each in control of their own section, would the setting be created in which anarchist syndicalism could be put to the test and each anarchist would have to take a stand for or against syndicalism.

There were by this stage significant numbers of anarchists in many sections of the workforce, but the hardest core of the anarchist union movement was undoubtedly made up of printworkers. In 1916 a typically named Shinyūkai (Sincere Friends' Society) printing union had been formed on a purely reformist footing. By 1919 it had 1,500 members and was abandoning its initial reformism for anarchism. The same year, a major dispute between the Tōkyō newspaper companies and another reformist union ended in defeat for the workers. In the wake of this dispute, an anarchist-inclined union, the Seishinkai (Righteous Progress Society), was organised among the newspaper workers with an initial membership of some 500. Together, the Shinyūkai and Seishinkai became for many years the stronghold of the anarchist union movement and their influence was further enhanced when, in 1923, they linked to form a general printworkers' union federation, which had achieved a combined membership of 3,850 by 1924. It was a sign of the times that, when Ōsugi and his comrades launched a new journal, *Rōdō Undō* (Labour Movement)

in October 1919, it was no longer merely a vehicle for popularising the ideology of anarchist syndicalism but carried detailed reports on labour disputes as they occurred throughout Japan. *Rōdo Undō*'s publication was frequently interrupted, due to repression and shortage of funds, but it continued to appear, in one form or another and despite gaps of several months, until October 1927.

Although virtually from their emergence the unions provided a forum for clashes between reformists and anarchists, with the bolsheviks also soon becoming involved, initially there was room for a limited amount of cooperation before positions hardened into irreconcilable battle-lines. Prominent among those who turned to bolshevism, and who went on to participate in the founding of the Nihon Kyōsantō (Communist Party of Japan) in 1922, were a number of former anarchists, including Arahata Kanson and Yamakawa Hitoshi. Despite their new-found sympathy for bolshevism, Arahata and Yamakawa contributed articles to the early issues of *Rōdō Undō* and there was sufficient cooperation among unions of different ideological orientation for several thousand workers jointly to take pan in the first ever May Day demonstration in Tōkyō on Sunday 2 May 1920. Encouraged by the success of May Day, a Rōdō Kumiai Dōmeikai (Labour Union Alliance), encompassing unions as varied as Sōdōmei, Shinyūkai and Seishinkai, was formed on 16 May 1920. Another example of an initial willingness to cooperate was the invitation by a Comintern agent to Ōsugi to visit Shanghai in October 1920 for discussions. Ōsugi accepted this invitation and, although he refused to abandon anarchism for bolshevism, he did receive ¥2,000 from the Comintern in order to relaunch *Rōdō Undō*, which had temporarily ceased publication in June 1920. The second series of *Rōdō Undō*, which lasted from January to June 1921, marked probably the high point of cooperation between anarchists and bolsheviks in Japan, both standpoints being aired in the columns of that journal. Parallel to this, an attempt was made in 1920 to organise a broadly-based Nihon Shakaishugi Dōmei (Japanese Socialist League) which would encompass various shades of opinion, including anarchists, bolsheviks and reformists. Although its founding conference, held in Tōkyō on 9–10 December 1920, was disrupted by the police, with many arrests, it had achieved a membership of approximately 1,000 by that stage and was publishing the journal *Shakaishugi* (Socialism). Three thousand attended the second attempt to hold a conference in Tōkyō on 9 May 1921, but the police again ordered the meeting to close and soon after banned the organisation entirely.

These attempts to find a basis for cooperation between anarchists, bolsheviks and reformists proved short-lived and, even without the repressive actions of the authorities, would have foundered on the differences in theoretical outlook and organisational practice which existed between the various camps. Even at the height of anarchist-bolshevik cooperation, there were anarchists who resisted the compromises which this involved and criticised Ōsugi's acceptance of Comintern funds. Those anarchists grouped around the journal *Rōdōsha* (Worker), which was published from April 1921 until May 1922, made a sharp distinction between workers and intellectuals. They counted among the latter not merely the Japanese bolsheviks, with their aspirations to leadership, but also anarchists such as Ōsugi who, they argued, had 'committed the biggest mistake of his life' in compromising with bolshevism.[23] In fact, it did not take long for Ōsugi himself to reappraise his cooperation with the bolsheviks. Ōsugi was a careful reader of (and often translated into Japanese) Alexander Berkman's and Emma Goldman's (1869–1940) reports on the Russian government's persecution of the anarchists, its treacherous attack on

[23] Hagiwara (1974), p. 60.

Nestor Makhno's forces as soon as the common enemy in the shape of the White armies had been defeated, and its bloody suppression of the Kronstadt rebellion in 1921. Ōsugi shared Berkman's and Goldman's estimation of the Russian Revolution and concurred that its potential for human liberation had been wrecked by the bolsheviks' consolidation of state power and their enforcement of a form of exploitation which was essentially capitalist. By September 1922 Ōsugi was asking 'to what extent was the life of workers in the new Russia, where state capitalism and private capitalism exist side by side, basically different from the life of workers in those other so-called "capitalist countries" where there is private capitalism?'[24] By January 1923 he was answering his own question by asserting that 'the New Economic Policy has cast the chains of wage slavery for the Russian proletariat and has dragged the workers down into a worse situation than the conditions of labour found in other capitalist countries'.[25]

Within the unions, the triangular rivalry between reformists, anarchists and bolsheviks ultimately undermined all attempts at cooperation. While anarchist elements within Sōdōmei never ceased to denounce the reformism and parliamentarism of its leaders, the reformists reciprocated by attacking anarchism as destructive adventurism and urged Sōdōmei members to 'dissociate themselves from frenzied, extremist groups which believe in socialism'.[26] Despite the relative success of the 1920 May Day demonstration, there was tension in 1921 between reformists and anarchists over the readiness of the latter to turn May Day into a confrontation with the authorities. Not only were there clashes with the police on this occasion, but reformist and anarchist unionists also came to blows. One of the issues at stake in the disputes between reformists and anarchists was the nonproletarian background of many of the reformist leaders. As a Seishinkai spokesman put it from the May Day platform: 'We are opposed to people from the intellectual class assuming the leadership of the labour movement.'[27] As a result of this rivalry, and in the wake of the May Day brawls, the Sōdōmei leaders and the unions they controlled withdrew from the Rōdō Kumiai Dōmeikai on 4 June 1921.

In September 1922 there was one final attempt to form an all-encompassing federation of unions. The founding conference of the Zenkoku Rōdō Kumiai Sōrengō (All-Japan General Federation of Labour Unions) was held in Ōsaka on 30 September 1922 and attended by 106 delegates, representing 59 organisations with a combined membership of over 27,000. As usual, this conference ended prematurely when the police ordered the meeting to close but, even before this occurred, the discussions which did take place revealed the unbridgeable gap between the anarchists and their opponents. Once again the numerous differences, both theoretical as well as practical, which existed between the various camps found their most concentrated expression when the question of organisational structure was debated. The anarchists stood for a decentralised federation, while the reformists and bolsheviks opportunistically united on this issue and backed each other's determination to establish a centralised leadership with powers of direction.

The failure to establish the Zenkoku Rōdō Kumiai Sōrengō brought to a close the period of albeit limited cooperation between the anarchists and their reformist and bolshevik opponents. Anarchist elements were henceforth either driven out of Sōdōmei or forced to conform to poli-

[24] *Rōdō Undō* series 3 no. 7, 10 September 1922, p. 9.

[25] Ibid., series 3 no. 10, 1 January 1923, p. 9.

[26] Quoted in Mizunuma Tatsuo, '"Sōrengō" no Ketsuretsu to Sono Zengo', *Nihon Museifushugi Undō Shi* (1970), p. 28.

[27] Hagiwara (1969), p. 82.

cies decided by the leadership. The reformists and bolsheviks maintained an uneasy cohabitation within Sōdōmei until the organisation split in 1925. At that stage the reformist leadership retained control of 35 unions with around 20,000 members, enabling them to cling on to the title Sōdōmei, while the bolsheviks set up the Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Hyōgikai (Japanese Labour Union Council), comprised of 32 unions with 12,500 members. It was against this background that in 1926 the anarchists formed the Zenkoku Rōdō Kumiai Jiyū Rengōkai (All-Japan Libertarian Federation of Labour Unions), bringing together 25 unions with a combined membership of 8,372.

However, during the period covered by this chapter, the anarchists remained in unaffiliated unions and dispersed groups, wim no umbrella organisation to link them. Following the abortive founding conference of the Zenkoku Rōdō Kumiai Sōrengō, 20 unions signed a joint declaration which appeared in *Rōdō Undō* in November 1922. This declaration, which was entitled 'Announcement to the Workers Throughout the Country', stated its support for 'libertarian federation' and expressed opposition to 'combination based on centralised authority'. The list of signatories reveals that, besides their preponderance among the printworkers, the anarchists had considerable support at this time among the watchmakers, general labourers, tramworkers, shipbuilders, engineering workers, communication workers and other sections of the workforce.[28] Certain local unions, such as the Shibaura Labour Union, which had been formed in November 1921, were also strongly anarchist. As for the anarchist groups, adorned with often extravagant . names such as the Girochinsha (Guillotine Society) or Futeisha (Outlaws' Society), they were mostly short-lived but replaced one another in uninterrupted succession. Their activity was as varied as their names, some being essentially groups whose *raison d'être* was the publishing of a journal, others inclining towards terrorism, some lending support to the workers' struggles and others throwing themselves into the tenant farmers' disputes.

This was roughly the situation of anarchism in Japan when disaster on a similar scale to that inflicted by the 'high treason case' hit the movement once more in September 1923. At noon on 1 September 1923 a massive earthquake shook the Kantō region, including Tōkyō. The initial destruction and loss of life was severe, but it was nothing compared to that resulting from the fires which followed the earthquake. The strong winds associated with the typhoon season fanned the flames, which cut enormous swathes through Tōkyō as the fires burned out of control for days and nights on end. In the atmosphere of fear and panic which this situation induced, rumours that revolutionaries and arsonists were out on the streets spread as quickly as the flames. The authorities had all the excuse they required to round up dissidents and among those detained by the military police were Ōsugi (who had recently returned from four months spent in France), his partner Itō Noe (1895–1923) and Ōsugi's nephew Tachibana Munekazu, who was still a child. Arrested on 16 September, their bodies were fished out of a well four days later. Ōsugi, Itō and Tachibana were only three among thousands who were lynched, but the blow to Japanese anarchism was severe. Once again, the most able anarchist of his generation had been murdered.

[28] *Rōdō Undō* series 3 no. 9, 1 November 1922, p. 2.

3. Hatta Shūzō: Christian Pastor to Anarchist Militant

After Ōsugi Sakae's murder, it was Hatta Shūzō who became the most influential anarchist theoretician in Japan. Most accounts treat anarchism as though it was supplanted by bolshevism after 1923 but, in fact, this was far from the case. As the next chapter will show, in terms of being an active social movement. anarchism was still very much alive and kicking throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. Intellectually, it also entered its richest and most productive phase after Ōsugi's murder, and the theoretical fertility of this period was primarily due to Hatta's writings and the intense debates which these provoked. Ōta Ryū has been one of the few postwar commentators who has adequately appreciated Hatta's significance as a thinker. As he once put it, in an essay on anarchist theory:

> Hatta Shūzō (born 1886; died 1934) was an important anarchist after the murder of Ōsugi Sakae (in 1923). Basing himself on Kropotkinism, he developed the theory of anarchist communism one step further. After Kropotkin's death, world anarchism rapidly regressed from the level to which Kropotkin had brought it. It seems to me that, as far as I know, in the midst of these degenerate circumstances (the era of Marxism-Leninism's complete domination) there was nobody other than Hatta (not only in Japan but in the entire world) who took a step forward in this way.[1]

Hatta's active involvement in the anarchist movement spanned the relatively short period 1924–32 and his most important writings all appeared during a concentrated spurt of theoretical innovation, lasting barely five years between 1927 and 1931. Nevertheless, to understand Hatta's theory of anarchist communism, and to locate it within the unfolding process of Japan's social, political and economic development after the First World War, one needs not merely to examine his role as an anarchist during the period 1924–32, but to set his anarchist years within the context of his life as a whole. The half century of Hatta's lifespan was a time of enormous change within Japan, involving the spread of capitalist social relations, the sacrifice of the peasant villages on the altar of industrial growth, and the militarisation which accompanied relentless imperialist expansion on the Asian mainland. As we shall see, the tensions and traumas which these related processes produced impinged on Hatta throughout his life and were responsible for the directions taken by his thought and activity.

[1] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981), p. 336.

Origins and Education

Hatta was born on 11 December 1886 in the port town of Tsu in Mie Prefecture.[2] He was the youngest of seven children and both his parents died while he was young. Clearly, this was a keenly felt loss because even at the end of his life, in an introspective article which he wrote in 1932, he was attributing certain aspects of his character to being deprived of parental love at such a young age.[3] Even without his parents' early deaths, however, Hatta's childhood could not have been other than beset by difficulties. The Hatta family was long established in Tsu and had a tradition of loyal service to the Tōdō *han* (fief) prior to the Meiji Restoration of 1868. In fact, the Hattas had for generations managed the finances of the Tōdō *daimyō* (lord). The family house was located in the Wakebe Machi (modern Higashi Maru no Uchi) district of Tsu and, since this was a *chōnin* (merchant) quarter, it is an indication of the family's location within the strict hierarchy of samurai-peasants-artisans-merchants that pervaded Tokugawa society. After 1868 the *han* were abolished throughout Japan and replaced by a modern administrative structure of prefectures which were answerable to those who held power in Tōkyō. Along with the abolition of the *han*, the *daimyō* were also deprived of power, with catastrophic economic consequences for those who had previously catered for their needs. While this was the general pattern of events throughout Japan, the consequences of this redistribution of power must have been compounded in Tsu, since the Tōdō *han* had been on the 'wrong' side in the Meiji Restoration, having remained loyal to the doomed Tokugawa regime instead of throwing in its lot with the restorationist forces, whose leaders became the new rulers of Meiji Japan. The lingering impact which this social upheaval made on those like the Hatta's even as late as the turn of the century is revealed by the difficulty young Shūzō experienced in acquiring an education appropriate to his family's traditional merchant status. He enrolled in Kōbe Shōgyō Gakkō (Kobō Commercial School) but could not progress beyond the third year because the money sent from home dried up, depriving him of all means of support.

Although then still in his teens, Hatta was drawn to Tōkyō since, to a provincial lad like him, the wealth, power and educational institutions to be found there all had a magnetic appeal. In Tōkyō he hoped to find the means to support himself and to pick up the threads of his education. However, this proved more difficult than he had imagined. Jobs such as delivering newspapers provided him with barely enough to survive, let alone to finance an education and as he drifted out of one menial occupation into another. Hatta thought he would try his luck as a deckhand. Evidently this was no more satisfactory than the other jobs he had tried, since he jumped ship at one of the first opportunities, but in taking him to Taiwan it did lead to an experience which was to be one of the two major turning points in his life. Taiwan was then a recently acquired colony, which China had been forced to cede to Japan under the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki after the Japanese victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5, and it was therefore relatively easy for even a poorly educated young Japanese such as Hatta to find employment. He secured a position at Taipei Post Office and the fact that his elder sister had settled there with her husband must have made life in Taiwan easier for Hatta. He did not stay in Taiwan for long because a quarrel with the postmaster caused him to lose his job, but before that happened Hatta came under the

[2] Hatta's date of birth is taken from the college register of Meiji Gakuin's Department of Theology. I am grateful to Ms Shibata of the Registrar's Department of Tōkyō Shingaku University for kindly supplying this information.

[3] *Hi no Hashira* no. 52, 10 July 1932, p. 6.

influence of Christianity and by the time he returned to Japan he was a fervent believer in the protestant creed.

Christianity's standing in Japan at this time needs to be briefly explained. The social transformation that Japan was experiencing in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was, up to a point, a process of Westernisation. Western machines, Western guns, Western sciences and so on were all adopted with alacrity but, when it came to Western ideologies, the state was considerably less enthusiastic. The purpose behind the adoption of Western technology was to strengthen Japan as a nation-state, thereby enabling Japan better to resist Western, imperialist aggression. Yet, while it was clear to the Meiji leaders that a Japan equipped with Western-style arms would be better able to stand up to the Western powers, they were much more doubtful about the benefits which Western-style ideologies would confer. Rather it was the case that, parallel to their promotion of Western technology within Japan, they were no less busy synthesising an ideology of nationalism from components which were lifted eclectically from Japan's own ideological tradition.

Suspicious though the authorities were of Christianity and other Western ideologies, they were in no position to resist Western demands that Japan be opened up to Western missionaries. During the closing decades of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century various Christian sects mounted a considerable missionary effort in Japan and, although the number of converts was small when measured against Japan's population as a whole, Christianity enjoyed something of a vogue among young, and particularly disaffected, intellectuals. Within such circles, Christianity benefited from its 'modern' and 'Western' image and also from the tendency for at least the protestant missionaries to engage in social work, in contrast to the largely 'other-worldly' attitudes which were characteristic of longer established religions in Japan, such as Buddhism in its various forms. An illustration of the somewhat radical tinge which Christianity had acquired in Japan at this time is provided by the case of the Shakai Minshutō. When the abortive attempt was made to launch this social democratic party in Tōkyō in 1901, all its founder members were Christians, with the notable exception of Kōtoku Shūsui. Furthermore, when Katayama Sen was prosecuted for publishing the party's manifesto, the journal *Rōdō Sekai* (Labour World) responded with the explanation that 'it will be the very first time in Japan that Socialism as well as Christianity will be tried before the law'.[4] As Kōtoku complained in 1903: 'In Japan socialism is regarded merely as a special product of Christianity, or as its appendage. People even go to the extreme of believing that "socialist" is synonymous with "Christian".'[5]

Under these circumstances, it is not difficult to understand the attraction which Christianity would have had for an impoverished young man with frustrated intellectual ambitions such as Hatta. There might even have been the subsidiary consideration that the mission schools could provide a cheaper education than was available elsewhere. Be that as it may, after his return to Japan, Hatta entered the Presbyterian missionary college Meiji Gakuin in Tōkyō in 1905. Among a number of lifelong friends whom Hatta made at Meiji Gakuin was a fellow student called Kagawa Toyohiko. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, Kagawa went on to play a prominent role in the early Kansai labour movement and he also became a leading evangelist in Japan. Hatta spent five years at Meiji Gakuin, taking first the general course (1905–6), then the higher course (1906–8) and finally the theology course (1908–10). The surviving college records show him to have been a

[4] *Rōdō Sekai* no. 82, 21 June 1901, p. 6.

[5] *Kōtoku Shūsui Zenshū* vol. 4 (1968), pp. 390–1.

brilliant student who was superior to most of his peers and an accomplished all-rounder.[6] Apart from academic studies, contemporary issues of *Shirogane Gakuhō,* the college magazine, reveal that he was an involved and active student who was a member of such societies as the *Seinenkai* (Young Men's Association) and the Literary Society and who spoke frequently at meetings.

For reasons which are not entirely clear, Hatta left Meiji Gakuin in 1910 before graduating. After a spell of evangelical work, he then entered Kōbe Shin Gakkō (Kōbe Theological School). The reason for this switch from one college to another might have been that Kagawa Toyohiko had also transferred to Kōbe and Hatta followed his friend there. On the other hand, another explanation which has been given is that Hatta clashed with one of his teachers at Meiji Gakuin, leading to his premature departure.[7] Whatever the reason, Hatta completed his theological studies at Kōbe Shin Gakkō and graduated from there in 1912 at the age of 25. Kōbe Shin Gakkō was a training college for Presbyterian clerics which had been established as recently as 1907 by the American Southern Presbyterian Church Mission. Most of its graduates obtained posts within the Presbyterian Church on leaving and Hatta was no exception. For the next twelve years of his life (1912–24) he was employed as a clergyman in a succession of provincial churches.

Provincial Clergyman

Hatta's career as a clergyman took him to a number of locations in the Chūbu (Central Honshū) and Chūgoku (Western Honshū) regions. Typically a protestant church in provincial Japan at this time would have been a small-scale enterprise. Active membership would have been no more than a few dozen and, although congregations were expected to strive for economic viability, many churches could not have survived without assistance, which ultimately derived from overseas sources. Although there would have been visiting preachers from time to time, a local pastor had to rely very much on his own resourcefulness to maintain the cohesion and commitment of his flock. For an intellectually alert person such as Hatta, life as a provincial clergyman must have been frustrating and lonely at times. On the other hand, with his congregation being no more than a drop in the ocean of the unconverted, there was unlimited scope for the kind of propaganda work and activity on which Hatta thrived. Without a doubt, during his years as a practising clergyman, Hatta developed many of the talents which he later employed with such telling effect in the anarchist movement. Intellectual self-reliance, the ability to win over and inspire an audience, and a passion for human interaction and committed social involvement were only some of the attributes which Hatta acquired during his years in the church and later took with him into the anarchist movement.

Hatta's earliest appointments were to churches in Gifu and Aichi Prefectures. It is difficult to put precise dates on his transfers from church to church (at least prior to his appointment as pastor of Yamaguchi Church in April 1919) but a letter from Hatta which was published in the Meiji Gakuin magazine in March 1915 does throw interesting light on his work in Gifu Prefecture.[8] At the time of writing Hatta has been in what is evidently a rural location in Gifu Prefecture for ten months and he calculates that during this time he has made twelve converts to the church.

[6] I am grateful to Ono Keiko of Meiji Gakuin University Library for kindly supplying copies of Hatta's marksheets and other material.

[7] *Nihon Kirisutokyō Rekishi Daijiten* (1988), p. 1120. The college register of Meiji Gakuin's Department of Theology unusually gives no reason for Hatta leaving.

[8] *Shirogane Gakuhō* no. 38, March 1915, p. 43.

He describes the district in which his church is located as renowned on two counts—firstly for its sword-making industry and secondly for its *geisha*. Evidently, the practice of consigning young girls to apprenticeship as *geisha* is so entrenched locally that, as he explains, even little girls of primary school age calmly announce that this is what the future holds for them. Hatta is struggling to change this outlook, but it must have been an uphill battle, given the crippling poverty affecting so many peasant families. Many peasant households of the time were regularly faced with heart-rending choices between losing their land for failing to pay taxes or selling their daughters into prostitution. Those households which lost their land were reduced to becoming tenant farmers, who were forced to surrender to the landlord a proportion of their output as rent in kind, which typically amounted to about half of the total crop. Consequently, household consumption among tenant farmers in this period was only about 55 per cent of even the miserable levels experienced by peasants who owned their own land. Hence the pressures to dispose of daughters as *geisha* were considerable.[9]

Another observation which Hatta makes in the same letter is that he regards the countryside as offering the most fertile soil for the growth of Christianity in Japan. A single convert in the countryside soon leads 10 others, writes Hatta, presumably due to the closely-knit web of human relations which exist in rural society. By implication, the individualism which is more characteristic of urban life means that converts have to be made one by one in the cities. This favourable evaluation of the countryside and its potential relative to the cities was another attitude which Hatta was later to take with him into the anarchist movement.

At some stage during these years Hatta married a young woman who was a graduate of Yokohama Kyōritsu Joshi Shin Gakkō (Yokohama Public Women's Theology School). Little is known about Mrs Hatta in this period beyond the fact that she impressed people as *jōhin* ('refined' or 'ladylike').[10] Since Yokohama Kyōritsu Joshi Shin Gakkō was, in effect, a training college for those intended to become the wives of protestant clergymen (Kagawa Toyohiko's wife, for example, was another graduate of this college), there is every likelihood that Hatta's was a conventional, arranged marriage, as were the overwhelming majority of marriages in those days. Mrs Hatta gave birth to two children in the years prior to 1924, a boy called Tetsurō and a girl who was given the Western-style name Yohana (Johanna). Beyond this, the only other observation that can be made about Hatta's relations with his wife is that they cannot have been entirely happy even at this stage of their marriage. As Mrs Hatta revealed in later years, Shūzō had a number of affairs with other women even during the period when he was a practising clergyman.[11]

Hatta was pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Yamaguchi from April 1919 until August 1920. This was evidently a crucial period in his life because it seems to have been at this time that his dissatisfaction with orthodox Christianity developed. It is reasonable to speculate that this was linked with the widespread discontent and mass struggles which occurred just before and during Hatta's tenure of the Yamaguchi post and with what he is likely to have seen as the inadequate response from the Christian churches. However, firm evidence of the strain to which his faith must have been subjected is hard to come by. All that is available is a frustratingly vague report from the clergyman who succeeded Hatta as pastor of the Yamaguchi Church. Hatta's successor was a man called Tamura Kensuke, who was pastor of the Yamaguchi Church from

[9] Macpherson (1987), p. 58.

[10] Interview with Makino Teru in Tōkyō on 18 June 1990. I am grateful to Kagawa Sumimoto for introducing me to Mrs Makino.

[11] Ibid.

September 1920 until September 1922. In the Synod Report for 1921, Tamura writes that he does not know the details of what occurred prior to his arrival in Yamaguchi, but he nevertheless refers to 'various distressful incidents' that took place in 1920 during Hatta's term of office.[12]

After Yamaguchi, Hatta moved to Hiroshima and what proved to be his last post as a clergyman. The four years Hatta spent in Hiroshima were to climax in the second major turning point in his life and we are therefore fortunate that there is more information available on his pastorship there than on all his other postings put together. Hatta's church in Hiroshima was then known as the Mokage Church.[13] It was a well established church, having been founded in 1892, and Hatta was its fifth pastor. Hiroshima City was an important port and prefectural capital and the prefecture to which it had given its name had one of the highest incidences of rice riots recorded in any prefecture during the hot summer of 1918. A labour movement started to emerge in the locality after the First World War, with various unions such as the Hiroshima Seishinkō Kumiai Hōyūkai (Hiroshima Needlemakers' Union Friendly Society) , the Hiroshima-Shi Insatsukō Shinyūkai (Hiroshima City Printworkers' Friendly Society) and the Hiroshima Rōdō Kōseikai (Hiroshima Labour Fairness Association) being formed from 1919 onwards.[14] The holding of local May Day rallies was another indication of the heightened consciousness of the workers. It was in this climate of increased working class assertiveness that Hatta arrived in Hiroshima on 23 August 1920.

The Mokage Church was of much the same size as the other churches where Hatta had worked. Church records show that in 1921, the year after Hatta's arrival, the average attendance at services was about forty.[15] Hatta preached regularly at these services, and prayer meetings and Sunday school were part of the normal weekly routine. In addition to religious meetings, Hatta also gave lectures on cultural subjects. On one or two occasions he persuaded his old friend Kagawa Toyohiko to travel from Kōbe to preach at the Mokage Church. Initially, after Hatta took up the Hiroshima post, all went well and the congregation of Mokage Church was enthusiastic about the eloquence of their new pastor. His skill as a speaker was compared to that of Uchimura Kanzō (1861–1930) and the previously mentioned Kagawa, who were the leading evangelists of their generations.

However, the recollections of a veteran member of the Mokage congregation show how Hatta's very eloquence became a problem for his new church: 'Pastor Hatta's sermons were superb, so much so that I thought it a shame that more people were not there to hear them. It was like the Bible talking in the spirit of pure socialism and one of my friends admired Pastor Hatta so much that he asked him to celebrate his marriage.'[16] The gospel as Hatta taught it proved popular with young people and a number of youths became regular attenders at Mokage Church services. But the older members of the congregation were disturbed, particularly when Hatta's outspokenness antagonised those with power and wealth in the neighbourhood. To quote the same source as previously: 'it was a period when everybody was taught that socialist thought was unpatriotic

[12] *Nihon Kirisuto Kyōkai Sanyō Chūkai Kiroku 1891–1942* (1990), p. 218. I am grateful to Furuya Haruo, Pastor of Hiroshima Church, for making available to me this source and that cited in note 15.

[13] I am grateful to Kanda Mikio for this information.

[14] Rōdō Undō no. 3, 1 January 1920, p. 18 and no. 5, 30 April 1920, p. 18.

[15] *Chi ni Mikuni o* (1982), p. 12.

[16] Ibid., p. 11.

or the work of the devil. When the Church put up a noticeboard announcing a series of "labour lectures", the Hiroshima newspapers all started to run headlines attacking Pastor Hatta.'[17]

By giving a series of 'labour lectures', announcing the formation of the Hiroshima Jiyū Rōdō Kumiai (Hiroshima Casual Workers' Union) and similar means, Hatta attempted to orient his church towards the ongoing struggles of workers and farmers against exploitation and oppression. Increasingly Hatta was thinking in terms of achieving paradise here on earth, rather than in the nebulous never-never land promised by conventional Christianity. He also came to realise that a project of social reconstruction as profound as this would entail abolition of both capitalism and the state. To put it another way, it became increasingly clear to Hatta that the achievement of a society which embodied the values which until now he had associated with Christianity was beyond the scope of conventional religion. Not only that, but such a society could not be achieved by reformist half-measures either. Gradually Hatta came to the view that there was only one political philosophy that was equal to the task of achieving such a total transformation of society's institutions and mores. This was anarchism. Step by step, Hatta was reaching the point of thinking of himself as an anarchist first and foremost, and only secondly as a Christian.

As indicated above, newspapers then were little different from newspapers now and the local papers responded to Hatta's undisguised sympathy for anarchism by attempted character assassination. It has to be said that Hatta's behaviour, and particularly his relations with women, undoubtedly made this easy for the newspapers. Among other sneers, they claimed that 'he is involved in a triangular relationship with a lady who was searching after the truth. He is a disgrace as someone purporting to show others the way.'[18] It is more than likely that the reports of this affair were accurate, although this does little to justify the moral posturing of the press. This was a period when a recognised symbol of worldly success was for a man to acquire a mistress and the newspapers were deafeningly silent about the 'triangular relationships' in which so many contemporary politicians and capitalists were involved. Nevertheless, the effect of such reports on Hatta's church can be imagined. Older members of the congregation were distressed and dropped away, so that increasingly the active membership of the church consisted of youngsters under Hatta's spell. By 1924 average attendance at services was down to thirty and there was a corresponding deterioration in the church's financial situation.

For the church establishment and the local dignitaries alike, the final straw was Hatta's response to Ōsugi's murder. With considerable bravery, and disregarding intimidation by the police, Hatta organised a memorial meeting for Ōsugi at his church. As a result, Hatta was ordered by both the Town Council and the Mission authorities to leave Hiroshima. By this stage Hatta had virtually ceased holding religious meetings and was devoting all his time and energy to anarchist propaganda.[19] Mrs Hatta was heard to pray, 'Please let him return to being a disciple of Christ', but Shūzō's response was: 'For myself. I am going to end my life as a propagandist for anarchism. If you disapprove of that, there is nothing for it but to split up.'[20] When the Mokage congregation joined the chorus demanding his resignation, there was no alternative but to leave Hiroshima. Abandoning his church, his family and all means of a secure livelihood, Hatta left for Tōkyō in September 1924 and threw himself into the vortex of the anarchist movement.

[17] Ibid., pp. 11–12.
[18] Ibid., p. 12.
[19] Noguchi (1931), p. 213.
[20] Ibid., p. 214.

Anarchist Propagandist

Life was not easy for a revolutionary anarchist in Japan in the 1920s. Quite apart from the continual threat of imprisonment and police violence, there was the problem of making a living. Even skilled workers, such as the many anarchist printworkers, had to contend with victimisation when they became known as militants and with bouts of unemployment, but for someone in Hatta's position life was even more insecure. Writing for the anarchist press and speaking at anarchist meetings made enormous demands on his time but provided no income. A certain amount of money could be earned by translating, but even here Hatta's commitment to the cause often got the better of his business sense. Kropotkin's *Ethics: Origin and Development, Modern Science and Anarchism* and *Anarchist Morality* (all published in 1928), Bakunin's *God and the State* (1930) and Charles Cide's *Les Colonies Communistes et Coopératives* (1933) might all have had a place on any anarchist's bookshelf, but they were unlikely to become bestsellers. Apart from the limited funds generated by translation work, there remained only sponging off acquaintances (Hatta's friendship with Kagawa was strained by a string of unrepaid loans and broken promises) and the practice of *ryaku. Ryaku* (☒) derived from the Japanese title of Kropotkin's *The Conquest of Bread (Pan no Ryakushu).* It is a character which literally means to capture or seize or plunder. Among the anarchists in prewar Japan it was jargon for the practice of extorting funds from the wealthy. One or more anarchists would pay a visit to a suitable capitalist and suggest that, if he wanted to sleep soundly, a contribution might not be such a bad idea. Faced with this sort of vague threat to person and property, many a capitalist swallowed his indignation and paid up. *Ryaku* was an unreliable source of income, and it required steady nerves and considerable audacity to pull it off, but many anarchists were forced to resort to it for want of any other means of filling the rice bowl.

When Hatta first moved to Tōkyō he stayed at the charitable 'settlement' run by Kagawa and, after several moves, he later took up residence in Setagaya-Ku, not far from Kagawa's house and church in Matsuzawa. In 1939 Kagawa published an autobiographical novel, under the title *Taking a Stone As My Pillow,* which covered the period 1923–6. The character Yagi Shūzō who appears in this novel is plainly modelled on Hatta, even down to being a renegade clergyman from Hiroshima who has abandoned his wife and children. Apart from throwing light on Hatta's perpetually complicated relations with women, the novel vividly describes his poverty and shabby appearance:

> At that time Yagi had put a cheap *kimono* over his *yukata* and was wearing an Ōshima *haori* which had once had a splashed pattern but was now faded and had holes here and there. With his face flushed by *saké* and a skin rash around his neck, he cut an incredibly sorry figure.[21]

Clearly, even making allowances for a degree of literary licence, Yagi Shūzō still represents a considerable comedown from the promising young clergyman of ten years earlier.

The few surviving photographs of Hatta, and his fellow anarchist Mochizuki Kei's (1886–1975) sketch of him, show a short, stout man with a moustache and features which are far from handsome and make one wonder why so many women obviously found him attractive. Hatta's relations with at least one of the women with whom he was involved also reveal a thoroughly

[21] *Kagawa Toyohiko Zenshū* vol. 19 (1963), p. 331. Kagawa claims in this novel that Yagi (i.e., Hatta) was a drug addict, but I have been able to find no independent confirmation of this.

reprehensible side to his character.[22] During his final years Hatta lived with Hirose Waka, who was the younger sister of the anarchist Hirose Kotarō, and by whom he had two further children. It is said that Hatta was often violent towards Waka, pulling her by her hair and attacking her even when she had their baby strapped to her back. Waka is described as not a pretty woman, but it seems that Hatta was morbidly jealous and suspected her of philandering. In his anarchist theorising Hatta often wrote that it was the 'creative violence of a minority' that would rouse the masses and precipitate the revolution. Whatever the merits of this strategy as a means of bringing about the revolution, it did not provide any justification for individual violence, particularly when this was directed at someone like Waka who was, by any standards, one of capitalism's victims and not one of its perpetrators. Living with Hatta, Waka could not have been other than miserably poor; after his death, she worked as a cleaning lady at the Setagaya-Ku Council Offices (*kuyakusho*). Whichever way one looks at it, Hatta's treatment of Waka was inexcusable and totally at variance with the very principles he expounded.

