3 Japan and the Great War: Imperialist Ambitions Abroad, Social Change and Protest at Home

3.1 Introduction

Regardless of the recent centennial the Great War,[1] the focus of many studies published in the last four years, has remained Eurocentric as "[b]oth popular and academic accounts of the First World War often omit East Asia, and any reference to Japan,"[2] despite the war having "permanently laid to rest a Europe-centered power system."[3] The war changed East Asia tremendously and had a great impact on the national level in this region because it caused a "regional restructuring" there, namely the transition from a China-centered to a Japan-centered political and economic system.[4] For Japan the Great War was therefore naturally very important and caused change in multiple ways, although works on Japan and that period mainly focus on the political history of the country, and the centennial did not change this perspective too much.[5] On the one hand, this change is emphasized by Western scholars like the Dutch historian Dick Stegewerns, who critically discussed the war's character as a turning point in Japanese history, but for Japanese historians the landmark was and often still is the Russo–Japanese War of 1904/05, while the First World War was often, especially by Western historians, considered

1 This chapter is a revised and extended version of Frank Jacob, Japan and the Great War: Imperialist Ambitions Abroad, Social Change and Protest at Home, in: Marcel Bois/Frank Jacob (Eds), Zeiten des Aufruhrs (1916–1921). Globale Proteste, Streiks und Revolutionen gegen den Ersten Weltkrieg und seine Auswirkungen, Berlin 2020, 352–391.

2 Oliviero Frattolillo/Antony Best, Introduction: Japan and the Great War, in: Oliviero Frattolillo/Antony Best (Eds.), Japan and the Great War, New York 2015, pp. 1–10, here p. 1.

3 Thomas W. Burkman, Japan and the League of Nations. Empire and World Order, 1914–1938, Honolulu 2007, p. 2.

4 Tosh Minohara/Tze–ki Hon/Evan Dawley, Introduction, in: Tosh Minohara/Tze–ki Hon/Evan Dawley (Eds.), The Decade of the Great War. Japan and the Wider World in the 1910s, Leiden 2014, pp. 1–17, here p. 2.

5 Frederick R. Dickinson, War and National Reinvention. Japan and the Great War, 1914–1919, Cambridge, MA 1999; idem., World War I and the Triumph of a New Japan, 1919–1930, Cambridge, MA 2013; Tosh Minohara/Tze–ki Hon/Evan Dawley (Eds.), The Decade of the Great War. Japan and the Wider World in the 1910s, Leiden 2014. Two works by German scholars changed this and provided important new insights for the study of the topic. Jan Schmidt, Nach dem Krieg ist vor dem Krieg. Medialisierte Erfahrungen des Ersten Weltkriegs und Nachkriegsdiskurse in Japan (1914–-1919), Frankfurt 2020; Jan Schmidt/Katja Schmidtpott (Eds.), The East Asian Dimension of the First World War. Global Entanglements and Japan, China and Korea, 1914–1919, Frankfurt 2020.

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as a bilateral conflict between Japan and Germany[6] of second rank from a national perspective.[7] The Japanese political scientist Maruyama Masao (1914–1996), in addition, did not characterize 1919 as the climax of Taishō democracy, but rather called it the starting point for Japanese fascism.[8] In a way this characterization was correct, as Japan contradicted the new political world order of the interwar period, as it was supposed to be established in Versailles, with its colonial policies in the years leading to the full–scale expansion of the Japanese Empire during the early Shōwa period (1926–1945).

For other Japanese researchers, like the political scientist Hosoya Chihiro (1920–2011), the First World War rather marked the beginning of a new order of Japanese–American rivalry that was eventually cemented by the Washington Conference (1921/22).[9] Nevertheless, it was the European conflict between 1914 and 1918 that allowed Japan to replace China in the East Asian political order and allowed the Japanese economy to grow due to the absence of European competitors. With regard to its own status in the region of East Asia, for Japan, the war and its consequences can hardly be called less than decisive.[10] The war against Germany in Shandong, a Chinese province, was not "a brief, narrow, bilateral conflict that was limited to East Asia in the autumn of 1914," but "part of the profound global clash between two opposing alliance systems that lasted for four long years."[11] One also has to emphasize that the impact of the First World War on Japan as a nation state, and in consequence on East Asia as a region, was not limited to the political level, but, to quote the work of historians

6 Minohara/Hon/Dawley, Introduction, p. 1.

7 Dick Stegewerns, The End of World War One as a Turning Point in Modern Japanese History, in: Bert Edström (Ed.), Turning Points in Japanese History, London/New York 2002, pp. 138–162, here p. pp. 142–151. The number of Japanese works published on the First World War was in the years leading to and even during the centennial period rather little. Publications include: Yamanoue Shōtarō, Dai–ichiji Sekai Taisen. Wasurerareta sensō, Tokyo 2010; Yamamuro Shin'ichi et al., Gendai no kiten Dai–ichiji Sekai Taisen, 4 vols., Tokyo 2014; Kimura Seiji, Dai–ichiji Sekai Taisen, Tokyo 2014; Itaya Toshihiko, Nihonjin no tame no Dai–ichiji Sekai Taisenshi. Sekai wa naze sensō ni totsunyū shita noka, Tokyo 2017. In contrast, a three volume history of the Russo–Japanese War was published in 2016. Handō Kazutoshi, Nichiro SensōshI, 3 vols., Tokyo 2016. For a very detailed survey of the Japanese historiography related to the First World War see Schmidt, Nach dem Krieg ist vor dem Krieg, pp. 33–74. Schmidt's extremely important study also highlights that the war had actually caused important debates within Japan and therefore must not be only seen as a Western event that aroused little attention in the Japanese context. It is therefore hoped that Schmidt's book will soon be translated into English as well.

8 Cited in Stegewerns, End, p. 146.

9 Hosoya Chihiro, Ryō taisenkan no Nihon no gaikō, 1914–1945, Tokyo 1988, p. 75.

10 Minohara/Hon/Dawley, Introduction, p. 3.

11 Frattolillo/Best, Introduction, p. 1.

Oliviero Frattolillo and Antony Best again, "both Japan's experience within the war and its observations of the impact of the conflict were major catalysts for change and . . . its effects went beyond the further expansion of Japanese political and military influence in continental East Asia."[12]

Japan had not only succeeded in "display[ing] its national glory"[13] but, as a signatory power of the Treaty of Versailles, helped to create what Japanese Foreign Minister Uchida Yasuya (1865–1936) had called the "Magna Carta of a new world"[14] in Tokyo's *Asahi Shimbun* on 23 January 1920. If the Russo–Japanese War had introduced Japan to the international stage as a world power, the First World War strengthened this role and underlined Japanese demands in a more globalized world after 1918. For the Japanese nation state, as the American historian Frederick R. Dickinson correctly remarked, "the interwar years were an extraordinary era of change kindled by a singular global event."[15] In addition, in the later part of the Taishō period (1912–1926), namely the years between 1918 and 1926, a more democratic expression of the wishes of the Japanese people seemed to be possible, even against old elites like the military or navy.[16]

The present chapter will provide a survey of the impact and the consequences of the First World War in Japan. It will therefore cover the political perspectives of Japan's war participation and the economic impact of the war. Afterward, the social changes, as they were achieved due to the war, will be described in more detail. Eventually, the protests in 1918 and in the aftermath of the war shall be taken into closer consideration to show how Japan was shocked by an increase in social unrest and democratic forms of criticism against capitalism and an economic crisis created by a globalized conflict and its consequences.

3.2 Political Perspectives

The Meiji period (1868–1912) was one of transition, because the Meiji Restoration had transformed the country as a whole since 1868[17] and created a modern nation

12 Ibid., p. 2.

13 Frederick R. Dickinson, The First World War, Japan, and a Global Century, in: Oliviero Frattolillo and Antony Best (Eds.), Japan and the Great War, New York 2015, pp. 162–182, here p. 162.

14 Cited in ibid.

15 Dickinson, World War I and the Triumph, p. 6.

16 Harukata Takenaka, Failed Democratization in Prewar Japan. Breakdown of a Hybrid Regime, Stanford, CA 2014, p. 87.

17 On the Meiji Restoration see: Inoue Kiyoshi, Meiji ishin, Tokyo 2003; Osatake Takeki, Meiji ishin, Tokyo 1978; Tōyama Shigeki, Meiji ishin, Tokyo 2018.

state that was industrialized and whose economy was no longer based on rice cultivation.[18] The struggle of the Japanese people with Westernization and the defense against Western imperialism was consequently expressed in ideas that wanted to combine a Japanese soul with Western technology (*wakon yōsai*)[19] on the one hand, while preparing the country for self–defense with riches and a strong army (*fukoku kyōhei*) on the other.[20] The Meiji state had fought two wars to consolidate its position within East Asia and to counter Chinese and Russian ambitions in Korea. During these wars, the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy were not only able to wage a fast and successful war against the much bigger Chinese Empire but were also, as the first Asian nation state, able to defeat a European army on the battlefield. However, the Peace Treaty of Portsmouth did not secure Japanese interests in the region, especially since the United States considered the island empire in the Far East as its antagonist of the future.[21] Nevertheless, the Meiji period saw the establishment of a politically and militarily consolidated Japanese state whose policy makers were interested in the Asian mainland, especially since the costs of the war against Russia needed to be paid and Japan's economy needed access to the raw materials and resources of the continent.

When the First World War began in 1914, the Japanese policy makers and military planners alike realized that this war would be more than just a European conflict.[22] They eventually considered the war to be a chance to solve some of the problems that had been troubling the country since the Meiji Restoration, because, as Frattolillo and Best so expertly described it,

> Japan had a dual identity. On the face of it, it appeared on the world scene as an up–and–coming country, militarily and economically. Indeed, it was the only Great Power in Asia and, moreover, was allied with the only world power, Britain. Beneath the surface, though, it was troubled in a number of ways. At the broadest social level, many of the issues that it faced were a natural result of the modernization process that it had begun after 1868.[23]

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18 David H. James, The Rise and Fall of the Japanese Empire, London/New York 2010 [1951], p. 157.

19 Hirakawa Sukehiro, Wakon yōsai no keifu. Uchi to soto kara no Meiji Nihon, Tokyo 1992; Peter Lutum, Das Denken von Minakata Kumagusu und Yanagita Kunio. Zwei Pioniere der japanischen Volkskunde im Spiegel der Leitmotive wakon–yōsai und wayō–setchū, Münster 2005.

20 Ban'no Junji, Meiji kenpō taisei no kakuritsu. Fukoku kyōhei to minryoku kyūyō, Tokyo 1992; Nakano Takeshi, Fukoku to kyōhei. Chisei keizaigaku josetsu, Tokyo 2016.

21 For a detailed discussion of the US role during the Russo–Japanese negotiations at Portsmouth and the American interest in a pro–Russian peace treatey, see Frank Jacob, The Russo–Japanese War and Its Shaping of the Twentieth Century, London 2018, pp. 90–113.

22 Dickinson, The First World War, p. 164.

23 Frattolillo/Best, Introduction, p. 2.

Representatives of the Japanese Imperial Navy in particular had realized that the war in Europe offered a chance to regain both influence on the political scene and support for a restrengthening of the naval power of Japan. In January 1914 the Siemens Scandal (*Shīmensu jiken*) had weakened the position of the navy, whose representatives were accused of corruption.[24] In addition, the national expenditure for the Japanese navy had been steadily cut since 1911 (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Navy Expenditure 1911–1914.[25]

Year	Expenditure in ¥
1911	100,463,000
1912	95,486,000
1913	96,446,000
1914	83,700,000

The navy's leaders had initially hoped for an expansion of its budget in early 1914, but due to the scandal these hopes were destroyed. In an attack in the Lower House Budget Committee meeting, Shimada Saburō (1852–1953) of the Dōshikai[26] accused the navy's leaders of having lost their "moral integrity" and, even worse, of having "soiled Japan's reputation abroad."[27] In the following days the pressure on the government increased, although a motion of no confidence was rejected by 205 votes to 164 in the Diet.[28] Eventually, however, Prime Minister Admiral Yamamoto Gonnohyōe (1852–1933) resigned, and he was then degraded, together with Navy Minister Saitō Makoto (1858–1936), by a naval court, which also punished leading officers in Japan's navy with fines and jail time. The months before the First World War were therefore a troublesome time for the navy, whose representatives realized that the war in Europe might help them to get back on track quickly. However, when the war began in August 1914, it was not yet clear what Japan would do. Of course, the elderly

24 On the scandal see: J. Charles Schencking, Making Waves. Politics, Propaganda, and the Emergence of the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1868–1922, Stanford, CA 2005, pp. 187–191. On Siemens' role in Japan Toru Takenaka, Siemens in Japan. Von der Landesöffnung bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg, Stuttgart 1996 is recommended.

25 Numbers were taken from Schencking, Making Waves, p. 186.

26 The party, originally called Rikken–Dōshikai (Association of Allies of the Constitution) founded by Prime Minister Katsura Tarō (1848–1913) in 1913 only existed until 1916.

27 Schencking, Making Waves, p. 191.

28 Ibid., p. 193.

statesmen (*genrō*) around Yamagata Aritomo (1838–1922) were responsible for the fate of the country, but they were not really interested in being drawn into a larger European conflict. Allied with Britain through the Anglo–Japanese Alliance since 1902, it was likely that they would support the Allied Powers, but the German–ruled Chinese province of Shandong also triggered the Japanese interest in the region as a reason to get involved, as it represented an opportunity to extend Japan's influence in East Asia while supporting a European war effort.[29]

Historian J. Charles Schencking clearly describes the ambivalence of the First World War, with regard to its European and East Asian perspectives, when he states that "the cataclysmic event that forever altered European history was a war, if not the war, of opportunity for Japan."[30] The military commitment to the war effort in Europe was limited to naval support for the security of British convoys, while East Asia, especially China, got quite unprotected and therefore presented a good opportunity for Japan to gain what it had not been able to during its own wars there in the Meiji period. For the navy, the war was also a game changer. To quote Schencking again: "Acting opportunistically in the opening months of the war, initially without the consent of the cabinet, the navy used the war to further its institutional, strategic, and budgetary aims, and did so with astonishing success."[31] The increase of naval necessities could be explained by the demands of its British allies as well as the growing navy of the US, which must have been considered as a competitor for the Pacific Rim in the days after the war was over. Financially, the increased spendings were made possible by the overall economic boom that will be discussed in more detail later. However, due to a surplus of almost ¥ 1.5 billion between 1915 and 1918 and ¥ 1.3 billion in 1919, the navy could demand, and was granted, more money for new ships and increased personnel costs.[32]

Japan's Foreign Minister Katō Takaaki (1860–1926), in contrast, contacted British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey (1862–1933) to find out what Japan was supposed to do according to Britain's war plans.[33] The situation for the British government was, however, really ambivalent when it came to the question of Japanese support: "On the one hand, certain members of the British government, namely in the Admiralty Office, strongly desired Japanese naval assistance. On the other hand, British diplomats in China and Hong Kong believed that Japanese

29 A. Morgan Young, Japan under Taisho Tenno 1912–1926, London/New York 2010, p. 70.
30 Schencking, Making Waves, p. 201.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., p. 202.
33 Ibid., p. 203.

participation would diminish Britain's 'future political influence in China and our prestige in Asia generally' and 'would involve deplorable complications now and hereafter.'"[34] Identifying the war as an opportunity to extend Japan's influence in China while supporting the British war effort in Europe, Katō, as well as Prime Minister Ōkuma Shigenobu (1838–1922), agreed to get involved. The support of the Entente and the war against Germany also provided Japan, and especially its navy, with the opportunity to acquire an empire in the Pacific, where the German colonial islands were waiting for the ambitious Japanese to take them into their possession.[35]

On 15 August 1914 the Japanese government sent an ultimatum to Germany, demanding the Germans' surrender in Shandong, the transfer of their rights in this province to Japan, and the dismantling of warships in Chinese waters. The note did not receive any reply, which is why Japan formally declared war on 23 August.[36] Due to the lack of a German war plan for the East Asian theater of war and the Japanese superiority therein, the campaign against the central power in China was a rather short one, as were the operations against German warships in the Pacific. According to the Japanese perspective, they were only at war and fighting against the German Empire due to their obligations related to the Anglo–Japanese Alliance. The former ambassador to America and lecturer at Columbia University, Iyenaga Toyokichi (1862–1936), explained this fact to a US audience in Buffalo, New York on 7 February 1915: "Japan entered the war [at] last. [. . .] I will assure you, she will not be the last to quit the bloody scene, but will leave it at the same time and in company with her ally."[37] By stating this, the former Japanese ambassador highlighted the role of the British request for Japanese participation in the global conflict, because "[t]o capture this stronghold of Germany in the Far East, and to destroy the warships that preyed upon British merchantmen, was then the duty that was imposed upon Japan when she was called by her ally to her assistance."[38] Regardless of the attempt to create an image of the Japanese decision makers that resembled the idea of a reluctant Japan when it had to enter the war,[39] the military

34 Ibid., p. 204.

35 Ibid., p. 206.

36 Young, Japan under Taisho Tenno, pp. 71–73.

37 Frederik R. Coudert et al., Why Europe Is At War? The Question Considered from the Points of View of France, England, Germany, Japan and the United States, New York/London 1915, p. 115.

38 Ibid., p. 121.

39 Iyenaga makes this point quite clear, when he writes: "Japan whole–heartedly went to her ally's aid in fulfilment of the obligations imposed upon her by her Anglo–Japanese Treaty. Had Japan desisted from taking such action she would have been forever branded as a cowardly, selfish nation, and none would in future have trusted or befriended her." Ibid., p. 134.

operations in China[40] soon revealed the real interest of the government in Tokyo. Iyenaga had already claimed the Japanese right for expansion in Shandong to be just in early 1915, because to him it was more than obvious that "if the Allies finally win, Japan will have proper claims to make for the blood and treasure expended for the capture of Kiao–chau [sic!] and in running the great risk of having for her foe a power so formidable as Germany. Even should Japan decide to retain Kiao–chau, it would not be a violation of China's integrity, for Kiao–chau was not a part of China; its complete sovereignty, at least for ninety–nine years, rested in Germany."[41] With regard to the European theater of war, it was declared that the Japanese soldiers were no "hirelings" and would never fight for money, as for example many Hessian soldiers had done in the past. It was rather hoped "that the Allies will be able to crush by their own hands the German militarism."[42] The ambivalence of the Japanese perception of the First World War was consequently already visible early on. On the one hand, the war, supposedly only waged for the sake of the Anglo–Japanese Alliance, would secure Japanese rights in Asia, especially since Japan had to fight a strong enemy there, i.e. Germany. On the other hand, it was natural that the Japanese nation state should be granted the German rights in the region, once the enemy's troops in Shandong had been defeated.