How was it that this down-at-heel, lapsed clergyman, who was overfond of *saké* and prone to violence, could have become such a forceful influence in the prewar anarchist movement? The answer lay partly in the calibre of Hatta's ideas, expressed in his theoretical writings, but also had much to do with his ability to convey passion and enthusiasm, both as a public speaker and in his everyday dealings with his comrades. Mochizuki Kei wrote that one would come across Hatta quietly dozing and smelling of *saké* but that, as soon as people gathered round him and a discussion started, he would become animated and full of passion.[23] Years after Hatta's death, the journal *Museifushugi Undō* (Anarchist Movement) recalled: 'He really loved to discuss and was a person fired with passion. You could say he had the atmosphere of a revolutionary about him, burning for the ideal of anarchism and always with young people gathered round him.'[24] In the same journal, Daidōji Saburō described how he once took Hatta on a propaganda trip to the poor farming village in Tōhoku (North-East Honshū) where he came from. Hatta's unsurpassed ability to talk to an audience of farmers for hours on end without losing their interest, and his capacity to move them to tears, fill them with anger, and redouble their enthusiasm for anarchist communism, are vividly conveyed in Daidōji's account, of which the following is an excerpt:

> We passed the 14 hours in the train talking about this and that, and the next day at about 11 a.m. we arrived at my village.
>
> It was mid-Autumn in that Tōhoku village and already there was a nip in the air. Two youths had come to meet us at the station. They told us that we would be put up in my parents' house and a comrade's house. I was surprised to hear that—young and old, men and women—there would be more than 50 people from the hamlet as an audience. I was amazed too at how much they had come on—saying that they didn't give a damn about the police and being full of fight.
>
> That night 60 people really did turn up. Young and old, male and female, they all turned out. Since the youngsters had organised a collection in the hamlet and made rice cakes (*mochi*) from the proceeds, it was decided that first we'd eat.

[22] The following information on Hatta's treatment of Hirose Waka derives from my interview with Makino Teru on 18 June 1990.

[23] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981), p. iv.

[24] *Museifushugi Undō*, November 1963. (Reproduced in Ibid., p. 315.)

> Among the comrades, there was a young man called Kikuchi who was good at drawing. Big drawings of Kropotkin, Makhno and others had been fixed to the front-facing sliding doors.
>
> On the evening of our arrival and the next evening too, from about 6 p.m. until midnight, Hatta talked for 5 or 6 hours at a stretch. Whether words like 'eloquently' or 'resonantly' adequately describe Hatta's delivery on those nights, I don't know, but let's just say that they were masterly speeches, with Hatta talking on and on. I don't remember what he talked about, but not even one person dozed off. The women were shedding tears as they listened. The comrades were worked up (*kinchō shi*) and an atmosphere like the eve of the revolution filled the room.
>
> I was scared by what on earth might happen if the police came marching in but, since it was a hamlet far removed from the police in the towns, it ended without incident. It was a wonderful reception they gave us in the houses of that hamlet and, with a merry song of victory from the people who had gathered to see us off ringing in our ears, we returned to Tōkyō.[25]

Hatta's outstanding talent as a public speaker is clear from this passage, but so too is the unforced enthusiasm of the farmers for the revolutionary creed of anarchist communism. No amount of eloquence on Hatta's part could have compensated if the anarchist communist critique of existing society and its vision of an alternative had not matched his audience's sense of grievance and their hopes for the future. Hence one can say that, for all his undoubted talent, an anarchist propagandist such as Hatta was merely expressing, albeit in a more systematic and articulate fashion than most were capable of doing, a social and political philosophy which flowed from ordinary people's experiences and aspirations.

Theoretician of Pure Anarchism

In addition to his reputation as a public speaker, Hatta came to be regarded by his comrades as 'the greatest theoretician of anarchist communism in Japan'.[26] A detailed examination of Hatta's theoretical writings will be left until Chapters 5 and 6, but here it is appropriate to indicate the objectives which lay behind this side of his activity. In particular, it is important to demonstrate that his theoretical output was in response to the twin enemies which he saw confronting anarchism—namely, capitalism and bolshevism.

Japan continued to develop as a capitalist and imperialist power throughout the interwar years. For many years, the textile industry led this development, with the number of cotton spindles in operation increasing from 2.4 million in 1914 to 6.7 million in 1929.[27] Consequently Japanese textiles were penetrating the world's markets and were posing a serious threat to Western manufacturers, such as the once unrivalled Lancashire cotton mills. Other industries as diverse as coal mining, iron and steel production, shipbuilding and machine construction were developing too, laying the basis for Japan's increasing military strength as well as its economic power. It would be tedious to recite the economic statistics for all these industries but, typically, between 1913

[25] Ibid., pp. 313–14.
[26] Ibid., p. 309.
[27] Allen (1972), p. 118.

and 1929 coal production increased from 21.3 to 34.3 million tonnes and the output of finished steel rose from 255,000 to 2.0 million tonnes.[28]

Linked with Japan's rise as the dominant economic power in East Asia, step-by-step it acquired an empire. In 1910 Korea was added to Taiwan as another colonial territory, and, by judiciously siding with the 'right' side in the First World War, Japan took over a string of formerly German-held islands in the North Pacific. Parallel to this acquisition of a formal empire, there was a continual process under way of informal economic and military penetration of China, particularly of its North-Eastern region of Manchuria, which was rich in many of the raw materials needed by Japanese industry. Eventually Manchuria was to be detached from China by the creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932. Rivalry on the world's markets and the ambition to secure dependable supplies of raw materials inevitably led to increasing tension between Japan and other imperialist powers in the years after the First World War. It is not only the benefit of hindsight that allows one to recognise the roots of the Second World War here. Already in 1927, when Japanese troops had been dispatched to China, *Kokushoku Seinen* (Black Youth) had argued that what was happening in the Far East was 'preparation for the Second World War'.[29] Hatta was as aware as any of his comrades that war and economic crisis were inherent features of capitalism and he wrote in apocalyptic terms about the destruction and misery that would follow if existing society were allowed to proceed unchecked.[30] For Hatta, capitalism meant the division of labour, centralised power, national aggrandizement, and the expansion of production at the expense of the people's consumption. These were the reasons why he fought against capitalism with such passionate intensity.

Not a few of capitalism's opponents in Japan during this period believed that opposition to capitalist society automatically entailed supporting bolshevik Russia. Hatta would have none of this. For him, capitalism and bolshevism were cut from the same cloth and displayed essentially the same characteristics. As a consequence of bolshevik attempts to industrialise, the division of labour was proceeding apace in Russia and destroying patterns of communal living that had survived for centuries among the peasants. In order to enforce this, power was being concentrated more and more in the hands of a despotic state and a tyrannical party. The supposedly international creed of bolshevik-style 'communism' provided an ideological gloss for these processes but was, in fact, merely a vehicle for advancing Russia's national interests. Similarly, once the succession of bolshevik economic policies and plans were stripped of the propaganda which accompanied them, it could be seen that they unfailingly gave precedence to raising production rather than improving the people's livelihood. All these features of bolshevism meant that it was no more than a variation on the capitalist theme and in no way an alternative to capitalism.[31]

Hatta and similarly minded anarchists were determined to pose a distinctively anarchist communist challenge to any system that incorporated state control and capital/wage labour relations, no matter whether it described itself as capitalist or bolshevik. However, as they saw it, the problem was not only for anarchism to confront external enemies, such as capitalism and bolshevism, but also to cleanse the anarchists' own ranks of any taint of capitalist or bolshevik influence. It was this determination which lay behind their struggle for 'pure anarchism'. Among the an-

[28] Ibid., p. 225.

[29] *Kokushoku Seinen* no. 10, 5 July 1927, p. 4.

[30] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981), p. 136.

[31] For Hatta's criticisms of bolshevism, see such articles as 'Rōnō Kokka to Nōkō Jiyūshi' and 'Sobietoshugisha o Hōmure' in Ibid., pp. 152–5 and 166–8 respectively.

archists were some who wished to meet the bolsheviks' claims to be exponents of 'scientific socialism' by setting anarchism on a more self-consciously scientific footing.[32] Similarly, faced with competition from bolsheviks employing organisational methods based on so-called 'democratic centralism', there were anarchists who stressed the need to develop their own theory and practice of organisation. Many of these anarchists were anarchist syndicalists, who naturally favoured an organisational structure of industrial unions pursuing the class struggle.[33] Another current of anarchists consisted of those who reacted to the appalling poverty afflicting many farmers by concluding that the fundamental conflict within society lay between the cities and the countryside. According to these anarchists, all city dwellers benefited parasitically from the flow of wealth out of the villages, so that even the urban workers shared in the exploitation of the farmers.[34] These arguments were given added weight by the fact that peasants and tenant farmers constituted half of the entire workforce during this period, while under twenty per cent of the population lived in cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants.[35]

Hatta met these challenges emanating from different anarchist currents head on. Science, he argued, was not a neutral technique which could be employed without cost to everyone's (including anarchists') advantage. For him, science was a form of knowledge which had grown up with capitalism and to use it meant to locate oneself on the capitalist terrain of authority, centrally imposed norms, the division of labour and technologically assisted exploitation.[36] On the question of organisation, Hatta insisted that anarchists had no need to devise an artificial organisational theory and practice, because the entirely natural process of free association by groups united in a common purpose, which was widely practised among animals and supposedly 'primitive' peoples, yielded better results than any form of 'artificial organisation', including 'democratic centralism'.[37] As for anarchist syndicalism, Hatta saw a syndicalist-style labour movement, organised industry by industry, as a mirror image of the division of labour inherent within capitalism. This meant that it could not provide a genuine alternative to capitalism, but was doomed to reproduce the structures of hierarchical power and economic inequality which, according to Hatta, always accompany the division of labour.[38] With regard to the claim that the fundamental social division was between the urban centres and the countryside, Hatta agreed that the cities exploited the farming villages. However, he saw this as merely one facet of the overall situation which typifies capitalism, where everyone is an actual or potential exploiter of everyone else. Consequently, he argued that the solution to this situation of generalised antagonism lay not in the farmers pursuing a class struggle against the city folk, but in farmers and workers uniting to dissolve all structures of exploitation, including the cities, since these functioned as centres of industry, power and wealth.[39]

In summary, what Hatta and the other pure anarchists sought to achieve was a decentralised society of largely self-supporting communes engaged in both agriculture and small-scale industry. Hatta believed that a society organised in this fashion could avoid the division of labour and

[32] Ibid., p. 179.
[33] Ibid. (1983), pp. 1–16, 23–35.
[34] Ibid. (1981), pp. 184–8.
[35] Allen (1972), pp. 209–10.
[36] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981) pp. 8–22.
[37] Ibid., pp. 59–60.
[38] Ibid. (1983), pp. 1–16, 23–35.
[39] Ibid. (1981), pp. 184–8.

the unequal distribution of power. Hence it would be free of any incipient structures that could eventually mature into a new apparatus of state control. Such a society's rhythms of production would flow from decisions on the levels of consumption they wished to enjoy taken by the people in their communes. Consumption would thus determine production, rather than being subordinated to the priority of expanding production, as occurs in any system based on capital accumulation and state aggrandizement. Since this anarchist communist society represented a fundamental break with all aspects of capitalism, Hatta and his comrades believed that it could not grow out of any of the internal processes of capitalism, such as workers engaging in the class struggle for improved wages and working conditions. Just as anarchist communism transcended the norms of capitalism, so the revolution to bring it about would have to transcend the norms of political activity within capitalism, including parliamentary elections and class struggle. What was required was a process of self-liberation carried out by the 'propertyless masses' (*musan taishū*). For Hatta, these 'propertyless masses' encompassed a far wider range of people than the wage-earning working class and at their core stood the tenant farmers.

The foregoing paragraphs indicate the main areas over which Hatta's theoretical investigations ranged. As was mentioned earlier, detailed examination of his theoretical writings will be left until Chapters 5 and 6. However, what has been demonstrated here is that the issues which concerned him were all linked to developments within Japanese and world capitalism, and to interpretations of those developments by other anarchists with whom he disagreed. Hence one can say that, during his anarchist years, Hatta was that rare combination of a man of action and a man of thought. As Komatsu Ryūji has described him:

> Hatta was no mere educator of the masses or activist. Still less was he a mere researcher or philosopher. His assertions and ideas all came about within the movement or in connection with the movement. Furthermore, he devoted all his energy not merely to shouting at those around him, but to taking responsibility for his own assertions and trying to embody them in his own life and activity. In that sense, Hatta was without doubt a thinker.[40]

Decline and Death

Hatta's last contribution to the anarchist press was an article on 'Questions of the Day' which was published in January 1932. By this stage, repression of the anarchists was becoming ever more intense, their movement was in decline, and Hatta himself was at a low ebb. Poverty and alcoholism had taken their toll and his health was by now seriously undermined. He was eventually to die on 30 January 1934. An obituary notice which appeared in the *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* (Libertarian Federation Newspaper) explained that he had been ill for a long time but had been unable to afford medical attention.[41]

It is tragic that in the last two years of his life Hatta's acumen as a theoretician of anarchist communism was on the wane. The ideas expressed in the article 'Questions of the Day' are so at variance with his earlier writings that some commentators have even questioned whether it really was written by Hatta.[42] However, I see no reason to doubt its authenticity and I am

[40] Ibid., p. 301.
[41] *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* no. 89, 10 February 1934, p. 3.
[42] Mihara Yōko, '1930 Nendai no Anakizumu Rōdō Undō' part I, *Rodōshi Kenkyū* no. 3, 1986, p. 91.

more inclined to explain the contradictions which exist between it and Hatta's earlier writings by reference to his political desperation. It was already clear by 1932 that the state's vice was tightening on the anarchists and, in a desperate bid to ensure their survival, Hatta proposed that they integrate themselves into popular movements, including the labour movement. A key passage in his article asserted:

> Now is the era of capitalism. Even to get on a tram one needs money. Everything boils down to commercial transactions. The masses are all engaged in commercial transactions. Hence we too should undertake commercial transactions and enter into the midst of the people, enter into their midst via commercial transactions. As one particular commercial transaction, there is the labour movement. We should establish close contact with the people and enter into their midst via those commercial transactions which constitute the labour movement.[43]

Hatta's precise meaning here is open to interpretation, but certainly his readiness to countenance 'commercial transactions' was a far cry from his earlier unambiguous condemnation of the monetary economy and all that it implies. Whereas previously Hatta had denounced the daily struggle over wages and working conditions as utopian, in the sense that it involved pursuing aspirations for economic security and human dignity which the very workings of capitalism make unrealisable, he was now apparently urging the pure anarchists to enter the fray and make the labour movement's concerns their own. Hatta now seemed to be encouraging anarchists to base their activity on conflicts occurring within capitalism rather than on the struggle against capitalism, which was perceptibly dwindling by 1932.

In addition, there is evidence that Hatta reverted to Christianity at the very end of his life. One of the last articles he wrote for any outlet was a piece entitled 'Confession' which was published in July 1932 in the journal of the Iesu no Yūkai (Society of the Friends of Jesus). Although Hatta was still critical of conventional Christianity in that article, he nevertheless wrote that 'society is waiting for the reality of love to emerge from the hands of Christians'.[44] Also, when I interviewed veteran members of the Matsuzawa Church in Tōkyō in 1990, they recalled that Hatta attended their church in the period immediately before his death. As 87-year-old Makino Teru put it: 'In his last days, he quietened down. After the violence subsided, he naturally returned to the church.'[45]

Such remarks may explain why few, if any, of Hatta's former comrades attended his funeral in 1934.[46] His obituary notice in the *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun,* which was referred to earlier, was a mere five lines in length and perhaps it is significant that Hatta was described there as a 'former anarchist polemicist'.[47] Hatta's old friend, Kagawa Toyohiko, presided at his funeral in Matsuzawa Church and the former Mrs Hatta took the role of wife, since Hirose Waka was in confinement with her second child.[48] Where Hatta's remains were interred is not known. If his ashes were taken back to his family grave in Tsu, all trace has disappeared, since Tsu was reduced to ruins

[43] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981), p. 149.

[44] *Hi no Hashira* no. 52, 10 July 1932, p. 6.

[45] Interview, 18 June 1990.

[46] Makino Teru's recollection was that none of Hatta's anarchist comrades attended his funeral. On the other hand, Ōshima Eizaburō has claimed that the anarchist Kondō Kenji was present (*Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* [1981] p. 342).

[47] *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* no. 89, 10 February 1934, p. 3.

[48] Interview, 18 June 1990.

by successive raids by American bombers in the closing months of the Second World War, a war which anarchists like Hatta had vainly struggled to prevent. People by the name of Hatta still live in Tsu, but all memories of Shūzō have long since evaporated. In 1990 one household dimly recalled thal their family originated from the Wakebe Machi district, but the fact that one of their relatives had been 'the greatest theoretician of anarchist communism in Japan' evoked little interest from a generation for whom anarchist communism is as much of a mystery as is the name Hatta Shūzō.[49]

[49] I am grateful to Midorikawa Taeko, who spent the afternoon of 17 May 1990 contacting all those named Hatta in the Tsu telephone directory.

4. Organisational Confrontation: Pure Anarchists versus Syndicalists 1926–31

Kokuren

On 1 December 1925 an event took place which had no direct connection with anarchism but which provided the stimulus for the first ever national federation of anarchist groups. Several months earlier, in March 1925, the Diet had passed a law widening the electorate to all males aged 25 or over. In response to this, a broad range of leftists entered into negotiations in order to form a party which could attract the votes of the newly enfranchised farmers and workers. This was the Nōmin Rōdōtō (Farmer-Labour Party) but, when it held its founding conference in Tokyo on 1 December 1925, the anarchists turned out in force to confront what they saw as yet another bunch of political opportunists who were out to dupe the farmers and workers. Activists from many different anarchist groups gate-crashed the conference and disrupted it by distributing leaflets to the cry of 'Down with the political movement!'[1] The Nōmin Rōdōtō was merely a transient organisation, since the state issued a banning order within thirty minutes of the announcement of its inauguration, but the anarchists were sufficiently encouraged by the effectiveness of their joint intervention on 1 December 1925 to initiate discussions aimed at forming a broadly based federation of their own. The federation which emerged from these discussions some two months later was the Kokushoku Seinen Renmei (Black Youth League, or Kokuren for short).

Despite its name, Kokuren was not an exclusively youth organisation. It drew its support from numerous anarchist groups and also from such strongholds of the anarchist union movement as the Tōkyō Printworkers' Union. It is interesting to note that among the two dozen constituent groups which initially comprised Kokuren was one, known as the Shakai Seiri Kenkyū Kai (Social Physiology Research Association) which had been formed by Hatta Shūzō and his comrades.[2] A public meeting to announce the formation of Kokuren was held in Tōkyō on 31 January 1926 and attracted an audience of more than seven hundred. The principal issues for discussion at this meeting were itemised in the following six slogans:

> The emancipation of the workers must be carried out by the workers themselves!
> We insist on libertarian federation (*jiyū rengōshugi*)!
> Destroy the political movement!
> Reject the proletarian party movement!
> Get rid of professional activists!
> Down with all oppressive laws and ordinances![3]

[1] Hagiwara (1969), p. 173.

[2] A list of affiliating groups appeared in *Kokushoku Seinen* no. 1, 5 April 1926, p. 5. The expansion of this list in later issues is testimony to the subsequent growth of Kokuren.

[3] Ibid., p. 8.

In anticipation of interference from the police, a roster of more than forty speakers had been drawn up so that they could replace one another in continuous succession whenever the police ordered a speaker to stop. Sure enough, the meeting proceeded in this fashion but, as it did, the anarchists' indignation gradually rose until it reached boiling point. Eventually the meeting broke up amid cries of 'Out on the streets!' Black flags were unfurled and the anarchists poured out of the meeting and headed for the Ginza, the most fashionable thoroughfare in Tokyo where many of the shops specialised in luxury goods for the rich. In the running street battles which ensued dozens of shop windows were smashed and many well-to-do passers-by took to their heels in terror. More than thirty anarchists were arrested and seven were subsequently imprisoned.[4]

When Kokuren was first formed its main strength was in the Kantō (Eastern Honshū) region, but before long regional federations had been organised in most other areas of Japan and even in such Japanese colonies as Taiwan and Korea. Although it is difficult to estimate its size with any degree of confidence, it was a strong organisation by anarchist standards and extremely active. From April 1926 it started to publish *Kokushoku Seinen* (Black Youth) and this continued to appear until February 1931, despite the authorities repeatedly banning its sale. The early issues of *Kokushoku Seinen* reveal Kokuren as a grouping of class-struggle anarchists. For example, an article in the second issue reported a labour dispute involving several hundred workers which had broken out at a branch of the Keisei Tram Company in March 1926. The subtitle of this article referred to 'Black Action Which Terrified the Watchdogs' and this conveys an idea of the role which Kokuren militants regularly assumed in such disputes. Practical support was given to the Keisei tramworkers, both in the form of leafleting and by physically confronting the police. The article explained that Kokuren had 'resolved from a class standpoint to give all-out support' to the workers. Kokuren members were described as having backed the dispute 'with the utmost bravery for the benefit of the class', leading to twenty of them being arrested.[5]

The readiness of Kokuren militants to battle with the police also flowed from their perception of themselves as a revolutionary minority whose responsibility it was to precipitate the revolution. Another article in the same issue of *Kokushoku Seinen* throws light on this area of Kokuren's political philosophy. This article was entitled 'The Strength to Create a Historical Turning Point' and its purpose was to refute what it perceived as the Marxist notion of historical inevitability. It asserted that 'just as we cannot dream about our day coming tomorrow, so we cannot wait for the day when the majority of our brothers will consciously awake'. The article took the view that it was up to the anarchists to seize the initiative and create the conditions for social transformation, since 'the actions that will realise this and create this opportunity are inevitably the mission of the revolutionary minority'.[6]

Kokuren's perception of its role as an activist minority initially reinforced its commitment to class struggle. Both views acted in the early stages of Kokuren' s existence to induce its militants to involve themselves in labour disputes and to confront the police with scant regard for their own safety. Other notable disputes in which Kokuren members became actively involved were those by 600 workers at Hitachi's Kameido Factory in September/October 1926 and at the Japan Musical Instruments Company in Hamamatsu from April until August 1926. In the Hitachi strike, Kokuren militants issued leaflets threatening the capitalists and, in order to give

[4] Ibid. and Kondō (1969), p. 65.

[5] *Kokushoku Seinen* no. 2, 5 May 1926, p. 8.

[6] Ibid., p. 2.

substance to their words, they firebombed the mansion belonging to the company president, Kuhara Fusanosuke. Arising out of this incident, six members of Kokuren were imprisoned for arson and riot.[7] The Japan Musical Instruments Company strike was an epic confrontation by more than 1,200 workers, who showed enormous resilience throughout 105 days, an amazing period over which to sustain a strike in the conditions prevailing in prewar Japan. Although the bolshevik-led Hyōgikai union federation made a major commitment to this strike, Hyōgikai's involvement should not be allowed to obscure the fact that Kokuren also gave active support to the Hamamatsu workers. Indeed, the point is worth making that in this period many rank-and-file Hyōgikai members were inclined to anarchism, despite their leaders' alignment with the Communist Party.[8]

Anarchist syndicalist ideas were evident among Kokuren members during the early days of its existence. As an article on 'Black Action and Labour Unions', which again appeared in the second issue of *Kokushoku Seinen,* put it: 'we believe that the means of revolution in Japan have to be collective action centred on the labour unions'.[9] Such views did not go unchallenged, however, and a further strand in Kokuren's political philosophy that was equally evident in the early issues of *Kokushoku Seinen* was hostility to urbanisation. For example, an article in issue number 4 declared that 'the farmers are the source of civilisation'[10] and another article, entitled 'Revolt Against the City', in the third issue of the journal, discussed in some detail the parts to be played by farmers and urban workers in the revolutionary process. As far as the writer of this unsigned article was concerned, the cities were simply centres of overwork for the workers and of superfluous production of unnecessary goods for the benefit of the capitalists. All necessary production of truly useful goods was rooted in the land. The cities were seen as having an exploitative relationship with the countryside, which meant that:

> all people who live in the cities are undoubtedly exploiting the villages. That's even the case for the workers. However, the city workers certainly are not exploiting on their own initiative, nor are they satisfied with this state of affairs.[11]

The same article recognised that most urban workers originated from the farming villages, economic necessity having driven them to work in the factories.

> Hence, most city workers are essentially people who have the ability 'to produce in order to satisfy everyone's needs'. If they converted their industrial skills from 'making motor cars' to 'making spades', they could sufficiently participate in true 'production in order to satisfy everyone's needs'.[12]

However, it was maintained that such a fundamental reorientation of production could not take place within the framework of existing society. For this to occur, the cities would have to be destroyed and those within them who exercised authority over the rest of society would have to be stripped of their power. In contrast to anarchist syndicalism's aim of taking over the urban

[7] *Nihon Museifushugi Undō Shi* (1970), p. 54.
[8] Enishi (1974), pp. 4–5.
[9] *Kokushoku Seinen* no. 2, 5 May 1926, p. 3.
[10] Ibid. no. 4, 5 July 1926, p. 1.
[11] Ibid. no. 3, 5 June 1926, p. 1.
[12] Ibid.

industries, this article asserted that it is only rulers and exploiters who need cities, not those who live by their own efforts. The alternative strategy which it therefore recommended was for the 'city workers and village workers' to join forces. The article made clear that, for this to take place, the urban workers would have to abandon the cities to the capitalists and other parasites and take their skills back to the countryside.[13]

Clearly there were tensions between the various theoretical and strategical orientations which different members of Kokuren adopted. As time went by, anarchist syndicalism and the theory of the class struggle came in for increasingly forthright criticism from a majority of Kokuren members. Conversely, the penchant for violent struggle by an activist minority and ideological rejection of the cities became entrenched characteristics of those who remained in Kokuren's ranks. Hatta Shūzō's theories exerted a considerable influence among Kokuren members and played no small part in determining which of the various strands within Kokuren's initial *mélange* of theories would prevail. In particular, his extended article 'An Investigation into Syndicalism', which was serialised in *Kokushoku Seinen* between September and November 1927, was a powerful attack on anarchist syndicalism and included a section entitled 'A Criticism of the Theory of the Class Struggle'.[14] It was due to the influence exerted on Kokuren members by articles such as this that, within a short time of its formation, Kokuren became a bastion of pure anarchism within the wider anarchist movement.

Later issues of *Kokushoku Seinen* contained many articles which strongly affirmed anarchist communism and stressed its distinctive character relative to other currents of anarchism. One particularly forceful statement to this effect appeared in the Esperanto column of issue number 22, where the distinction between anarchist syndicalism and anarchist communism was stressed for the benefit of overseas readers. In part, this article read:

> The anarchist movement is progressing a great deal in Japan at the present time. In other countries we find an anarchist movement which links up with the syndicalists. But in this country we do not approve of them, driving them away just as we do the bolsheviks. We are even against anarchist syndicalism and we adhere to anarchist communism.[15]

Many Kokuren militants were active within the Zenkoku Rōdō Kumiai Jiyū Rengōkai (All-Japan Libertarian Federation of Labour Unions, generally abbreviated to Zenkoku Jiren) after that organisation was formed in May 1926. The relationship between Kokuren and Zenkoku Jiren has sometimes been likened to that between the Federación Anarquista Ibérica (FAI) and the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) in Spain.[16] Yet, although the drawing of such parallels may help to convey to those outside Japan Kokuren's role as an inner core of battle-hardened militants within the wider ranks of Zenkoku Jiren, it should not be allowed to obscure

[13] Ibid. Writing in 1927 on the anarchist movement after the Great Kantō Earthquake, Furukawa Tokio argued that the Japanese anarchists 'constantly warned about the tendency for the labour unions to compromise and to regard themselves as almighty (*bannōshugiteki*). They pointed out that the very existence of the cities makes centralised power necessary. They emphasised that the movement of the city workers should be a movement which rejects the capitalist system, the collectivist system. Instead it should be a movement for constructing a libertarian federation system of decentralised local production. And *Kokushoku Seinen* was the one which devoted the most energy to this.' (Nihon Museifushugi Undō Shi</em [1970], p. 55.)

[14] *Kokushoku Seinen* no. 13, 5 October 1927, p. 2.

[15] Ibid. no. 22, 10 December 1929, p. 1.

[16] Le Libertaire Group (1979), p. 159.

the major differences in theoretical orientation that distinguished Kokuren from the FAI. More will be said about Kokuren below but, in order to grasp the full extent of the shakeout between pure anarchists and anarchist syndicalists which occurred in Japan in the late 1920s, we now need to shift the focus of our attention to Zenkoku Jiren.

Zenkoku Jiren

The founding conference of Zenkoku Jiren took place on 24 May 1926. The conference was held in the Asakusa district in Tōkyō and the meeting place was kept secret even from the delegates until the day before to prevent the authorities from banning the conference. Some 400 delegates attended, representing 25 unions with a combined membership of 8,372 workers. It is worth listing the participating unions, since this conveys the geographical spread of the anarchist union movement and the range of industries involved, even if absolute numbers were small due to the limited size of the working class in this period.

> Kantō (Eastern Honshū) Libertarian Federation of Labour Unions
> Kantō Casual Workers' Union Federation, Tōkyō Printworkers' Union, Tōkyō Newspaper Workers' League, Yokohama Printworkers' Union, Machine Workers' Union, Tōkyō Confectionery Workers' Union, Jōmō Printworkers' Union Sanzan Society, Shizuoka Amalgamated Workers' Union, Shizuoka Newspaper Workers' League. Saitama Tenant Farmers' Union
>
> Kansai (Ōsaka-Kyōto-Kōbe Region) Libertarian Federation of Labour Unions
> Kōbe Casual Workers' Union, Kyōto Printworkers' Union, Ōsaka Machine Workers' Union, Osaka Printworkers' Union
>
> Chūgoku (Western Honshū) Libertarian Federation of Labour Unions
> Okayama Genuine Workers' Union, Okayama Machine Workers' Union, Okayama Spinning Workers' Union, Okayama Rubber Workers' Union
>
> Hiroshima Libertarian Federation of Labour Unions
> Hiroshima Casual Workers' Union, Hiroshima Rubber Workers' Union, Hiroshima Genuine Workers' Union, Kure Casual Workers' Union, Hiroshima Printworkers' Union
>
> Hokkaidō (Northern Japan)
> Hakodate Printworkers' Union, Sapporo Printworkers' Union[17]

A number of resolutions on policy were adopted at this conference, as well as a four-point programme. Among the policy decisions, there was a declaration of total opposition to all political parties and to any unions which had affiliations with political parties. Indeed, with regard to relations with other unions. Zenkoku Jiren committed itself to a policy of breaking up the meetings of those it considered hostile to working class interests. Conscious that the majority of workers were still unorganised, Zenkoku Jiren announced its intention to campaign among such workers so as to convince them of the need to form libertarian union federations. The problem of unemployment was addressed by calling for the introduction of a number of reforms,

[17] Komatsu (1971–2), p. 82.

such as the establishment of the eight-hour day and the adoption of measures for dealing with seasonal unemployment among casual labourers. Other decisions were concerned with establishing industry-by-industry organisation, persuading sympathetic but as yet unaffiliated unions to join Zenkoku Jiren, abolishing all oppressive laws and ordinances. and promoting a network of Far-Eastern libertarian labour unions.[18]

The programme which the conference adopted read as follows:

> We take the class struggle as the basis for the movement to liberate the workers and tenant farmers.
> We reject all political movements and insist on economic action alone.
> We advocate libertarian federation organised industry by industry and we reject centralised authoritarianism.
> We oppose imperialist aggression and advocate the international solidarity of the working class.[19]

The influence of the classic formulation of syndicalist principles, the CGT's Charter of Amiens (1906), on Zenkoku Jiren's programme is evident both in the latter's stated commitment to class struggle and in its rejection of all political movements. Just as Zenkoku Jiren's programme declared that 'we take the class struggle as the basis for the movement to liberate the workers and tenant farmers', so the Charter of Amiens had proclaimed:

> The Congress considers that this declaration is a recognition of the class struggle which, on the economic terrain, sets the workers in revolt against all forms of exploitation and oppression, both material and moral, which are instigated by the capitalist class against the working class.[20]

Similarly, Zenkoku Jiren 's affirmation that 'we reject all political movements and insist on economic action alone' mirrored the Charter of Amiens' declaration that 'the CGT groups, outside of all political schools, all those workers who are conscious of the struggle leading to the disappearance of wage-earning and employment'.[21]

Zenkoku Jiren's programme was supplemented by an agreed set of rules, the third clause of which was the most significant. This clause emphasised that, providing there was no conflict with the programme, unions which affiliated to Zenkoku Jiren were independent and autonomous as far as their actions and the management of their own affairs were concerned.[22] Such freedom of action was clearly attractive to many unions, since Zenkoku Jiren grew rapidly in the period immediately after its formation, with numerous unions affiliating to it. Notable among these affiliating organisations were the Hitachi Employees' Union, the Korean Casual Workers' Union and unions in regions where initially Zenkoku Jiren had not been implanted, such as Niigata and Asahikawa. Membership was expanded in the Tōkyō newspaper industry, the Tōkyō Gas Workers' Union affiliated, and Zenkoku Jiren established a presence at various big factories and heavy industrial centres. There was also a rationalisation of union structure along industrial

[18] *Jiyū Rengō* no. 1, 5 June 1926, pp. 6–7.
[19] Ibid., p. 7.
[20] Dubief (1969), p. 95.
[21] Ibid.
[22] *Jiyū Rengō* no. 2, 5 July 1926, p. 4.

union lines, with the formation of a national printworkers' federation, a national metalworkers' federation and So on. The overall effect of these developments was that it was not long before Zenkoku Jiren claimed more than 15,000 members.[23]

Zenkoku Jiren started to issue a journal, called *Jiyū Rengō* (Libertarian Federation), from 5 June 1926. The same range of views on questions of theory and strategy that was evident in *Kokushoku Seinen* was also found in the columns of *Jiyū Rengō*. Syndicalism was well represented in the early issues of the journal. For example, in issue number 2 there was an article on the French syndicalist Fernand Pelloutier, which described him as 'the father of the labour movement' at the same time that it talked about 'we young anarchist syndicalists of Japan'.[24] Similarly, in the joint issue of numbers 9 and 10, there was a report on the formation in France of the CGTSR (SR = *Syndicaliste Révolutionnaire*).[25]

On the other hand, an article by a Tōkyō printworker in issue number 7, entitled 'Let's Abandon the Cities', was against industrial concentration in urban centres. After claiming that the land and its produce are the basis of life, the article went on to look at the relationship between those who work in the cities and those who work on the land. It argued that, even though the city workers and 'the village workers, in other words the tenant farmers', are both proletarians, the life of the latter is far harder and more miserable than the former: 'At present the city workers are exploited by their employers but, all the same, they benefit from some share in the exploitation of the villages by the cities.' The article recognised that urban workers have to fight against the bosses who exploit them, but it insisted that they should also oppose the continued existence of the cities in any shape or form, because inevitably cities stand in an exploitative relationship with the villages. The urban workers were urged to adopt such an attitude not solely for altruistic reasons, but also because it was in their own interests to do so. The argument proceeded from the observation that the cities grew fat at the expense of the villages, allowing some crumbs from this exploitation to fall to the urban workers. Since continuing exploitation of the rural areas was progressively impoverishing them, however, the urban workers' share in the diminishing . surplus that could be extracted from an increasingly destitute countryside was bound to dwindle. Hence the logic of the present economic system was that both tenant farmers and urban workers faced increasing hardship, which gave them a common interest in revolutionary change. It is true that the conclusion which the article reached was that the tenant farmers and the urban workers should stand shoulder to shoulder. Nevertheless, it was striking that in a city-based union journal, such as *Jiyū Rengō*, the point was made that it is the former who occupy a crucial position in the struggle for human liberation. This view was taken because not only were the tenant farmers deemed to be forced into resisting their immediate exploiters, the landlords, but also their position within society led them to confront the cities.[26]

During the first eighteen months of its existence, the unions federated to Zenkoku Jiren were involved in numerous disputes. The strike at Hitachi's factory in Kameido in September/October 1926 has already been mentioned in connection with the firebombing of the company president's mansion by Kokuren militants. The union at Kameido was the Hitachi Employees' Union, which had been organised in June 1926 and had promptly affiliated to Zenkoku Jiren. This dispute was

[23] Komatsu (1971–2), p. 84 and Enishi (1974), p. 5.
[24] *Jiyū Rengō* no. 2, 5 July 1926, p. 3.
[25] Ibid. nos. 9/10, 5 March 1927, p. 3.
[26] Ibid. no. 7, 5 December 1926, p. 3.

prominently reported in the columns of *Jiyū Rengō*.[27] There were also many disputes involving printworkers. A detailed analysis of those printworkers' disputes which had flared up in 1926 appeared in *Jiyū Rengō* in September 1927. According to the figures given there, in 1926 there had been seventy disputes involving the All-Japan Printworkers' Federation.[28] This high level of disputes continued into 1927. Articles in the July and October 1927 issues of *Jiyū Rengō* stated that the number of disputes that had occurred in Tokyo printing works in May and June 1927 was probably the highest in any two-month period since the formation of the Tokyo Printworkers' Union and that there had been thirty-six disputes involving the All-Japan Printworkers' Federation during the first half of 1927.[29] In addition, there were articles in various issues of *Jiyū Rengō* which discussed the correct tactics to be employed in labour disputes and which invariably argued strongly against centralised leadership and decision-making.[30]

Zenkoku Jiren was also involved in a number of campaigns, often in association with Kokuren. It campaigned vigorously against the attempt by the printing companies to introduce 'workers' record books' (*shokkō techō*) into the industry. Since these were designed to record information on a worker's skills, productivity, wages, behaviour, length of service, reasons for leaving jobs, etc., they were intended to serve as a means of controlling and disciplining the workforce, which accounted for Zenkoku Jiren's implacable opposition to their introduction.[31] On 23 August 1927 the anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were executed in the USA and prior to their deaths Zenkoku Jiren and Kokuren mounted a passionate campaign for their release, which included public meetings and demonstrations. Both federations also launched another joint campaign in the same year against Japan's armed intervention in China. This was in response to Prime Minister Tanaka dispatching 2,000 troops to Shantung Province in May 1927, in a move designed to block Chiang Kai Shek's northern expedition, which was considered to be detrimental to the interests of Japanese imperialism.