Consequently, the Japanese operations in Shandong focused on a fast siege of the German fortress of Kiao–chow. In contrast to the experience of Port Arthur during the Russo–Japanese War a decade before, a combined naval–land assault secured the Japanese victory quickly and without the large number of casualties caused by the siege of Port Arthur in 1904/05.[43] This time, the Japanese were much better prepared and did not face an enemy that neither had a larger amount of soldiers in the region nor was similarly willing to resist as the Russians had been a decade before. It seemed unlikely that the Japanese would face any problems in Shandong. The Bay of Kiao–chow was blocked by the Second Squadron of the Japanese Navy under the command of Vice–Admiral Katō Sadakichi (1861–1927) by late August 1914, and the landing of troops began on 2 September. Again, Japan sent troops to fight a war against a foreign power on Chinese soil, ignoring China's neutrality. The Japanese commanders, experienced and with vivid memories of the Russo–Japanese War, prepared the attack

40 Ibid., pp. 121–122.
41 Ibid., p. 138.
42 Ibid., pp. 138–139.
43 Joseph I. C. Clarke, Japan at First Hand. New York 1918, pp. 384–385.

on the German fortifications in Shandong with caution as well as care, and therefore landed large siege guns and naval guns.[44] The majority of casualties of the Japanese Army or Navy were rather related to accidents, like the sinking of the Takachiko, an old cruiser that hit a mine in mid–October 1914 and whose crew of 280 sailors drowned in the sea.[45] The German garrison was bombarded by Japanese shells for a week before its commander decided to surrender. 8,000 people, of whom 3,000 had been soldiers, became prisoners of war of the Japanese, whose army had lost 200 men – in addition to almost 900 wounded – in the last assault. On 7 November 1914 the German capitulation was received, and the relatively short campaign ended for the Japanese Empire with a victory and the takeover of the colonial rights in Shandong Province.[46]

Although the Japanese victory was celebrated at home, Germany was not really considered an enemy, especially since Japan's military had been trained and educated by German officers in the past, and because Russia was rather considered the natural enemy of the Japanese Empire in East Asia. In Europe, the war, however, went on, and some politicians and military leaders there hoped that Japan would also participate in the fight against Germany on European soil, but the Japanese government did not want to take such responsibilities. In addition, suspicions in London and Washington argued against the further incorporation of Japan with regard to the Allied war effort. Japan had already shown in Shandong that it was willing to take over the rights and possessions of the German Empire, and it was feared that its further involvement in the war could lead to tremendous demands related to the postwar era.[47] With regard to Japan's influence on the Asian mainland, the course of Tokyo seemed clear: "It had been determined in Japan that there had never been an opportunity like the present, and that there was never likely to be one so favourable again, for bringing China under Japanese control."[48] The First World War had created a window of opportunity for Japanese imperialism on the Asian continent, or as Frattolillo and Best described it, "the power vacuum created by the retreat of the European Powers from the region allowed Japan not only to seize Germany's Qingdao lease and resolve the Guandong issue, but also to begin to exercise a degree of influence over the Chinese government."[49] By the time the war ended, Japan had increased its influence in East Asia quite

44 Young, Japan under Taisho Tenno, p. 73.
45 Ibid., p. 74.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., pp. 75–76.
48 Ibid., p. 76.
49 Frattolillo/Best, Introduction, p. 4.

dramatically, while the Japanese Navy ruled in German Micronesia and parts of the Pacific Rim in 1919 as well.[50] The victory over the German troops in Shandong in 1914 was essential for this development, as it not only allowed them to take over the islands in the Pacific controlled by the German Empire, but also to intensify the pressure on Beijing, where Japanese politicians attempted to replicate their imperial policy in Korea before 1910. China was supposed to be transformed into a Japanese protectorate, something that was solely possible because the Western imperial powers were involved in the First World War, trying to destroy each other on the European battlefields.

A "turning point in Japanese diplomatic history"[51] was reached in 1915 when Japan issued the Twenty–One Demands, according to which the colonial transformation of China was to be completed within the coming years, with Japan as the sole and exclusive colonial power. It was solely due to American diplomatic intervention[52] and the pressure of a nationalist wave at home that the government in Beijing was able to achieve changes to the demands, especially the last group of them that was dropped in the end, as this would have really damaged China's national integrity and "brought much criticism because it attempted to violate Chinese sovereignty and clashed with existing British privileges."[53] While the Japanese government had requested to keep Group V[54] of the demands secret, the leaking of their content provided the Chinese leadership with international support and a chance to resist Japan's aggressive imperial policy. The Japanese

50 Dickinson, The First World War, p. 166.

51 Sōchi Naraoka, A New Look at Japan's Twenty–One Demands. Reconsidering Katō Takaaki's Motives in 1915, in: Tosh Minohara/Tze–ki Hon/Evan Dawley (Eds.), The Decade of the Great War. Japan and the Wider World in the 1910s, Leiden 2014, pp. 189–210, here p. 189.

52 The US intervention, however, was not an expression of a pro–Chinese policy, but of an imperialist anti–Japanese agenda. An article in the journal "The Revolutionary Age" from 1919 therefore criticized the US position: "The motive behind these protests about Shantung are purely imperialistic. China, before the war, was the scene of a fierce struggle, between competing Imperialisms for control; and the struggle must become more acute now. The only considerbale competitor in the Far East of American Imperialism is the Imperialism of Japan; and there is a natural protest, accordingly, against soldifying Japenese control in China." The Shantung Controversy, in: The Revolutionary Age 2, no. 4, July 26, 1919, p. 2.

53 Naraoka, A New Look, 189.

54 These demands would have turned China into a Japanese puppet state, as Naraoka's short summary confirms: "The fifth group was the most notorious and controversial. It included the following articles. China was to engage some influential Japanese people as political, financial and military advisers (article 1); Sino–Japanese control of the police was to be implemented where necessary (article 3); and China was to grant Japan the right to construct railways in the Yangtze (article 5)." Ibid., p. 191. A detailed description of all demands is provided by Young, Japan under Taisho Tenno, pp. 76–77.

image abroad was damaged by this imperialist attempt, especially since "some in the West felt that Japan, despite the I[mperial] J[apanese] N[avy] having contributed to the defence of the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, had done relatively little to support the Allied cause and that its outlook in international affairs was selfish and increasingly anachronistic in a world that was being redefined by Wilsonian internationalism."[55]

Regardless of such animosity against Japan's expansionist actions, the government in Tokyo continued its overall policy of attempting to use every opportunity to extend the borders of the Japanese Empire. The Russian Revolution and the international participation in the Russian Civil War against the Bolsheviks provided them with another opportunity to do exactly that. Due to the revolutions in February and October 1917, the Czarist Empire not only dropped out of the war, but it also ceased to exist and was replaced by a Bolshevik party regime under Lenin's (1870–1924) leadership, who had corrupted the revolution as a whole.[56] Due to the attempt of the Czech Legion[57] that had been fighting in the Czar's army to reach their home by crossing Asia, as they wanted to sail from Vladivostok to America and then back to Europe, an international intervention on their behalf and against the Bolsheviks was initiated by the British and French governments, who were aiming at a containment of the communist menace as well.[58] The United States and Japan were informed about the case and an intervention was requested, and both agreed to send a small force of 7,000 soldiers to Russia. The Japanese Army eventually sent 9,000 men from its Twelfth Division on Kyūshū in August 1918, and on 23 August, a combined force of British, Czech, French, and Japanese troops led by Ivan Kalmikoff, a Cossack, began the war

55 Frattolillo/Best, Introduction, p. 4.

56 Frank Jacob, 1917 – Die korrumpierte Revolution, Darmstadt 2020. For the impact of the Russian Revolution on anti–left sentiments and politics in Japan, see: Tatiana Linkhoeva, The Russian Revolution and the Emergence of Japanese Anticommunism, in: Revolutionary Russia 31 (2018) 2, pp. 261–278; Tatiana Linkhoeva, Revolution Goes East. Imperial Japan and Soviet Communism, Ithaca, NY 2020. For a more general discussion of the Russian Revolution and its impact on Japan, see: Hosoya Chihiro, Roshia kakumei to Nihon, Tokyo 1972.

57 On the Czech Legions see: Gerburg Thunig–Nittner, Die Tschechoslowakische Legion in Russland. Ihre Geschichte und Bedeutung bei der Entstehung der 1. Tschechoslowakischen Republik, Wiesbaden 1970 and Joan McGuire Mohr, The Czech and Slovak Legion in Siberia from 1917 to 1922, Jefferson, NC 2012.