The line between Kokuren and Zenkoku Jiren was often blurred, since the same individual was often a member of both federations, but Kokuren's role as a more theoretically rigorous ginger group, which was less inclined to compromise politically, was highlighted by the controversy surrounding the Pan-Pacific Labour Union Conference which was held in Hankow in May 1927. Zenkoku Jiren decided to participate in this conference after it received a letter inviting it to send delegates in March 1927. The positive initial response from Zenkoku Jiren was perhaps understandable, since topics for discussion at the conference were to include 'Preventing a Pacific War' and 'Pacific Coast Labour Union Cooperation'.[32] However, when Zenkoku Jiren's delegates reached Canton, the local anarchists told them that it was the Russian-dominated Profintern which was behind the conference. Zenkoku Jiren should also have been alerted by the fact that the unions dominated by the Communist Party of Japan sent a sizeable delegation to Hankow. Despite this, Zenkoku Jiren's delegates pressed on from Canton to Hankow and took part in the proceedings, only to find themselves on the receiving end of its bolshevik organisers' machinations. After returning to Japan, a report on the treatment accorded to them was issued, which read as follows:

[27] Ibid. nos. 4/5, 5 October 1926, p. 5 and no. 6, 5 November 1926, p. 3.
[28] Ibid. no. 16, 5 September 1927, pp. 4–5.
[29] Ibid. no. 14, 5 July 1927, p. 6 and no. 17, 5 October 1927, p. 4.
[30] See, for example, Ibid. no. 15, 5 August 1927, p. 5.
[31] Ibid. no. 13, 5 June 1927, p. 5 and no. 14, 5 July 1927, pp. 5 and 7.
[32] Enishi (1974), pp. 9–10.

> During the conference the Communists obliged our two comrades to have only one vote and referred their items on 'Sacco and Vanzetti' and the 'Freeing of political prisoners in all countries' to … representatives who were not fully informed on the subjects.
> And after the conference the Communists pressed our comrades to sign agreements that Zenkoku Jiren would in future not oppose the Communists in Japan. What arrogance! Understandably, our comrades refused and reported on their return that the conference was manipulated by Communist charlatans.[33]

Despite such explanations, Kokuren remained highly critical of Zenkoku Jiren's participation in this Profintern-organised conference. In September 1927, Zenkoku Jiren published an explanation of its participation in the Hankow conference.[34] Kokuren printed this explanation in its own paper and added a note of its own which criticised what it saw as the opportunist elements within Zenkoku Jiren who had supported the conference.[35] By opportunist elements it meant the anarchist syndicalists. Hence the controversy over the Pan-Pacific Labour Union Conference became an issue in the debate between supporters and opponents of syndicalism, a debate which became increasingly bitter as 1927 progressed and as the date of Zenkoku Jiren's second national conference approached.

The anarchist syndicalists within Kokuren's ranks started to issue a journal of their own from June 1927. Known as *Han Seitō Undō* (Anti-Political Party Movement), it opposed all political parties, no matter whether they were avowedly bourgeois or supposedly proletarian. One of those behind this journal was Utagawa Noboru (1895–1944) who had been one of Zenkoku Jiren's delegates to the Pan-Pacific Labour Union Conference. The anarchist syndicalists within Kokuren felt the need for their own paper because *Kokushoku Seinen* was becoming increasingly open in its attacks on syndicalism, reflecting the pure anarchist leanings of the majority of Kokuren members. For example, in the issue of *Kokushoku Seinen* which was published two weeks before the second conference of Zenkoku Jiren; the lead article was headlined 'Bury the Dictatorial Unionists' and was outspokenly anti-syndicalist in tone and content.[36] The appearance of *Han Seitō Undō* raised the temperature of the polemics between anarchist syndicalists and pure anarchists, leading to the former's withdrawal from Kokuren, with the result that pure anarchists came to comprise the overwhelming majority of those who remained in its ranks.

As 1927 progressed, tension between anarchist syndicalists and pure anarchists was similarly building up within Zenkoku Jiren and was reflected in the columns of *Jiyū Rengō*. In July 1927 the pure anarchist Iwasa Sakutarō's (1879–1967) booklet *Anarchists Answer Like This* was published.[37] There was a critical review of lwasa's booklet and of his pure anarchist rejection of the theory of the class struggle by someone who signed himself Katamachi in the issue of *Jiyū Rengō* which appeared on 5 August 1927.[38] This review provoked, in its tum, a pure anarchist retort by Mizunuma Tatsuo (1892–1965) in the next issue on 5 September 1927. In this polemic, Mizunuma explained that he was not against prosecuting the class struggle, but that he was opposed to a

[33] *Rōdō Undō* series 5 no. 8, August 1927, p. 50.
[34] *Jiyū Rengō* no. 16, 5 September 1927, p. 1.
[35] *Kokushoku Seinen* no. 12, 5 September 1927, p. 3.
[36] Ibid. no. 14, 5 November 1927, p. 1.
[37] Iwasa's booklet was inspired by George Barrett's *Objections to Anarchism* and adopted the same question and answer format as Barrett's pamphlet, although the questions tackled were not identical.
[38] *Jiyū Rengō* no. 15, 5 August 1927, p. 6.

theory which sought to reduce all social phenomena to a simplistic scenario that allowed only for antagonism between capital and wage labour. To reduce all social conflicts to this simple formula meant that the mass of tenant farmers could have no significant role to play. Mizunuma claimed that those who adhere to the theory of the class struggle habitually argue that everything depends on the actions of the proletariat, even though 'the number of wage labourers among the people has not even reached 10 per cent'.[39]

Katamachi had claimed in his article that the class struggle was a conscious struggle over control of the means of production between owners of capital and sellers of labour power. In other words, he had criticised Iwasa's view that the class struggle is simply a struggle over the share of the social product that should accrue to the capitalist or the worker.[40] Mizunuma rebutted Katamachi's interpretation of the everyday struggle over wages and working conditions. According to him, experience showed that countless struggles between capitalists and workers are confined to the issue of how to share out the social product, and are not informed by the type of consciousness needed for attaining a new society. Mizunuma argued that if pure anarchists did think in terms of the class struggle, it was a class struggle which was entirely different from that on which the anarchist syndicalists pinned their hopes:

> The class struggle on which libertarian federation lays stress is not merely aiming to transfer the ownership of the means of production from the capitalists to the workers, as Brother Katamachi advocates. It has to be the initial means of going beyond that and realising a truly free and equal society without classes and where all social exploitation will be abolished.[41]

It was against this background of tension between anarchist syndicalists and pure anarchists that the second conference of Zenkoku Jiren was held on 19 and 20 November 1927.

Zenkoku Jiren's Second Conference

The second conference of Zenkoku Jiren was again held in the Asakusa district of Tōkyō, on this occasion in an annexe to the Honganji Temple. As often happens with theoretical disputes, the controversy between pure anarchists and anarchist syndicalists at this conference assumed the form of a protracted wrangle over how to interpret Zenkoku Jiren's rules. The issue over which the two sides squared up was the representation of the Ōsaka Amalgamated Workers' Union. This syndicalist-inclined union had joined the Kansai Federation of Zenkoku Jiren in May 1927, but had subsequently been expelled by the same federation on the grounds that it was in conflict with Zenkoku Jiren's programme. However, the Ōsaka Amalgamated Workers' Union persisted in sending delegates to the Zenkoku Jiren conference in Tōkyō, claiming that it was still a member of the national organisation, despite its expulsion from the regional federation.[42] Some of those attending the conference denounced the Ōsaka Amalgamated Workers' Union as a bolshevik group and, such was the passion which this union's status engendered, that the dispute over whether its representatives should be allowed to take their seats occupied a full day and a half of

[39] Ibid. no. 16, 5 September 1927, p. 6.
[40] Ibid. no. 15, 5 August 1927, p. 6.
[41] Ibid. no. 16, 5 September 1927, p. 6.
[42] Kondō (1969), p. 75.

conference time.[43] Although the national conference eventually upheld the Kansai Federation's expulsion of the Ōsaka Amalgamated Workers' Union, and thus refused seating rights to the union's delegates, by the time this decision had finally been taken the conference was reduced to utter confusion. Antagonism between pure anarchists and anarchist syndicalists was running high and the conference was adjourned until a later date.[44]

One person who had become alarmed by the intensity of the arguments between pure anarchists and anarchist syndicalists was Augustin Souchy (1892–1984), secretary of the syndicalist International Workers' Association (IWA). Writing on 4 October 1927 from the IWA's head office in Berlin, Souchy sent greetings to Zenkoku Jiren and expressed hopes for the success of the conference 'in the name of the syndicalists of the entire world'. He then added:

> Comrades! We have heard something about a current theoretical dispute between the pure anarchists and pure syndicalists within the Japanese libertarian labour movement. If we might express our opinion, now is not really the time for a dispute over such an issue. It has taken on an entirely theoretical character. On this occasion, we would like to draw your attention to Argentina and to the South American countries in general. In these countries the labour movement acts in the spirit of Mikhail Bakunin and also, at the same time, is under the spiritual guidance of our indomitable pioneer Errico Malatesta. In these countries, all anarchists heroically take part in the syndicalist movement, while, at the same time, all syndicalists are fighting to abolish the oppressive machinery of the state and to resist capitalist exploitation. In Spain too, anarchists and syndicalists apportion between them concern for economic questions and for the spiritual side of things in such a way that theoretical disputes do not arise.[45]

Yet, although Souchy's letter was published as a front-page article in *Jiyū Rengō* on 10 January 1928, and despite the cases it cited of countries where anarchists and syndicalists cooperated readily, it did little to cool tempers. Kokuren published a rejoinder to the IWA the following month, in which it declared that since 1927 it had been engaged in a struggle against 'the betrayers, opportunists and union imperialists' in Zenkoku Jiren's ranks.[46] This was a foretaste of the mood which was to prevail when the second conference of Zenkoku Jiren reconvened in March 1928.

Prior to the reconvening of Zenkoku Jiren's conference, the Tōkyō Printworkers' Union held its conference on 19 February 1928. The programme of the Tōkyō Printworkers' Union had hitherto been modelled on the famous Charter of Amiens, but at their February conference the printworkers broke with anarchist syndicalism and revised their union's statement of principles accordingly.[47] Having taken this step, it was the printworkers who pressed hardest for changing Zenkoku Jiren's programme when the delegates to its second conference reassembled in the Hongō district of Tōkyō on 17 March 1928. They called for Zenkoku Jiren's original, four-point programme to be replaced by a simple affirmation that 'We take libertarian federation as the basis

[43] Komatsu (1971–2), pp. 85–6.
[44] Yamaguchi (1970) p.21.
[45] *Jiyū Rengō* no. 20, 10 January 1928, p. 1.
[46] *Kokushoku Seinen* no. 16, 5 February 1928, p. 8.
[47] Komatsu (1971–2), p. 88.

for the movement to liberate the workers and farmers.'[48] This was opposed by the Tōkyō Casual Workers' Union, whose delegates countered by proposing a revised programme which differed less fundamentally from the original:

> We take the class struggle as the basis for the liberation movement of the workers and farmers.
> We shall resist all authority, not by means of political parties and cliques, but by relying on the strength of the workers and farmers themselves.
> We emphasise the need for organisation based on libertarian federation and reject organisation based on centralised authority.
> We oppose imperialism and promote the international solidarity of the working class.[49]

The debate over the programme commenced on 17 March and continued into the next day's session, with tempers getting frayed on both sides and the atmosphere in the hall deteriorating. Kokuren members barracked the anarchist syndicalists, jeering and catcalling at them, and the proceedings degenerated to the level where it was almost impossible to hear the speeches. Eventually, the anarchist syndicalists decided that they had had enough. Unfurling their black flags, they walked out of the hall to a chorus of taunts, such as 'blind believers in central authority!', 'bolsheviks!' and 'betrayers!'[50] Following this, the printworkers' amendment of the programme was approved, and the unions and branches which had withdrawn were formally expelled from Zenkoku Jiren. It was significant that Hatta was among those who spoke in the final session and that his speech was one of those which evoked enthusiastic applause.[51]

The unions that withdrew from the conference included the Tōkyō Casual Workers' Union, the Kōtō and Nankatsu branches of the Tōkyō General Workers' Union, and the Tōkyō Food Workers' Union. There is evidence that, at least in some cases, the pure anarchists were justified in accusing their opponents of sympathising with bolshevism. After their expulsion from Zenkoku Jiren, both the Tōkyō Casual Workers' Union and the Nankatsu branch of the Tōkyō General Workers' Union subsequently affiliated to the Zenkoku Kyōgikai (National Council, generally abbreviated to Zenkyō) union federation.[52] Formed in December 1928, Zenkyō openly supported the Communist Party, so much so that its journal, *Rōdō Shinbun* (Labour Newspaper), declared in January 1929: 'In order to liberate the working class from the pits of oppression, to destroy capitalism, and to achieve communism, our council must be under the political leadership of the Japanese Communist Party, which is the organizational unit of the most advanced element of the Japanese proletariat.'[53] On the other hand, the Kōtō branch of the Tōkyō General Workers' Union and the Tōkyō Food Workers' Union maintained their commitment to anarchist syndicalism and jointly formed one of the foci around which the anarchist syndicalist union federation Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Jiyū Rengō Kyōgikai (Libertarian Federal Council of Labour Unions of Japan, generally abbreviated to Jikyō) was to form.[54] A section of the Ōsaka Amalgamated

[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., p. 89.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Yamaguchi (1970), p. 22.
[53] Quoted in Beckmann & Okubo (1969), p. 174.
[54] Yamaguchi (1970), p. 22.

Workers' Union, whose delegates had been at the centre of the controversy in November 1927, also subsequently affiliated to the Communist Party's Zenkyō union federation and most of the activists connected with the anarchist syndicalist journal *Han Seitō Undō* eventually turned to bolshevism.[55] As Shirai Shinpei (1907–88) put it in later years, of those associated with *Han Seitō Undō*, 'only three people stayed with the black flag'—Enishi Ichizō (1901–84), Takahashi Kōkichi (1903–84) and Shirai himself.[56] It would be unfair to pay disproportionate attention to those anarchist syndicalists who switched their allegiance to bolshevism, but it cannot be denied either that such defections from the anarchist syndicalist camp lent weight to Hatta's claim that syndicalism was an inherently unstable amalgam of 'anarchist' and 'Marxist' elements which, on breaking down, was likely to metamorphose into reformism. The theory which underpinned this claim will be examined in the next chapter.

Kokuren and Zenkoku Jiren after the split

After the split in Zenkoku Jiren, organisational separation of pure anarchists and anarchist syndicalists occurred in many unions and also in other fields of anarchist activity. For example, the more than 5,000 members of the Tōkyō Printworkers' Union divided in April 1929, with the anarchist syndicalists in its ranks breaking away to form the Tōkyō Printworkers' Federation, which no longer had any organisational connection with Zenkoku Jiren. In oilier areas of Japan too, anarchist syndicalists withdrew from Zenkoku Jiren in order to set up organisationally distinct unions of their own. The Kyōto General Workers' Union, the Kyōto Printworkers' Union, the Izumi Fishworkers' Union and the Kishiwada branch of the Black General Workers' Union all emerged from Zenkoku Jiren in this fashion midway through 1929.[57] Similarly, at the end of 1929, the confrontation between pure anarchists and anarchist syndicalists led to the demise of the anarchist literary and theoretical magazine, *Kokushoku Sensen* (Black Battlefront), which had been launched in February of that year. Differences between those associated with this journal had been exacerbated by arguments over Hatta's pamphlet *The Fallacy of the Theory of the Class Struggle,* which was published by Zenkoku Jiren in August 1929. From October 1929 a number of meetings were held to discuss the attitude which anarchists should adopt towards the class struggle. These failed to resolve the differences and the controversy finally came to a head at an editorial meeting over a lead article which declared itself for 'true libertarian federation' (shin no jiyū rengōshugi) at the same time that it bracketed syndicalism and Marxism together. Following the final issue of *Kokushoku Sensen*, which carried this article, in December 1929, the pure anarchists and the anarchist syndicalists each sought to replace it with a magazine oriented towards their own theoretical position. The pure anarchists' *Kurohata* (Black Flag) appeared from January 1930 and the anarchist syndicalists' *Kokusen* (Black Battle) from February of the same year.[58]

Kokuren was in the thick of the process whereby the differences between pure anarchists and anarchist syndicalists were pushed to the point of organisational splits and confrontation. As far as it was concerned, the anarchist syndicalists had betrayed true anarchism and were no better

[55] Komatsu (1971–2), p. 90.
[56] Enishi (1974), p. 22.
[57] Gotō (1984), pp. 109–10.
[58] Hoshino & Shio (1975).

than crypto-bolsheviks. In Kokuren's eyes, the anarchist syndicalists (whom it preferred to call plain 'syndicalists', thereby denying them any association with anarchism) had shown their real colours in splitting away from the pure anarchists and were therefore as legitimate targets of violent direct action as were the capitalists or the bolsheviks. Violent confrontations between Kokuren's militants and anarchist syndicalists became commonplace and *Kokushoku Seinen* kept up a withering criticism of syndicalism's methods and objectives. As well as articles by Hatta, such as the characteristically titled 'The Daily Struggle Is Utopian', there were many articles by other writers dealing with the union movement and discussing revolutionary strategy.[59]

It would be wrong to think that, because Kokuren's members had come to reject syndicalism, they were automatically hostile to unions. On the contrary, as an article published in April 1928 on 'Anarchists and the Union Movement' made clear, they considered that under capitalism workers were bound to form unions in order to pursue economic objectives and resist the bosses. However, they did not believe that there was anything inherently, or even potentially, revolutionary about workers engaging in such activity. Workers would only become revolutionaries to the extent that they made a conscious choice to direct their struggle away from seeking improvements within capitalism towards overthrowing capitalism and reorganising life on the basis of anarchist communism. This was where genuine anarchists had a role to play, since their function 'must be, via the daily economic struggle, to make the workers themselves aware of the fact that, without unionists embracing anarchist communism, they can never bring about the true liberation of the workers'. If anarchist communists were to neglect this role, day-to-day economic demands would be uppermost in the workers' minds and unions would be nothing more than 'mere organs of daily economic struggle'.[60]

Various commentators have argued that, after the anarchist syndicalists broke away from Zenkoku Jiren, it came to have more the character of an ideological movement than of a federation of labour unions. This is an exaggeration. Organisationally Zenkoku Jiren remained a federation of labour unions. The list of constituent organisations published in Zenkoku Jiren's organ *Jiyū Rengō* in August 1928 gave the names and addresses of seventeen unions in all. Eleven of these unions were grouped into regional federations in the Kantō, Chūgoku and Hiroshima areas, while the other unions were located in urban centres such as Kyōto, Kōbe, Niigata, Sapporo and Hakodate.[61] It is true that, while it survived, Kokuren exerted a strong ideological influence on Zenkoku Jiren and acted to reinforce the latter's commitment to pure anarchism, but there is ample evidence that the Zenkoku Jiren unions welcomed their relationship with Kokuren. A resolution jointly moved by the Okayama General Workers' Union and the Okayama Textile Workers' Union at Zenkoku Jiren's second conference stated that 'as long as Zenkoku Jiren's objective and that adhered to by Kokuren are identical, Zenkoku Jiren will have a close, organic relationship with Kokuren.'[62]

Where the 'ideological' outlook of Zenkoku Jiren could be said to have shown itself was in the attitude it adopted towards labour disputes. Even when Zenkoku Jiren became involved in clashes with the bosses, it continually directed the attention of the workers beyond the immediate conflict to the battle for a new society. For example, in late 1930 a struggle against redundancies and wage cuts broke out at the Shibaura Works which was jointly owned by Mitsui and the Amer-

[59] Hatta's 'The Daily Struggle Is Utopian' appeared in *Kokushoku Seinen* no. 21, 1 July 1929, p. 2.
[60] Ibid. no. 17, 5 April 1928, p. 5.
[61] *Jiyū Rengō* no. 26, 10 August 1928, p. 2.
[62] Ibid. no. 22, 10 March 1928, p. 4.

ican General Electric (G.E.) Company. By the standards of the time, the Shibaura Works was a large factory, employing 1,300 workers in the production of electrical machinery'. Zenkoku Jiren was heavily involved in this dispute, running articles on it in *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* (Libertarian Federation Newspaper),[63] organising meetings, distributing leaflets and supporting demonstrations. At a packed meeting held in Shibaura on 1 December 1930, Zenkoku Jiren's speakers were one after another ordered by the police to stop speaking and more than ten were arrested. After the strike ended in defeat in February 1931, *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* wrote:

> Even though the strike was crushed, we did not give in to the capitalists' tyranny. We are well aware of the fact that our situation and the present state of society mean that struggles against those bastards (*yatsura*) must end in defeat. So our struggle towards victory certainly cannot be fought only against the capitalists of the Shibaura Works. Our true victory lies in directing our attack against the very world order which forces us to struggle only to see those struggles end in defeat.[64]

In other words, Zenkoku Jiren 's message on this and similar occasions was that nothing short of the destruction of capitalism and its replacement by anarchist communism could solve the workers' hardships. Short of this fundamental solution to their problems, workers would remain permanently disadvantaged in a society whose very make-up stacked all the cards against them. This was certainly a radically different outlook from that which has characterised most unions, whether in Japan or elsewhere. Surely the most striking feature of Zenkoku Jiren after the departure of the anarchist syndicalists from its ranks, however, was not its 'ideological' distance from conventional unionism, but rather the extent to which its supposedly ideological, pure anarchism enthused significant numbers of rank and file unionists, despite the fact that it promised no immediate improvements to their situation within capitalism.

Another way in which the 'ideological' commitment of Zenkoku Jiren to pure anarchism was manifested was in the attention it paid to the farming communities, despite its own members' location in an industrial and urban environment. In this regard too, Kokuren's influence on Zenkoku Jiren was important. While, as was noted earlier, Kokuren recognised the unions as a target for organised anarchist intervention, it attached no particular significance to the labour movement. Kokuren regarded the unions as merely one field among many which offered anarchists opportunities for promoting revolution.[65] It considered the rural villages and urban neighbourhoods to be just as important as the factories, and hence, unlike the anarchist syndicalists, Kokuren's members saw no reason to concentrate their efforts on industry. Rather it was the case that Kokuren looked especially to the tenant farmers as the most potent source of revolution in Japan. As an article in *Kokushoku Seinen* put it in February 1931:

> Revolution—in particular anarchist revolution—will occur when the farmers rebel simultaneously throughout the country to escape from their agony.
> Today a dangerous atmosphere envelops the whole of Japan. Disturbances on account of poor economic conditions are occurring here and there. We anarchists are

[63] Zenkoku Jiren's organ *Jiyū Rengō* was renamed *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* from 1 September 1928.
[64] *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* no. 57, 10 April 1931, p. 1.
[65] *Kokushoku Seinen* no. 17, 5 April 1928, p. 5.

> conscious that our responsibility is very great. A feeling of urgency abounds in our camp.[66]

Such sentiments were transmitted from Kokuren to Zenkoku Jiren. Numerous articles in Zenkoku Jiren's journals dwelt on the poverty afflicting the tenant farmers, whose lives were even more miserable and insecure than those of the urban workers, and on the ways in which the existing farming villages could be transformed into the communes which, it was believed, would be the basic units of an anarchist communist society. An issue of *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* in April 1929 focused on the countryside and took up many of the themes which were of central importance to pure anarchism. Mutual aid was presented as the foundation stone of rural life and the land as the key to universal well-being. Precisely because the farming villages were said to be doubly exploited by both the cities and the landlords, successful revolution depended on the cooperation of the farmers and urban workers.[67] In other issues of *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* the tenant farmers were urged to refuse to pay taxes and rent, to abandon the commercial production of crops, to refuse to become embroiled in politics, and to organise their villages as libertarian federations.[68] Zenkoku Jiren also published in September 1928 Hatta's booklet *Lectures on Social Problems in the Farming Villages,* which was further evidence of its 'ideological' orientation towards the countryside.

Despite the secession of the anarchist syndicalists, Zenkoku Jiren grew in the period following its second conference. Although the statistics on union membership in the prewar period are not wholly reliable, the available figures show that Zenkoku Jiren reached a peak of 16,300 members in 1931.[69] In September 1931 the so-called 'Manchurian Incident' occurred and the army's aggressive action in Manchuria gave rise to increasing militarisation and repression within Japan. An account of the various strategies which different currents of pure anarchists employed after 1931 in their attempts to rescue the movement from state repression will be left to Chapter 7, but the decline of Kokuren predates the Manchurian Incident and therefore needs to be mentioned here.

In February 1931 Kokuren's journal, *Kokushoku Seinen*, wrote:

> The Japanese anarchists do not locate anarchist communism in the cultural movement or in the movement to improve the lot of the exploited. They define it as a movement of all humankind to abolish capitalism—in other words, to abandon private property—and to destroy power. They have already driven the power-mongers, who call themselves anarchist syndicalists, out of their camp and now our comrades have actively launched their own anarchist movement throughout the entire country.[70]

Brave words though these were, such remarks proved to be the swansong of Kokuren. Its members were acutely aware of the 'terrible economic distress' experienced by Japanese farmers as a result of the world depression and sensed the impending political crisis which hung over

[66] Ibid. no. 24, 10 February 1931, p. 1.
[67] *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* no. 34, 1 April 1929.
[68] Ibid. no. 65, 10 December 1931, p. 4.
[69] Komatsu (1971–2), p. 97.
[70] *Kokushoku Seinen* no. 24, 10 February 1931, p. 1.

Japan.[71] But, for all their heroics, they were unable to muster sufficient forces to detonate the revolution on which they pinned their hopes. On the contrary, Kokuren's recklessly violent activism, coupled with the unremitting persecution which it experienced even prior to the Manchurian Incident, had the effect of driving all but the most committed elements out of its ranks. In 1929 and 1930 sections of Kokuren's membership in Western Honshū broke away, so that Kokuren was gradually reduced from the nationwide federation it had once been to a narrower grouping of uncompromising pure anarchists, whose best known feature was their readiness to use violence.[72]

As indicated above, Kokuren was perpetually harried by the state. In fact, every issue of *Kokushoku Seinen* was prohibited from sale and had to be distributed covertly. From September 1928 *Kokushoku Seinen* was reduced from its previous eight pages to four pages and its supposedly monthly publication became increasingly irregular. Indeed, a full year elapsed between the appearance of the last two issues in February 1930 and February 1931 respectively. In this situation many Kokuren militants found it easier to act under Zenkoku Jiren's colours than to maintain a separate identity as Kokuren. This is not to imply that Zenkoku Jiren was untroubled by state interference during the period prior to the Manchurian Incident. We have already seen how its speakers at public meetings were habitually harassed by the police and an article which appeared in the *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* in July 1929 recorded that five out of the previous six issues of thal paper had been banned from sale.[73] Nevertheless, Zenkoku Jiren 's implantation into a working class milieu made it relatively less vulnerable to the state's attempts to suppress it than was Kokuren. Even though *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* was frequently prohibited from public sale, the factories provided an environment in which the paper could be surreptitiously circulated from hand to hand among sympathetic workers. Without this advantage, Kokuren was swamped by the formidable difficulties which were bound to beset any activist group trying to keep alight the flame of anarchist communism in a hostile environment. To Kokuren's credit, even as it was overwhelmed, it refused to relinquish its commitment to pure anarchism. In what proved to be the final issue of *Kokushoku Seinen,* Kokuren was still talking about a new start for the anarchist movement and was still determined to draw a line between 'anarchist communists equipped with genuine consciousness' and the hotchpotch of 'pan-anarchism' (which it saw as encompassing everything from Stirner's philosophical anarchism to anarchist syndicalism).[74]

After the collapse of Kokuren, Zenkoku Jiren battled on and met the crisis precipitated by the Manchurian Incident with an analysis of the capitalist roots of war in the modern world. In an attempt to establish international solidarity against armed aggression in China, it published an article written in Esperanto in the issue of *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* which appeared on 10 November 1931. This article first exposed the lying pretexts used by the Japanese army to justify its expansionist moves in Manchuria and then explained:

> The true cause of the mobilisation to China is none other than the ambition of the Japanese capitalist class and military to conquer Manchuria. Japan has its own Monroe doctrine. Japanese capitalism cannot develop, or even survive, without Manchuria. That is why its government has made up its mind to risk anything so as

[71] Ibid.
[72] Hagiwara (1969) p. 180.
[73] *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* no. 37, 1 July 1929, p. 4.
[74] *Kokushoku Seinen* no. 24, 10 February 1931, p. l.

> not to lose its many privileges in China ... American capital has flowed into China in larger and larger amounts. This represents an enormous menace to the Japanese capitalist class. In other words, now Japan is forced to oppose American capital in China. This is, in fact, the direct cause of the mobilisation.[75]

As with labour disputes, Zenkoku Jiren argued that there was no fundamental solution to war other than the achievement of anarchist communism. The masses in all countries were urged to reject war, cease military production, refuse military service and disobey the officers. In an appeal to like-minded anarchists abroad, the article concluded:

> Complete international unity of the anarchists would signal our victory, not only economically but in the war against war.
> ANARCHIST GROUPS OF ALL COUNTRIES. UNITE! ABOLISH IMPERIALIST WAR![76]

Unrealistic though Zenkoku Jiren might have been in its assessment of the strength of the anarchist communist movement internationally, it could not be faulted for the clarity of its perception that war would remain a scourge as long as there were rival nation-states locked into a struggle for economic advantage.

The Anarchist Syndicalists

Much of Hatta Shūzō's theoretical output was written within the context of the developments which have been described in this chapter. Many of his most important texts were published either as articles or booklets by Kokuren or Zenkoku Jiren. Since several of these works were specifically directed against syndicalism, it is appropriate briefly to examine here the anarchist syndicalist current which he engaged in theoretical debate. Hence, before moving on to a detailed consideration of pure anarchist theories in the next two chapters, this chapter will conclude with a short account of what became of the anarchist syndicalists after they withdrew from Zenkoku Jiren.

In July 1928 those syndicalist-inclined unions in the Tōkyō area which had not moved towards bolshevism in the aftermath of the split in Zenkoku Jiren's ranks formed the Kantō Chihō Rōdō Kumiai Jiyū Rengōkai (Kanto District Libertarian Federation of Labour Unions, generally known as Chihō Jiren). Chihō Jiren has been described as 'the focus of the movement as a battling stronghold of the syndicalists'.[77] In April 1929 a preparatory conference to launch a nationwide grouping of anarchist syndicalists, the Zenkoku Rōdō Kumiai Jiyū Rengō Kyōgikai (AlI-Japan Libertarian Federal Council of Labour Unions, generally abbreviated to Zenkoku Jikyō), was held and this was followed by a national delegate conference in Tōkyō in June of the same year. This brought together twelve unions from the Kantō (Eastern Honshū), Kansai (Ōsaka-Kyōto-Kōbe), Chūbu (Central Honshū) and Western Kyūshū regions, representing workers in the printing,

[75] *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* no. 64, to November 1931, p. 4.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Yamaguchi (1970), p. 22.

metal, chemical and other industries.[78] These anarchist syndicalist unions had a combined membership of about 2,000.[79] Even if one includes other loosely related and sympathetic groups of anarchist syndicalists, Zenkoku Jikyō was a considerably smaller federation than the pure anarchist Zenkoku Jiren. As one account puts it, 'it cannot be denied that the syndicalists who had broken away were organisationally far weaker than Zenkoku Jiren and numerically inferior'.[80] For a time during 1930 and 1931 Zenkoku Jikyō adopted the title Jiyū Rengō Dantai Zenkoku Kaigi (All-Japan Conference of Libertarian Federation Groups) but by the end of 1931 it had settled on the name Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Jiyū Rengō Kyōgikai (Libertarian Federal Council of Labour Unions of Japan, generally abbreviated to Nihon Jikyō). Given this complicated story of realignment and changing names, it is probably least confusing to refer to the anarchist syndicalists' union federation throughout this period as 'Jikyō' and this is the convention which will be adopted henceforth. By 1931 Jikyō had almost 3,000 members (compared to Zenkoku Jiren's 16,300 members in the same year) and, as with Zenkoku Jiren, this proved to be the peak membership it attained in any year.[81]

Jikyō came into existence at a time of intensifying class struggle. The number of labour disputes was on the increase as workers sought to defend themselves against wage cuts, lay-offs, factory closures and other measures taken by companies to promote 'rationalisation'. Considering its limited resources, Jikyō was involved in an impressive number of these disputes, its members repeatedly throwing themselves into the fray and enthusiastically lending support to the workers' struggles. Many of the labour disputes of this period were marked by violence, since the police habitually intervened on the side of the capitalists and many companies routinely employed gangsters to intimidate the workforce. It was against such odds that Jikyō's militants regularly took up the cudgels and, disregarding the likelihood of beatings and imprisonment, committed themselves to struggles which were often doomed to failure from the start. Two of the best-known disputes in which Jikyō activists were involved were the strikes at the Nihon Senjū Company and the Tōkyō Gas Company in April and July 1931 respectively. These strikes will be briefly described as they are representative of Jikyō's role in such disputes.

Nihon Senjū was a medium-sized dyeing works in the Asakusa district of Tōkyō. It employed about 300 workers and was a stronghold of the Jikyō-affiliated Kantō General Workers' Union. When the company moved to rescind the existing labour agreement and sack part of the workforce, the union responded with a strike and also occupied the factory so as to prevent the company from resuming operations using scab labour. The company tried to starve the occupying strikers into submission by cutting off supplies and the workers met this threat by initiating their own hunger strike. The factory occupation lasted for twenty-four days and women played key roles in the struggle by nursing the hunger strikers, taking care of supplies, sticking up posters, organising demonstrations and harassing the company directors in their houses. Out of the women's experience, a consumers' union developed which outlasted the dispute itself. The most famous incident in the Nihon Senjū dispute came on 1 May when Chiba Hiroshi, a Jikyō militant who was a member of the Tōkyō Printworkers' Federation, climbed the forty metres-high factory chimney, unfurled a black flag, and remained precariously perched aloft for the next four-

[78] Ibid., pp. 28–9.
[79] Enishi (1974), p. 11.
[80] Yamaguchi (1970), p. 24.
[81] Komatsu (1971–2). p. 97.

teen days. The tactics used by the Nihon Senjū strikers evoked wide sympathy and the dispute was eventually resolved by the arbitration of the police.[82]

The Tōkyō Gas Company dispute was complicated by the divide and rule policy which the company adopted for handling its workers. In addition to 'regular' workers, there was a category of 'external' workers who were not directly employed by the company but by a labour contractor. In July 1931 a dispute erupted among these 'external' workers, which was hampered by the divisions among the workforce. Jikyō became involved in this dispute and a group of its militants occupied the company's gas tank. Without food and water, under the blazing summer sun, they were driven to the desperate length of drinking their own urine in an attempt to slake their thirst. Finally, on 2 August, they could hold out no longer and were forced down from the gas tank. The strike ended once again under the formal guise of police arbitration, but this time it was unmistakably a defeat for the workers.[83]

As a militant union federation, Jikyō could claim a number of achievements. For example, its pioneering use of the hunger strike in the Nihon Senjū occupation led to the recognition of this tactic as an emotive weapon which could be employed in labour disputes, sometimes with telling effect, depending on the circumstances. However, in their enthusiasm for prosecuting the class struggle, Jikyō's members tended to pay less attention than their Zenkoku Jiren counterparts to mounting a theoretical challenge to capitalism and to propagandising the anarchist alternative. In fact, the class struggle became one of the principal bones of contention in the bitter polemics between pure anarchists and anarchist syndicalists which were the hallmark of this period. It is to these polemics, and particularly to the part played in them by Hatta Shūzō as he strove to purify anarchism of what he considered to be alien influences, such as syndicalism, that we now turn.

[82] Enishi (1974), pp. 14–16.
[83] Yamaguchi (1970), pp. 31–2.

5. Critique of the Old World

Syndicalism

For Hatta Shūzō syndicalism was one of the fetters which chained the workers to the old world of political power, social divisions and exchange relations, rather than offering hope for a new world free from state domination and commodity production. Why was it that pure anarchists such as Hatta were so hostile to a syndicalist strategy which, at first glance. seemed to have much in common with anarchism and which, indeed, had been enthusiastically embraced by many anarchists?

Hatta regarded syndicalism as an economic movement which was a reaction against the negative experience of political activity within the labour movement. He argued that historically the labour movement had first emerged in Britain due to that country's role as the pioneer of industrial capitalism. According to Hatta's account of the historical development of the labour movement, when it had first appeared in Britain in the early years of the nineteenth century, its adherents had supported the campaign for electoral reform which culminated in the Reform Act of 1832. Quite apart from the limited extension of the franchise which was actually achieved under the Act of 1832, Hatta maintained that 'even if, for argument's sake, the workers had secured "universal suffrage", it was still bound to have been a failure' as far as they were concerned.[1] Hatta believed that disillusionment with electoral politics had led to workers stressing the need for 'economic action' alone and that syndicalism was a manifestation of this enduring trend within the labour movement. Yet Hatta pointed out that the historical record also showed that the workers 'cannot win by economic action alone'.[2] In that sense, syndicalism too derived from an additional legacy of failure that was embedded in the history of the labour movement: 'syndicalism is a movement which belongs to the second variety of failed labour movements'.[3]

Since the pure anarchists did not regard anarchism as confined to the terrain of the labour movement, the distinct historical origins of anarchism and syndicalism constituted one reason for sharply differentiating between them. However, in Hatta's eyes, a further, and more important, reason for contrasting anarchism and syndicalism lay in the ideology which the latter employed. As Hatta put it:

> syndicalism *is not a theory or an ideology, but is merely a tendency within the labour movement.* Nevertheless, to the extent that the labour movement is a movement of human self-awakening, it certainly cannot be devoid of ideas. *In other words, syndicalism's weak point and bankruptcy lie in the fact that, while it does not possess a systematic set of ideas, it cannot entirely dispense with ideas either.* To put it another way, since syndicalism is not itself a specific ideology, it underpins itself with some

[1] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1983), p. 3.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid., p. 4.

> other ideology. And in answer to the question what is it that ideologically underpins syndicalism, I can only conclude that it is a combination of Marxism and anarchism. In other words, syndicalism can be said to be, in this sense, a hybrid creature.[4]

Specifically, Hatta maintained that syndicalism borrowed from Marxism the theory of the class struggle and the ambition to take over the capitalist means of production (including the division of labour, which Hatta saw as inseparable from large-scale industry) in order to construct a society centred on the producers. To these elements, which Hatta insisted were derived from Marxism, syndicalism added 'the anarchist theory of creative violence by a minority'.[5] As was mentioned in Chapter 4, Hatta's contention was that what made syndicalism inherently unstable was precisely the fact that it drew its ideology eclectically from what he regarded as two opposing philosophical systems—Marxism and anarchism. Hatta did not deny that there were able and enthusiastic activists within the ranks of the anarchist syndicalists, but he argued that, irrespective of the quality of its militants, syndicalism would always tend to degenerate into reformism because of its unstable theoretical base.[6]

With the benefit of hindsight, one could well argue that Hatta was wrong to attribute to Marx the ambition to take over intact capitalism's division of labour. Marx's early philosophical texts provide ample evidence that his vision of communism was informed by the determination to transcend the division of labour.[7] However, such texts were not available to Hatta, who habitually looked at Marxism through the distorting prism of what he took to be its realised form in Russia. In any case, what concerns us at this point is not the inadequacy, in this regard, of Hatta's understanding of Marxism, but his critique of syndicalism's incorporation of the capitalist division of labour into its union-based organisation and strategy. Here Hatta was on much firmer ground. Anarchist syndicalists believed that the strength of the working class derived from the crucial position it occupied within the capitalist production process. When capitalism developed large-scale industries, it also gave rise to sizeable bodies of workers whose cohesion, solidarity, and organisation were functions of the system of factory-based production. Hence, anarchist syndicalists saw the workers' unions as organic outgrowths of capitalist industrial organisation itself. Yet, since the unions were seen not only as the means of revolutionary struggle but also as the administrative structure of the coming society, what was implied was a considerable degree of structural continuity between industrial capitalism and the society which was expected to replace it. Hatta did not doubt the well-meant intentions of anarchist syndicalists to democratise the new society, eliminate state power and abolish class divisions, but he nevertheless predicted that their efforts would be undermined by the structures that were unavoidably built into large-scale industry and the procedures it was bound to practise, irrespective of its ideological trimmings. For Hatta, the most important of these inevitable characteristics of large-scale industry was the division of labour.

[4] Ibid., p. 8.
[5] Ibid., p. 10.
[6] Ibid., p. 13.
[7] See, for example, Marx (1972). pp. 197–8.

The Division of Labor

In his writings, Hatta analysed the division of labour inherent within large-scale industry and identified the principal consequences which flowed from it. First, he argued that, where the division of labour exists, labour becomes mechanised and, as a result, degenerates into mechanical activity. The producer becomes a cog in an inflexible production process which dehumanises work, stifles creativity and devalues labour to the point where it is no more than 'an assistant of the machine'.[8] Economists often claim that it is the division of labour which socialises production. In the era of industrial production, no individual can claim to have produced independently any item of social wealth, since all products are the result of multiform labour which links together innumerable, anonymous producers' in an extended network of productive activity. However, Hatta believed that this is a superficial way of looking at the effects of the division of labour:

> The division of labour is mechanised, but in the true sense of the word is not socialised. Nay, rather it is the division of labour that destroys genuine social solidarity.[9]

This leads us to what Hatta regarded as a second consequence of the division of labour, namely that those involved in one branch of production generally have 'neither responsibility for, understanding of, nor interest in' other branches of production.[10] This is clearly so in the case of capitalism, since enterprises occupying different niches in the production process are indifferent to each other's well-being and relate to one another solely via antagonistic, buying and selling relations, with each unit of capital pursuing its own narrow goal of attempting to maximise profit. Yet, even if the capitalists were expropriated so that all industries came to be controlled by those who worked in them, there would still be a situation where, for example, the coal mines would be in the hands of a body of men who saw themselves as miners and looked out on the rest of society from the confines of their industry. No other section of society could fully appreciate the problems and hardship involved in the extraction of coal, nor the satisfaction derived from using the particular skills of the miner to accomplish safely potentially hazardous operations. One could no more envisage those who were not miners being fully conversant with the ins and outs of coal production, or with the ethos of the mining communities, than one could reasonably expect miners to appreciate entirely the joys and frustrations of growing crops or the seasonal rhythm of agricultural work. Even if syndicalism successfully lopped off the head of capitalism by eliminating the capitalist class, the body of society would still be riddled with the tensions and misunderstandings which arise when people are tied into particular occupations and regard themselves as miners or farmers or some other category of specialised producers. In other words, in whatever form it persisted, the division of labour would undermine people's sense of unity and common purpose, and reinforce their divisive allegiances to particular industries and sectional interests. In Hatta's estimation, this would be no less the case for syndicalism than it is for capitalism.

According to Hatta, the third principal consequence of the division of labour is that 'a superior coordinating machinery' becomes necessary in order to coordinate the various branches of

[8] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1983), p. 31.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.

production.[11] In capitalism it is the market which fulfils this role, but since syndicalism's declared intention was to transcend the capitalist market, it would have to find some other means to achieve this goal. The means which anarchist syndicalists have generally favoured is a network of delegate conferences, where the mandated delegates of one industry would negotiate agreements with the representatives of related industries so as to ensure the smooth flow of materials into, and products out of, the factories. Hatta maintained that one thing which such arrangements overlooked was the unequal standing of different industries within the production process. Hatta's point was that, where the division of labour existed, it was a reasonable expectation that industries supplying vital goods and services would have leverage over others engaged in less crucial lines of production. His suspicion was that, faced with a hierarchy of industries arising from their different degrees of importance in the production process, ideological commitment to the goal of a classless society would prove to be an inadequate safeguard:

> In a society which is based on the division of labour, those engaged in vital production (since it forms the basis of production) would have more power over the machinery of coordination than those engaged in other lines of production. There would therefore be a real danger of the appearance of classes.[12]

Hatta described syndicalism's 'superior coordinating machinery' as 'in other words, a supreme economic council or, in other words, a government'.[13] Why was he so convinced that, for all their ideological hostility to state power, the anarchist syndicalists' strategy of social transformation would degenerate into the familiar social division between rulers and ruled? In a situation where those engaged in one branch of production have 'neither responsibility for, understanding of, nor interest in' other branches of production, effective coordination would depend on the emergence of a stratum which could rise above sectional interests and take an overall view of the production process. Even the emergence of such a stratum would not be straightforward, since people engaged in different branches of production would compete to elect their representatives to the 'superior coordinating machinery' and those elected would strive to look after their industrial constituencies, but to the extent that this stratum did appear, it was likely to become a specialist agency composed of people who did not themselves engage in production. Not only would the need for administrative expertise set up pressures leading the members of the 'superior coordinating machinery' to detach themselves from production, but in order to administer effectively they would need to be able to enforce their decisions. To put it bluntly, the resulting 'supreme economic council' would need to be equipped with centralised power simply in order to fulfil its role efficiently.[14] Yet all experience shows that, once a stratum furnished with such power emerges within society, it tends to use its authority to benefit itself by exploiting others. Hence, 'one cannot separate the division of labour from rule and exploitation,' argued Hatta.[15]

In Hatta's opinion, a further reason why the division of labour in its syndicalist form would inevitably lead to power relations and the emergence of government was that most anarchist syndicalists accepted the need for exchange between economic units and for calculation in labour

[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., pp. 14–15.
[13] Ibid. (1981), p. 117.
[14] Ibid., p. 23.
[15] Ibid., p. 120.

time. Hatta traced back to Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809–65) the readiness of many anarchist syndicalists to resort to such economic measures, since Proudhon was not only the first to declare himself an anarchist but was also an advocate of an economic system based on precisely these elements:

> Even Proudhon, since he was an adherent of the labour theory of value, took labour exchanges to be the organs of distribution in the new society. Yet, by setting up labour exchanges, one is forced to adopt quantitative labour as the standard of value. But, as Kropotkin affirmed, this immediately gives rise to a wages system which takes as its principle recompense according to labour time.[16]

Why did Hatta regard exchange and calculation in labour time not as neutral techniques for facilitating economic affairs, but as measures which were pregnant with dire consequences for the new society? The reason was that he grasped the antagonism inherent in exchange relations, where each party involved tries to get the best deal for itself, giving rise to the need for an arbiter who is sufficiently detached to ensure that equity is achieved and yet who is equipped with the necessary power to enforce the rules of the game. In capitalism it is the state which fulfils these roles and syndicalism was held to be no different, in that it too would create an environment in which these same functions would need to be undertaken by an equivalent body, no matter what it was called. A similar parallel was drawn between capitalist money and syndicalist labour vouchers. Since both were to function as the symbols of value in their respective systems, calculation could only be reliably conducted in either of them if their production and circulation were controlled and monitored and policed by some supervisory body. Once again, it was only the state, in one guise or another, that could adequately carry out these tasks and hence guarantee sound currency, either in the form of conventional money or a substitute such as labour vouchers. Hatta summarised this area of his thought as follows:

> Where the division of labour occurs, exchange takes place. Where exchange takes place, a medium of exchange—in other words, money (or labour vouchers)—comes into existence. And money stands in need of a basis of centralised power (government). The development of money naturally leads to the development of government.[17]

Hatta regularly described anarchist communism as a society which would take consumption as its basis. What he meant by this was that, since the people in their communes would be in control of the means of production, they would be in a position first to decide what level of consumption they wished to enjoy and subsequently to organise production in whatever manner was most congenial for meeting their requirements. This formed a complete contrast to capitalism, which he characterised as a society that took production as its basis. This feature of capitalism again derived from the division of labour, which led competing enterprises to battle against one another for economic survival by producing more cheaply than their rivals. If anarchist communism and capitalism were polar opposites in this regard, where did syndicalism stand in relation to the crucial question of the primacy of consumption or production? Hatta's answer was that, by

[16] Ibid., p. 23.
[17] Ibid., p. 116.

accepting the division of labour, syndicalism located itself on essentially the same terrain as capitalism and, for that matter, bolshevism too:

> syndicalism will take over, just as it is, the capitalist mode of production and perpetuate the system of big factories, the division of labour system and the economic organisation which takes production as its basis. As far as these points are concerned, it will not be the slightest bit different from communism [sic].[18]

In other words, syndicalism planned to inherit capitalist industries which had habitually given priority to economic growth. While the desire for expansion ultimately proceeded from the capitalist's thirst for profit, the assumption that there was a link between increased growth and economic progress tended to rub off onto the workforce too. To the extent that workers in capitalist industries believed that 'the union makes us strong', there would be an expectation that economic activity on a wider scale would lead to a bigger workforce and hence to a still stronger union. Furthermore, even if the capitalist entrepreneur were eliminated and syndicalism realised, the producers organised in a syndicalist union would still have an interest in expanding the scale of their enterprise's operations and in capturing the economic high ground. This would be so because the weight of their voice in the decision-making councils of syndicalist society, would depend on the scale of their operations and the importance of their products for society as a whole.

It is worth noting that Hatta extended his criticisms of union-based syndicalism to the alternative revolutionary strategy which sought to use *soviets* (workers' councils) as the means to overthrow the existing order and establish a new society in its place. Advocates of this strategy have often pointed to various advantages which soviets have over syndicalist-style unions, such as the fact that the former were seen as emerging spontaneously in the heat of revolution whereas the latter were intended to be built up incrementally in advance of the revolution, making them susceptible to bureaucratisation in the process. Yet, whatever the claimed advantages of *soviets* over unions, for Hatta they were still fatally flawed by being rooted in the capitalist workplaces and therefore embodying the division of labour:

> The *soviets* are a machinery of administration which arises from the fact that the working class, as the producers, control society. Those who seek to establish *soviets* insist that it is the system of production based on the division of labour which becomes the basis of society and also think that during the transitional period [the need for which Hatta rejected—see Chapter 6] it should be the working class that necessarily controls society.[19]

Here we can see that not only were *soviets* rejected because they would consolidate rather than transcend the division of labour, but also because they represented class power. We shall analyse the distinction which the pure anarchists made between class struggle and revolution in the next section, so here it is sufficient to make the point that, given their root and branch criticism of *soviets*, Hatta and his comrades were not impressed by those who sought to distinguish between genuine *soviets* and their bolshevik-dominated namesakes in Russia. Hatta maintained

[18] Ibid. (1983), p. 31.
[19] Ibid. (1981), p. 52.

that, irrespective of whether they were manipulated by party bosses or were the freely organised expression of workers' interests, *soviets* were not the way forward to human liberation.[20] This was why he criticised those anarchists in the Russian Revolution who had advocated 'free *soviets*' as an alternative to the 'party *soviets*' under bolshevik control:

> What deluded the Russian anarchists at the time of the revolution was this word *soviet*. Those like Berkman, using the expression 'free *soviet*', even tried to introduce the *soviet* principle (*sobietoshugi*) into anarchism.[21]

To those who objected that even Kropotkin had evaluated the *soviets* highly, Hatta retorted (not altogether convincingly) that, just because Kropotkin happened to have said one or two positive things about the *soviets*, this did not make him a *sovietist*.[22] Hatta believed that in Russia it was the anarchist syndicalists who had been the most enthusiastic campaigners for 'free *soviets*', because they had realised that the *soviet* form of organisation was just as serviceable for syndicalist purposes as unions. This was why he referred approvingly on more than one occasion to the conference of the Nahat Confederation of anarchist communists, which had been held in Kharkov in 1920 and where the anarchist syndicalists had been roundly denounced.[23]

The Class Struggle

Although Hatta made a major contribution to pure anarchist theorising on the class struggle, it was Iwasa Sakutarō who most pithily captured the pure anarchists' distrust of the conventional labour movement with his 'mountain bandit' theory. In an essay on 'The Labour Movement and the Mass Workers' Movement', Iwasa wrote:

> I divide the workers' movement into two. One of these is a movement that arises from the majority of the workers in the farming villages and the towns. It is a movement which demands a fundamental change of social organisation, immediately and decisively, due to the economic circumstances of those who comprise it. In other words, it is a revolutionary movement. The other is the so-called labour movement, the members of which form labour unions from the standpoint of the particular position they occupy under the modern capitalist system. They compromise with the capitalist class and cooperate with it so as to shorten the hours of labour, raise wages and improve their conditions. They seek to raise their own standard of living and achieve prosperity. It is a movement of a minority working class found mainly in the towns—a movement of the so-called new working class.[24]

Iwasa criticised the latter on the grounds that 'they turn their back on the movement of the general mass of workers, those who cannot achieve liberation without a fundamental transformation of the modern capitalist system'.[25] It was true that this aristocracy of labour organised

[20] Ibid. (1981). p. 53 and (1983), p. 15.
[21] Ibid. (1981), p. 167.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid., pp. 53, 171.
[24] Iwasa (1931), p. 93.
[25] Ibid., pp. 98–9.

themselves so as to improve their position within capitalism, yet 'their so-called class struggle is not a rebellion against capitalism but has become an approval of capitalism, an assenting to capitalism, and amounts to appealing and imploring to the capitalists'.[26]

The nub of Iwasa's criticism of the conventional labour movement was that it had allowed itself to be incorporated into existing society in such a way that its members were just as imbued with capitalist values as were the capitalists. It was to illustrate the relationship between the capitalist class and the conventional labour movement that Iwasa used the analogy of a gang of mountain bandits. Within such a gang, there may well be tension between the leader and his henchmen, with the latter harbouring an ambition to step into the shoes of the former. But, however fiercely the battle between leader and henchmen might be joined, no-one expects a gang of mountain bandits to be socially transformed by the outcome of such a struggle. A gang of bandits remains a gang of bandits, no matter who their leader is. Likewise, capitalism would remain capitalism, no matter whether it was led by the established capitalists or by a new leadership drawn from the labour movement and seeking support by the use of expressions such as 'the dictatorship of the proletariat':

> It may be going a bit too far, but their relationship even resembles the boss-henchmen relationship between mountain bandits holed up in their mountain den. The henchmen, having formed a union, could launch the class war against their boss and thus raise their own position and improve their livelihood. Not only that; going further, they could even overthrow their boss and replace him. Yet it would still remain the case that they were mountain bandits, just as they were before.
>
> Hence their movement—that is, the class struggle—does not fundamentally break with the plunder and exploitation of the capitalist system. It is essentially a conservative, reformist movement which is in harmony with capitalism, compromises with it, or even inherits its pillage and exploitation. It is not a movement by means of which the liberation of the whole of society can be achieved.[27]

Iwasa depicted class struggle, even in its most radical form, as the process whereby one class replaced another as the dominant group in society. However far-reaching the changes which this transfer of power might bring about, it did not signify the end of social domination or class rule. He specifically rejected Karl Marx's and Friedrich Engels' (1820–95) contention in *The Communist Manifesto* that 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles'.[28] Clearly, the class struggle is part of social experience, retorted Iwasa, but it is far from being the sole theme which runs through human history.[29] There is also a striving for revolution which, Iwasa believed, transcended the class struggle and whose modern expression he saw as anarchist communism. Such a revolutionary movement 'aims to destroy utterly the destructive system of capitalist exploitation (in other words, the state system) and to give free rein to the essentially social nature of human beings'.[30] It is not simply hardship and misery which bring about social revolution, nor will it be 'an inevitable achievement of the working class as the so-called scientific

[26] Ibid., p. 99.
[27] Iwasa (1927), pp. 18–19.
[28] Marx (1947), p. 110.
[29] Iwasa (1927), p. 11.
[30] Ibid., p. 15.

socialists argue'.[31] Rather, social revolution would occur when sufficient people were inspired by the vision of a new society. In a phrase which harked back to the Meiji Restoration of 1868, and beyond that to the Confucian classics, Iwasa described those who would provide the spark to kindle this vision as 'many anonymous activists and people of virtue and righteousness' (*ikuta mumei no shishi jin jin gishi*). 'Due to their activity and their effort, the notion of a just future is clearly implanted in the heads of the people and, in this way, for the first time, the people are awakened.'[32]

Hatta shared this pure anarchist critique of the class struggle, but he sought to provide it with a more rigorous theoretical expression than Iwasa achieved in his writings. From a sociological standpoint, Hatta pointed to the difficulty of arranging people into water-tight classes, particularly within a society such as Japan. He rightly emphasised the artificiality of attempts to force interwar Japan into the mould of a schematic class structure which assigned everybody to either the capitalist class or the proletarian class by reference to their relationship to the means of production. Throughout the 1920s, for example, roughly half the workforce was engaged in agriculture or forestry, compared to less than one-fifth who were employed in manufacturing.[33] Of the more than 14 millions who worked on the land, only a few hundred thousand (400,000 in 1920 and their number declined thereafter) were agricultural labourers and thus proletarians.[34] The vast majority worked the land in family units (men, women and even children engaging in production) and most families rented part or all of their land from landlords to whom they paid rent in kind. Two out of every three farms were less than 2.5 acres (1 hectare) in size.[35] With entire families trying to eke out a living on such tiny smallholdings (and at the same time surrendering to the landlord half of the crop produced on whatever percentage of their land was rented) the poverty which afflicted the tenant farmers was not in dispute, but Hatta's point was that there was no direct connection between poverty and proletarianisation. Nor was there any perceptible trend towards the tenant farmers becoming wage labourers, since the form of exploitation to which they were subjected was stable and served the purposes of their often absentee landlords.[36]

Hatta had two principal objections to the way in which most of the self-proclaimed Marxists in Japan conceived of the supposedly revolutionary class as a narrow stratum of factory workers. First, as shown above, he argued that there was no evidence that as capitalism developed in Japan society was being reduced to a simple, bipolar structure of two rival classes. Besides the tenant farmers, there were other sizeable strata, such as small traders and petty officials, who were poor and oppressed but who did not fit into the revolutionary class if it was conceived narrowly as consisting only of factory workers. Hatta asserted that it was quite wrong to overlook the revolutionary potential of these other strata. In fact, one should recognise that often the people in these strata 'long for and also struggle for social change more than the working class does'.[37] Second, Hatta pointed to the course of revolution in the world. From the vantage point provided by the late 1920s and early 1930s, the most fertile regions for the outbreak of revolution seemed to be those countries where capitalism was not so highly developed and where the class struggle had

[31] Ibid., pp. 16–17.
[32] Ibid., p. 17.
[33] Allen (1972), p. 210.
[34] Macpherson (1987), p. 58.
[35] Allen (1972), p. 114.
[36] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981), p. 80.
[37] Ibid. (1983), p. 29.

not been focused to the point where it pitted two all-encompassing classes against one another. Far from the developed capitalist countries being ripest for revolution, one found that the living conditions of workers were improving there and that they were not the ones to manifest any spark of rebellion. Workers in the advanced countries seemed to be largely preoccupied with maintaining and improving their conditions within capitalism, so that in such circumstances it was often left to the intellectuals to assume the role of rebels.[38]

Given the failure of the available methods of class analysis to capture the subtleties of Japan's social structure, Hatta developed the notion of the 'propertyless masses' (*musan taishū*) as an alternative to the concept of the proletariat. The 'propertyless masses' was a wide-ranging term which encompassed the tenant farmers, small traders, petty officials, artisans and even wage labourers when they were prepared to forsake their preoccupation with narrowly defending the advantages that accompanied their urban lifestyle and were ready to throw in their lot with other oppressed strata. Since the various constituent elements of the 'propertyless masses' stood in different relations to the means of production, they did not collectively constitute a class and therefore class struggle was not an appropriate mode of action for them. What could potentially unite the 'propertyless masses' was not a shared objective position within society relative to the means of production, but a common, subjective realisation that capitalism oppressed them and that their liberation depended on its revolutionary overthrow. Thus, just as Hatta developed the notion of the 'propertyless masses' as a challenge to the rival concept of the 'proletariat', so he put forward 'revolutionary action' as an alternative strategy to 'class struggle'.[39] By drawing a sharp contrast between class struggle and revolution, Hatta found another opportunity for attacking syndicalism:

> Syndicalism says that it will bring about the revolution by means of the class struggle, but that is a major mistake. The class struggle and the revolution are two opposing movements; one does not give birth to the other.[40]

What did Hatta understand by 'revolution' and what contrasts did he make between it and the 'class struggle'? In the first place, Hatta understood revolution to entail a rejection of class divisions. By way of contrast, he believed that, by basing themselves on a struggle to further sectional interests, those who advocated class struggle were perpetuating social divisions. Second, Hatta saw class struggle as a kind of trench warfare. Classes experience continual advances and retreats and, as a result, start to observe in the conduct of their struggles what Hatta termed 'a general law of competitive power'.[41] The endless repetition of class struggle leads to it being conducted according to mutually observed rules so that it settles down into a self-perpetuating routine. For Hatta, revolution was entirely different to this. It was a once and for all, life-and-death explosion which was not governed by any laws and could not be channelled into routine. Although revolution could be prepared for, in the sense of the revolutionary forces building up their strength prior to its occurrence, its outbreak could not be predicted nor its course tailored to order.

Hatta argued that a third characteristic of the class struggle was that, even as classes pitted themselves against each other, there was a tendency for them to develop similar tactics. In this

[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., p. 26.
[40] Ibid., p. 27.
[41] Ibid.

sense, class war was much like any other form of warfare. In military confrontations, if one side acquires a particular weapon, the other side must do the same if it is to defend itself effectively. Hatta maintained that the class struggle was no exception to this general rule. If (as inevitably they will) the capitalists resort to political measures, the proletariat has to involve itself in politics too. Similarly, if (as inevitably they will) the capitalists wield state power, the proletariat will be tempted to strive for a supposed workers' and peasants' state. Once again, Hatta saw revolution as offering an entirely different approach to that represented by the class struggle. If class struggle was characterised by the fact that both sides did battle on the same terrain by using analogous tactics, revolution broke with all accepted procedures and therefore was likely to disorient the capitalists and disarm them in the process. What Hatta was suggesting here was that, in the case of the class struggle, the capitalists can employ carefully prepared, defensive measures because the rules of the game are well known and the struggle proceeds via set-piece confrontations. On the other hand, since there are no rules to regulate an explosion of revolutionary violence, the capitalists will find their well-rehearsed tactics inadequate for containing a situation which takes them by surprise.[42]

The final distinction which Hatta made between class struggle and revolution lay in their very different outcomes. Hatta argued that even if the class struggle were fought successfully to the point of 'final victory' for the oppressed class, the outcome 'will be nothing more than a reversal of positions'.[43] He predicted that. even if the former oppressors were subjugated, a new ruling class would emerge from the formerly oppressed and ironically the class struggle would persist. Conversely, 'final victory' in revolutionary terms would entail 'the destruction of the opposing camp' and of class society in any shape or form.[44]

It should be clear from what has been said that Hatta and the other pure anarchists did not deny that class struggle existed. On the contrary, they recognised that it was inevitable that workers would engage in the class struggle in order to defend themselves for as long as capitalism lasted. This was so since wage earners are in exactly the same position as anyone else within capitalism: 'in order to live, workers must undertake commercial transactions, in other words buying and selling ... they sell their labour and buy the means of life'.[45] Consequently, since individual workers are in this position, it is only to be expected that they will band together in order to get a better price for their labour power. What the pure anarchists insisted, however, was that a struggle between classes could not be transformed into a struggle to abolish classes. For the pure anarchists, these struggles were qualitatively different and were pitched at different levels. Hence Hatta spoke for all pure anarchists when he asserted:

> If ... we understand that the proletariat (*musan kaikyū*) and the propertyless masses (*musan taishū*) are different things, and that the class struggle and the revolution are different things, then we are forced to say that it is a major mistake to declare, as the syndicalists do, that the revolution will be brought about by the class struggle. Even if a change in society came about by means of the class struggle, it would not mean that a genuine revolution had occurred.[46]

[42] Ibid., p. 28.
[43] Ibid., p. 27.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid. (1981), pp. 228–9.
[46] Ibid. (1983). p. 29.

Physiocracy *(Jūnōshugi)*

Physiocracy was a powerful ideology in interwar Japan. With half the workforce engaged in agriculture, and millions of peasants and tenant farmers living lives of hardship and insecurity, it was little wonder that urban capitalism was widely regarded as a parasitic leech on the otherwise healthy body of the countryside. *Jūnōshugi* (physiocracy) and its related ideology of *nōhonshugi* (literally 'agriculture-as-the-root-ism') were even utilised by the militarists as a means of winning support from the peasants and tenant farmers for the army's political ambitions. Hence, when Hatta took up the cudgels against physiocracy, he was not engaging in a debate over abstract, philosophical principles but was addressing issues that were of burning importance to millions of hard-pressed peasants and tenant farmers.

Just as Hatta rejected demands by anarchist syndicalists for anarchism to base itself on the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, so he was equally scathing about suggestions that anarchism should develop a strategy based on alternative methods of dividing society into classes. He was sarcastic about the efforts of those associated with the journal *Fujin Sensen* (Women's Battlefront) to present the relationship between men and women as the principal antagonism within society and he expended much energy on opposing those who sought to orient anarchism towards a struggle which would pit the agricultural villages against the cities.[47] In articles with titles such as 'Against Physiocracy', Hatta criticised anarchists of this latter persuasion not because of their hostility towards the cities, nor even because they look the view that 'the workers too exploit the farmers', but rather because of their physiocratic ambition to favour agricultural interests at the expense of the urban population. He maintained that, even if it were true that all city dwellers (including the urban workers) currently benefited from the exploitation of the agricultural population, the solution did not lie in inverting this relationship and reversing the flow of wealth so that it was henceforth transferred from the cities into the villages. As Hatta put it:

> The city exploits the farming village. That's a fact. However, the cause lies in the division of labour, in the fact that, due to the total system of the division of labour, industries exploit one another. One side of the matter is that the city exploits the farming village, but this must not cause us to overlook the fact that the cities exploit one another. To abolish exploitation, and particularly the city's exploitation of the farming village, cannot be achieved by prosecuting a class struggle whereby the city and the village are set against one another. It cannot be achieved without abolishing the division of labour system (in other words, the capitalist system) which sets the city and the village against one another.[48]

The alternative strategy which Hatta and his comrades put forward was not to subjugate the cities or to declare the villages independent of the urban centres, as the physiocrats intended to do. Instead, the pure anarchists sought to bring about a revolution which would be jointly executed by the farmers in the villages and the wage-earning workers in the clues. The aim of such a revolution would be to dissolve the cities and convert the villages into the communes which the pure anarchists anticipated would form the constituent elements of an anarchist communist

[47] Ibid. (1981), p. 184.
[48] Ibid., p. 186.

society. However, to win the peasants and tenant farmers over to this strategy of cooperating with the urban workers, it was necessary to convince them that they were not, as the physiocrats asserted, the sole objects of exploitation. To this end, Hatta devoted much effort towards examining the nature of exploitation and identifying the roots of the antagonism which existed between the cities and the villages. Hatta did not deny that the capitalist stood at the apex of the system of exploitation that constituted capitalism, nor that the tenant farmer was at the base of the same system. Even though, in Hatta's estimation, the capitalists were not the sole exploiters, he readily conceded that they were the social group engaged in the most systematic appropriation of the wealth created by others.[49] Conversely, Hatta considered that the tenant farmers were doubly exploited, first by the landlords, due to the exorbitant rents they were forced to pay in kind, and secondly by the cities. Hatta conceived of the latter form of exploitation as a case of unequal exchange. In his view, the tenant farmers were forced through poverty and ignorance to sell their produce cheaply as raw materials or food to the cities. When these raw materials came back to the villages as manufactured commodities, the same factors of poverty and ignorance enabled the urban entrepreneurs to sell them expensively.[50]

Hatta was well aware that urban wage earners are exploited by their capitalist employers. Nevertheless, he was still of the opinion that the workers in the cities benefited from the exploitation of the countryside. He maintained that if, for example, urban workers organised themselves skilfully so as to raise wage levels and/or shorten working hours, the capitalists could recoup their losses by increasing the prices of the goods they sold to the villages. Hence, it seemed to him that, even when the class struggle was prosecuted successfully by workers in the cities, the result was simply a shift in the burden of exploitation from the wage earners to the peasants and tenant farmers.[51] Arguments along these lines were part of Hatta's case against the so-called 'proletarian parties', such as the Nōmin Rōdōtō (Farmer-Labour Party) and the Rōdō Nōmintō (Labour-Farmer Party). He argued that such parties habitually called for a united front of workers and farmers despite the fact that, *within the parameters of capitalism,* there was a conflict between their class interests.[52]

It might be objected that Hatta's account of the mechanics of exploitation displayed a certain degree of economic or sociological naivety. After all, if capitalists could automatically transfer to the agricultural population the losses incurred by conceding wage rises, why should they bother to resist workers' demands as strenuously as they evidently did? Setting such objections aside, however, Hatta's account of the various exploitative relationships outlined so far could be taken as lending weight to, rather than countering, the physiocrats' contention that city folk prospered at the expense of the villagers. Yet where Hatta parted company with the physiocrats was in his claim that 'in today's society, everybody exploits everybody else and robs each other. Everybody engages in a struggle for existence with everybody else.'[53] Actually or potentially, even the poorest peasants or tenant farmers were exploiters, insisted Hatta, and this was why exploitation could not be eradicated from society by taking their side against those who exploited them.