58 Sumiko Otsubo, Fighting on Two Fronts. Japan's Involvement in the Siberian Intervention and the Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918, in: Tosh Minohara/Tze–ki Hon/Evan Dawley (Eds.), The Decade of the Great War. Japan and the Wider World in the 1910s, Leiden 2014, pp. 461–480, here p. 468.

against the Bolshevik Red Army at Kraevski.[59] Additional troops were sent from Japan and Manchuria to the Siberian Transbaikal province, where a strong contingent of the Red Army, supposedly 30,000 men, was waiting for the foreign invaders. An advance of the latter to the city of Chita in September was successful and Japan could strengthen its control over the Chinese Eastern and Amur railway lines in the province, although smaller struggles with Russian partisans continued there in the following weeks. By November 1918 Japan had sent more than 70,000 soldiers to Eastern Siberia, and the three provinces in that region were under the firm control of the international troops that stayed there uncontested during the winter.[60]

Regardless of its rather promising start, the Siberian Intervention became rather a disaster for Japan. On the one hand, the Spanish flu was imported to Japan as a consequence of the intervention, because Japanese soldiers got infected with it due to their operations in Siberia,[61] and on the other, the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Civil War could not ultimately be prevented by the international intervention and the troops sent from Britain and its empire, France, Italy, China, and Japan. The military operations were costly and, with regard to the gains, rather a waste of Japanese financial and military capacities, but the government in Tokyo had hoped to achieve its expansionist vision in Siberia, which had been expressed since the early Meiji period.[62] What turned out to be nothing more than a costly "adventure" in Siberia, however, was also an essential part of the overall wartime strategy of Foreign Minister Uchida Yasuya, who intended to strengthen

59 Ibid., pp. 468–469.

60 Ibid., pp. 469–470. For a more detailed analysis of Japan's Siberian Intervention see: Izao Tomio, Shoki shiberia shuppei no kenkyū. Atarashiki kyūseigun kōsō no tōjō to tenkai, Fukuoka 2003; Hosoya Chihiro, Shiberia shuppei no shiteki kenkyū, Tokyo 2005; Paul E. Dunscomb, Japan's Siberian Intervention, 1918–1922, Lanham, MD 2011.

61 Hayami Akira, Nihon o osotta supein infuruenza. Jinrui to uirusu no dai ichiji sekai sensō, Tokyo 2006, pp. 284–293. According to Iijima Wataru, the Spanish flu had hit China between 1918 and 1920, from where the disease supposedly reached China. Wataru Iijima, Spanish Influenza in China, 1918–20. A Preliminary Probe, in: Howard Phillips/David Killingray (Eds.), The Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918–19. New Perspectives, London 2003, pp. 101–109, here p. 109, cited in Otsubo, Fighting on Two Fronts, p. 466. On Epidemics in Modern Asia, including the Spanish flu, also see Robert Peckham, Epidemics in Modern Asia, Cambridge 2016.

62 Especially right wing secret societies, like the Gen'yōsha or the Kokuryūkai had demanded a Japanese expansion until the Amur River, which was considered the natural border of a Japanese interest zone on the continent. For a detailed analysis of these societies, their positions, and impact, see: Frank Jacob, Japanism, Pan–asianism and Terrorism. A Short History of the Amur Society (the Black Dragons) 1901–1945, Bethesda, CA 2014.

Japanese interests in Northern Manchuria and China alike. The Twenty–One Demands and the dispatch of Japan's troops to Siberia were meant to achieve these goals and therefore present Tokyo's overall strategy during the war, namely to use it to further extend and strengthen the Japanese Empire on the Asian continent, where Korea (since 1910) and the railway rights in Southern Manchuria only provided the necessary bridgeheads for the further expansion of Japan's imperialist ambitions.[63]

The eventual end of the Siberian Intervention was the result of a strong parliament, whose members, with the support of Army Minister, and later Prime Minister (1926–1929), Tanaka Giichi (1864–1929), were able to avoid the interference of the Japanese Imperial Army. The General Staff was only informed once the Emperor had already approved parliament's decision.[64] This act further emphasized the rather powerful position of the elected leaders of Japan, in contrast to the previous Meiji period and the later Shōwa years, when the military would decide the political course of the country. Regardless of the fact that Japan had failed to reach its ultimate aims in China and Siberia, the war had left its impact on the island country, and for many people a new age seemed to have begun in 1918/19.

When news of the armistice between the Entente and the Central Powers reached Japan, a national school holiday was declared and more than 60,000 businessmen and shopowners gathered for a lantern parade.[65] In 1922, they also sponsored the Tokyo Peace Exposition in Ueno Park and the Japanese League of Nations Association kept the commemoration of the armistice alive through the 1920s. In Japan, many people believed in the proclaimed new age of internationalism, reflected in Wilson's idea for the League of Nations. That these dreams at the end of the conflict in Europe went beyond the later realities was already expressed during the negotiations of the peace treaty in Versailles, where Japan was present as a victor nation as well.[66] In November 1918, Foreign Minister Uchida had drafted a memorandum, outlining something like a general agenda for Japan's delegates who were supposed to participate in the peace treaty negotiations.[67] The Foreign Minister of Japan was well aware that

63 Rustin B. Gates, Out with the New and in with the Old. Uchida Yasuya and the Great War as a Turning Point in Japanese Foreign Affairs, in: Tosh Minohara/Tze–ki Hon/Evan Dawley (Eds.), The Decade of the Great War. Japan and the Wider World in the 1910s, Leiden 2014, pp. 64–82, here p. 65.

64 Takenaka, Failed Democratization, p. 88.

65 Dickinson, The First World War, p. 174.

66 Ibid., p. 166.

67 Kobayashi Tatsuo (Hrsg.), Suiusō Nikki, Tokyo 1965, pp. 285–286.

the League of Nations was rather an idealistic project, determined by racism and jingoism from the beginning, and therefore unable to solve the main questions related to the postwar era, in which the main imperialist powers would try to regain as much control, and even intensify their influence, in the colonial world to become as powerful as they had been before the war. Uchida's overall strategy suggested being a complying voice in the choir of the great powers and not creating any form of antagonism. While the League of Nations might not have been attractive for Japan, the latter could not afford to stay outside.[68] The Foreign Minister knew that the Japanese attempts to expand its control and influence on the Asian continent needed to be accepted in Versailles, or as the American historian Rustin B. Gates explained it, "[w]ith the end of World War I, Uchida had to go along with the trends of the times to pursue his past policy of cooperation. This policy would be tested in Paris over the question of Japanese control of Shandong."[69] While the years between 1912 and 1926 were often referred to as a more democratic period in Japan, where internationalist ideas, represented by the League of Nations, were stronger than nationalist ones, this is contradicted by the continuity of Japanese imperialism, here expressed in Uchida's considerations about the expansion of the empire in China and Manchuria. Japan's interest in its neighboring regions was not related to Wilsonian ideals, but "a consistent line in Japanese policies towards Asia" becomes very obvious and "has little to do with a new spirit of democratic international cooperation."[70]

The main interest of the Japanese delegation in Paris was consequently not to establish a new peaceful international order, but to secure gains from the war, especially the German rights in Shandong, which naturally had to lead to a conflict with China.[71] Manchuria and Mongolia were also considered rather exclusive zones of interest for Japan, which is why they were not supposed to be discussed as part of the Chinese question.[72] The talks in Paris were consequently quite ambivalent: "[W]orld leaders forged the institutional framework for a new system that they believed would relieve humanity of the threat of

68 Gates, Out with the New, p. 72.

69 Ibid.

70 Kurt W. Radtke, Nationalism and Internationalism in Japan's Economic Liberalism. The Case of Ishibashi Tanzan, in: Dick Stegewerns (Ed.), Nationalism and Internationalism in Imperial Japan. Autonomy, Asian Brotherhood, or World Citizenship? London/New York 2003, pp. 169–195, here p. 180.

71 See the chapter by Jacob on China in the present volume for a more detailed discussion of this conflict at the Versailles Peace Conference.

72 Radtke, Nationalism, p. 182.

war. For Japan the rapid changes in international affairs produced uncertainty concerning future relationships with its Asian neighbors and the victorious powers."[73] While Wilson had hoped to recreate an international political system, the Japanese in particular had gained from disrupted relations during the war years, as the East Asian region could now be politically and economically dominated by the Japanese. Their interest in the latter field increased due to the transformation of its production, as their main export goods were no longer just textiles but goods from its heavy industry as well. Ships were exported from Japan during the war, and the industrial sector in particular could rely on unforeseen profits. With the financial surplus, the Japanese government could also use loans to China and Russia to gain more influence in the regions of her imperial ambitions.[74] However, the boom and subsequent recession after the war also politically challenged the existent order in Japan, when rice riots and strikes steadily shook the order and endangered the country's internal stability. Although the government in Tokyo could see itself in the camp of the victorious powers, it still was able to lose a lot in 1919. In Paris, the delegation therefore had to secure a success for Japan. Uchida had consequently prepared the Japanese diplomats to remember the following four points: "First, Japan approved the Wilsonian program in theory. Second, details of the program would create circumstances disadvantageous to Japan. Third, Japan should attempt to delay the program's actual implementation. Fourth, if its realization appeared inevitable, Japan should not press reservations to the point of nonparticipation or diplomatic isolation."[75] The Japanese prepared for the peace talks with a lot of care, as they feared a repetition of the diplomatic loss they had experienced during the negotiations leading to the Peace Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905. The ambassadors to London and Paris, Chinda Sutemi (1857–1929) and Matsui Keishirō (1868–1946), were chosen to represent Japan at the Versailles Peace Treaty Conference, but the former had informed the government in Tokyo that he might not be suitable for this task, as the other states were sending plenipotentiaries that were heads of state at the time.[76] Since Prime Minister Hara Takashi (1856–1921) was not willing to leave Japan and was also not willing to send his foreign minister, whose support he needed at home, the cabinet eventually appointed Marquis Saionji Kinmochi (1849–1940) to lead the Japanese delegation, because "[h]is qualifications included Imperial lineage, past service as premier and foreign minister, and stints as Japanese minister in Austria, Belgium, and Germany. During a decade–long stay in

73 Burkman, Japan and the League of Nations, p. 2.
74 Ibid., pp. 2–3.
75 Ibid., p. 45.
76 Ibid., p. 57.

Paris as a student, he had acquired fluency in the French language and the friendship of Georges Clemenceau.[77] Moreover, the sixty–nine–year–old Saionji was a recognized senior statesman of quasi–*genrō* status."[78] Regardless of Saionji's official leadership, Makino Nobuaki (1861–1949) "acted as the real strategist and major spokesman for the delegation" and made sure that Japan's interests were taken into full consideration by the other powers.[79]