[49] Ibid., p. 131.
[50] Ibid., p. 170.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., p. 257.
[53] Ibid., p. 64.

By giving a further twist to the notion of unequal exchange, Hatta suggested that peasants and tenant farmers exploit when, for example, they exchange rice for fish, or exchange their produce for manufactured articles which contain a fraction of the labour expended in coal mines. Even if formally an exchange of equal quantities of labour time were involved in such commercial transactions, there would be no economic compensation to the coal miners or fishermen for the dangers which their occupations involved. Compared to farming, both coal mining and sea fishing are hazardous operations, which for Hatta signified that peasants and tenant farmers benefited from an exploitative relationship when they consumed the products of these industries.[54] He argued that physiocracy, with its holier than thou attitude towards the city dwellers, failed to recognise that exploitation was a universal condition within capitalism. Thus the physiocrats were wrong to blame the plight of the villages on the cities when the inhabitants of both had a common enemy in the shape of capitalism.[55] For Hatta, the crucial difference between anarchism and physiocracy was that 'anarchism is opposed to the antagonism between city and village (physiocracy is opposed only to the city)'.[56]

Although the physiocrats were opposed to inequality between the cities and the villages, they were far from being against hierarchy in principle and tended to eulogise patterns of authority in the countryside, including the supposedly paternalistic relationship between landlords and tenants. Hatta and the other pure anarchists interpreted life in the agricultural villages quite differently from the physiocrats in this regard. For the pure anarchists, one reason why the rural villages were so important was that they were seen as repositories of healthy 'natural anarchism' even in a society which was becoming more and more diseased, due to the spread of pathological capitalism. As the pure anarchists saw it, agricultural production was so dependent on cooperation by the farming community that even capitalism could not smother this inherent feature of village life. In one of his *Lectures on Social Problems in the Farming Villages,* Hatta wrote:

> In the present era of capitalism, selfish egoism has penetrated even into the villages, but all the same the farming village cannot exist unless, as a village, it practises cooperative irrigation and cooperative endeavour. When the farmers organise a village by means of cooperative and communal endeavour, they possess a power which does not depend on the law or on orders, but which is the power of human beings to organise a natural society and to strive for a cooperative existence and common prosperity—a natural power which human beings have been endowed with from ancient times.[57]

In passages such as this, Hatta tried to persuade the peasants and tenant farmers to see their villages in a different light from that shed by physiocracy. Poor and exploited though the villages might be, and though they might fall far short of the communes of the society to come, they possessed, in the shape of communal solidarity, one of the indispensable cornerstones on which anarchist communism would be built.

A second reason why Hatta attributed such importance to the rural villages was the sheer size of the agricultural population:

[54] Ibid., p. 131.
[55] Ibid., pp. 61–2.
[56] Ibid., p. 188.
[57] Ibid., p. 284.

> The farmers account for a majority of the population and occupy a vast area of land. If this great mass does not awaken and does not move, the reform of society cannot possibly be achieved. For example, whatever the scale of the movement which the urban workers organise, as long as the farming masses do not move, it will fizzle out. Even if we supposed that it succeeded, it could only take the form of centralised authority and not of an organisation based on locally autonomous libertarian federation. The foundation stones on which to build the new society that we long for are none other than the awakening of the tenant farmers and the launching of their determined movement. Whether our creative movement is destroyed or lives depends solely on the awakening of the farmers.[58]

Hatta was angered by the superiority complex displayed by some city-based workers towards the peasants and tenant farmers, an attitude which he claimed was particularly prevalent among the members of the Communist Party.[59] He argued that it was a major mistake to imagine that society's problems could be solved by the urban workers taking action on their own in the cities. Echoing Kropotkin's warnings in *The Conquest of Bread,* Hatta asked what would be the outcome of an uprising which was confined to the city alone. Dwindling food stocks would soon precipitate a crisis and any attempt to solve this by adopting authoritarian measures towards the countryside would be self-defeating for the project of liberation in which the workers were engaged.[60] Hatta insisted that it was therefore vital for the urban workers to rid themselves of any arrogance or trace of superiority in their dealings with the peasants and tenant farmers. Likewise, the peasants and tenant farmers should shake off any sense that they were inferior to the city dwellers and should instead be aware of their heavy responsibility, since the outcome of any revolution would hinge on their readiness to cooperate with the urban workers. It was this realisation which constituted the most important difference between the physiocrats and the pure anarchists. While both talked in terms of instituting radical change, the former believed that the way to bring this about was to accentuate the rural population's feelings of hostility towards those who lived in the cities. By way of contrast, pure anarchists like Hatta repeated tirelessly that 'our movement cannot succeed without [the urban workers and the farmers] advancing together in a spirit of heartfelt mutual cooperation and mutual aid'.[61]

Science

In addition to the attacks on various features of existing society which we have considered so far, Hatta also launched a frontal assault on science. In a series of articles on 'Natural Science and Anarchism' which appeared in *Rōdō Undō* (Labour Movement) in 1927 he announced his intention 'to prove that natural science is the enemy of the people and to give a detailed explanation of the fact that a new system of knowledge must be created'.[62] Hatta pointed out that when people talked about the 'wonders of science', such as the radio, or the motor car or the electric tram (all of which were still novelties in Japan in the 1920s), they overlooked the fact that much of the misery

[58] Ibid., pp. 237–8.
[59] Ibid., p. 235.
[60] Ibid., p. 236.
[61] Ibid., p. 238.
[62] Ibid., p. 8.

of modern life was equally attributable to science. To Hatta's way of thinking, the regimenting of workers in the factories and the phenomenon of people toiling endlessly in poverty were just as much the result of science's role in society as were spectacular inventions and handy gadgets.[63] He recognised that some would argue that it was not science itself which was at fault but the use to which it was put by existing society. Hatta was little impressed by such arguments, however, since his contention was that science and capitalism were inextricably linked together so that there was nothing fortuitous about the fact that the former served the interests of the latter.

In order to support this contention, Hatta developed a critique of science which was embedded in an historical account of the changing forms of human knowledge. Starting with the earliest forms, he sought to identify the characteristics which knowledge had exhibited among so-called 'primitive' peoples. He suggested that, within their range of knowledge, it was whatever was most important for maintaining life (knowledge of crops, knowledge of fire, and so forth) that was most highly valued. Indeed, in early societies whatever contributed most to communal well-being was usually endowed with a spiritual aura. The other vital aspect of supposedly 'primitive' knowledge to which Hatta drew attention was that it was held in common by the community as a whole, it was not the property of specialists, nor was it used to bolster the power of a privileged minority.[64]

Hatta argued that, although the forms taken by human knowledge change as society evolves, the common feature of all systems of knowledge found within class societies is that care is taken by the ruling class to monopolise vital areas of knowledge so that they can be used as instruments of social control. The principle of common knowledge is thus lost, as is the belief that whatever contributes most to communal well-being has the highest spiritual value. It is not necessary to go into the details of Hatta's description of varieties of class knowledge, but his general approach can be conveyed by citing one of his examples—Europe in the Middle Ages. In medieval Europe, he explained, knowledge took the form of religious dogma and was employed by the ruling class to mystify the people, discourage dissent and justify the elite's power and privileges.[65]

By extending this line of reasoning, Hatta developed the case that science was not knowledge as such but was merely one variety of class knowledge. He maintained that it was not an historical accident that the rise of science coincided with the consolidation and expansion of capitalism. On the contrary, being a class society, capitalism needed a form of knowledge which was monopolised by specialists ('scientists'), was therefore inaccessible to the mass of the people, and could be used as an allegedly neutral and value-free arbiter whenever people's interests were sacrificed in the name of 'progress'. Hatta insisted that there was thus a parallel between capitalism and earlier types of class society. In the ancient world, rule by the elders went hand in hand with the politics of plunder and an ideology rooted in magic. In the Middle Ages, the feudal rulers relied on despotic politics and an ideology of religious dogma to maintain their grip on power. Hatta's claim was that the modern age was no different, in that a capitalist ruling class employed parliamentary politics and the ideology of science for similar purposes. In other words, each social system has its own style of politics and its own form of knowledge which, in each case, is tailored to meet its particular needs.[66]

[63] Ibid., p. 9.
[64] Ibid., pp. 10–11.
[65] Ibid., pp. 10–12.
[66] Ibid., p. 15.

Hatta did not dispute that in some ways science represented an advance over previous forms of knowledge. For example, he did not deny that there had been an advance in human understanding when it was grasped that the planet turns on its axis, rather than the sun rising in the East and setting in the West. What he was at pains to point out, however, was that the price which had been exacted for this advance in understanding was the emergence of 'the belief in an all-powerful reason' (*risei bannōshugi*).[67] Ordinary men and women were henceforth perceived as insignificant in the face of a natural universe which works according to its own inexorable laws: 'Giant nature becomes an enormous machine which operates without concern for human happiness or misery and, irrespective of whether they are laughing or crying, in the face of this machine of giant nature, human beings become creatures devoid of any authority.'[68] For Hatta the danger inherent in this attitude was that scientists come to erect 'natural laws' which, because they are considered to be expressions of incontrovertible reason, take on the role of sources of authority to which the people have no option but to submit. Hatta was suspicious of external authority in any shape, no matter whether it took the form of rulers and their self-serving laws or science and its 'natural laws'. His contention was that 'natural laws' are not natural phenomena existing independently of humans. 'What are natural laws?', he asked, and replied: 'They are nothing more than things which reduce observed reality to an extremely simple form for the sake of economic convenience in human thought.'[69] Even 'nature' is a product of human thought—a concept and an abstraction: 'Both what is called nature and natural laws were created by humans for the sake of humans. Humans were not created for the sake of nature and natural laws.'[70] Hence, part of Hatta's case against science was that, being the products of human minds, so-called 'natural laws' are fallible and should be treated with scepticism, rather than as forces to which people have no option but to conform.

The conclusion which Hatta draw from his investigation into science was that 'we must build a new social system, create a new system of knowledge, and get rid of science'.[71] He believed that one of the ways in which science reflects capitalism's priorities is that it operates on the principle of universality (*fuhensei*). Just as the bottom line for capitalism is inevitably the mathematical calculation of profit and loss, so science too is based on mathematics, in the sense that it relies on methods such as quantitative assessment and establishing numerically derived norms which are to be enforced with scant regard for local conditions and exceptional circumstances. In place of science, Hatta looked to the emergence of a new system of anarchist communist knowledge which would adopt specificity (*tokushusei*) rather than universality as its fundamental principle. For that reason, he thought that the geographical rather than the mathematical metaphor came closest to capturing the essence of anarchist communist knowledge. This was because the form of knowledge which he favoured was one which would be, above all, sensitive to local circumstances and conditions: 'Like the people of ancient times, we should take as our starting point the knowledge which relates to the land on which we live in each district.'[72] In anarchist communism as Hatta envisaged it, the people of each locality would live a life of self-support and self-sufficiency, and they would absorb that knowledge and engage in that study which enabled

[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid., p. 20.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid., pp. 20–1.

them to satisfy their needs with the minimum of labour. Universality was not to be rejected out of hand just because it was such a prominent feature of science. It could be assimilated into the new system of knowledge, but only to the extent that it contributed to specificity, locality, practical application and happiness. Hence the contrast with the currently prevailing species of knowledge was that universality would not be allowed to dictate people's fate blindly, as it was wont to do under the rule of science at the service of capitalism.[73]

In view of Hatta's hostility to science, it was ironic that in 1928 he should have translated into Japanese Kropotkin's *Modern Science and Anarchism.* In his preface to the translation Hatta had to admit that Kropotkin's purpose in writing this booklet had been to give anarchism a scientific foundation and he conceded that Kropotkin 'grasped the points of agreement between science and anarchism'.[74] Obviously, this presented Hatta with a dilemma, since he was as fervent in his admiration of Kropotkin as he was in his hostility towards science. Hatta attempted to circumvent this difficulty by claiming that Kropotkin had used the term 'science' in a particular way which made it acceptable to anarchists. Thus he wrote: 'I am opposed to Marx's "science", but I agree unconditionally with Kropotkin's "science".'[75] As with his comment on Kropotkin and the *soviets*, such a remark can only be explained in terms of Hatta's loyalty to the principal theoretician of anarchist communism blunting his normal acerbity. The fact is that Kropotkin's understanding of science seems to have been largely at one with the prevailing nineteenth century use of the term. This was revealed in the passage in *Modern Science and Anarchism* where he committed anarchism both to the methodology of the natural sciences and to an aim which was clearly premised on the scientific principle of universality:

> Anarchism is a world-concept based upon a mechanical explanation of all phenomena, embracing the whole of nature—that is, including in it the life of human societies and their economic, political and moral problems. Its method of investigation is that of the exact natural sciences, and, if it pretends to be scientific, every conclusion it comes to must be verified by the method by which every scientific conclusion must be verified. Its aim is to construct a synthetic philosophy comprehending in one generalization all the phenomena of nature—and therefore also the life of societies.[76]

Hence it was ironic that Hatta should have attributed to Kropotkin a distinctive interpretation of science, since this was a claim which could have been directed with far greater justification at Hatta himself. It was Hatta's understanding of science as the ideology of capitalism which informed all his writings on the subject and which induced him to attack science with such uninhibited gusto.

Marxism

As with syndicalism, Marxism for Hatta was part of the world which had to be conquered rather than a conveyor of hope for a new world. His writings on Marxism ranged from critical examinations of Marx's theories, such as the materialist conception of history, to denunciations of what

[73] Ibid., p. 21.
[74] Ibid., p. 190.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Baldwin (1927), p. 150.

(as was mentioned earlier) he took to be the concrete application of those theories in the shape of the regime in Russia and its local apologist—the Nihon Kyōsantō (Communist Party of Japan). Although Hatta did not distinguish between the Marxism of Marx himself and the 'Marxism' of his bolshevik epigones, the following account will concentrate on the former in the interest of clarity. Failure to do so would raise major questions, such as the extent to which Marx can be held responsible for the actions of later generations who invoked his name. Such questions fell outside of Hatta's fields of interest and therefore do not concern us here.

We have already seen that Hatta wrote extensively on the theory of the class struggle, which was one of the main weapons in Marx's theoretical armoury. Yet, although Hatta referred to Marx when discussing the problems involved in aggregating people into social classes, it was the anarchist syndicalists who served as his main example of a movement led away from communism by basing its strategy on the class struggle.[77] Even so, one should not lose sight of the fact that, in directly targeting syndicalism, Hatta was indirectly attacking Marx too. This was particularly the case with regard to the class struggle since, as we have seen, Hatta held that this area of syndicalist theory was largely derived from Marx. Hatta did not dispute that syndicalism differed from most varieties of self-proclaimed 'Marxism' (he cited revisionism and bolshevism as examples) due to its declared hostility towards political parties and the state.[78] Paradoxically, however, this merely confirmed syndicalism as an exceptionally pure form of Marxism in Hatta's eyes. His argument here rested on Marx's distinction between economic infrastructure and social superstructure. By rejecting superstructural politics and focusing on economic action at the level of the all-important infrastructure, anarchist syndicalists revealed their true nature, argued Hatta. 'If this is not Marxism, what is it?', he asked rhetorically.[79] Hence, bearing in mind this identification of syndicalism with Marxism, it is fair to say that in all Hatta's writings on the class struggle Marx figured as the ultimate target of his criticism.

Marx was also a proponent of the labour theory of value and we have already seen some of Hatta's objections to this theory (as when he criticised Proudhon, for example). In the case of the labour theory of value, however, Marx was frequently the direct object of Hatta's critical attention. His two principal objections to the Marxian labour theory of value were, first, that value is a subjective quality which cannot be measured objectively and, second, that Marx debased communism by suggesting that it would have recourse, at least in its early days, to a value-based wages system. In the first place, Hatta asserted that the value of goods is determined neither by the labour incorporated into them nor by their scarcity. In Hatta's opinion, the 'value' of an article for any particular person depends entirely on that individual's inclinations and circumstances. Since no two individuals ever share precisely the same tastes or live under identical conditions, the value of an object can never be exactly the same for both of them. Hatta's understanding of value was, in fact, one of the philosophical cornerstones of his support for anarchist communism. In Hatta's view, only an economy functioning along communist lines could accommodate the infinite variety of personal 'values', because only communism—by replacing economic exchange by free access to goods—would dispense with the need for a universal standard of value. To put this in Hatta's own words: 'Let's strive for an economic system without prices, an economics of the free communes organised on the basis of true, unmeasured value.'[80]

[77] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981), p. 79.
[78] Ibid. (1983), pp. 11–12.
[79] Ibid., p. 12.
[80] Ibid. (1981), p. 110.

Hatta's second major criticism of the Marxian labour theory of value was that:

> as long as Marx adopted the labour theory of value, he could not escape from the fundamental principles of capitalism. On the one hand, his theory became collective individualism (where a collective engaged in a certain industry exclusively possesses value created by the whole of society) and, as a result, was separated from true communism. On the other hand, an all-encompassing wages system was to be established with the state or a limited society (*shō shakai*) as the capitalist and the people all as workers. In this way, the people were to be permanently enchained.[81]

Here Hatta was less concerned with Marx's use of the labour theory of value as an instrument for analysing capitalism than he was with Marx's proposal that it should be carried over into the notorious 'first phase of communist society'.[82] In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme,* Marx claimed that in the 'first phase' of communism articles of consumption would in effect be purchased with labour vouchers received in accordance with the number of hours one had worked. According to the Marxian labour theory of value, under capitalism commodities exchange in proportion to the quantities of socially necessary labour incorporated within them. Marx had recommended that in his 'first phase' of communism the exchange of labour vouchers for means of consumption would operate in a similar fashion: 'the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity-equivalents, so much labour in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labour in another form'.[83] Following Kropotkin in *The Conquest of Bread,* Hatta insisted that there was no such thing as a 'first phase' of communism which featured a wages system or which used labour time as the unit of economic calculation. Any system which employed such devices would be no more than a variant of capitalism, maintained Hatta. It could not legitimately be considered as even a preliminary stage of communism, since 'when labour becomes the basis of all value we are destroying the foundation of the concept of communism'.[84] Hatta refused to accept any watering down of the communist challenge to capitalism because for him communism necessarily entailed each individual's free and unrestricted access to the entire array of available goods. As a member of the communist community, each individual would have the right of unhindered consumption because the goods in question would all be part of the common wealth created by applying the community's collective talents and energies to commonly-held resources. Hatta was adamant that, compared to this vision of communism, Marx's outline of the initial stage of a supposedly new society was in no way worthy of the name 'communism', not even in the qualified form of 'first phase'.

Hatta believed that there had been a time when anarchism had been in mortal danger of falling into the same trap as Marxism, since several of its best-known exponents had employed the labour theory of value. Not only Proudhon, but Bakunin too had incorporated this theory into his proposals for reorganising society and Hatta accused other prominent anarchists, such as Rudolf Rocker (1873–1958), Augustin Souchy and Alexander Berkman, of making the same mistake in later years. According to Hatta, it was Kropotkin who rescued anarchism from this fate when he put it on an unambiguously communist footing. Hatta believed that, had it not been for Kropotkin, anarchism would have been overwhelmed by Marxism:

[81] Ibid., p. 42.
[82] Marx (1942), p. 565.
[83] Ibid., p. 564.
[84] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981), p. 166.

> In the days of the First International, anarchism and Marxism gave the appearance of setting up in business together. In fact, it was thanks to Kropotkin that anarchism was rescued from this major crisis. If Kropotkin had not appeared, anarchism would have been taken over by Marxism in both its theory and practice.[85]

Hatta saw himself as following in Kropotkin's footsteps both when he opposed Marx's theories and when he campaigned against syndicalism, since he interpreted the latter as an attempt to revive the Marxist-influenced variety of anarchism which had prevailed at the time of the First International.[86]

The third theory of Marx's which Hatta found it necessary frequently to challenge in his writings was the materialist conception of history. In advancing this theory, Marx had asserted that people's 'relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production', that their 'social existence determines their consciousness' and that 'in broad outlines we can designate the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the modern bourgeois methods of production as so many epochs in the progress of the economic formation of society'.[87] While Hatta rejected all these propositions, he regarded as the most pernicious the idea that humankind progresses via capitalism due to capitalism allegedly creating the material conditions for achieving communism. Hatta dismissed this out of hand because he regarded capitalism as an unmitigated disaster which should never have been allowed to develop in the first place and whose further development should be uncompromisingly opposed. One of his most outspoken statements to this effect appeared in an article in *Kurohata* (Black Flag) in 1931, where he wrote: 'Capitalism is a disease which absolutely should not be contracted. It is a stage which absolutely should not be permitted to exist in history.'[88] Hatta contradicted Marx in this forthright fashion because he disagreed both with the general proposition of historical progress and with the specific claim that capitalism prepared the ground upon which communism could be built.

As far as historical progress was concerned, Hatta argued that there was no such thing. History was no less important for Hatta than it was for Marx, since he held that it furnished numerous examples of periods in the past when anarchist communism had flourished, but he dismissed the notion of linear progression (as in the Marxian sequence of feudalism to capitalism to communism, for example). According to Hatta's reading of history, 'civilisation' based on rule and exploitation had occupied no more than a few thousand years of the last 100,000 years of human existence. In other words, for the bulk of its existence on the planet 'humankind had been experiencing a peaceful society without rule or exploitation' and, furthermore, 'a society without the distinction between town and country, without the division of labour'.[89] Even with the emergence of urban civilisation, all was not lost because much of the subsequent history of the human race could be interpreted as a continuing struggle between centralised power on the one hand and decentralised autonomy on the other. Hatta considered that the principal examples of the latter have been the uncountable number of villages, found in all countries throughout the ages, which have organised their own affairs and practised a natural communism, although he also pointed to those 'free towns' which successfully threw off central authority in periods such

[85] Ibid., p. 212.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Marx (1911), pp. 11–13.
[88] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981), p. 96.
[89] Ibid., pp. 65–6.

as the European Middle Ages.[90] Hatta's view was that, when these decentralised communities waxed, the urban centres of power waned and vice versa. He maintained that this inverse relationship between centralised power and autonomous community could best be conveyed by the notion that running through human history there is 'a strong will for liberty—a will to live—which rulers and exploitation cannot eradicate'.[91] Hatta believed that it was this urge for liberty which creates history and not the successive replacement of modes of production occurring in conformity with the sequence laid down in Marx's materialist conception of history. As he put it: 'History does not repeat itself, nor does it progress. It is just that, albeit in pain and agony, a giant leap towards liberty is being prepared for.'[92]

As for the specific, historical role of capitalism, Hatta did not see it in the same way as Marx did, principally because their ideas on how communism could be achieved were fundamentally different. Since Marx envisaged communism as the outcome of a struggle between the working class and the capitalist class, a struggle which would culminate in the workers taking over the capitalist means of production and adapting them for communist purposes, he naturally saw capitalism as creating both the subjective agent of revolution (the proletariat) and the material preconditions for communism (large-scale industry). Conversely, for Hatta capitalism merely erected obstacles in the way of communism. By siphoning off revolutionary energy into the class struggle and accentuating the division of labour, it impeded progress towards communism. It should also be added that, because neither the wage-earning working class nor mass production for sale on the market had the same significance for Hatta as for Marx, they did not always use the term 'capitalism' in the same sense. Whereas for Marx 'capitalism' invariably meant a system based on wage labour and capital accumulation, Hatta sometimes used the word as a blanket term to cover all class societies which exhibited private property and exploitation. Hence we can find in his writings passages such as the following:

> It is not simply the wages system that constitutes capitalism. That being the case, capitalism existed in any number of eras. All exploitative economic systems that arise from the private ownership of capital are capitalism; it is not simply the one means of exploitation that takes the form of the wages system that is capitalism. In the history of humankind, capitalism has recurred again and again since ancient times.[93]

However capitalism was defined, and whatever obstacles to communism it threw up, Hatta did not believe that the way forward to communism can be blocked either by the presence or by the absence of capitalist conditions. Indeed, one of his most fundamental beliefs was that communism is an option which remains permanently open throughout human history and that its achievement depends not on material circumstances but on human determination. This was another reason why he rejected the materialist conception of history. Looked at from this perspective, it struck Hatta as a 'mechanical world view' which lacked 'poetry, creativity or impulsiveness'.[94] For Hatta, communism could be achieved at any level of technological development,

[90] Ibid., p. 152.
[91] Ibid., pp. 6–7.
[92] Ibid., p. 7.
[93] Ibid., p. 4.
[94] Ibid., p. 150.

irrespective of the productive capacity that was available. All that was required for communism to blossom was readiness on the part of human beings to organise their lives on the basis of libertarian federation and solidarity with one another. This was why Hatta was especially dismissive of the dialectical component of Marxism, which he regarded as a species of philosophical opportunism. According to him, 'by means of dialectics everything that exists is rationalised', including capitalism, which Marxists had fined into the thesis-antithesis-synthesis equation.[95] In place of dialectics, which he described as one of 'the most laughable things in the world', Hatta recommended a 'principle of action' which would encourage people, no matter at which point in history they found themselves, freely to reject whatever they found unacceptable and freely to struggle for whatever form of society they wished to create.[96]

Since Hatta was such a firm opponent of the materialist conception of history, the question arises whether we should regard him as a philosophical idealist. His idea that human history is the manifestation of 'a strong will for liberty' would certainly suggest as much and Hatta himself did not object to being called an idealist, although he was keen to emphasise that his thought was not what is conventionally understood by idealism.[97] In an article 'What Is an Ideal?', which was published in September 1931, he explained that his opposition to philosophical materialism derived from the fact that materialism lakes the principle of necessity and not the principle of liberty as its fundamental point of reference.[98] On the other hand, in another article which appeared in January of the same year, he denied that his arguments against the materialist conception of history proceeded from philosophical idealism. On that occasion, he wrote that: 'Idealists forget the existence of matter and materialists forget the existence of will.'[99]

Although, on balance, Hatta seemed happier with being identified as an idealist rather than as a materialist, he did not attempt to explain his own thought in such terms. For him, the crucial distinction lay not between idealism and materialism, but between what he termed mechanical thought and biological thought He believed that mechanical cognition had dominated nineteenth century thought, with Marx as one of its exponents. By way of contrast, the twentieth century was to be 'an era of biological cognition, the era of Kropotkin' and, whereas 'mechanical cognition acknowledges authority, biological cognition acknowledges anarchy'.[100] What did Hatta mean by 'biological cognition'? His essential point was that humans are animals and that therefore their social relations, as well as their history, are best understood by referring to the principles which govern the existence of all living creatures. Hatta suggested that the most fundamental of these principles are:

1. They live in accordance with their will to exist.

2. Material circumstances condition the way they live.

3. They alter material conditions by means of mutual aid, which is a manifestation of their will to exist.[101]

[95] Ibid. (1983). p. 6.
[96] Ibid., pp. 5–6.
[97] Ibid. (1981), p. 143.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., p. 84.
[100] Ibid., p. 144.
[101] Ibid., p. 85.

Both idealist and materialist elements were interwoven here in the shape of 'their will to exist' and 'material circumstances' respectively. Hatta's objective, however, was not to identify his thought with either the idealist or the materialist philosophical traditions, but to argue that, whether material conditions are propitious or adverse, anarchist communism represents the social organisation of the human species which is biologically most advantageous. It followed from this that, just as humans' biological nature does not change to any appreciable extent over the ages, neither does their need for anarchist communism.

6. Hope for a New World

It often happens that those who spend their time criticising the bad, old world are noticeably reluctant to offer a concrete alternative to it. A declared aversion to utopian speculation often becomes the convenient excuse for providing few details about a frequently invoked 'new society' which is alleged to be waiting in the wings. Whatever one thinks of the pure anarchists, one cannot accuse them of failing to provide an alternative vision of how society might be organised. Particularly in the writings of Hatta Shūzō one finds not only a sweeping critique of the old world but also a coherent explanation of the principal features of a new world which, he insisted (and many thousands agreed), was not merely desirable but attainable too.

As has already been explained, the pure anarchists were anarchist communists. They followed Kropotkin and the other pioneers of anarchist communism in envisaging the new society as a federation of autonomous communes organised on the basis of free agreement, well-being for all and mutual aid. Production and consumption were to accord with the well-worn formula that people 'would work according to ability' and receive shares according to need' without recourse to buying and selling.[1] All were to take part in decision-making and no group within society would wield power over any other, hence eliminating the possibility of exploitation. Describing 'our ideal society', Iwasa Sakutarō wrote:

> Here, having abolished legal coercion, compulsion by hunger, economic incentives and so on, all of which force people to work, it will be an economic system based on free consumption—on consumption according to need. It will be a society where all people support each other and are themselves supported, where life is lived by relying on one another and helping one another. There will be no need for laws. This being the case, there will be nowhere where authority could take root and everyone will be a completely free man or woman. There will be neither rulers nor ruled, neither exploiters nor exploited. Since there will be no-one to buy labour, it follows that there won't be anyone selling labour either. It could not be other than anarchy—in other words, a society without government—where all people can, in fact, realise their true personalities.[2]

Social Physiology

Outlined in these general terms, the pure anarchists' vision of anarchist communism was little different from the way in which it has often been depicted before and since. However, Hatta tried to get beyond the level of vague generalisation so as to discern in more concrete detail the essential contours of an anarchist communist society. In order to do this, he took a remark

[1] Iwasa (1931), p. 8.
[2] Ibid., pp. 8–9.

by Kropotkin that the study of the needs of humankind and the means of satisfying them with the least possible waste of human energy constituted the 'Physiology of Society' and tried to work out what anarchist communism, conceived as social physiology, would entail.[3] Physiology . seemed to Hatta to be a particularly important feature of anarchist communism, since it stood in such marked contrast to the pathological condition to which human society had been reduced by class domination and exploitation.[4] His intention was to investigate social physiology with the aim of replacing the conventional fields of study of economics, ethics and politics. Closely following Kropotkin, Hatta defined social physiology as the discovery of the means for satisfying human needs with the minimal expenditure of human energy 'so as to realise universal happiness'.[5] Since health and happiness go hand in hand, 'universal happiness' was clearly an appropriate objective when attempting to arrive at a physiologically sound condition of society.

One of the ways in which social physiology came into conflict with conventional economics was over the question of people's wants or desires. These were every bit as important for Hatta as they were for conventional economists:

> Universal satisfaction is the satisfaction of everyone's individual desires. To put it another way, it is to plan the satisfaction of individual desires. The fundamental principle of the communist system lies here. Kropotkin said that if one's point of departure is not the satisfaction of individual desires, one cannot reach a genuinely communist system. It has to be said that this remark of Kropotkin's is truly the definitive statement on the subject.[6]

Yet where Hatta differed from conventional economists was over their arbitrary, but none the less crucial, assumption that human desires are infinite and that, faced with a world of finite resources, it is necessary to economise—and hence to study the best means of achieving economies via the discipline of economics. Clearly, if conventional economics were correct in its belief that desires are insatiable, then the pure anarchists' goal of a society where people would freely consume on the one hand and work voluntarily on the other would remain forever unrealisable, no matter how physiologically advantageous it might be. The human condition would be doomed to remain one of men and women competing to grab whatever they could from permanently inadequate sources of supply, just as conventional economics asserts.

Hatta rose to this challenge in the extended article 'A Sketch of Social Physiology' which was serialised in *Rōdō Undō* (Labour Movement) between June and September 1927. Confronting the views of academic economists, the type of questions he tackled there were:

> are desires as a matter of fact infinite, as they claim? Is it desire which, as they say, is the mother that gives birth to the giant monster of modern civilisation? ... Is the idea of freeing everyone from scarcity mere utopianism? Is it impossible for humans to escape from their fate of desires which are unlimited and scarcity which knows no bounds?[7]

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[3] Kropotkin (1972), p. 191.
[4] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981), p. 69.
[5] Ibid., p. 27.
[6] Ibid., p. 45.
[7] Ibid., p. 31.

Hatta's answer was that, on the contrary, there were definite limits to desires and that it was quite possible, even on the basis of the existing forces of production, to attain a situation where no-one would need to go without and everyone could enjoy abundance. Hatta deployed various arguments to support his views and to expose the woolly thinking that lay behind the assertion that human desires are unlimited, but central to his case against conventional economics was the role that is played (and, even more so, could be played) by human solidarity (*rentaisei*). Quite reasonably, Hatta pointed out that conventional economists take the behaviour manifested by people within the sick society of capitalism and proceed to make unwarranted generalisations about the inherent nature of the human animal, as though the same characteristics apply whatever the circumstances. Hatta counter-attacked by insisting that it is precisely because capitalism tramples on solidarity that human desires become diseased. The analogy he drew was with cancer. What makes cancer a pathological condition is its tendency to spread out of control and so it is with unhealthily stimulated desires under capitalism, suggested Hatta. One could no more draw valid conclusions about the intrinsic qualities of human desires by studying them under capitalist conditions than one could make generalisations about animal cells after observing only cancerous varieties:

> This is pathology. It is not physiology. In the brutal state of affairs found in existing society, the symptoms of cancer crop up in our desires. But this should not be taken as the real nature of cells.[8]

Hatta argued that, even in a diseased society like capitalism, pathology did not go unchallenged. Physiology was at work too and predictably he cited the farmers as evidence of this. As on other occasions, his argument here was that, without solidarity being practised in the farming communities, agriculture would become impossible and would grind to a halt. He also added that, even beyond the farming villages in the wider society generally, there was evidence of solidarity at work, particularly at times of crisis and disaster. The conclusion which Hatta drew from such observations was that, if even within the pathological society of capitalism, the physiology of human solidarity manifested itself in everyday situations, here was proof that solidarity was, biologically speaking, the basic instinct of human beings. Furthermore, it was impossible that human desires would be unaffected by this instinctual nature of the human animal.[9] Hatta freely acknowledged his debt to Kropotkin in developing this line of argument. Its main thrust was that in the new society, which would encourage solidarity rather than attempting to smother it as capitalism does, it was the bonding between people which would act as the limiting factor on their desires and induce them to harmonise their personal satisfaction with the well-being of the community. Perceptions of personal plenty would be influenced by the community of which one was a member and by the strong ties of affection and solidarity between individuals.