On 21 April 1919 the delegation received a message from Foreign Minister Uchida requesting them to deny Japan's participation in the League of Nations if the other powers did not accept the takeover of German rights in Shandong Province by the Japanese government. It was therefore clear that Uchida wanted to use the idealist plan for the internationalist postwar order as leverage to gain the Germans' colonial rights in China for Japan.[80] In the end, US President Woodrow Wilson sacrificed the Chinese territorial integrity for his vision of an international order based on free trade and peaceful understanding. Japan ripped away Chinese rights and claimed to be a guarantor of this new order when it became a founding member of the League of Nations.[81] Japan was unable, however, to secure racial equality as a foundation of the new order, which meant full acceptance by the Western powers. The negotiations in Paris were another blow for Japan's ambition to be accepted as a full member of the imperial club, and its policy would change in the years to come when Tokyo would eventually argue in favor of freeing Asia from white supremacy while replacing it with Japanese hegemony. Due to the political impact of the First World War, what Frattolillo and Best called "a search for a new cultural identity among intellectuals and radical activists"[82] began as well. Eventually, the discourse of the Meiji period, when leading figures argued in favor of leaving Asia,[83] was replaced by demands for a return to Asia, especially since it was obvious that the West had never accepted

77 Georges Clemenceau (1841–1929) was French Prime Minister during the peace conference in Versailles.

78 Burkman, Japan and the League of Nations, p. 58.

79 Wada Hanako, Dai–ichiji Sekai Taisengo ni okeru Nihon gaikō zaigai kōkan, in: Journal of the Graduate School of Humanities and Sciences, Ochanomizu University 8 (2005) 6, pp. 1–13.

80 Haruno Saru/Shen Chun Ye, Pari kōwa kaigi to Nichi–Bei–Chū kankei. „Santō mondai" o chūshin ni, in: Hokusai kōkyū seisaku kenkyū 9 (2005) 2, pp. 189–206; Qian Yang, Pari kōwa kaigi to taika ni jū ichi–kajō. Santō mondai o chūshin ni, in: Hokudai shigaku 58 (2018), pp. 80–95.

81 Gates, Out with the New, p. 74.

82 Frattolillo/Best, Introduction, p. 6.

83 For a detailed discussion of Fukuzawa Yukichi's (1835–1901) „Datsu–A–ron" see: Fukuzawa Naomi, Fukuzawa Yukichis Datsu–a–ron (1885). Wegbereiter des japanischen Imperialismus oder zornige Enttauschung eines asiatischen Aufklarers?, in: Tātonnemen 13 (2011), pp. 210–224.

Japan as an equal. Regardless of its anti–Western resentment, Japan had profited from the war, but was forced to face a dangerous recession after the war ended, which is why her interest in the Asian markets must have been even stronger then than before the First World War. However, the war's economic impact was quite intense, and not only demanded a new foreign policy once the European battles had ended. It is therefore necessary to take a closer look at the socio–economic watershed,[84] as it was caused by the war that marked the beginning of the "age of extremes," and that, of course, not only in Europe but in Asia as well.

3.3 The Economic Impact of the War

That the First World War caused tremendous changes in Japan is not a surprise, especially when one considers the huge economic impact the conflict had on the country's trade balance and industrial production.[85] In 1914 Japan was still paying interest, namely ¥80 million per annum, on the loans it had been granted a decade before when it defeated Russia with American and British credit.[86] While under economic pressure, the government, as mentioned before, also received steady demands from the army and navy, whose representatives wanted to increase their share of the budget, making sure to strengthen Japan's military position on the Asian continent and the Pacific alike. This "budget rivalry in a time of financial distress"[87] was a heavy burden for the Japanese state before the First World War began. Although the Japanese Navy had suffered from budget cuts and the Siemens Scandal, as described before, the rivalry with the army did not cease to exist and would continue, even after the war. When the First World War began, there was consequently not only a "grievous depression"[88] but also an internal political instability that had the potential to cause more than just a small problem.

84 Frank Jacob, Der Erste Weltkrieg als ökonomisch–soziale Zäsur der japanischen Moderne, in: Stephan Köhn/Chantal Weber/Volker Elis (Eds.), Tokyo in den zwanziger Jahren Experimentierfeld einer anderen Moderne? Wiesbaden 2017, pp. 17–32.

85 Tamura Kosaku, who worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and later became a professor at Tokyo's Chūō University had written an early analysis of the impact of the war on foreign trade. Tamura Kosaku, Dai–ichiji Sekai Taisen to Nihon gaikō, in: Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, B10070135800.

86 Frattolillo/Best, Introduction, p. 3.

87 Ibid.

88 Young, Japan under Taisho Tenno, p. 90.

In some way, one could argue that the First World War presented some kind of salvation, because "[f]or some years the tendency of imports to exceed exports had been a source of anxiety to Japanese economists, and it was noted with satisfaction that in the first half of 1915 exports exceeded imports, though the satisfaction was somewhat damped by the fact that the change was even more due to the decline in imports than to the increase in exports."[89] Initially, the prices of the main Japanese trade goods, namely rice and silk, fell tremendously, and Prime Minister Ōkuma therefore established companies that acted on behalf of the government and bought rice and silk to stabilize the economy. This was a dangerous move, but once the Japanese stock market boomed after one year of the war, his strategy paid off, as it held Japan in order until the advantages of increasing trade volume due to the European conflict kicked in. Due to the events since 1914, their Western competitors had left the Asian markets to Japanese trade, which is why a boom was the natural consequence of the now hegemonic and monopolistic position of the single supplier for the goods needed in the region. Due to the immense surplus created by the war, Japan went through a speedy second phase of industrialization and urbanization, and income tax eventually the main direct taxation. For the Allied powers, Japan became the main source to buy arms from, but also textiles, war supplies, and other industrial goods were ordered in Tokyo and other larger Japanese cities, which is why the value of exports soon outnumbered that of imports and Japan eventually became a creditor, handing out loans to Britain, France, and Russia so that these allied nation states were able to buy goods from Japanese companies.

During the war years, Japan, when it comes to war–related sales, had a very fortunate trade relation with Russia, having "sent over a million rifles, with ammunition for small arms and artillery and kept the Osaka factories working night and day in supplying these, besides boots, hats, blankets, clothing and various supplies for the Russian army."[90] Since the Allies, like Britain, also forced their own economies to respond to the war necessities, they no longer produced for the colonial markets in Asia but for the battlefields in Europe. It was Japan that could exploit this situation as it began, step by step, to take over these markets as the main supplier for textile goods, and due to the lack of competition the prices rose. Japan's exports in the textile sector, in the meantime, increased by over 60%, and this development was greeted with joy, especially by politicians like Finance Minister Taketomi Tokitoshi (1856–1938).[91] While

89 Ibid.
90 The North American Review, 1918, p. 727.
91 Young, Japan under Taisho Tenno, p. 91.

demands for stronger Japanese involvement in the European war effort could be ignored, the country gained from the absence of its rivals, who tried to destroy themselves in the years of bloodshed. The short struggle against the Germans in Shandong was sufficient involvement for the Japanese government, whose representatives now, albeit while struggling for more influence in China, rather tended to enjoy the economic surplus created by the far–away conflict.

The prices charged for the Japanese goods were "extortionate,"[92] and by 1916 the First World War was widely "regarded [. . .] as a heaven–sent opportunity to make money"[93] while the war, i.e. the battles and the casualties, at least from a Japanese perspective, was already over. Japan's position with regard to the First World War was consequently an ambivalent one. On the one hand, it had actively participated in defeating Germany, even if it only did so in the Asian and Pacific context; on the other hand, it profited like a neutral nation state from the lack of competitors for Asian trade during the war and could sell goods to the Allied powers, whose demands were constantly high, because the conflict in Europe was a total one, demanding all economic capacity to be thrown at the enemy in this global battle of material. Within this global context, Ōkuma could observe the rise of a new Japan:

> The old Marquis was at the helm at the important crisis of the outbreak of war; he had embarked on a policy of successful aggression in China which most of his countrymen frankly admired. He had made daring deals in rice and silk, and had proved them to be good business. Above all, he saw the country pass from a state of commercial depression to one of unprecedented prosperity. New industries were started on all sides, often with bountiful subsidies, a special and lasting effort being made in the manufacture of electrical apparatus. Ships were in such demand and the supply of shipbuilding materials was so scarce that the firm of Suzuki, ordering a new steamer in September 1916, had to pay the unprecedented price of 385 yen (then about £40) a ton. The scenes on the stock exchanges were described as fit only for a madhouse.[94]

Having been dependant on foreign loans in the past, Japan had eventually become a creditor to many other great powers, something that definitely created a feeling of pride for the Asian island nation. And Japan's prosperity in these few years seemed to be unmatched: "The war had not progressed very far when Japan found herself in the position of a monopolist supplier of a multitude of goods. In the Indian and Chinese markets she had hardly a competitor. The Dutch Indies and Australia depended increasingly on her factories for a number of their commodities; and before the war was ended South Africa and South

92 Ibid., p. 92.
93 Ibid., p. 93.
94 Ibid., p. 95.

America were offering almost any price for her manufactures."[95] At the same time, however, Japan also had trouble with getting possession of the goods necessary to keep up its production rate, which is why, to name just one example, "new import–substitution industries, in areas such as chemicals and optics, to make up for the loss of trade with Germany"[96] had to be built up from scratch. Nikon was one of these companies, initially providing war–related materials to the Japanese Navy. While Japan had enormous financial reserves in 1918 – up to ¥1.6 billion – the following tables (Tables 3.2 and 3.3) show that this was only possible due to the rise in exports since 1914.