Just as conventional economics rests on the bedrock of the assumed insatiability of human desires, so Hatta's social physiology took solidarity between human beings as its foundation stone. Obviously, to build a physiologically sound society on this foundation meant to eliminate those pathological features which, in combination, constitute the disease of capitalism. In line with his critique of capitalist society, Hatta identified those pathological symptoms as centralised power (which he saw as being inextricably linked to the division of labour), exploitation and the

[8] Ibid., p. 32.
[9] Ibid., pp. 32–3.

tendency to give production precedence over consumption. A form of anarchist communism therefore had to be devised which, by acting in the same fashion as preventive medicine, would ensure society's physiological health by blocking the recurrence of the symptoms of the capitalist disease. It was in the process of devising such built-in safeguards of social health that Hatta achieved a level of detail which outstripped that found in most other descriptions of anarchist communism.

Decentralisation

It might be argued that there was nothing special about Hatta favouring decentralisation. After all, anarchist communists of every description have envisaged the new society as a federation of autonomous communes. To that extent, anarchist communism by its very nature could be said to be a political arrangement which automatically stands at the opposite pole to the centralised power of the state. However. Hatta believed that simply breaking up the state into local, self-governing units would not be an adequate safeguard against the reappearance of power relations or, indeed, against an eventual relapse into centralisation. In his view, there would be a particular danger of this occurring if the politically decentralised communes continued to practise an economic division of labour. Economic specialisation within the commune could easily provide an opportunity for the emergence of new forms of social stratification, where those with particular expertise which was of crucial importance to the community could use their monopoly of certain fields of knowledge and skills to acquire power and privileges. Similarly, a division of labour between communes, such that each commune specialised in a particular economic activity, could just as easily give rise to an imbalance of power within society at large, due to the unequal degrees of importance of different lines of production. In other words, Hatta maintained that a network of communes which retained the division of labour would suffer from the same ills that, as we saw in the previous chapter, he predicted would overwhelm a society organised along syndicalist lines.

To avoid this outcome, Hatta insisted that the political decentralisation achieved by dissolving the centralised state into a federation of autonomous communes would have to be matched by an equal degree of economic decentralisation. In place of steel-producing areas or agricultural districts, each local commune would need to engage in all-round economic activity and become a microcosm of the economy as a whole. As far as possible, each commune should produce its own food, manufacture its own industrial products, be self-sufficient in energy and so on. Hatta and the other pure anarchists did not make a fetish out of autarky and there was no reason why, at the margins, there should not be giving and receiving (as distinct from exchange) relations between communes. What had to be avoided, however, was reliance on external sources for vital supplies, since this would make any commune which was caught in that situation vulnerable to outside pressure. If articles in everyday use could not be produced locally, alternatives should be sought or, if needs be, the commune should be prepared to do without. Not that the pure anarchists thought that this turn of events was very likely. As Aizawa Hisao (b. 1908) put it in April 1930 in an article entitled 'We Can Immediately Achieve a Libertarian Society', 'the development of a high level of productivity means that today we can produce sufficient quantities even by resorting to a decentralised system, in other words to a society where people consume ac-

cording to their needs and work according to their abilities'.[10] Nevertheless, as Miyazaki Akira's (1889–1977) *Appeal to the Farmers* made amply clear in February 1931, the pure anarchists did see political and economic liberty as taking precedence over convenience in everyday life. Perhaps because Miyazaki was discussing the situation that could arise in the agricultural villages as they engaged in the actual process of detaching themselves from urban capitalism and transforming themselves into libertarian communes, he considered such eventualities as the electricity current being cut off or supplies of paraffin oil running out. In addition to suggesting alternative, locally-produced energy sources, such as methane gas or vegetable oils, Miyazaki did not flinch from recognising the possibility that a newly emergent commune might even have to dispense with artificial lighting and adjust to living by natural daylight.[11] However unlikely such drastic measures might have been, the very fact that the pure anarchists openly considered them illustrates the lengths to which they were prepared to go, if necessary, in order to safeguard decentralisation and to circumvent the power relations inherent in a situation where energy sources or other vital supplies lay outside the local commune's control.

Nevertheless, despite recognising certain problems which might possibly be associated with economic decentralisation, the pure anarchists naturally were inclined to stress the benefits of what Hatta called the 'locally decentralised communist system'.[12] In an article on 'The Two Meanings of the Decentralised System' he claimed that, in the first place, it would be more productive than the division of labour and that its second (and more important) meaning lay in the fact that it could guarantee human liberty by sweeping away political power.[13] The pure anarchists expected a decentralised economy to be highly productive for a variety of reasons. First, by abolishing the wages system, it would be a society without alienation. People would work individually and collectively for their own satisfaction and benefit, thereby eliminating all those counter-productive practices which embody wage workers' resistance to their bosses or which express their dissatisfaction with the commodities they are forced to produce. Second, by dissolving the cities and hence dispersing the industrial workers among the agricultural villages, they anticipated a vast increase in productivity within the formerly backward, farming sector of the economy due to the application of industrial skills to agricultural production. As Miyazaki's *Appeal to the Farmers* put it, 'will this not speed up the pace of change whereby the villages cease to be mere communist agricultural villages and become a cooperative society which is a fusion of agriculture and industry?'[14] Third, due to the combined effects of the reasons given above, they also expected that there would be an explosion of inventiveness and fruitful experimentation as the members of the communes pooled their knowledge and, by taking full advantage of their familiarity with local conditions, used their talents creatively for the common good. The point needs to be made that, despite the pure anarchists' hostility to large-scale industry, they were not opposed to employing machinery or introducing new techniques of production. What they looked for was certainly a dismembering of the capitalist factory, with its inhuman production processes and industry designed with the capitalists' interests in mind. Yet in its place they did not seek to resurrect the pre-industrial village of the past, but to move forward to a form of anarchist communism which would combine the best features of agriculture and industry both in

[10] *Kurohata* vol. 2 no. 4, April 1930, p. 8.
[11] Ibid. vol. 3 no. 2, February 1931, p. 8.
[12] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981), p. 127.
[13] Ibid., p. 24.
[14] *Kurohata* vol. 3 no. 2, February 1931, p. 13.

the production undertaken in each local commune and in the lifestyle of each individual. Hatta explicitly rejected the machine breaker's mentality when he wrote:

> We are completely opposite to the medievalists. We seek to use machines as means of production and, indeed, hope for the invention of yet more ingenious machines.[15]

All the same, whatever the claimed increase in productive potential that decentralised communism was expected to bring, in the final analysis the pure anarchists did not seek to justify their preferred social system in terms of the economic advantages it might deliver. Scattered throughout Hatta's writings are numerous remarks to the effect that 'humankind cannot advance to happiness by means of a large volume of production'.[16] As has already been mentioned, the ultimate meaning of political and economic decentralisation for Hatta was that he saw it as the key to people retaining control of their own lives and not finding themselves on the receiving end of decisions taken elsewhere. He believed that. without decentralisation, a stratum of specialised administrators, entrusted with the function of coordinating production, would be bound to emerge. Decentralisation could prevent this from occurring because, in the first place, the scale of the coordinating exercise would be held in check by confining it to the level of the local commune. Secondly. decentralisation would also act to preserve the transparency of the coordination process since, simply by virtue of living within the commune, everyone would be informed about local resources, productive activities and needs. Hence, just as Hatta expected that in an anarchist communist society everyone would participate in production in proportion to their talents and energies and inclinations, so it was anticipated that all people would similarly take part in running the commune and in coordinating production. Universal participation in all aspects of communal life would block the emergence of a privileged elite equipped with special knowledge and exempted from production because of its administrative duties. Hatta succinctly summed up this area of pure anarchist theory when he wrote:

> In a system of decentralised production, where people individually and collectively produce to satisfy their own needs, the producers will also be the coordinators. They will coordinate production in the process of producing and hence no special coordinating organ will be required. A superior organ, composed of people who coordinate production without taking part in production, will not be needed. In other words, coordination will occur internally, within the commune, so that there will be no danger, or even possibility, of power emerging.[17]

Abolishing the Division of Labour and Exploitation

To achieve a situation where everyone would be involved in growing the communal crops, manufacturing industrial products in the cooperative workshops, running the community's affairs, contributing to cultural life and so on, would clearly depend on transcending the division of labour. Yet, however desirable that might be in theory, could it ever be realised in practice?

[15] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981), p. 127.
[16] Ibid., p. 129.
[17] Ibid. (1983), p. 32.

Could any single individual conceivably have sufficient time and zest to engage in so many varied activities? At a more fundamental level, what exactly did Hatta and the other pure anarchists mean by 'abolishing the division of labour' anyway? Did this turn of phrase imply something as far-fetched as the entire commune engaging simultaneously in precisely the same activity? If so, would this not entail an entirely unacceptable degree of regimentation and conformity?

The answers to several of these questions emerge once we recognise the distinction which Hatta made between the 'division of labour' (*bungyō*) and the 'division of work' (*tewake*). *Bun* and *wake* are alternative readings of the same character [□] in Japanese, which has the meaning 'division'. Gyo [□] is literally 'occupation'. Hence, in combination with *bun,* we get *bungyō* [□□], meaning the 'division of occupations' or, more colloquially, the 'division of labour'. *Te* [□] is a character signifying 'hand', so that *tewake* [□□□] conveys the meaning 'hands divided' or, again more colloquially, the 'division of work'. Bearing these lexicological distinctions in mind, we need to realise that, while Hatta believed that the division of labour (*bungyō*) was the cause of class divisions and exploitation, he did not see anything sinister in the division of work (*tewake*). On the contrary, Hatta believed that the division of work was a benign and unavoidable feature of any productive process: 'it goes without saying that within society, whatever the kind of production, there has to be a division of work'.[18]

To put it another way, the dangers to which Hatta drew attention did not arise from a situation where, at any one time, different people were engaged in different productive activities. This, he argued, posed no particular threat. What did spell danger, however, was when, either individually or collectively, people permanently divided along occupational lines and withdrew from the pool of communal knowledge expertise which henceforth became the property of a particular profession. It was this development, in Hatta's opinion, which constituted the division of labour and which gave rise to the disastrous consequences that we noted in the previous chapter: the degrading of labour to a mechanical function; the lack of responsibility for, understanding of, or interest in other branches of production; and the need for a superior administrative organ to coordinate the various branches of production. It was Hatta's belief that, within the context of the decentralised economy of anarchist communism, the division of work would not lead to these doom-laden consequences, both because of the limited geographical scale, and because of the intense solidarity, of the commune as a form of organisation. He argued that, because coordinated production would take place on the limited scale of the autonomous commune, people would not be alienated from one another even during periods when they were engaged in different branches of production:

> In Kropotkin's commune type of organisation, everyone could take part in coordination at the same time as engaging in production. There would be [no] need for a special coordinating organ. This would be the case since, even as they engaged in one productive process, people could take direct responsibility for, understand, and have an interest in, other branches of production. This, in its turn, would come about because coordinated industry would be conducted within a limited, autonomous sphere.[19]

[18] Ibid., p. 14.
[19] Ibid.

Reinforcing this effect of living within a tightly knit community, there would be the additional characteristic of life in a commune that people would be moving frequently from one economic activity to another anyway. What incentive would there be for people to identify with one particular branch of production to the exclusion of others when, before long, they would be moving on to another?

Further light can be shed on this area of pure anarchist thought if we examine the intimate connections which existed between Hatta's proposals for abolishing the division of labour and his suggestions as to how exploitation could be eliminated. In Hatta's view, the threat of exploitation always existed when people were reduced to dependency through being forced to rely on others for the means of life. To avoid this predicament, people needed to achieve a situation where, individually and collectively, they were self-sufficient (*jisoku*) and practised self-support (*jikyū*) . Explaining how self-support and self-sufficiency would work in practice, Hatta described the organisation of production within the communes as conforming to the principle 'the things that we need individually we will make as individuals and the things that we need together we will make together'.[20] In concrete terms, what did this mean? In outlining how it might work in practice, Hatta found it useful to distinguish between 'essential production' and 'cultural production'. Under the heading 'essential production' would fall many products which everyone consumed and which therefore were regarded by the entire commune as essential for maintaining life as it was currently lived. Conversely, there would undoubtedly be some items which, while they were 'essential' for the life of certain individuals or certain minorities, would be of no interest to the majority of commune members. In line with his commitment to self-support and self-sufficiency on the one hand, and to the primacy of individual desires on the other. Hatta argued that all people would surely take steps to satisfy whatever needs they personally regarded as 'essential'. Where the entire community was in agreement, all would participate in the communal production of goods which everyone considered to be essential. Although Hatta offered no examples of his own, in the Japanese context rice could usefully illustrate products in this category. Since rice has traditionally been the staple food, one could reasonably expect all members of a commune to take part in the production of a crop which is universally recognised as 'essential' throughout Japan. In the case of a product such as tobacco, however, it would be reasonable to expect that only smokers would cooperate in the effort to grow that crop, since only they would regard it as essential . At the furthest extreme along this narrowing band of agreement over what was considered to be 'essential' might be a single individual who differed from the rest of the commune in finding life intolerable without some product or other. Should such a case occur, it would be up to that individual to take the necessary steps, either by producing individually the required product or perhaps by moving to another commune where perceptions of what was 'essential' were different.[21]

Apart from such 'essential production', all other productive activity was seen by Hatta as falling under the heading of 'cultural production'. 'Culture' in this widely defined sense was of great importance to Hatta. since he was far from seeing anarchist communism merely as the means for satisfying people's physical requirements. On the contrary, he often described communism as a society 'full of poetry and song'.[22] Hatta believed that, in the pursuit of self-

[20] Ibid. (1981), p. 131.
[21] Ibid., p. 132.
[22] Ibid., p. 66.

expression, the commune's members would spontaneously group themselves into any number of cooperative associations whose work would range over a wide variety of artistic and technical fields. Here creative individuals with enquiring minds would find like-minded people with whom to cooperate in the spirit of mutual aid. Here would be an environment in which joint production and experimentation could flourish across the entire range of arts and (to use current terminology) 'sciences' too.[23] Nevertheless, the same principle would apply as within the field of 'essential production'. If any individual found himself or herself alone in the pursuit of certain cultural interests, there would be no impediments to single-handed enquiry and nothing to prevent the solitary expression of an individual taste.

Having outlined Hatta's ideas on the practical steps for eliminating exploitation, we can use the example of rice cultivation (as a case of 'essential production' involving the entire commune) to explain further why he drew such a sharp distinction between the 'division of labour' and the 'division of work'. On the question of 'essential production' in general, Hatta wrote:

> Essential production is production of things which are essential for the commune as a whole (in other words, for 'us' in the plural) and which is undertaken by the entire community. Naturally, in the course of this production, a division of work can occur within the commune. However, this is not the division of labour. The reason why is because all the people engaged in production are producing by their own effort things which they themselves need. The opportunity simply does not arise for them to make things which they themselves do not need. Moreover, everybody understands, takes an interest in, and feels responsibility for the whole process of production.[24]

As mentioned, we can flesh out the bare bones of this argument by considering it within the context of the commune producing a crop of rice. Rice cultivation is a multifaceted process which extends over many months and involves numerous distinct operations. To mention only the most obvious jobs involved, these include ploughing, tending the seedbeds, flooding the paddy fields, transplanting the seedlings, maintaining the irrigation system, harvesting, transporting, threshing, polishing, storing and so on. Clearly. there would be innumerable opportunities here for people to insert themselves into the overall production process at many different stages and in a wide variety of ways which reflected their particular aptitudes and interests. Even if the entire commune were to tum out at crucial junctures when large amounts of labour were required, such as transplanting time and harvesting, there is no doubt that throughout most of the process of cultivating rice a division of work would be operating. However, Hatta's argument was that, because everybody would be a consumer of rice, would live in intimate contact with the growing crop, and would be accustomed from childhood to regard the cultivation of rice as essential to individual and communal well-being, all would take an interest in the health of the plants and would be familiar with the overall cultivation process. Hence responsibility for, understanding of, or interest in rice growing would not be restricted to one section of the population alone. Nor would any professional group of specialist 'rice farmers' be in a position to hold the rest of society to ransom by virtue of their control of this vital foodcrop.

[23] Ibid., p. 132.
[24] Ibid.

In summary, Hatta and the other pure anarchists saw the division of labour and exploitation as two sides of the same coin. The abolition of one depended on the elimination of the other and the means for achieving these twin goals lay in the decentralised commune practising the 'division of work' as distinct from the 'division of labour'.

Taking Consumption as the Basis

Hatta maintained that one key difference between anarchist communism and all economic systems based on centralised power (which included capitalism) was that only the former would give precedence to consumption in economic decision-making. In his own words:

> In a locally decentralised communist system, production springs from consumption. In place of consumption arising out of production, as in a system based on centralised power, consumption becomes the causal source of production in a system of decentralised production. As far as this point is concerned, a decentralised production system and a system based on centralised power (which I shall abbreviate to 'a centralised production system') reverse the relationship between production and consumption.
>
> centralised production system … production … consumption
>
> decentralised production system … consumption … production[25]

Hatta used the form of words 'the principle of taking consumption as the basis' *(shōhikihonshugi)* to express the idea that the members of each commune would independently decide the material standard of living they wished to enjoy and would then proceed to organise local production in whatever ways suited them best so as to achieve freely agreed levels of consumption. This is very different from existing society, where people's desires for consumption are continually eclipsed by production considerations, reflecting either the state's interest in expanding production or the effect of capitalism's economic laws. In an anarchist communist society neither of these factors could interfere with the communes' priority of satisfying local consumption needs. Centrally planned production targets could only be imposed onto the communes, to the detriment of their members' consumption, if a state were to exist which was provided with the power to force its decisions onto the rest of society. Anarchist communism's declared purpose was precisely to remove the possibility of this occurring by destroying the state and shifting the locus of decision-making from an all-powerful centre to the autonomous communes. Similarly, the compelling need to accumulate capital, which likewise expresses itself as production taking precedence over consumption, only operates in a market economy where rival enterprises compete to outsell each other and acquire profits. Again, one of anarchist communism's aims in abolishing buying and selling, and freeing production from considerations of profit, was precisely to eliminate the economic consequences of capitalism, such as compulsive capital accumulation.

Hatta's concern for 'taking consumption as the basis' dovetailed with the other elements in his political philosophy. He believed that only by giving priority to consumption could the individual's desires be satisfied and could liberty be guaranteed. Since the class struggle was rooted in the clash between workers and capitalists at the point of production, it was only to be expected

[25] Ibid., p. 127.

that those whose strategy and tactics flowed from the class struggle would focus on production. This was how he explained the prevalence of slogans such as 'the workers' right to work' or 'the producers' right to produce' among exponents of the class struggle. He argued that, for the same reason, Marxism and syndicalism both aspired to 'distribute in accordance with the quantity of labour expended' in production and favoured a system where 'those who do not work should not eat'.[26] By way of contrast, Hatta insisted that it was precisely because anarchist communists rejected the class struggle, and the bias towards production which went with it, that they were able to demand 'the right of human beings to satisfy their desires whatever they might be'. In opposition to what he took to be Marxism's and syndicalism's principles of distributive justice, Hatta formulated anarchist communism's alternatives as 'distribute in accordance with everyone's desires' and 'receive in accordance with desires and work according to abilities'.[27]

Undoubtedly, Hatta believed that, compared to a social system such as capitalism which gives priority to expanding the means of production, the mass of the people would be materially better off in a society that 'took consumption as the basis'. This was an important consideration because, as with Kropotkin before him, he understood that an anarchist communist revolution would succeed only if it could provide material security for all. Yet prioritising consumption was intended to be far more than an economic device for raising living standards. Hatta also saw it as the source of human liberty because, for him, liberty was defined as the freedom of people to realise their desires. That was why he denounced as inimical to liberty any social system which, by prioritising production, frustrated people's ability to satisfy their desires:

> In making production our economic starting point, human liberty is lost. This is because human liberty is realised when our desires are expressed in production … Since making production our economic starting point is to determine consumption by means of production, it ends with the denial of liberty.[28]

In Hatta's opinion, human liberty would be part of the very fabric of an anarchist communist society exactly because the sole purpose of production in the decentralised communes would be the satisfaction of people's desires. 'Taking consumption as the basis' meant that production would be moulded and adapted to meet those desires, thereby bringing about a physiologically sound state of affairs which would be reflected in people's psychological as well as their physical well-being. This was why Hatta argued that when one looked at the two formulae

> centralised production system … production … consumption
>
> decentralised production system … consumption … production

'one might think, at first glance, that it hardly makes any difference. Yet, in fact, these constitute the fundamental points of contrast between these two systems.'[29]

[26] Ibid., p. 74.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., pp. 127–8.
[29] Ibid., p. 127.

A World to Win

The pure anarchists were not content with simply dreaming about the new world of anarchist communism, but were committed to an all-out effort to bring it about. Commitment to anarchist communism's realisation, however, raised questions such as what form of organisation would be best suited to achieving this goal and what should be the relationship between the anarchist minority and the mass of the people in the course of bringing it about. Hatta pitched into the debates on these questions with characteristic fervour and expressed his views in a typically forthright fashion. In the final section of this chapter, we shall therefore briefly look at how he thought the new world could be won. The issue of organisation was a hotly contested subject within the anarchists' ranks. To a certain extent, the debate over organisation was part of the wider controversy over syndicalism, but it also reflected the determination of some anarchists to meet the challenge of the bolsheviks' 'democratic centralism' by devising an organisational theory of their own. As we saw in Chapter 1, this was the rationale behind the decision of the Group of Russian Anarchist Communists Abroad to issue the *Organisational Platform of the General Union of Anarchists* in 1926. The phenomenon of 'platformism' (as this tendency became known) provoked heated arguments even in distant Japan and it was partly in reaction to the *Organisational Platform* that Hatta joined the discussion on organisation.[30]

Hatta was against any attempt to 'organise' the anarchist movement in the sense of inventing a theory of organisation to rival 'democratic centralism' which would then be brought into the movement. It was true that Hatta and the other pure anarchists favoured 'libertarian federation' *(jiyū rengōshugi)* as the organisational principle of the anarchist communist movement, but Hatta denied that this was one theory of organisation among several contending theories. Rather it was the case, suggested Hatta, that libertarian federation has the status of a 'fundamental truth' *(genri)* which we all recognise from our own experience, knowing that without it society would simply collapse and life would no longer be truly human.[31] Understanding libertarian federation in this fashion, Hatta argued that it was a 'natural' *(shizentuki)* mode of organisation, as opposed to such 'artificial' *(jin 'iteki)* forms as 'democratic centralism'. It could be described as natural because it was widely practised among many species of animals and also within 'the communist groups of primitive people'.[32] Yet its natural qualities had no connotation of backwardness or ineffectiveness for Hatta. On the contrary, they were evidence that it was biologically suited to the needs of the human species. By way of contrast, it was artificial organisation which clashed with the interests of the majority of human beings, since 'artificial organisation is inevitably accompanied by power and coercion'.[33]

Hatta did not agree with those who argued that the failures of the anarchist movement (as, for instance, in the case of its defeat by the bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution) were attributable to organisational failings. Instead, he maintained that anarchism's strength lay in the fact that it did not resort to artificial organisation. To achieve an anarchist communist society, what was required was a method of organisation which was effective in coordinating the efforts of a widespread and sizeable movement at the same time that it provided ample scope for individual initiative and action. Hatta believed that libertarian federation met these requirements entirely.

[30] Ibid., p. 59.
[31] Ibid., p. 1.
[32] Ibid., pp. 59–60.
[33] Ibid., p. 59.

On the one hand, it was 'based on the freedom of will and spirit of independence of the individual', but it also encouraged the individual to 'federate with other individuals according to individual interests, tastes and inclinations, and by means of free agreement'.[34] Just like their members, the grassroots groupings of like-minded individuals which would emerge in this fashion would be free and independent in their turn. They too could be expected to federate with similar groups, again on the basis of commonly held 'interests, tastes and inclinations'. Thus libertarian federation provided for a progression from one level of federation to successively higher levels, with the links at each stage being forged in a spirit of free agreement and unforced cooperation to attain common objectives. As can be seen, this was an argument intended to demonstrate that libertarian federation was a form of organisation uniquely suited to anarchism's requirements. But it is important to realise that, for Hatta, the argument also flowed in the opposite direction: 'outside of anarchism there is no genuine libertarian federation'.[35]

One reason why Hatta felt that it was vital that the pure anarchists should adopt a form of organisation which allowed for maximum individual initiative was that he believed that the 'creative violence of a minority' would play a key role in the anarchist communist revolution. One can get an idea of the relationship which Hatta envisaged between the minority of anarchist activists and the majority of the people from his criticism of syndicalism. Hatta claimed that one of syndicalism's contradictions was that it sought to combine the theory of creative violence by a minority, which it borrowed from anarchism, with the theory of the class struggle, which derived from Marxism. In the course of criticising syndicalism's use of what he regarded as these two contradictory theories, Hatta conceded that anarchist syndicalists did aim to 'rouse the majority by means of the heroic, creative audacity of a minority of conscious militants'. His reaction to this stated aim was significant. 'That is not the class struggle; that is revolution', he retorted.[36] In other words, in this respect Hatta's own image of revolution coincided with that of the anarchist syndicalists. He too thought In terms of a bold minority seizing the initiative and spurring the majority into action. In part, this concept of a revolution carried out by the majority but initially provoked by a minority seems to have derived from Hatta's perception of the relationship between the cities and the countryside. The majority of Japan's population was composed of peasants and tenant farmers in the agricultural villages, which were seen as reservoirs of naturally occurring anarchist communism. On the other hand, most of the pure anarchists were based in the cities and, in the pursuit of their struggle against capitalism, concentrated their activities within the urban centres. In the light of this relationship between the farming majority in the countryside and the activist minority in the cities, minority action to detonate the revolution was seen as justifiable. If the city-based militants took the initiative and acted to destroy urban capitalism, it was held that this would break the cities' stranglehold on the farming communities and hence enable the latter to flower naturally into the autonomous communes of the new society.[37]

Nevertheless, despite the role which Hatta expected the anarchist minority to fulfil in the early stages of a revolution, it would be quite wrong to give the impression that he believed that social change could be engineered by a vanguard leadership. In his polemics against bolshevism, Hatta repeatedly emphasised that it was useless to resort to centralised power and that only

[34] Ibid., pp. 227–8.
[35] Ibid., p. 228.
[36] Ibid. (1983), p. 30.
[37] I am grateful to Mihara Yōko for drawing my attention to this facet of pure anarchist thought.

the mass of the people *(minshū),* spontaneously organised into numerous groups through which they pursued their common interests, could bring the revolution to a successful conclusion.[38] For Hatta, revolution remained the responsibility of the people and whatever problems it threw up had to be solved by the people themselves. A good example of Hatta's 'Japanese style' of thinking was his explanation that the revolution 'should advance by means of the power that moves at the base of the belly of the people (*minshū no hara no soko ni ugoite iru chikara).* The power at the base of the people's belly is their ardent desire for "supplying according to needs". It is just this ardent desire that constitutes the driving force of the revolution. True revolution can be said to be rising up by means of this and beating a path in response to it.'[39] Not only was Hatta bitterly opposed to the bolshevik strategy of substituting vanguard power for popular initiative, but he was dismissive of any attempt to introduce centralised authority into the revolutionary process, even when this was excused as a 'temporary' measure during a supposed 'transitional period' which would bridge the gap between capitalism and communism. Hatta denied that there was any need for a 'transitional period' to be interposed between the old society and the new. Looked at from an economic angle, he maintained that it would be positively harmful to institute centralised control of the economy, since it was turning immediately to decentralised production in the communes which would unblock the potential locked up in society's productive forces.[40] But his principal argument against the notion of a 'transitional period' was that, despite its ostensible purpose of taking society beyond capitalism, its real effect would be to consolidate capitalist patterns of behaviour and control, and hence block the way forward to a new world. A 'transitional period', Hatta insisted, represents 'an attempt to advance according to capitalism's fundamental principles, such as the centralised, authoritarian state and the mode of production based on the division of labour'. Instead of transcending capitalism, 'such a transitional period is a prolongation of capitalism'.[41]

Hatta's essential point in all his writings on how to achieve anarchist communism was that a movement organised for a particular goal must, as far as possible, prefigure the goal itself. If the aim is to achieve a decentralised society, the movement itself must be decentralised. If the objective is to abolish power relations, the means used must dispense with such relations. If the goal is to eradicate capitalism, there must be no flirting with elements of capitalism along the way. By sticking to this basic principle, Hatta managed to achieve a high degree of consistency between his vision of the new world of anarchist communism and his ideas on how it could be won.

[38] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981), p. 154.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., p. 152.
[41] Ibid., p. 153.

7. Repression, 1931–6

From 1931 the Japanese state became locked into an intensifying spiral of external aggression and internal repression. Externally, the Japanese army provoked the Manchurian Incident in September 1931, the puppet state of Manchukuo was declared in March 1932, part of Inner Mongolia was occupied by Japanese forces in March 1933, and the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July 1937 led to full-scale war with China. Internally, the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai in May 1932 opened the way to an increasing role for the military in government and this trend was further strengthened by the attempted coup carried out by young army officers in February 1936. Accompanying these political developments, the economy was increasingly militarised, with spending on the armed forces rising from 31 per cent of government expenditure in 1931–2 to 47 per cent in 1936–7 and 71 per cent in 1937–8.[1] Needless to say, the period from 1931 onwards was also characterised by a relentless tightening of the screws on all who offered resistance to these political and economic changes. The anarchists were prime targets of repression and this chapter deals with various strategies adopted by different tendencies among the pure anarchists as they attempted, against all the odds, to turn the tide.

Broadly speaking, there were three strategies employed by different currents among the pure anarchists. As Zenkoku Jiren's membership dwindled after 1931, there were those who advocated burying the hatchet with the anarchist syndicalists and reuniting with Jikyō so as to bring all the anarchist-inclined unions together again into a single, decentralised federation. A second tendency among the pure anarchists reacted to repression in the cities by turning even further away from the urban centres and adopting an even looser organisational structure than Zenkoku Jiren. This tendency is best represented by the Nōson Seinen Sha (Farming Villages Youth Association) whose full title was generally abbreviated to Nōseisha. As its name implies, Nōseisha was oriented towards the peasants and tenant farmers in the agricultural villages. It pushed decentralisation to the point where ultimately there were those in its ranks who questioned the need for any form of linking organisation whatsoever. As a complete contrast to Nōseisha, the Nihon Museifu Kyōsantō (Anarchist Communist Party of Japan, often abbreviated to 'the Party' [Tō] by Japanese anarchists—a practice which will be followed in the rest of this chapter in the interest of brevity) was organised in 1934 as a highly secretive and tightly structured group. It brought together a number of pure anarchists who believed that the situation was so threatening as to justify copying the bolsheviks' organisational methods, even though anarchist communism remained the objective of their struggle. The fact that none of these strategies was successful and that by 1936 the anarchist movement lay shattered (like all other organised opposition to the dominant power structures, it should be noted) is testimony to the hopeless predicament in which the anarchists found themselves. In retrospect, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, whatever strategy they had employed, the odds against them were too overwhelming to have offered any chance of success. Nevertheless, even if one concludes that they were doomed to

[1] Allen (1972), p. 136. Borton (1970), p. 413.

failure all along, it is giving them no more than their due to recognise that behind all their efforts lay the determination to resist the capitalist state. Even if one judges some of the strategies they employed to have been seriously flawed, they surely deserve respect for the fact that the state had to crush them, since it could not win them over.

Zenkoku Jiren after 1931

The move towards reuniting Zenkoku Jiren and Jikyō, which was eventually accomplished in January 1934, was part of a more general trend towards compromise which became increasingly evident within some pure anarchist circles in the years after 1931. Not all the pure anarchists succumbed to this spirit of compromise. Some protested that principles were being abandoned, but the threat hanging over the movement was so ominous that a majority felt that there was no point in worrying exclusively about the purity of the movement's anarchist communist credentials when its very survival was in the balance. Hatta Shūzō played no part in the process which led to reunification, since he was an increasingly sick man during 1932 and 1933. When his death came on 30 January 1934, it was preceded only two weeks earlier by Jikyō's reabsorption into Zenkoku Jiren, which took place on 14 January. Yet, although Hatta was not directly involved in the debates on the pros and cons of reunification, his article 'Questions of the Day', which appeared in January 1932, anticipated the direction that much of the pure anarchist movement was about to take. As we noted in Chapter 3, he wrote in that article, which proved to be his last contribution to the anarchist press, 'we should establish close contact with the people and enter into their midst via those commercial transactions which constitute the labour movement'.[2] This certainly prefigured the reassessment of the labour movement which many in Zenkoku Jiren were to undertake before long. In a sense it was fitting that, just as Hatta's earlier writings had been pathbreaking in their formulation of pure anarchism, so his last article should have been one of the first indications that the bulk of the movement was in retreat from its former commitment to uncompromising and unambiguous anarchist communism.

It is not difficult to discover the reason why in the years after 1931 many Zenkoku Jiren members started to think that it was more important to find allies with whom jointly to resist repression than it was to castigate indiscriminately all who failed to measure up to the exacting specifications of pure anarchism. Although the available membership figures for Zenkoku Jiren and Jikyō are not entirely reliable, they do provide a useful indication of the prevailing trend. From a peak of 16,300 members in 1931, Zenkoku Jiren's membership declined to about 11,000 in 1932 and was down to 4,359 by 1933. In Jikyō's case, the corresponding figures are 2,968 in 1931, 2,850 in 1932 and 1,110 in 1933.[3] Faced with this drastic decline in their numbers as the state cracked down on all unions, voices were raised in both federations during 1933 counselling unification. Both Zenkoku Jiren and Jikyō also started to look beyond the boundaries of anarchism towards other organisations with whom to engage in defensive, 'united front' activity. From a pure anarchist standpoint, there undoubtedly are grounds for criticising Zenkoku Jiren's development in the years after 1931 as a slide towards compromise and away from anarchist communist principles. Yet, as the following account will attempt to convey, even if such criticism is

[2] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981), p. 149.
[3] Komatsu (1971–2), p. 97.

legitimate, it should nevertheless be tempered by an adequate appreciation of the difficulties and dangers which confronted the pure anarchists.

The most tangible signs that moves towards reunification were under way in 1933 were that representatives of Zenkoku Jiren attended Jikyō's Kantō (Eastern Honshū) district conference on 5 March 1933 and Jikyō delegates were present at Zenkoku Jiren's third national conference when that was held on 2 April 1933. One indication of the mounting level of repression was that the police ordered the latter conference to stop after it had been in session for only half an hour and at the very point when Takahashi Kōkichi, representing Jikyō, was addressing the meeting and stressing the need for unity between the two federations.[4] A measure of the rising tide of reformism within Zenkoku Jiren is provided by the 'action programme' (*kōdō kōryō*) which the third conference was intended to consider. That this was clearly a reformist document is revealed by its calls for 'a struggle to oppose absolutely all wage cuts and for wage rises', for 'complete opposition to the intensification of labour and for improvement in working conditions', for 'securing a system of equal wages for equal work without distinction of race, sex or age', and for 'obtaining security of livelihood for the unemployed at the expense of the state and the capitalists'.[5] In contrast to these proposals for making capitalism less painful for the working class, demands for abolishing the wages system, the state and capital were conspicuously absent. It is true that the immediate demands of the 'action programme' were intended to fit in with the strategy encapsulated in the first clause of the new 'programme' (*kōryō*) which the third conference was also intended to consider. This stated that 'we shall advance to the liberation of the workers and farmers via all kinds of day-to-day struggles, conducted by means of voluntary solidarity'.[6] Ironically, however, the inadequacy of immediate demands that failed to challenge capitalism in a root and branch fashion was implicitly conceded in the programme's second clause, which declared that 'we firmly believe that the complete liberation of the workers and farmers is unrealistic without the establishment of a society based on libertarian federation'.[7]

As it happened, Zenkoku Jiren was prevented from adopting the proposed 'action programme' at its third conference by the police forcing the proceedings to halt. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that many of the immediate demands which it incorporated resembled the reformist proposals which constituted Jikyō's similar 'action programme'. For example, Jikyō's 'action programme' called for 'a struggle to oppose industrial rationalisation, dismissals and closures of factories', 'a struggle to enforce a minimum wage system (¥2.50) and twice-yearly, regular wage increases', 'a struggle to secure equal wages for equal work, without distinction of sex, age or race', 'a struggle to make the capitalists responsible for the secure livelihood of those suffering from occupational injuries and the disabled', and so on.[8] Hence it is fair to say that Zenkoku Jiren and Jikyō moved towards one another on the basis of an increasingly shared reformism. A few days after Zenkoku Jiren's aborted third conference, its representatives again met with delegates from Jikyō and decided to participate jointly in the coming May Day demonstration, using the common slogans 'Against War', 'Against Fascism' and 'Against Unemployment'.[9]

[4] Ibid., pp. 92–3.
[5] Ibid., p. 93.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Enishi (1974), p. 11.
[9] Mihara (1987), p. 101.

Another reason why reformism and its associated impetus for unification with Jikyō made such rapid progress within the ranks of Zenkoku Jiren during 1933 was the changed status of the journal *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* (Libertarian Federation Newspaper). Until December 1932 *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* was the organ of Zenkoku Jiren, but from January 1933 it ceased to be Zenkoku Jiren's mouthpiece and was published henceforth by a newly formed, independent Libertarian Federation Newspaper Company. The formal reason for this change of status was that it was judged that, by loosening its ties with Zenkoku Jiren, *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* could widen its appeal to the anarchist movement as a whole. Behind the scenes, however, more sinister motives were at work. Aizawa Hisao revealed in later years that from the end of 1932 he and a small group of other Zenkoku Jiren activists, who went on to form the Party, started to reassess their previous hostility towards anarchist syndicalism and their adherence to Kropotkin's theories. Doubts were raised as to whether Kropotkin's *The Conquest of Bread* had any useful lessons to offer on strategy and tactics and, instead, this group wanted Zenkoku Jiren to drop its hostility to participating in the class struggle and to come out strongly in support of workers' economic interests within capitalism.[10] This group gained editorial control of *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* and, having severed its association with Zenkoku Jiren, used the journal as a vehicle for promoting the policies it favoured.

The explanation for the relative ease with which Aizawa and his comrades took over *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* lay in Zenkoku Jiren's loose organisational structure. As a safeguard against bureaucracy, Zenkoku Jiren relied heavily on spontaneous initiatives by individuals and groups within its ranks and largely eschewed the delegation of duties or the appointment of office-holders who were answerable to the membership in a structured fashion. Zenkoku Jiren's lack of organisational coherency left it wide open to manipulation by strongly motivated individuals or groups who, by attending key meetings, could play a disproportionate part in deciding policy.[11] Hence, not only did control of *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* fall into the hands of the group around Aizawa which was later to form the Party but, by skilful manoeuvring, they influenced Zenkoku Jiren in other ways. For example, on the eve of Zenkoku Jiren's third conference, a meeting of the conference preparatory committee was held in the house of one of the group, Umemoto Eizō (1904–43). At this meeting an intense debate ensued on reformism, as represented by the new 'programme' which the conference was intended to discuss the following day. Although the proposed change of policy encountered fierce opposition from those at the meeting who continued to identify with the established tenets of pure anarchism, Aizawa and his comrades managed to win the support of a majority of those who took part in this session of the conference preparatory committee.[12]

Developments abroad also helped to create an atmosphere in which the idea of a 'united front' had increasing appeal within the ranks of Zenkoku Jiren. In Germany the Nazis came to power in January 1933. Reacting to this, both Zenkoku Jiren and Jikyō helped form the Kantō (Eastern Honshū) Labour Union Council in May 1933. This was an amalgam of left-leaning, anti-fascist unions and it was formed in opposition to the rightist Japan Labour Council. Following this excursion into 'united front' activity, a variety of unions and cultural groups organised the League for Opposing and Crushing Nazism and Fascism in Kantō and the League for Opposing Repression and Crushing Fascism in Kansai (Ōsaka-Kyōto-Kōbe region) in June and July 1933 respectively.

[10] Aizawa (1974), pp. 45–7.

[11] Mihara (1986), p. 92. Aizawa (1974), p. 47.

[12] Aizawa (1974), p. 48.

Both Zenkoku Jiren and Jikyō again participated in these ventures. The recollections of the veteran anarchist syndicalist Yamaguchi Kensuke (1910–76) reveal the type of organisations with which the anarchists found themselves cooperating in the course of this kind of 'united front' activity. He recalled an attempt in the 1930s to hold a public rally against Nazism and Fascism at an indoor location in Tōkyō, when the police repeatedly interrupted the speeches and within five minutes the meeting was forced to close. As Yamaguchi explained, the thirteen organisations which sponsored this rally ranged across the ideological spectrum from 'left social democrats, bolsheviks and anarchists to syndicalists'. In Yamaguchi's words, 'it was a united front body in the broadest sense', embracing the Soviet Friendship Association as well as (incongruously) both the Anti-Religion League and the Buddhist Youth Federation.[13] It is no exaggeration to say that, from a pure anarchist standpoint, some of the groups with which from 1933 Zenkoku Jiren found itself aligned in 'united fronts' made strange bedfellows indeed.

Yamaguchi's recollections are also useful for conveying how the changing orientation of Zenkoku Jiren appeared to its erstwhile opponents in Jikyō. To anarchist syndicalists like Yamaguchi, it seemed that during the course of 1933 Zenkoku Jiren left off despising the class struggle as it had done previously and showed signs of taking on the authentic form of a workers' movement'.[14] However, while such an assessment was not entirely mistaken, the real situation was considerably more complicated than this suggests. Despite the editorial control exercised over *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* by Aizawa and his comrades, they were unable to squeeze out all views which ran counter to their own favoured policies of immersion in day-to-day struggles and unification of Zenkoku Jiren and Jikyō. Hence the numerous articles which appeared in *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* throughout the course of 1933 revealed a range of views, extending from those who engaged in self-criticism over Zenkoku Jiren's established position on the class struggle to those who continued to criticise anarchist syndicalism from an anarchist communist perspective.

Representative of the former point of view were two articles that appeared in the issue of *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* which was published on 10 January 1933. One of these articles, entitled 'Various Problems of Anarchism in 1933', claimed that 'formerly, it even reached the point where, as an extreme manifestation of rejecting syndicalism, the far-fetched opinion emerged that those participating in the labour movement were not anarchists'.[15] The accompanying article on 'Various Problems of the Union Movement' called for 'rigorous self-criticism' and sought to turn Zenkoku Jiren away from its preoccupation with 'ideological purification' towards 'the struggle of the masses to live'.[16] In a similar vein, an editorial on 'Problems of Getting the Anarchist Movement Ready for Battle' in the following issue of *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* expressed dissatisfaction with past practice. It attributed the 'stagnation' of the anarchist movement to what it saw as the failure to establish 'connections, based on struggle, with the problems arising out of people's daily lives'. Furthermore, it asserted that 'the trend towards realising that we must eliminate these past errors in our practice and launch ourselves positively into concrete struggles is now making itself felt throughout the entire movement'.[17] Another editorial in the July issue of the journal, entitled 'Let's Energetically Build a Grass Roots Movement', also stated that there was

[13] Yamaguchi (1970), p. 39.
[14] Ibid., p. 40.
[15] *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* no. 76, 10 January 1933, p. 2.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid. no. 77, 10 February 1933, p. 1.

'a danger of lapsing into a so-called idealistic movement, in other words of grasping the life of the masses purely conceptually and not establishing any direct links in the course of a concrete movement'.[18] Turning specifically to syndicalism, this editorial then continued:

> In the past, we came close to falling into this kind of danger in the course of our struggle against syndicalism. This is something we have come to recognise via the painful self-criticism in which we have been engaged since the spring.[19]

One of the best examples of someone who stood at the other extreme to the views expressed above is provided by an article on The Libertarian Commune and Anarchist Syndicalism', which appeared in *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* on 10 September 1933. As we have seen, the pure anarchists' vision of a new society took the form of a federation of libertarian communes. In an attempt to find common ground with the pure anarchists of Zenkoku Jiren, a Jikyō study group issued a report during 1933 which argued that libertarian communes could be achieved by means of a struggle conducted along anarchist syndicalist lines. The writer of the article on The Libertarian Commune and Anarchist Syndicalism rejected this, since he believed that the unions favoured by anarchist syndicalists could not form the basis of a genuinely new society. The nub of his argument was that, since unions are organisations formed by workers engaged in production, they inevitably would give priority to the interests of the producers rather than to the human community as a whole, thereby thwarting any attempt to establish anarchist communism by means of a union-based strategy:

> Generally, syndicalism takes groups of producers, in other words *syndicats,* as the nucleus of the revolution and, furthermore, as the nucleus giving form to the new society. However, the problem lies in the fact that such *syndicats* are taken to mean the present labour unions and farmers' unions and, just as they are, these are supposed to lay the basis of the future society. In actual fact, we have considerable doubt as to whether *syndicats* can, by their very nature, become the nucleus of the revolution, but we are not afraid to say that, even if one initially granted it as a possibility, the result would be nothing but the dictatorship of the producers.[20]

The writer of this article did not reject unions out of hand. On the contrary, he was quite prepared to concede that 'in our opinion, labour unions are indispensable in present-day society for purposes of struggle, training and preparation', but he was nevertheless adamant that, in the event of revolution, they would be replaced by entirely different types of organisations.[21] It was clear that Kropotkin and Makhno remained his principal touchstones in the fields of theory and practice respectively, and he concluded the article by rejecting out of hand Jikyō's attempts to present anarchist syndicalism as 'a course which could be taken by the new anarchist communist movement'.[22]

Between the two extremes of either abandoning or strictly adhering to the principles of pure anarchism, there were many writers who managed to combine criticism of anarchist syndicalism

[18] Ibid. no. 82, 10 July 1933, p. 1.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid. no. 84, 10 September 1933, p. 2.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.

as a theory and Jikyō as an organisation with a positive attitude towards forming a 'united front' with anarchist syndicalists or even merging Zenkoku Jiren and Jikyō. It is clear from the articles which they wrote that holding such contradictory views often depended on a degree of self-deception. For example, an article on 'The Recent Tendency of Jikyō', which appeared in *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* on 10 March 1933, described Zenkoku Jiren 's attitude towards syndicalism as follows:

> However far the development of the syndicalist movement is pushed in a revolutionary direction, it certainly cannot, of itself, develop to the point of anarchist revolution. Conscious conviction of this has governed Zenkoku Jiren's attitude in practice ever since its second conference.[23]

Yet, despite such outspoken support for Zenkoku Jiren's long established scepticism with regard to syndicalism's revolutionary credentials, the article still came out strongly for a 'united struggle' with Jikyō. The writer of this article did not pretend that Zenkoku Jiren and Jikyō now saw eye to eye on all questions, but he did argue, with little evidence to support such a claim, that 'a section of Nihon Jikyō has recognised the fallacy of unionism and is stressing the upsurge of libertarian federation'.[24]

Similarly, an article entitled 'Let's Understand Correctly the Clamour for Unity', which was carried by *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* on 10 October 1933, opened with the words:

> For us, the idea that anarchism and anarchist syndicalism are different systems of thought, and moreover that we take the anarchist position, is a first premise. This premise, or position, or attitude, is something to which we should continue to adhere even in relation to the so-called unity question, which recently started to be pushed by the Nihon Jikyō side in the first instance.[25]

The same article also declared:

> however few in number we become, we must strictly uphold the banner of anarchist communism and not take even a single step which would compromise this theory. This is because we recognise the vital necessity of clear, revolutionary thought for achieving revolutionary action.[26]

Nevertheless, despite this apparently uncompromising stand, the writer of the article excused Zenkoku Jiren's participation in 'united fronts', such as the Kantō Labour Union Council, on the grounds that these were merely tactical moves and that joint struggles were justified in view of the period of reaction through which Japan was currently passing. One of the purposes of 'united fronts' was given as to 'win over to our side the masses who have fallen under anarchist syndicalism's influence, bring their ideas into line with ours and incorporate them into our camp'.[27] The writer also insisted that the only basis for unity between Zenkoku Jiren and Jikyō was for

[23] Ibid. no. 78, 10 March 1933, p. 3.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid. no. 85, 10 October 1933, p. 2.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

the latter to abandon anarchist syndicalism and accept anarchist communism. Although such hard line views were no doubt intended to impress on readers the strength of the writer's pure anarchist convictions, they were in fact totally unrealistic. There was no more chance that Jikyō's members would entirely relinquish anarchist syndicalism than that they would passively stand by as their 'united front' partners manipulated them and helped themselves to their supporters. If the writer had really not been prepared to give an inch of anarchist communist ground, as he stridently maintained, he ought to have dismissed outright the very notions of a 'united front' and unity with Jikyō. The fact that he did not do so is evidence that his ostentatious rejection of all compromise was ultimately no more than a device for saving face and salving conscience while the process of arriving at an accommodation with anarchist syndicalism went ahead.

By the end of 1933, those who wanted to redefine the theoretical basis of Zenkoku Jiren 's activity and those who, often without openly admitting it, were prepared to compromise in order to increase the federation's shrinking membership together outnumbered those who sought to resist any move away from the principles which defined pure anarchism. When the accommodation with anarchist syndicalism eventually came, it took the form of a joint statement issued by Zenkoku Jiren and Jikyō on 1 January 1934. With evident high hopes, this claimed that:

> In their final impasse, Japanese capitalism and imperialism have already reached an extremity of chaos. The ineptness of their political policies and the crimes of the leading capitalists (*zaibatsu shihonka*) are revealed in the resentment now felt by the masses. Calls for the overthrow of capitalism and the tide of social reconstruction are on the increase throughout the country everywhere. Already we can hear the opening strains of the revolution.[28]

Believing this to be the case, the statement was even-handed in its apportionment of blame for the 'completely antagonistic relations' which had existed between Zenkoku Jiren and Jikyō for the previous five years. Zenkoku Jiren was said to have been guilty of 'abandoning the daily struggle, sectarian deviation and other regrettable tendencies', while Jikyō had lapsed into 'putting the labour unions above everything else' (*rōdō kumiai daiichishugi*)' Now, however, both organisations were able jointly to announce: 'Long live the fighting unity of Zenkoku Jiren and Nihon Jikyō' and 'Long live the strengthening and widening of the libertarian federation forces in Japan'.[29]

Jikyō formally disbanded and merged with Zenkoku Jiren on 14 January 1934. Two months later, Zenkoku Jiren's fourth conference was held in Tōkyō on 18 March 1934. The conference's objectives were summarised in a number of slogans:

> In these stormy times, we must strengthen our forces for the battle.
> Total opposition to sackings, wage reductions and short-time working (*rinkyū*).
> Down with fascism—the tool of the capitalists.
> Three cheers for the achievement of the union of the libertarian federation forces.
> Enlarge and strengthen Zenkoku Jiren; boldly and prudently defend the conference.[30]

[28] Ibid. no. 88, 10 January 1934, p. 3.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Komatsu (1971–2), p. 96.

The 'action programme' before the conference was also set in the by now established reformist mould, but the most striking feature of the conference was the small number of delegates who attended. On this occasion, under 100 delegates were present, compared to the 150 who had attended the previous year's third conference, or the 400 who had gathered at Zenkoku Jiren's first conference back in 1926. As the 1934 conference manifesto noted, 'out of 5 million workers, organised workers are no more than a mere 360,000 and our Zenkoku Jiren has organised no more than a fraction of them'.[31]

Even this fonn of words considerably understated the desperate situation which was engulfing Zenkoku Jiren. The hard truth was that, despite Zenkoku Jiren 's trading of principles for numbers, its membership continued to decline. Whereas Zenkoku Jiren had 4,359 members and Jikyo had 1,110 members prior to unification in 1933, the unified organisation had a membership of only 4,092 in 1934, and by 1935 it had shrunk even further to 2,300.[32] As Yamaguchi Kensuke put it, even after unification, Zenkoku Jiren 'was really, as a body, nothing more than a mere handful'.[33] Certainly it was a 'mere handful' who gathered in 1935 at Shibaura in Tōkyō for what proved to be the last May Day demonstration to be held in prewar Japan. The police were out in force to control a mere 300 demonstrators, the speakers addressing the crowd were repeatedly ordered to stop and there were several arrests. Although the demonstrators managed to march beneath the black flags for the last time through central Tōkyō, it was no more than a small gesture of defiance against a bloodthirsty state which was preparing Itself for total war. By 1936 the balance between the state and its opponents had tipped sufficiently for the former to be able to enforce a ban on all May Day demonstrations, while the right-wing unions contented themselves with taking part in Founding of the State Day (*kenkoku kinenbi*) celebrations on 11 February instead.[34]

As we shall see, the *coup de grâce* to Zenkoku Jiren came with the mass arrests of anarchists in 1935 and 1936, following the discovery by the police of the Party's existence. This was, however, merely the final turn of a screw which had been steadily tightening on Zenkoku Jiren over several years. With the benefit of hindsight, it is obvious that Zenkoku Jiren was doomed to extinction in the years after 1931 as it engaged in a hopeless battle with a state which was increasingly determined to crush all opposition. The pity is that, since it was doomed anyway, Zenkoku Jiren did not go down defending anarchist communist principles. These were diluted in a vain attempt to boost numbers and hence save the organisation's skin. The ultimate tragedy was that Zenkoku Jiren failed in this trade-off and, in the final reckoning, ended up with both its organisation and its principles in tatters.

Nōson Seinen Sha (Farming Villages Youth Association)

The Nōson Seinen Sha (Nōseisha for short) was formed in February 1931 and disbanded in September 1932. Despite its short-lived existence, both the calibre of its militants and the distinctiveness of its theories made it an important organisation in the history of pure anarchism. In Chapter 4 it was mentioned that, after the split in Zenkoku Jiren's ranks in 1928, the confrontation between

[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., p. 97.
[33] Yamaguchi (1970), p. 44.
[34] Hagiwara (1969), p. 184.

pure anarchists and anarchist syndicalists spread and led to the demise of the anarchist literary and theoretical magazine *Kokushoku Sensen* (Black Battlefront) in December 1929. The pure anarchist replacement for *Kokushoku Sensen* was a new journal, *Kurohata* (Black Flag), whose first issue appeared in January 1930. Several of those who went on to form Nōseisha were associated with *Kurohata* (as also was Aizawa Hisao, who played a key role in organising the Party) and it is noteworthy that Miyazaki Akira's pamphlet *Appeal to the Farmers,* which has been described as the veritable 'bible' of Nōseisha, was first published in instalments in *Kurohata*.[35] Establishing the background of the group which formed Nōseisha is important, since it illustrates the point that their roots lay in 'orthodox' pure anarchism, as expressed in the writings of Hatta Shūzō and others, even though they gradually developed their own distinctive approach to organisational theory and other questions.

One of the best ways of putting Nōseisha's theories into context is to refer to Suzuki Yasuyuki's (1903–70) pamphlet *History of the Japanese Anarchist Movement*, which he wrote in 1932. Suzuki was one of Nōseisha's most important theoreticians and in this pamphlet he traced, from Nōseisha's perspective, the development of anarchism in Japan. Suzuki was critical of the anarchist syndicalism which Ōsugi Sakae had championed prior to his murder in 1923, claiming that Ōsugi 'inducted anarchism into syndicalism' and referring to 'Ōsugi's dictatorship of the producers by means of anarchism'. From Suzuki's standpoint, anarchism as Ōsugi envisaged it was still 'a system based on the division of labour' and was not the 'decentralised system of the libertarian communes'.[36] He therefore interpreted positively the pure anarchist reaction to anarchist syndicalism, symbolised by the emergence of Kokuren in 1926 and by the mounting hostility to the 'extreme actualism of syndicalism'.[37] He also evaluated highly Hatta Shūzō's theoretical writings, arguing that they had played an important part in enabling the Japanese anarchist movement to free itself from syndicalist influence. As Suzuki put it: 'In this way, anarchism increasingly achieved ideological purity.'[38] Nevertheless, at the same time, he also criticised Hatta's 'idealistic anarchism'. Suzuki quoted Hatta to illustrate the latter's belief that the conventional labour movement was engaged in essentially capitalist, commercial activity which had no bearing on the liberation of the workers. In place of such activity, Hatta urged unionists to become campaigners for libertarian federation, which would take them beyond capitalism to anarchist communism. Suzuki's comment on this was:

> But Hatta does not say how this is to be put into effect. It goes without saying that herein lies the idealism of Hatta Shūzō's anarchism.[39]

Suzuki was also critical of the organisational methods employed by many anarchists. He described Bakunin's influential principle of organisation as 'from the base to the apex' or 'from the periphery to the centre' and argued that such pyramidal or centralised methods do not become acceptable to anarchists merely because the base takes precedence over the apex or the periphery over the centre. Suzuki insisted that, instead of trying to devise libertarian checks to organisational methods based on the authoritarian principle of 'amalgamation' (*kesseishugi*),

[35] Mihara (1988), p. 6.
[36] Suzuki (1979), pp. 29–30.
[37] Ibid., p. 34.
[38] Ibid., p. 36.
[39] Ibid.

what anarchism requires is 'autonomous action in a decentralised organisation' without any apex or centre. Suzuki argued that understanding of this had recently spread among the anarchists in Japan and he believed that what was required was a movement which was anarchist not only in terms of the social changes it sought to bring about, but also with regard to its actual method of organisation.[40] In Suzuki's opinion, one crucial difference between Nōseisha and the anarchist movement in its earlier phases was that, while previously the operational slogan had always been 'To the Farmers', Nōseisha had turned this round to become 'From the Farmers'. Henceforth, the movement had to be based on local initiatives in the villages and on the recognition that those within each area know the local situation best.[41]

The Nōseisha approach to anarchist communist revolution was essentially that the entire farming village would rise up, take control of the land, oust the landlords, sever its links with the urban capitalist economy, and resist the state's demands, such as the payment of taxes and the conscription of young men. Comparing this projected revolution with such previous experiences as the French, Russian and German Revolutions, Suzuki claimed that past attempts had failed because 'they were not cases of constructive destruction but of destructive destruction. They were emotional upheavals and certainly were not imbued with a clear social ideal.' To correct this deficiency, Suzuki stressed that a future revolution would need to be both a mass movement and consciously under the banner of anarchism.[42] It is interesting to note that, in the concluding section of his pamphlet, Suzuki expressed the opinion that, in respect both of its critique of syndicalism and its ideas on organisation, he saw the movement in Japan as standing at the forefront of anarchist theory internationally.[43]

Nōseisha's theory, which we have introduced here by means of Suzuki's *History of the Japanese Anarchist Movement,* was developed in a stream of texts which appeared during the period 1930–2. These were mainly written by Miyazaki Akira and Suzuki Yasuyuki. It is worth examining several of these texts in a little detail, since they can throw additional light on certain areas of Nōseisha's theory, including some of the contradictions that were woven into it. One of the interesting things about Miyazaki's *Appeal to the Farmers* is that, by first appearing in instalments, it demonstrated how Nōseisha's distinctive doctrine emerged only gradually. The early chapters appeared in the issues of *Kurohata* that were published in May and June 1930, even before Nōseisha had been formally constituted. Here the handling of anarchist communism was unexceptional and there were many echoes of Hatta's deliberations on the same subject. However, by the time the later chapters of the pamphlet were published in *Kurohata* in February 1931, Miyazaki was no longer discussing anarchist communism merely as an alternative to capitalism which might be realised at some indefinite time in the future. Instead, his purpose now was to consider, in extremely practical terms, how the tens of thousands of villages scattered across the length and breadth of Japan could shake off capitalism immediately and the concrete measures they would need to take in order to convert themselves into libertarian communes. In place of the abstract proposition to abolish exchange relations found in many accounts of anarchist communism, Miyazaki's pamphlet was full of down-to-earth advice. For example, he urged the farmers to stop using commercial fertilisers, since this would release them from the consequent need to produce cash crops in order to meet the expense involved. Miyazaki argued that it was

[40] Ibid., pp. 44–5.
[41] Ibid., pp. 45–6.
[42] Ibid., p. 47 (Note that Suzuki is here quoting Suzuki [June 1931], pp. 541–3.)
[43] Ibid., p. 48.

by taking practical steps such as switching from chemical fertilisers to nightsoil that buying and selling could be abandoned and production undertaken solely to satisfy consumption needs. This would then lay the basis for communist social relations, for as Miyazaki asked rhetorically: 'If money disappeared from the village, why couldn't the village live as one big family?'[44]

In *The Organisation of the Recent Movement and a Proposal on the Form It Should Take* (published in August 1931) Miyazaki was strongly critical of 'centralised organisation'. In developing his argument, he rejected not merely overtly centralised bodies but even large-scale federations, including those whose ostensible organisational principle was libertarian federation. Hence one section of the text was subtitled 'The Fallacy of Amalgamation (*Kesseishugi*); the Dissolution of Kokuren and Jiren'. Here he called for the disbanding of large organisations, such as Kokuren and Zenkoku Jiren, on the grounds that 'action proceeds from the individual'.[45] This was not intended as an argument against all organisation, however. On the contrary, Miyazaki made it clear that he expected local groups to be formed for propaganda purposes and joint activity, but he drew a sharp distinction between locally rooted, cooperative efforts by like-minded individuals to achieve specific objectives and large-scale bodies functioning as permanent organisations. The local groups favoured by Nōseisha were seen as temporary alignments which would exist only as long as it took to accomplish the tasks for which they had been formed. Miyazaki captured the essence of this organisational method in the motto 'Group together according to need; disperse when finished.'[46] Clearly, it ruled out permanently organised, national federations, such as Kokuren and Zenkoku Jiren, which Nōseisha regarded as seed-beds for centralised control and power relations. Hence Miyazaki's text ended with the slogans:

> Reject 'From the base to the apex' and 'From the periphery to the centre'!
> From amalgamation to decentralisation!
> From centralisation to autonomous, decentralised action![47]

Nōseisha's criticism of Kokuren's and Zenkoku Jiren 's organisational methods produced a fierce reaction from the latter and the situation was not helped when, in November 1931, Nōseisha secretly issued a 'Report on the Situation Throughout the Country' which, it was claimed, would prove useful to the authorities if it fell into the hands of the police. In the repressive conditions of the time, fear of police spies was rampant and what, in the event, proved to be totally unjustified suspicions about Nōseisha's links with the authorities were easily aroused. Consequently, Hatta Shūzō denounced Nōseisha not merely as 'nothing but a handful of big mouths' but also as a group which 'gave off a treacherous smell'.[48] In the same issue of *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* which carried these remarks by Hatta, there were several other articles by Zenkoku Jiren members which attacked Nōseisha with great venom. One vitriolic denunciation, which repeated the charge of spying and threatened Nōseisha with violence, was entitled 'Looking Forward to the Complete Sweeping Away of These Foul Elements'.[49] In retrospect, we can dismiss the preposterous idea that Nōseisha's members were helping the police as paranoia induced by the threatening conditions in which the anarchists were forced to operate. Unfortunately, however, the hue and

[44] *Kurohata* vol. 3 no. 2, February 1931, pp. 7–8.
[45] Miyazaki (August 1931), p. 130.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] *Hatta Shūzō Zenshū* (1981), p. 148.
[49] *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* no. 66, 10 January 1932, p. 4.

cry over this issue distracted attention from the need to subject Nōseisha's own organisational theory and practice to critical evaluation. Although not on the scale of Zenkoku Jiren, Nōseisha claimed to have a network of '700 comrades scattered throughout the entire country'.[50] Even allowing for a degree of exaggeration, it is clear that Nōseisha too, just like Zenkoku Jiren, therefore fulfilled some of the roles of a (by its own definition) 'centralised' organisation. For example, from March 1931 it started to issue the journal *Nōson Seinen* (Farming Villages Youth), which served as its national mouthpiece, and also its members in Tōkyō often assumed the functions of a de facto leadership. Contradictions between Nōseisha's theory and practice of organisation thus evidently existed, but circumstances served to delay its members' appreciation of this until the latter half of 1932.

Another related contradiction in Nōseisha's theory was the tension which can be detected between its opposition to centralised leadership of the mass movement and the leading role it nevertheless assigned to a minority of anarchist revolutionaries, who were seen as distinct from, and yet supposedly were fused with, the masses. As we have seen, Nōseisha argued strongly against centralised leadership, which it saw as inevitably arising within 'amalgamated organisations'. Decentralisation was presented as a safeguard against this, as also was the concept of 'the whole village movement' (*zenson undō*).[51] This latter notion expressed the idea of the entire village rising as one body to achieve its liberation and thereby prefiguring in the revolutionary act the free and egalitarian organisational structure of the emergent commune. What is striking about Nōseisha's theory is the poor fit that existed between, on the one hand, its attachment to decentralisation and 'the whole village movement' and, on the other, its equally strong commitment to the idea that, albeit at the local level, anarchists should play a crucial role as an organised faction which guides the people's rebellion in an anarchist direction. In his text *What Is To Be Done?* (written in September 1932) Suzuki maintained:

> We are anarchists. For that reason we must never forget, whatever the circumstances, that we are revolutionaries. However, we are not leaders divorced from the masses. Therefore we must always be prepared to act as anarchist revolutionaries who are with the masses and who are in the van of the revolution proceeding from the masses.[52]

For all their denunciations of centralised leadership, what Nōseisha was recommending here and in other texts was vanguardism, albeit of a relatively 'libertarian' variety. To put it another way, throughout its existence Nōseisha was torn between the desire to fuse with the masses and the equal and opposite desire to lead them.

Armed with the theory outlined above, Nōseisha attempted to fan the flames of revolution in the agricultural villages. In August 1931 Nōseisha's members decided that the mountainous district of Nagano was the region where revolutionary potential was most developed. A plan was therefore agreed to support the anticipated uprisings in the impoverished villages of Nagano Prefecture with attacks on military installations and terrorist action in the cities. To raise the necessary funds, Nōseisha's members in Tōkyō launched a campaign of robberies, but these resulted in most of its prominent members being arrested in the early months of 1932. Due to the

[50] Miyazaki (November 1931), p. 417.
[51] Suzuki (September 1932), p. 571.
[52] Ibid., p. 565.

consequent lack of resources, *Nōson Seinen* ceased publication in April 1932 and in September 1932 Suzuki and others, who were still at large in Tōkyō, issued a statement announcing that Nōseisha was disbanding. Far from conceding that dissolution was a defeat, the statement referred to 'the anarchist agitation of the rising masses in all districts' and claimed that the reasons for Nōseisha's formation no longer applied since 'the anarchist movement in the villages has risen beyond that originally planned by *Nōson Seinen*'.[53] Although Nōseisha had built up a network of several hundred supporters in Nagano Prefecture and elsewhere, there is little evidence to support the optimism it affected at the time of its dissolution. Nevertheless, disbanding Nōseisha did close the gap, which, as was mentioned earlier, had opened up between its organisational theory and practice.

Nōseisha's dissolution statement made clear that what was intended was a strategic dispersal and not the cessation of all activity by its former members. In fact, those of its militants who were still at large remained active in various ways, even if no longer under the Nōseisha banner, and those who had been imprisoned started to be released from September 1934. However, no sooner had this happened than there was a wave of repression in October 1934. This was associated with military manoeuvres which the Emperor was due to attend in Gunma Prefecture. Such events were normally accompanied by the mass arrest of known activists and in this case the round-up extended from Gunma into neighbouring Nagano Prefecture, which was the heartland of the Nōseisha movement.[54] As in Zenkoku Jiren's case, the final blow came in 1935–6 when, as a result of their investigations into the Party, the police arrested hundreds of those formerly associated with Nōseisha, despite the fact that the group had dissolved more than three years earlier.

Nihon Museifu Kyōsantō (Anarchist Communist Party of Japan)

In December 1933 Aizawa Hisao and four similarly minded comrades, who were working within Zenkoku Jiren to bring about its reorientation towards the class struggle and its reunification with Jikyō, formed the Nihon Museifu Kyōsanshugisha Renmei (League of Anarchist Communists in Japan) which was the forerunner of the Party. This diminutive and highly secretive group saw itself as a band of professional revolutionaries. Its intention was to build a centralised organisation based on leadership and, since it expected total commitment from its members, it excluded any with family ties. It also attached great importance to discipline, insisting that, once decisions were taken, members must follow them without question, irrespective of their private views.[55] Those who formed the League saw their responsibility as to create the conditions in which revolution would become possible. They believed that the masses could not achieve this on their own because they had been suppressed for too long. However, they did concede that past revolutions demonstrated that, once a revolution has been ignited, the masses are capable of anti-authoritarian, autonomous and creative activity. On the other hand, previous revolutions were considered to be instructive in another respect too. They were interpreted as showing that, as revolutions move beyond their initial, destructive stage, the people habitually hand over control to those who are supposed to be their 'representatives' but who, in fact, become the new wielders of power. The handful of activists who launched the League believed that, to prevent a

[53] *Nōson Seinen Sha* (September 1932), pp. 579–80.
[54] Mihara (1988), p. 9.
[55] Aizawa (1974), pp. 54–7.

future revolution from conforming to this pattern, 'the anarchists must seize social hegemony'.[56] This would prevent the revolution from falling into the hands of false leaders. Needless to say, they trusted themselves to relinquish leadership once the revolution was secure.

The bolshevik influence at work here is a point which hardly needs to be laboured. What is worth noting, however, is that none of those who set up the League came from a bolshevik background.[57] They had been members of Kokuren and/or Zenkoku Jiren and their enthusiasm for bolshevik tactics can be interpreted as a reaction against the pure anarchism which had previously claimed their allegiance. Nevertheless, in certain respects, they could be said to have remained pure anarchists. As we shall see when we examine the programme that they adopted after the League transformed itself into the Party, an anarchist communist society remained the object which they sought to achieve. Where they broke with pure anarchism was in their desire to become involved in the day-to-day struggles by workers to improve their conditions within capitalism. Yet, although involvement in the class struggle was now seen by Aizawa and his comrades as the means to win mass support, they could not entirely throw off their distrust of the reformist labour movement. This explains the importance they attached to their own role as a hard core of supposedly incorruptible revolutionaries operating within a wider, less fastidious movement, which they only half trusted on account of its reformism. In view of this perception of themselves as a leadership which would be the anarchist movement's salvation, it is not a little ironic that it was they who became the movement's Achilles' heel and who brought about its destruction.