Table 3.2: Japan's Foreign Trade 1910–1924.[97]

Years	Imports in millions of ¥	Exports in millions of ¥
1910–1914	662.3	593.1
1915–1919	14.137	15.999
1920–1924	24.257	18.104

In particular, the war years 1915, 1916, and 1917 showed an extreme increase with regard to the excess of exports (Table 3.3), as a US report from 1919 indicates.[98]

Table 3.3: Japan's Foreign Trade 1914–1917.[99]

Year	Imports in thousands of ¥	Exports in thousands of ¥	Excess of Exports in thousands of ¥
1914	595,736	591,101	–4,635
1915	532,450	708,307	175,857
1916	756,428	1,127,468	371,040
1917	1,035,811	1,603,005	567,194

With regard to Japan's share of world trade during the First World War, her position seemed almost totally uncontested, especially since she was the Allied Powers' favorite trade partner during the first years of the conflict.

95 Ibid., p. 110.
96 Frattolillo/Best, Introduction, p. 5.
97 Xu, Asia and the Great War, p. 50.
98 United States Tariff Commission, Japan. Trade During the War, Washington (Government Printing Office) 1919.
99 Ibid., p. 8.

An increase in factories could be observed due to the economic surplus, with the number of those with more than five workers rising from 31,000 in 1914 to 43,000 in 1919.[100] The economy as a whole grew extremely fast until the early 1920s, and Japan's exports became dominated by manufactured goods, which needed to be produced by an increasing urban labor force. The cities were consequently growing, e.g. Tokyo, where the population tripled to around 1 million in 1920. Osaka, the "industrial capital of Japan," had even reached 2 million inhabitants by 1925.[101] This urbanization, in combination with increasing prosperity, created a new urban middle class in Japan, which was no longer only male: 10% of Tokyo's workforce during the war years were women, and therefore a female consumer culture developed as well. There were consequently not only geopolitical changes due to the Japanese wealth created by the war, but also social changes within the country that would have a tremendous impact. Due to the economic boom, as Andrea Revelant highlighted, "the state's dependence on agriculture had dramatically decreased"[102] and changed existent structures as well as the relationship between urban centers and countryside peripheries as well. At the same time, inflation became a problem in the early 1920s, further weakening the economic position of small farmers and other producers in the agricultural sector. When one considers the impact of the First World War on Japan and the long–term reasons for the protests in its aftermath, one has to take the social transformation of Japanese daily life into further consideration.

3.4 The War and Social Change in Japan

The above–mentioned urbanization in the war years led to a migration of people from the countryside to find employment in the new factories, where the wages had increased due to the increase in prices and a more expensive life. The cities, however, not only promised well–paid work, but also the chance to participate in a modern lifestyle.[103] This chance was nevertheless very often an illusion, and what awaited the migrants in reality was totally different. Miki Kiyoshi (1897–1945), a Japanese philosopher who described his arrival in Tokyo

100 Xu, Asia and the Great War, p. 50.
101 Ibid., p. 51.
102 Revelant, Rethinking Japanese Taxation, p. 120.
103 Susan C. Townsend, The Great War and Urban Crisis. Conceptualizing the Industrial Metropolis in Japan and Britain in the 1910s, in: Tosh Minohara/Tze–ki Hon/Evan Dawley (Eds.), The Decade of the Great War. Japan and the Wider World in the 1910s, Leiden 2014, pp. 301–322, here 301.

in 1917, for example, was shocked when he realized his loneliness in the urban environment.[104] The urban poverty also influenced the Marxist Kawakami Hajime (1879–1946), whose "Bimbō monogatari" ("Tale of Poverty", 1916)[105] provides an insight into the rather dark side of the war for those living in the larger cities of Japan at that time. Due to the rising poverty rate and low wages compared to company profits and inflation, socialist ideas were also able to gain ground during the First World War. With the existence of more and more urban centers – there were only 39 in 1889, but this number had more than doubled to 83 by 1920[106] – a larger number of people started to wish for opportunities for consumption, e.g. journals, movies, food, cosmetics, etc. On the other hand, the city space needed to be shared with more and more people, which is why the density of Japanese cities during the First World War was much higher than in other countries. In Tokyo, to name just one example, more than 25,000 people shared a square kilometer.[107] The rapid influx of new labor created a surplus of inhabitants, and while Osaka became known as the "Manchester of the Orient," the city life of the lower classes was characterized by long working hours and general poverty. Osaka was no longer only known for its textile industry, but also for its slums.[108] Even before the war, the city had appeared crowded to Western visitors: "This flourishing industrial city, with its 5000 factories, its teeming population in crowded, narrow streets, its forest of smoking chimneys, its numerous great stone buildings in 'foreign' style, and, unfortunately, its paupers and its slums, represents the 'new industrialism' of Japan in its most extreme form."[109] Already facing the consequences of fast industrialization and urbanization, the problems in the urban space, as the British historian Susan C. Townsend correctly highlighted, were tremendously worsened due to the economic boom in the war years between 1914 and 1918:

> [N]early a thousand new factories opened. Floods of immigrant workers or 'new arrivals' (*gairaisha*) poured into the heavily polluted slum areas around the factories on [the] city's

104 For Miki's experiences in Tokyo see: Miki Kiyoshi, Miki Kiyoshi zenshū, Tokyo 1984, vol. 1, pp. 366–400. On the philosopher's life and work see: Susan C. Townsend, Miki Kiyoshi 1897–1945. Japan's Itinerant Philosopher, Leiden 2009.

105 Kawakami Hajime, Bimbō monogatari, Tokyo 1983. A German translation can be found in: Reiner Schrader, Die Erzählung von der Armut, in: Oriens Extremus 30 (1983–1986), pp. 154–245.

106 Townsend, The Great War and Urban Crisis, p. 308.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid., p. 311.

109 Sidney and Beatrice Webb, The Webbs in Asia. The 1911–12 Travel Diary, edited by George Feaver, Basingstoke 1992, p. 70. cited in ibid.

> fringes 'where living conditions were so poor that they posed a threat to public morals.' The worst areas were those adjacent to factories erected close to the harbor and along the rivers, especially the incorporated districts of Nishinari–gun and Higashinari–gun. Nishinari–gun reported a 47 per cent increase from 170,000 to 250,000 during the First World War and Higashinari–gun a 43 per cent increase from 140,000 to 200,000 turning these areas [. . .] from residential purgatory into something like Hell.[110]

The urban labor force, impoverished and exploited, eventually presented a high potential of social unrest, as was explicitly expressed in the Rice Riots of 1918, when the wartime boom and rice speculations on the one hand met with popular discontent and sorrow on the other.

The end of the war did not lead to a recession immediately, as it took a while until the European factories and producers began to reach their former capacities. Accordingly, "the change came with a little breathing–space,"[111] and the boom went on. The Japanese leadership and many businessmen seem to have ignored that the end of the war would bring back the former competition for the Asian markets and that prices would drop due to this as well. Due to this fact the recession hit Japan even harder, but for the time being, her people could still enjoy the economic surplus and the advantages it had created. There was also much enthusiasm shared by the government in its time about their own place in the country's history: "Japan after the Great War resembled the heady days of early Meiji, when the entire country rallied to conform to the new standards of modern civilization as originally introduced by Commodore Matthew Perry. In fact, Japanese statesmen after 1918 referred explicitly to the latter nineteenth–century transformation in their proclamation of a new future."[112] With the same enthusiasm, those who got rich during the war began to display their new wealth, and "the ostentation and extravagance of the newly rich attracted attention and condemnation"[113] at the same time. It was a spectacular time period, due to which those who had made a fortune due to their export business or shipbuilding – the latter of whom were called *fune narikin* – were very often wasting money, which is why they were very often caricatured for their almost shameless relationship with money.[114] With "extra money and

110 Ibid., p. 313. Townsend here refers to Jeffrey E. Hanes, The City as Subject: Seki Hajime and the Reinvention of Modern Osaka, Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA 2002, pp. 197–200.

111 Young, Japan under Taisho Tenno, p. 145.

112 Dickinson, The First World War, p. 169.

113 Young, Japan under Taisho Tenno, p. 112.

114 For an example see: Iizawa Ten'yō, Envelope for the series "The Nouveau Riche at New Year" (Narikin no shinnen), Part 1, Leonard A. Lauder Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

time to spend on recreation"[115] that now could no longer only be afforded by the rich, but also by a growing middle class, more possibilities that offered exactly this were created.