On 30 January 1934, as Hatta Shūzō lay dying, the League was reconstituted as the Party. Although its membership was subsequently expanded, it continued to keep its existence a closely guarded secret and never had more than a few dozen members. Its membership was deliberately restricted, partly to guard against infiltration by the state but also because its limited number of hand-picked members was intended to enable it to exert influence on larger organisations without them even being aware of its existence. For example, Umemoto Eizō was invited to join the Party because he was a member of lhe Tōkyō Printworkers' Union, a key figure in Zenkoku Jiren and (like Aizawa) one of the editors of *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun.* Another recruit was Tadokoro Shigeo (1907–45), a former secretary of Jikyō who was appointed to Zenkoku Jiren's secretariat after these two union federations reunited.[58] This tactic of infiltration was so successful that, by the end of 1934, the Party had come to regard *Jiyū Rengō Shinbun* as its 'quasi-organ'. Many articles came to reflect the Party's views, so that, for example, an article on 'Our Attitude Towards the 1935–6 Crisis', which appeared on 28 October 1934, was closely modelled on the Party's 'action programme' and contained a list of 26 slogans which formed the concluding section of the Party's pamphlet *Proletarian Strategy and Tactics.* Indeed, this Party pamphlet was itself published under the Libertarian Federation Newspaper Company's imprint.[59]

In August 1934 a meeting was held to decide the Party's 'programme' (*kōryō*) and 'action programme' (*kōdō kōryō*). The eight-point general 'programme' which the Party adopted read as follows:-

1. Abolition of power politics and the capitalist system.

[56] Ibid., p. 56.
[57] Ibid., p. 241.
[58] Ibid., pp. 72–4.
[59] Ibid., pp. 76–88. (The pamphlet is reproduced on pp. 211ff.)

2. Establishment of a system of complete local autonomy.
3. Abolition of the private property system.
4. Common ownership of the means of production and the land.
5. Abolition of the wages system.
6. Control of production by the workers and farmers.
7. Availability of education and culture.
8. Abolition of artificial national frontiers.[60]

Although the pure anarchist roots of those who had formed the Party were clearly visible in this statement of their ultimate objectives, the eleven-point 'action programme' was a contradictory hotchpotch of communist demands (such as 'abolition of the capitalist system ') and reformist proposals (such as 'unemployment insurance to be borne by the government and the capitalists'). Why 'acquisition of voting rights by men and women over 18 years of age' (clause 3) should have been of any interest to those who were also demanding 'the dissolution of parliament' (clause 2) was a mystery which was never explained.[61]

The Party's basic strategy was inherited from its predecessor, the League. In *Proletarian Strategy and Tactics* the case was made that, given the backward consciousness of the masses, it would be a mistake to rely on their spontaneous activity or to expect them, on their own initiative, to achieve 'libertarian federation and free agreement'.[62] As Aizawa explained, the conclusion which was drawn was that it was therefore up to the Party to 'seize social hegemony'. Only at a later stage of the revolution, when the people had asserted themselves sufficiently to engage in economic construction from the bottom up and were ready to exercise their own control over society, would the Party 'of its own accord relinquish power'.[63] In other words, the Party's strategy, like the League's before it, was derived from bolshevism, but the naive expectation was that a bolshevik outcome could be avoided because those carrying it out would be equipped with 'an ideology which denied power'.[64] At about the time when this strategy was being urged on the anarchists in pamphlets such as *Proletarian Strategy and Tactics* and the Party's clandestinely published *Theses of the Anarchist Communist Party of Japan,* Aizawa had a chance meeting with the veteran pure anarchist Iwasa Sakutarō. As Iwasa put it:

> These days strange pamphlets are appearing. They're complete rubbish. They're not anarchist, but bolshevik. Have you read them?

Rationalising that this was criticism from an outdated anarchist, Aizawa (who was the author of both pamphlets) lied his way out of the situation: 'I haven't read them yet, but I'll try reading them.'[65]

[60] Ibid., p. 76.
[61] Ibid., pp. 76–7.
[62] Ibid., p. 231.
[63] Ibid., p. 92.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid., p. 89.

The most powerful argument that can be directed against the Party's theories is to give an account of where they led in practice. The Party was organised into various sections which assumed responsibility for different areas of activity. The member who was put in charge of the section with responsibility for the Party's finances was Futami Toshio (1906–67). Futami came from a military family and, despite rebelling against his upbringing, was fascinated by strong-arm tactics and acts of violence. A plan was hatched to carry out a robbery in order to raise funds for the Party and a firearm was acquired for that purpose. However, before this plan could be put into effect, Futami and others became suspicious of a member called Shibahara Junzō (?1901–35), believing him to be at best loose-tongued about the Party's affairs and at worst a spy. The upshot was that, aided by other Party members, Futami shot Shibahara on the outskirts of Kōbe on 18 October 1935 with the pistol intended for the hold-up.

After Shibahara's murder, a bank in Tōkyō was selected as the target for the planned armed robbery. On 6 November 1935, Futami, Aizawa and Kobayashi Kazunobu (? h. 1910) attempted to hold up the Takada branch of the Agricultural and Commercial Bank, but the staff resisted, the pistol misfired and the three Party members fled empty-handed. Following this, the police launched a manhunt to find those responsible and Aizawa was arrested as he tried to escape from Japan and as he was about to board a ship bound for Shanghai. Once in custody, he was grilled remorselessly by the police and the existence of the Party gradually came to light. In the course of his questioning, he was beaten mercilessly, his tormentors screaming at him, 'It doesn't matter whether we kill one or two of you lot.'[66] As more and more details of the Party were revealed, the case rapidly snowballed from the routine investigation of a criminal act into a massive round-up of hundreds of anarchists. With complete disregard for whether they were Party members or not, approximately 400 anarchists were arrested in the closing months of 1935. The intensity of the repression was such that Zenkoku Jiren was forced to disband early in 1936. As Yamaguchi Kensuke recalled:

> This repression certainly mortally wounded Zenkoku Jiren. From factory and workplace, no matter whether they were men or women, those regarded as activists were arrested indiscriminately, without any distinction being made between anarchists and syndicalists. In the Tōkyō Printworkers' Union alone, the best part of 100 workers were arrested.[67]

Nor was the so-called 'Anarchist Communist Party of Japan Incident', which stretched far beyond the minuscule organisation of the Party, the end of the hammer blows which fell on the anarchist movement. As more and more anarchists were taken in for questioning at the end of 1935, the police gathered an increasing amount of intelligence on Nōseisha. Despite the fact that it had dissolved more than three years earlier, a 'Nōseisha Incident' was now discovered ('invented' might be a more appropriate term) and a further 300 anarchists were arrested in May 1936. Although it was only a few dozen leading members of the Party and Nōseisha who were eventually put on trial and given lengthy prison sentences, hundreds were locked up while their cases were investigated, often for months on end. When the trials had run their course, the leaders of the Party received variable prison sentences. Aizawa, for example, was given six years and, although Futami was initially sentenced to death, this was subsequently commuted to

[66] Ibid., p. 116.
[67] Yamaguchi (1970), p. 45.

twenty years' imprisonment. (Futami was still in prison at the end of the war. He was released by order of the Occupation authorities in October 1945.) Prominent members of Nōseisha, such as Miyazaki and Suzuki, were jailed for up to three years.

As they hounded the anarchists, the authorities also used the press to justify the witch-hunt that they were conducting. With headlines such as 'A Frenzied Bunch Dreaming of an Ideal' or 'Extending From Its Nagano Stronghold Across the Whole Country—A Black Encampment Expanding Itself Resolutely' adorning the newspapers, an atmosphere of hysteria was whipped up.[68] Under such circumstances, it was impossible for the anarchists to engage in organised activity or even to publish their views any longer. The merest whisper that someone had anarchist sympathies was enough to provoke an investigation by the special branch (*tokkō*). At the very least, this would result in being sacked from one's job or turned off one's farm by the landlord. Even the outbreak of the Spanish Revolution in July 1936 had only a minimal impact in far-away Japan. For most anarchists in Japan, there was from 1936 no alternative but to retreat into private life, think one's own thoughts, and try to stay alive, while waiting for the day when the state would, in its turn, be brought to its knees.

Many anarchists felt bitter resentment towards the Party for the fate which had befallen their movement. Although Yamaguchi spoke as an anarchist syndicalist, most pure anarchists could have endorsed his criticism when he stated:

> This party, centred on intellectuals, ignored objective circumstances and, due as much to its elitist heroics and self-righteousness as to its adventurism, which was completely isolated from the masses, delivered the final blow to an army already on the brink of defeat.[69]

Certainly, he was right to complain that it was the Party's foolhardiness which precipitated disaster. In the typically hothouse, claustrophobic atmosphere of a self-styled vanguard, the Party's members increasingly lost touch with reality, even to the extent of bizarrely executing one of their number who fell under suspicion. Needless to say, Futami's murder of Shibahara was a godsend to a state which wanted to blacken the very name of anarchism, since it provided an ideal opportunity to portray all anarchists as half-crazed assassins. Nevertheless, one should not overlook Yamaguchi's final remark. By 1935–6 the anarchists truly were 'an army already on the brink of defeat'. The state was determined to crush anything that would hinder the coming war effort, and the anarchists offended on every score, since their critique of the status quo took in every aspect of existing society—from capitalism to imperialism, from the Emperor to militarism, from parliament to the existence of the state institution itself. In that sense, the Party could be said to have merely provided the opportunity for what the state was determined to do anyway, under one pretext or another.

In August 1945, some ten years after the end of our story, and with more than three million Japanese corpses by then strewn across the battlefields of Asia and the Pacific, the Japanese state finally admitted defeat. In the subsequent rush to jettison what was expendable, so as better to preserve the essential structures of capitalism and the state, it suddenly became fashionable to denounce the old regime. Opportunists of all descriptions wasted no time in distancing themselves from the former state and its by now discredited ways. But in their hurry to cast off the state's

[68] *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, 11 January 1937, supplement.

[69] Yamaguchi (1970), p. 46

militaristic and oppressive garb, and to redress it in liberal garments, few remembered those who had resisted authoritarian rule long before it was fashionable to do so. Fewer still remembered the anarchist maxims that there is no such thing as a 'good state' (as opposed to a 'bad state') any more than there is an 'acceptable form of capitalism' (as opposed to an 'objectionable form of capitalism '). A new capitalist state rose in Japan from the ashes of the old—and with it the need to resist and overcome, just as the pure anarchists had attempted to do a generation earlier.

8. Pure Anarchism: an Assessment

For supporters of capitalism, there is a ready-made conclusion waiting to be drawn from the case-study of pure anarchism. Essentially, the argument is that pure anarchism is a particular manifestation of the strains inevitably induced by the process of economic development. They will argue that during the interwar years Japan was engaged in the further expansion of industry, to the detriment of agriculture; that this imposed burdens on the working population generally and on those in the agricultural sector in particular; and that pure anarchism was an expression of the unrealistic complaints and utopian yearnings uttered by hard-pressed farmers and first-generation workers as they witnessed the incorporation of their traditional communities into the market economy, with all its attendant, unfamiliar disciplines. As E.P. Thompson might have said, it is a verdict on the pure anarchists which reeks of 'the enormous condescension of posterity'.[1] It assumes that the very idea of economic development as the pure anarchists envisaged it (without state power, without production for profit and without the wages system) was a utopian fantasy. And, although supporters of capitalism would prefer not to admit it, it also assumes that there was no alternative to Japan becoming an armed nation-state, ready to engage in war in defence of its economic interests, as eventually happened with such catastrophic consequences between 1937 and 1945. Supporters of capitalism regularly invoke parliamentary 'democracy' as the safeguard which, when present, can prevent the state's warlike behaviour and they regret the fact that it was never properly consolidated in interwar Japan. Yet such faith in the saving grace of parliamentary 'democracy' is no more than a night of fancy of their own. As the pure anarchists never failed to point out, capitalist states of the 'democratic' variety, such as the USA or Britain, are no less likely to promote their interests militarily than is the type of despotic state that Japan was in the interwar years.[2] In other words, supporters of capitalism would be well advised to think through their own prescription for economic development, which is pregnant with the corollaries of war, exploitation and oppression, before they start levelling the charge of utopianism at others.

It is necessary to set aside prejudices and ready-made conclusions, then, if we are to assess fairly how feasible the communes favoured by the pure anarchists would have been as an alternative socio-economic organisation and path of economic development. Before evaluating the pure anarchists' proposals, however, we first need to summarise the principal features of the communes as we identified them in earlier chapters. They were seen as small-scale communities, much reduced in size and population when compared to existing nation-states. For example, Miyazaki Akira suggested in *Appeal to the Farmers* that a country of Japan's size would become 'several hundred or so communal societies'.[3] Reduced to this scale, each commune would function largely on the basis of face-to-face relationships, without the need for extensive representation and certainly eliminating the possibility that a self-serving bureaucracy would emerge.

[1] Thompson (1968), p. 13.
[2] Crump (1992), pp. 75–7.
[3] *Kurohata* vol. 3 no. 2, February 1931, p. 14.

Libertarian federation was expected to be the organisational principle observed both within the commune and between communes. By such means, the communes would prevent any centralised body from taking shape and imposing its decisions on the rest of society. It was argued that in this practical manner, the state could be eliminated and liberty guaranteed.

Turning from the 'politics' of anarchist communism to the organisation of its 'economy', the land and all other means of production were to be owned communally, thereby entitling each member of the commune to lake freely from the common wealth. Production would be undertaken neither to meet the requirements of a market, nor in order to fulfil the norms laid down in a centrally devised plan. Rather, people would engage in both cooperative and individual production within the commune in which they lived so as to satisfy their freely determined consumption needs in the manner that was most congenial for them. The division of labour, both within the commune and between communes, would be consciously avoided in order to prevent the emergence of the power relations which inevitably accompany it. Since each commune would aim at economic self-sufficiency, there would be a mix of agriculture and industry, which would manifest itself both in the life of the commune as a whole and in the lifestyles of its individual members. Men, women and children were expected to become well-rounded individuals with many aptitudes and interests. rather than narrow specialists locked into a particular profession and perpetually practising a single skill.

The above is intended as only a brief summary of arguments which have been well rehearsed throughout this book. One final point is worth re-emphasising, however. This is the crucial role which communal solidarity was expected to play. Anarchist communism as the pure anarchists envisaged it was expected to flourish not simply because the correct institutions had been set up or the goal of production had been redefined. By themselves these were only the dry skeleton of the proposed new society. What would animate it, put flesh on its bones and send blood surging through its arteries was communal solidarity. Bonds of affection and comradeship were expected to unite the commune, thereby providing all its members with physical and emotional security, and at the same time predisposing them to identify their own individual well-being with the common good.

When considering the feasibility of the social system advocated by the pure anarchists, we need to be clear about the criteria against which it should be measured. It would, for example, be unreasonable to demand that it be assessed against such yardsticks of a capitalist economy as annual rate of growth, balance of trade and so forth. This is not only for the obvious reason that since anarchist communism was never put into practice, there are no data available for comparing and contrasting its economic performance with capitalism's. If this were the only obstacle to gauging anarchist communism's economic performance in terms of capitalism's criteria, it might be possible to come up with a computer simulation of such an 'economy' and estimate its likely productive efficiency relative to that achieved by capitalism at an equivalent stage of technological development. However, evaluating anarchist communism by means of the criteria which have been devised to measure capitalism's performance does not make sense for more fundamental reasons, which arc both philosophical and technical In nature.

To take the philosophical reason first, capitalism is first and foremost an economic system. Its *raison d'être* is to achieve *economics,* in the sense of minimising economic inputs and maximising economic outputs. To the extent that this endeavour meets with success, profits are realised and economic indicators such as Gross National Product (GNP) register positive growth rates. Given capitalism's overwhelmingly economic orientation, it is not surprising that, while it is acutely

sensitive to the slightest fluctuations registered on an assortment of economic performance indicators, such as rate of growth and return on investment, it is notoriously ill equipped to take non-economic factors into account. In recent years many Greens have remarked on capitalism's inability to handle problems such as the destruction of the environment, since these are not calculable in the only terms capitalism readily understands—the one-sided, economic criteria of profit and loss. For similar reasons, capitalism would be no less baffled if it were demanded that it assess its operations against the performance indicators to which the pure anarchists attached most importance, such as personal liberty, communal solidarity and the individual's unconditional right to free consumption. Faced with such demands, capitalism would either have to admit that these were not yardsticks against which it could sensibly measure itself or it would have to resort to the type of grotesque ideological subterfuges which it often employs, such as identifying human liberty with the market and therefore with wage slavery.

This philosophical argument cuts both ways. Just as it would be unreasonable to impose on capitalism performance indicators which are alien to its very nature and purpose, so we have to evaluate pure anarchism against its own declared objectives and not against criteria derived from capitalism. The pure anarchists' confidence in the alternative society they advocated derived not from an expectation that it would *quantitatively* outperform capitalism in terms of GNP, productivity or similar capitalist criteria. On the contrary, their enthusiasm for anarchist communism flowed from their understanding that it would be *qualitatively* different from capitalism. Of course, this is not to say that the pure anarchists were indifferent to questions of production and distribution. As we have seen, they had distinctive proposals to make in these areas and they certainly believed that anarchist communism would provide economic well-being for all. But neither were they prepared to give priority to narrowly conceived economic expansion, to the neglect of individual liberty and communal solidarity, as capitalism regularly does.

The technical reason why anarchist communism, even if it could be simulated by computer, could not be evaluated by reference to capitalist criteria is that it was intended to be a moneyless society which would not employ a universal equivalent for measuring economic value. A capitalist state can quantify the sum total of economic activity occurring on its territory because all goods and services have economic values attributed to them, which are expressible in common monetary units. The pure anarchists had no need for money in the new society they sought to achieve, since the abolition of exchange relations would have made it superfluous. Similarly, since the inhabitants of an anarchist communist society would have been interested only in the physical and aesthetic qualities of the goods they produced, they would have been entirely indifferent to (indeed, would have regarded with incomprehension) the proposition that articles had a 'value' separate from these qualities. This is not to imply that anarchist communists would have regressed to a level of statistical illiteracy. Clearly, the communes could have been expected to employ calculating techniques in all of the many fields of production and distribution in which they were engaged. But this would have been calculation in physical units (weight, volume, length, etc.) to which further computation in a common, monetary unit would have added nothing. Hence the point hardly needs to be laboured that, in the absence of money, GNP and similar measurements of economic value would have been inappropriate and, indeed, impossible.[4]

Having established that the feasibility of an anarchist communist society cannot be assessed by employing performance indicators which are tailored to meet capitalism's requirements, we

[4] On calculation in kind, see Buick & Crump (1986), pp. 126ff.

can now evaluate it against those criteria which reflect its own priorities. Appropriate yardsticks would be the extent to which it could have provided for individual liberty and communal solidarity, and the extent to which it might reasonably have been expected to achieve economic well-being for all at the same time that it dissociated personal consumption from the individual's productive contribution to society.

As far as individual liberty and communal solidarity are concerned, there is every likelihood that an anarchist communist society could have successfully combined these two in a way which would have put contemporary Japanese capitalism to shame. It is reasonable to draw this conclusion because even a few moments' reflection reveals that anarchist communism would have removed the main impediments to liberty in interwar Japan. During the interwar period and through to 1945, Japan was a despotic society where power lay in the hands of the upper echelons of the military, the state bureaucracy and the industrial conglomerates. The state pursued policies. such as military expansion and the promotion of heavy industry, which reflected the ambitions of these powerful interests but which cost the bulk of the population dearly in terms of material deprivation and ultimately blood. It is inconceivable that ordinary working men and women would have voluntarily subjected themselves to the degree of economic privation which millions experienced in interwar Japan in order to achieve objectives, such as building up heavy industry, which brought them no tangible returns. Similarly, it is equally far-fetched to imagine that millions of young men from impoverished villages and urban shuns would have voluntarily departed in order to kill and be killed on distant battlefields, whose geographical location they often barely comprehended, for reasons which bore no relation to the welfare of their communities at home. The fact is that millions of workers and farmers worked themselves into early graves, or threw away their young lives in battle, for goals which were not their own but which served the purposes of unscrupulous minorities who held the levers of power. These policies had to be imposed on the majority by the usual combination of coercive force and ideological mystification. Coercion was provided for by wide-ranging repressive legislation, such as the notorious Peace Preservation Law of 1925, which aimed to suppress all who sought to change Japan's constitutional order, form of government or property system. This was enforced by the various arms of the state. such as the regular police, the special branch and the military police, although it should also be added that these forces were never overly concerned whether their repressive activities were legally sanctioned or not. Needless to say, ideological mystification took the form of the myths spun round the person of the Emperor. Once those wielding power had contrived to present their policies as expressions of the 'imperial will', all discussion was blocked off. From that point on anybody who dissented from official policy did so at their peril.

As for communal solidarity, throughout the interwar years this was increasingly eroded by the spread of economic competition and the strains induced by impoverishment. In the cities, workers competed to sell their labour power amidst the insecurity created by economic uncertainty and the perpetual fluctuations in the level of unemployment. In addition, urban workers were further divided against one another as employers played off males against females and 'regular' employees against those relegated to 'external' or 'temporary' status. Even in the villages, the heavy burden of taxation meant that peasants who could not pay their taxes lost their land and were reduced to renting a few tan from a landlord.[5] Under such circumstances. friction between those better off and those worse off, and particularly between landlords and tenant farmers,

[5] 1 *tan* is slightly less than one-quarter of an acre or slightly less than 1000 square metres.

strained the traditional harmony of the agricultural communities. Despite what the ideologues of capitalism might say, none of this was due to quirks of human nature or a genetic predisposition to contend. Competition and contention were learnt behaviour, induced by a social system which set people against one another and which worked in such a fashion that the prosperity of the few depended on the deprivation of the many.

It is no exaggeration to say that, had anarchist communism been achieved in the interwar years, it would have eliminated at one stroke the existing curtailments on individual liberty and the factors which were undermining communal solidarity. One can say this with confidence because the pure anarchists made no secret of the fact that they intended to dissolve the industrial conglomerates, dismantle the state bureaucracy and break up the military machine. Had these revolutionary changes been carried out, there would no longer have been powerful and privileged strata with interests different from those of the masses of the people, nor would they have been provided with any means to pursue their interests at the expense of the people. Both state and imperial institutions would have been swept away. leaving the people free to lead an independent and self-reliant existence in their communes, without any coercive or mystifying interference by outside forces. Decentralisation would have removed the scourge of war. since no commune would have been powerful enough to engage in the type of armed aggression for which the Japanese military was notorious. Furthermore, decentralisation would have introduced an additional safeguard against the possibility that war might have been undertaken by a federation of communes acting jointly. This safeguard was the deterrent inherent in a decentralised decision-making structure, where the gap between those taking the decisions and those carrying them out has been closed. Wars are invariably declared by those who are well insulated from their effects, not by those who have to risk life and limb in the fighting. Since the commune system would have removed the distinction between those deciding policy and those putting it into effect, people's natural reluctance to expose themselves to the dangers and hardships of war would have been a powerful check on military aggression. Similarly, by eliminating state-imposed taxes, private property in land and other resources, working for wages, and production for the market. anarchist communism would have eradicated the sources of impoverishment, competition and contention within society, and the dog-eat-dog attitudes which flow from them. This would have left people free to cooperate for their mutual benefit and enjoyment, and the traditional communal solidarity of the villages could have reasserted itself and flourished even further.

Even if it is thus a reasonable conjecture that the society favoured by the pure anarchists could have met its objective of combining individual liberty with communal solidarity, this still leaves the question of economic well-being to be considered. Without a sufficient supply of consumer goods and services, liberty would soon have worn thin and solidarity would soon have been jeopardised. The pure anarchists were as aware of this as their critics and yet they still proposed to abolish large-scale production in urban locations and switch to small-scale workshops set among the fields of the decentralised communes. As if this were not inefficient enough, when judged by capitalism's standards, they also intended to rely on an entirely voluntary system of labour and dispense with any mechanism, such as wages, which would require people to earn the wherewithal to consume. How likely was it that economic well-being could have been achieved under such circumstances?

The first point to make is that urban industry in interwar Japan was not primarily engaged in production to satisfy consumer demand among the bulk of the population. Relatively few of the

products of large-scale industry found their way into the households of either the urban workers or the farmers in the villages. Throughout most of the interwar period industry was dominated by textile production, which was heavily skewed towards overseas markets and accounted for the bulk of Japan's exports. Although the percentage of textile workers in the total workforce in the factories fell from 55 per cent in 1929 to 41 per cent in 1936, textiles still accounted for 52 per cent of all Japan's exports in the mid-1930s.[6] Being such an export-oriented sector, the textile industry was totally at variance with the pure anarchist principles of self-sufficiency and self-support. Hence closing down the large mills in the course of an anarchist communist reorganisation of society would not have had the detrimental effect that those accustomed to thinking along capitalist lines might imagine. Moreover, the relative decline in importance of textiles as the 1930s progressed was due to a shift towards industries which were even further removed from ordinary people's requirements, but which served instead the interests of the Japanese state as it prepared for all-out war. For example, during the period when the pure anarchists were locked in struggle with the capitalist state, industries such as metals and machinery, shipbuilding, and iron and steel all expanded by more than 300 per cent.[7] Once again, few if any of the products of such industries were destined for ordinary households and therefore shutting the enterprises which produced them would not have reduced the standard of living of the majority of the people. On the contrary, the pure anarchists were probably correct in their belief that it was encouraging workers with industrial skills and mechanical expertise to relocate in the villages which would have had a beneficial effect on general living standards. It was judged that, by setting up small-scale workshops in the communes, and by bringing people from industrial and agricultural backgrounds into intimate contact with one another, a ready supply could be obtained of farming implements, household goods, means of transport, and so forth, which precisely matched the needs of the local population. There was nothing inherently unrealistic about the pure anarchists' confidence that the products of communal workshops could have enriched ordinary people's lives immeasurably more than the often inappropriate (not to mention prohibitively expensive) commodities manufactured by large-scale industry in remote, urban locations.

As for the pure anarchists' plans to abolish the wages system and free consumption from monetary constraints, these are bound to jar against the prejudices of supporters of capitalism. Capitalism is underpinned by an ideology of human nature which asserts that no-one will work unless forced to do so by mechanisms such as the wages system and that greed is unlimited unless held in check by devices such as pricing. Obviously, the pure anarchists disagreed with such a patently un historical view of unchanging 'human nature'. They argued that even within capitalism much human behaviour does not conform to this pattern, but that within the tightly knit and mutually supportive environment of the communes people would behave in a fashion which would expose the capitalist view of human nature as an ideological caricature. The pure anarchists did not pretend that men and women would suddenly become angels once anarchist communism was achieved. All they were suggesting was that work is a physiological need which people would be free to satisfy under conditions of comradeship, diversity and self-regulation in the alternative society provided by the communes. From the pure anarchists' standpoint, the fact that capitalism's supporters conceive of work as an activity in which people will engage only when forced to do so tells us infinitely more about wage labour and the nature of capitalist

[6] Allen (1972), pp. 145, 213, 231.

[7] Ibid., pp. 218, 225, 226.

employment than it does about work per se or the nature of humans. Similarly, the equally ideological claims by supporters of capitalism that desires are infinite and that consumption will run riot unless held in check by monetary constraints tell us much more about the sick behaviour induced by capitalism than they do about the innate capacity of humans to consume. Not only is it blatantly ideological to talk about 'infinite' desire when physical reasons alone make that impossible but, as Hatta Shūzō argued persuasively (see Chapter 6), in a society which encouraged human solidarity, the bonds of comradeship and affection which united people could be expected to bring the individual's perception of plenty into line with the level of consumption that a commune could support.

In addition to the changes in attitudes towards work and consumption which have already been mentioned, neither should one overlook several other factors which would come into play in an anarchist communist society. In a society where production was consciously geared to the needs of the local population, where people no longer worked to enrich capitalists and landlords, and where the labour process was directly controlled by the producers themselves. one could reasonably expect a level of enthusiasm and interest which could never be achieved under conditions of capitalist alienation. One way in which people's new-found enthusiasm for, and interest in, production would very likely be felt would be as a surge of experimentation and inventiveness. It is also important to remember the fact that within existing society in the interwar years whole sections of the population and enormous resources were committed to activities which are essential to capitalism but which would become entirely redundant with the achievement of anarchist communism. The vastly wasteful armed forces might be the example which first comes to mind, but to these could be added the legions of bureaucrats, police and lawyers which capitalist states require, or most working in sectors of the economy such as banking, insurance and advertising, to name only a few. Once one considers the implications of integrating the millions of such people into productive activity, the pure anarchist goal of achieving economic well-being for all becomes an increasingly realistic proposition. The failure of the pure anarchists to realise their vision of a new society can then be seen to have been due to the power of the state against which they struggled, their inability to win sufficient workers and farmers over to their point of view, and the difficulty of getting their message across internationally. Il was not due to any intrinsic lack of feasibility in their plans for social reorganisation along anarchist communist lines.

To come down on the side of the pure anarchists' proposals for realising anarchist communism is not to imply that their concept of an alternative society was entirely free of problems. One such problem was localism. The unit of the future society was seen as the autonomous commune, whose members would form a tightly knit community and which, as far as possible, was intended to be economically self-supporting. Hatta's reasons for stressing communal autonomy and for avoiding a division of labour within society have been explained in detail, but it should be recognised that, in rightly establishing a link between economic specialisation and power relations, he probably went too far in the opposite direction. In other words, he neglected the danger posed by the emergence of strong local identities and loyalties in a society based on communes. Such attitudes already existed in the farming villages and there was a distinct possibility that, without taking conscious steps to head off the danger, the conversion of the villages into self-sufficient communes would have accentuated this localism further. The threat which this would have posed to anarchist communism as the pure anarchists envisaged it should not be underestimated. Since natural resources are not spread evenly, strict adherence to economic self-sufficiency would soon have led to significant differences in the standards of living achieved in

different communes. This would have been a source of enmity, from which it would have been only one step further for poorer communes to have resorted to force in an attempt to redress the balance, or for better endowed communes to have used their advantage to subjugate others. Had this been the case, such actions would no doubt have been accompanied by an ideology of localism which would have been every bit as pernicious as nationalism or racialism. Incidental differences of style, speech or whatever would have been rationalised as evidence of superiority or inferiority and the whole basis of anarchist communism would have been undermined.

To prevent these developments from occurring, pure anarchism would have needed to be modified in two respects. In the first place, it should have been recognised that the achievement of anarchist communism required a more significant leap in the realm of ideas than most pure anarchists allowed for. Whereas the pure anarchists generally acknowledged that the process of 'becoming an anarchist' was a major step, which involved throwing off capitalism's ideological domination and embracing a new view of society, they assumed that it was only a minority of activists who had to undergo the traumatic soul-searching which such a fundamental restructuring of one's ideas involved. It was asserted that the majority of the population, who lived in the farming villages, had no need to tread this difficult path because they already led lives of 'natural anarchism'. In the light of the danger posed by localism one can see that this was wrong. Anarchist communism is a universalist creed which demands the liberation of humankind as a whole. Thus it contains within itself an antidote to the poison of mean-spirited localism which could otherwise infect a society based on communes. However, for this to take effect, the communes would need to be populated by conscious anarchist communists, who were committed to the equality and the liberty of all humankind, and not by people who, for the most part, had never experienced the painful struggle to internalise the values of anarchist communism. To put it another way, one condition which anarchist communism would have had to meet, if it were not to degenerate rapidly into localism, was a revolution based on mass understanding of the nature and purpose of the new society. This was a far cry from Hatta's concept of revolution, according to which 'the creative violence of a minority' of conscious activists was sufficient to spur into action a majority whose practice of 'natural anarchism' was local in the extreme.

In the second place, some modification would have been needed to the principle of communal self-sufficiency. It is true that, as I have mentioned before, the pure anarchists did not make a fetish out of autarky and were prepared to contemplate, at the margins of economic life, giving and receiving (as distinct from exchange) relations between communes. Yet in their concern for avoiding the division of labour at all costs, they paid insufficient attention to the need to compensate for local deficiencies with supplies from outside in order to avoid marked discrepancies in living standards. Furthermore, they overlooked the extent to which this flow of products between communes (even if confined to a minority of economic activity) would need to be regularised. To take a concrete example, not every commune could have its own copper mine. In cases where there was no readily available local supply, the advantage of using copper would need to be weighed against the disadvantages of doing without, using a less satisfactory substitute or becoming dependent on an outside source. The choice would rest with each commune, but it would seem reasonable to argue, as a general rule of thumb, that there need be no fundamental risk to anarchist communism if communes made even regular use of some outside supplies, providing the bulk of production and distribution remained intra-communal and providing also that communes remained permanently alert to the danger of over-reliance on external sources and retained a psychological readiness to do without if needs be. To stick to the example of copper,

Murray Bookchin (b. 1921) made some points which are relevant to this discussion when he wrote in 1965 in an essay 'Towards a Liberatory Technology':

> ... let us grant that copper will fall within the sizeable category of material that can be furnished only by a nationwide system of distribution. In what sense need there be a division of labor in the current sense of the term? There need be none at all. First, copper can be distributed, together with other goods, among free, autonomous communities, be they those that mine it or those that require it. This distribution system need not require the mediation of centralized bureaucratic institutions. Second, and perhaps more significant, a community that lives in a region with ample copper resources would not be a mere mining community. Copper mining would be one of the many economic activities in which it was engaged—a part of a larger, rounded, organic economic arena. The same would hold for communities whose climate was most suitable for growing specialized foods or whose resources were rare and uniquely valuable to society as a whole. Every community would approximate local or regional autarky. It would seek to achieve wholeness, because wholeness produces complete, rounded men who live in symbiotic relationship with their environment. Even if a substantial portion of the economy fell within the sphere of a national division of labor, the overall economic weight of society would still rest with the community.[8]

The balance which Bookchin struck here between basic economic self-sufficiency which is tempered by a limited intercommunal flow of otherwise unobtainable products conforms to the essence of pure anarchism. At the same time, it could prevent the emergence of significant discrepancies in living standards and the localist reaction which these could provoke.

Mention of Murray Bookchin brings me to the final point I wish to make in this study of Hatta Shūzō and pure anarchism. Pure anarchism was not simply a missed historical opportunity of the interwar era. After lying all but dormant or many years, anarchist communism has recently stirred to life again in the form of 'ecological anarchism'. Faced with the threat of environmental catastrophe, a reaction by some Greens has been to resurrect the idea of a society of decentralised and largely self-sufficient communes. As one writer has put it: 'The classic ecocentric proposal is the self-reliant community modelled on anarchist lines.'[9] When 'ecological anarchists' such as Bookchin maintain that 'a national division of labor and industrial centralization are dangerous because technology begins to transcend the human scale; it becomes increasingly incomprehensible and lends itself to bureaucratic manipulation' or that 'workers' control, long favoured by syndicalist tendencies in opposition to nationalized economies, has serious limitations of its own', they are quite unconsciously echoing arguments which were advanced many decades earlier, often with considerable theoretical sophistication, by Hatta and other pure anarchists.[10] Since the pure anarchists' vision of anarchist communism thus anticipated recent proposals for achieving an ecologically balanced society, their relevance to modern Greens is obvious and constitutes another reason for making their ideas available to a Western audience by means of this study.[11]

[8] Bookchin (1971), pp. 137–8.

[9] O'Riordan (1976), p. 307.

[10] Bookchin (1971) pp. 135–6. Bookchin (1989), p. 193.

[11] For the ecological dimension of pure anarchism, see Crump (1993).

Of course, the writings of Bookchin and other 'ecological anarchists' have been dismissed as utopian, just as Hatta's were previously. But if a decentralised society of libertarian communes is a utopia, it is a utopia which surfaces repeatedly in various guises and in different historical periods, suggesting that it corresponds to certain deeply felt needs of humankind which capitalism is perennially unable to satisfy. Besides which, the charge of utopianism is a twin-edged sword, anyway. For as Oscar Wilde (1856–1900) reminded us, 'progress is the realisation of Utopias'.[12]

[12] Wilde (1890), p. 1028.

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