Some people spent their money on a European wing of their house, built in stucco, where they tended to entertain their Europhile Japanese friends. However, the luxury on the one hand could hardly cover the hardships on the other, and Japanese society was divided. While many gained financially from the war and the export business, many lived in poverty, exploited by global capitalism and the trade monopoly existent for their own country. One consequently has to be careful when evaluating the developments in Japan during the war period. Of course, a lot of people gained from the economic rise of the island nation, but many were further impoverished while they had to witness the reckless spending of many of the *nouveaux riches* as well. Regardless of this conflict, which will be described later in more detail together with its impact, i.e. protest movements in Japan in the aftermath of the First World War, the influx of money into the country also resulted in better infrastructure and therefore established a relatively high national connectedness of the people, no matter if they lived in the cities or in the countryside. In the four years between 1918 and 1922 the railway network in Japan was extended by more than 30% and the number of kilometers traveled by passengers tripled.[116] In 1914 ca. 165 million passengers and 35 million tons of freight were transported by train, increasing to 245 million and 49 million respectively in 1917, before reaching 405 million passengers and 57 million tons of freight three years later.[117] At the same time, wages actually decreased – ¥ 30.9 in 1914, ¥ 33.7 in 1915, ¥ 31.2 in 1916, ¥ 27.6 in 1917, ¥ 22.9 in 1918, and ¥ 20.0 in 1919 – due to inflation and higher living costs.[118] In 1920 the railway authorities reacted and raised the real wage to ¥ 36.3.[119] Due to the economic developments during the war years, the medical service provided by the employers for the railway employees also changed, and better opportunities were created for railway workers and eventually their families. The demand for and expansion of the railway network, like in many other economic branches as well, increased the demand for experienced

115 Gennifer Weisenfeld, MAVO. Japanese Artists and the Avant–Garde, 1905–1931, Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA 2002, p. 167.

116 Dickinson, The First World War, p. 171.

117 Chaisung Lim, Railroad Workers and World War I. Labor Hygiene and the Policies of Japanese National Railways, in: Tosh Minohara/Tze–ki Hon/Evan Dawley (Eds.), The Decade of the Great War. Japan and the Wider World in the 1910s, Leiden 2014, pp. 415–438, here p. 423.

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid., p. 433.

employees, who were consequently able to gain not only better wages but also better benefits from the enterprise they worked for.[120]

The railway had become the symbol of advancement, not only technological, but also social, as more and more people were able to travel, extend their individual horizon, and therefore reach modernity with regard to time and space.[121] Between 1912 and 1925 almost 1,300 power plants were built, since the increase in produced manufactured goods also demanded more electricity in the factories. This also led to increased private use of electricity, or better, its availability in private homes. The increase in productivity also affected Japanese factories abroad. To name just one example, the number of cotton spindles in China, which were owned by companies from Japan, increased from ca. 50,000 in 1910 to more than 800,000 in 1920.[122] These "explosions" in almost all economic sectors did not remain unnoticed, and on 1 January 1917 the *Asahi Shimbun* in Osaka announced that "during the span of the past two years Japan has secured a place in the sun, and she has become one of the happiest countries in the world [. . .]. Her national wealth has increased by leaps and bounds, and the volume of her foreign trade has witnessed an unprecedentedly [sic!] tremendous increase."[123] Social changes could nevertheless not only be observed in the cities, where the new financial capacities created a new consumer culture.

In general, the productive structures in the agricultural sector did not change a lot, although many people left for the cities to make more money and to secure a supposedly better life. However, the relationship between landowners and tenants changed a lot. American sociologist Theda Skocpol emphasized that especially peasants have some kind of generic potential for unrest that is related to change,[124] but the rapidness of the events overwhelmed even the Japanese peasantry. Due to their gains, many rich landowners moved to the cities, namely Tokyo or Osaka, to participate in the new and luxurious urban life and culture, as it was represented by the new department stores.[125] Custodians took over the

120 Ibid., p. 438.

121 On this issue: Woflgang Schivelbusch, Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise. Zur Industrialisierung von Raum und Zeit im 19. Jahrhundert, Seventh Edition, Frankfurt am Main 2000. The development of railways in Japan is well documented: Nihon Kokuyū Tetsudō – Sōsaishitsu – Shūshika, Nihon kokuyū tetsudō hyakunenshi, 17 vols., Tokyo 1969–1974.

122 Dickinson, The First World War, p. 171.

123 Ōsaka asahi shinbun, 1 January 1917, cited in ibid.

124 Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions, Cambridge 1979, p. 115.

125 Fujioka Rika. The Development of Japanese Department Stores in the Early 20th Century. The Process of Western Adaptation, http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_167604_en.pdf (3. 7. 2016). Also see: Hatsuda Tōru, Hyakkaten no tanjō, Tokyo 1993; Jinno Yuki, Hyakkaten ga tsukutta teisuto, Tokyo, 1994.

administration of their properties in the countryside, and the relations between owners and tenants loosened. The custodians had no close relationship to the tenants due to which the relationship was often soured, especially when money could not be paid on time. The last remains of the feudal order in Japan consequently disappeared, and capitalism on its full scale finally reached the Japanese countryside. A relationship that had been based on reciprocal gains transformed into a harsh dependency, only evaluated according to capitalist demands. This transformation also stimulated the decision of smaller farmers to leave the countryside, as they hoped for a better future in the city. On the other hand, more and more tenants began to organize themselves to argue for lower rent, especially since the costs for necessary supplies had increased during the war years as well.[126] Tenant conflicts (*kosaku sōgi*) were the consequence, and their number increased by the end of the war. Tenant unions eventually took over the representation of the peasants who had rented their land from rich landowners, and the conflict was brought out into the open more and more. It showed that not all parts of Japanese society had gained from the First World War and that the new splendor of city life was paid for by the work and debts of those who were exploited in the countryside. While life in the city became more and more luxurious and speculations with rice at the stockmarket produced enormous profits, the agrarian population was not allowed to participate in this development and, at the same time, lost human capital when people decided to give up their poor life in the countryside to move to the cities in the hope of gaining a glimpse of the richness that was promised to them.

Peasants were not the only ones who started to organize themselves; they were also joined by industrial workers, teachers, female office workers, and others. They all demanded higher wages, as life in the city had got more expensive since 1914. More and more unions began to be established, as the workforce had realized that a potential strike movement needed a large number of people to get involved to really threaten company owners and to have the possibility of gaining something through a strike declaration.[127] As part of the Union of Wage and Salary Earners in Tokyo (Tōkyō hōkyū seikatsusha dōmei kyōgikai), the first all–female union of office workers was established in 1920. Its members demanded the equal and gender–neutral payment of wages.[128] However, this was not the first female

126 Andrew Gordon, A Modern History of Japan. From Tokugawa Times to the Present, New York 2003, pp. 146–147.

127 Ibid., p. 150.

128 Andrew Gordon, The Short Happy Life of the Japanese Middle Class, in: Olivier Zunz/ Leonard Schoppa/Nobuhiro Hiwatari (Eds.): Social Contracts Under Stress. New York 2002, pp. 108–129, here p. 115.

union activity. During the war, many women had already joined Suzuki Bunji's (1885–1946)[129] Workers' Union that counted 30,000 members in 1919 and demanded better wages and working conditions.[130] During the war years, many workers joined unions or other labor–related organizations, where they also got in contact with Marxist or socialist ideas, especially in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. They all demanded not only higher wages but also better working conditions, and it can be stated that the war did not solely create an increase in trade and production. It also increased the self–awareness of the worker and the demands of the working class, especially in the urban and industrial centers of Japan. The solidarity among the exploited therefore intensified at the same speed as the exploiting upper classes gained money from Japan's special position within the First World War.

The economic prosperity in the city, regardless of the fact that not everyone was on the winning side, "laid the foundations for a mass–consumer society and invited an unprecedented transfer of power that nurtured representative politics in Tokyo."[131] The urban middle class was no longer just willing but in many cases also now able to spend money, be it for educational institutions, in the new department stores, or new media like journals or cinemas.[132] The already mentioned large and very often Western–looking department stores provided "a place and space that became central to modern Japanese life and a disseminator of modernist aesthetics to the general Japanese public during the early twentieth century"[133] and "Mitsukoshi and its rival Shirokiya had led the way in introducing advanced technology and Western architecture as well as innovative retailing methods since their beginnings as department stores during the first decade of the twentieth century."[134] The higher wages of the war years now allowed more and more people to enjoy the things such a place could offer, and the excitement related to the new Mitsukoshi building, whose three stories were opened in 1914, is easily understood. The two large lions flanking its entrance gave the customers the feeling of visiting Trafalgar Square

129 On Suzuki's life and work see: Stephen S. Large, The Japanese Labor Movement, 1912–1919. Suzuki Bunji and the Yūaikai, in: The Journal of Japanese Studies 29 (1970) 3, pp. 559–579.

130 For the development of unions in wartime Japan see: Chen Ta, Labor Conditions in Japan, in: Monthly Labor Review 21 (1925) 5, pp. 8–19.

131 Dickinson, The First World War, p. 175.

132 Dickinson, World War I, p. 7.

133 Elise K. Tipton, The Department Store. Producing Modernity in Interwar Japan, in: Roy Starrs (Ed.), Rethinking Japanese Modernism, Leiden 2011, pp. 428–451, here p. 428.

134 Ibid., p. 431.

in London.[135] At the same time, it was supposed that the store could provide a feeling of life in America, especially to female customers.[136]

A visit to a department store also opened different culinary experiences to the customers in the form of diverse restaurants. Furthermore, the shopping experience in the department stores in the big Japanese cities was no different from "Macy's in New York, Wanamaker in Philadelphia, and [. . .] Marshall Field in Chicago."[137] New journals were introduced that addressed the specific needs of the new urban middle class and thereby also opened up new possibilities for discussion, e.g. of gender roles, aesthetics, and many other things. The growing middle class wanted to spend money, and it did not seem hard to find opportunities for that in the consumer–oriented world of the big cities after the First World War. Consumption, however, was not only used to create leisure and excitement, it was also an expression of class, as the rise of the new gentry of the Taishō period was based on the unspoken agenda to spend money extravagantly. Referring to Ernest Gellner's (1925–1995) theories about nationalism, the new middle class that was established by the second industrialization wave during the war developed class consciousness and therefore demanded an expression of their own status, especially due to the spending of money, yet not only for the education of the next generation, as we will see later, but first and foremost to express their own belonging to the new middle class.[138] The members of the new Taishō middle class spent money to prove that they had achieved their social advancement, and in now amusement was available for everyone who could afford it. Even before the First World War, cinemas had shown films from Hollywood, which now reached even more spectators who looked for relaxation from their daily life, especially when watching movies. Japanese also danced to American Jazz, and like the Meiji oligarchs, defined their status especially by the consumption of foreign goods, including music. Money was also spent on Western clothes or food, and one market that gained tremendously from the prosperity of the new middle class was the print market. Books, magazines, and daily newspapers boomed because a larger audience could now be reached. This not only stimulated the establishment of what Benedict Anderson (1936–2015) called an "imagined community"[139] that

135 Ibid., p. 433.
136 Hatsuda, Hyakkaten, p. 124,.
137 Tipton, The Department Store, p. 434.
138 Ernest Gellner, Change and Thought, Chicago 1964.
139 Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, London 1983.

was based on print capitalism, but also allowed people who had been outside of the general mainstream before to participate in discourses about Japanese society.

Journals like *Friend of the Housewife* (*Shufu no tomo*, 1917–1935)[140] provided articles that were written for a female audience, including fashion tips, news about the modern female lifestyle, and other things. The journal therefore provided new role models for women as well as new social definitions of womanhood. It was the financial potential of the female readers that had stimulated the production of such journals, but other players, like the cosmetic company Shiseidō, also realized the potential of the female buyer. Beauty products became more popular, especially due to the discussions about their use in journals for women, and new images about beauty and the female gender were the consequence.[141] The role of women within society was discussed, and issues like education, political roles, workers' rights, the rights of mothers and daughters in the Japanese family, and sexual self–control became topics of popular interest.[142] In the early Taishō period social tensions were created by these discourses and conflict–laden energies were freed, especially indirectly by the economic impact of the First World War. In those days modern boys and girls, called *mobo* (modern boys) and *moga* (modern girls), appeared and were often staged as an expression of the new Taishō lifestyle in different mass media, though they were not representing a mass phenomenon. The style of these new representatives of Japanese modernity resembles that of the people in the so–called "Roaring Twenties" in Europe or the United States.[143] The self was eventually staged as representing the beginning of a new era, something that was only possible due to the increased financial capacities of the urban middle class who had gained from the developments during the war years.

Diversity was sought and expressed in many ways, including through entertainment and its consumption in any form. The more money was available, the more opportunities needed to be created because, as American philosopher Douglas Kellner highlighted correctly, "[d]ifference sells. Capitalism must constantly multiply markets, styles, fads, and artifacts to keep absorbing consumers into its

140 On this journal see: Christine Gross, Japanische Frauen. Ein Leitbild im Wandel. Die Zeitschrift Shufu no tomo 1917–1935, Dissertation, Universität Zürich, 2009.

141 Toya Riina, Ginza to Shiseidō. Nihon wo "modān" ni shita kaisha, Tokyo 2012.

142 Barbarba Molony, Women's Rights, Feminism, and Suffragism in Japan, 1870–1925, in: Pacific Historical Review 69 (2000) 4, pp. 639–661, here pp. 645–654.

143 James L. Huffman, Japan in World History, New York 2010, pp. 91–94.

practices and lifestyles."[144] Modern technologies also played an important role in creating these possibilities, which excited masses of people:

> [The] movie projector and against the mesmerizing images it cast on the big screen in the multiplex performance center of Entertainment Heaven (Rakutenchi); and carnies lightheartedly cajoled thrill–seekers into elevator rides up Tsûtenkaku Tower at the entrance to Luna Park in The New World (Shin Sekai) amusement park. The epoch–making technologies that embodied this new 'media culture' defined the spectacle of urban life; and the cultural processes of importation, adaptation, amplification, production, distribution, reproduction, and reinvention that helped assimilate these technologies into the everyday world had begun to work a powerful influence on the urban identity.[145]

Japan had not only turned into an "industrial dynamo"[146] during the First World War, but new technologies were very often also used to entertain the masses. This did not solely include the recently established urban middle class, but also the working class consumers, as "Japan witnessed a mass mania for conspicuous consumption fueled by status envy."[147] Japanese scholar Ishikawa Hiroyoshi has identified three periods of working class consumption. The first one (1916–1919) was marked by the wish for the consumption of food and drink, the second (1919–1922) by spending on clothes and housing, and the third (1922–1927) was dominated by the expectations of the working class as related to society and culture.[148] However, as Jeffrey E. Hanes emphasized, "[w]orkers and their families were not absorbed into the mass consumer market. With the help of able and willing (even enthusiastic) cultural producers, they carved out a distinct niche within it."[149] Those who offered pleasure and leisure related to new media in the Japanese metropolis at the same time, to quote Hanes once more, "offered to salve the workers' wounded spirits, interpret their unspoken dreams, and sell them an afternoon's excursion into a liminal world of sensory pleasure."[150] The entertainment industry in particular consequently

144 Douglas Kellner, Media Culture. Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics Between the Modern and the Postmodern, London 1995, p. 40.

145 Jeffrey E. Hanes, Media Culture in Taishō Osaka, in: Sharon Minichiello (Ed.), Japan's Competing Modernities. Issues in Culture and Democracy 1900–1930, Honolulu 1998, pp. 267–287, here p. 270.

146 Ibid.

147 Ibid., p. 271.

148 Ishikawa Hiroyoshi, Goraku no senzenshi, Tokyo 1981, pp. 100–102, cited in ibid.

149 Hanes, Media Culture, p. 271.

150 Ibid., p. 272.

provided the possibility of modern consumption for the masses as well, and cities like Osaka were able to offer any kind of entertainment to any kind of customer.

Greater income, however, was not only leading to consumption, but was also displayed through the education of the next generation, as recently wealthy people not only longed for leisure, but also the advancement to the next social level of their children, who would then naturally gain greater influence with regard to the political development of Japan.[151] Educational opportunities were plenty as a consequence of the described economic developments, because the larger financial capacities allowed the representatives of the new middle class to send their children to educational facilities. The number of male students in Japanese middle schools increased from 128,973 to 272,973 between 1912 and 1924. The number of female students that attended higher schools tripled, reaching 246,928. For the first time, parity between male and female students was achieved in Japan.[152] In addition to this trend, the famous private schools in Japan, i.e. Keiō, Waseda, Dōshisha, Chūō, and Meiji, were officially recognized as universities in the aftermath of the First World War, signaling the start of the further growth of Japan's university system that continued until 1930. In the Taishō period the number of academic professors increased from 792 to 8,946, and that of students from 4,567 to 52,186.[153] The indirect impact of the First World War, which means the direct impact of the increased financial capacities of the new urban middle class, could consequently also be felt with regard to the development of academia and higher education in Japan, a trend that reflected the necessities of those who had reached this new status and wanted the next generation to advance further.

This also caused gender–related changes, as the "attempt to strengthen the nation by educating its citizens was extended to females when girls' schools were built throughout the country [and] [b]y the time of the Great War (1914–1918), Japanese women's higher education had been developed into a gendered institution."[154] However, the girls and young women were no longer educated according to the Meiji agenda to create "good wives and wise mothers" (*ryōsai kenbo*) but rather to resemble a modernized society, in which the female right

151 A general discussion of the relation of income and political participation see: Jimmy Szewczyk, The Effects of Income Inequality on Political Participation. A Contextual Analysis. Honors Thessis, Sewanee 2015. https://www.sewanee.edu/media/academics/politics/The-Effects-of-Income-Inequality-on-Political-Participation.pdf (3. 7. 2016).

152 Dickinson, The First World War, p. 167.

153 Ibid.

154 Chika Shinohara, Gender and the Great War. Tsuda Umeko's Role in Institutionalizing Women's Education in Japan, in: Tosh Minohara/Tze–ki Hon/Evan Dawley (Eds.), The Decade of the Great War. Japan and the Wider World in the 1910s, Leiden 2014, pp. 323–348, here p. 323.

for a good education was addressed appropriately.[155] While the first Japanese female exchange students had already been sent to the United States in the 1870s, it was the First World War that "had minimized the enrollment disparity between girls and boys and thus established a good basis for developing higher education amongst all citizens, regardless of gender."[156] The years of the Great War had also witnessed a reconsideration of the role that women, especially well–educated ones, were supposed to play for the advancement of Japan's society. Educated mothers were supposed to raise the next generation of Japanese children and were therefore considered to be part of a national strategy, according to which their educational capacities would secure the country's prosperity in the future.[157] The education of girls and women was consequently turning into a necessary demand and was no longer perceived as something luxurious and probably inappropriate. With the import of Western ideas about education, new interpretations of gender roles also entered Japan and led to a discussion about Japanese society in general, often spearheaded by educators like Tsuda Umeko (1864–1929).[158] Initially, girls' schools were part of the work of Christian missionaries, especially during the early Meiji period when famous educational institutions like the United School for Girls (1871), the Aoyama Institute for Girls (1874), the Kobe Institute for Girls (1875), the Tokyo Academy for Girls (1876), the Doshisha School for Girls (1878) and others were established.[159] The internationalization of Japan during the First World War, with regard to both global trade and the further exchange of ideas, as Chika Shinohara highlighted, "fostered an awareness of women's important social roles, impacts, and their rights, particularly among highly educated women in Japan."[160] It was especially the latter ones who claimed more rights within society for themselves, and since the number of students who had studied abroad during the Great War increased the mass of people who shared similar ideas, there was not only an intellectual debate about gender roles but actual reforms were also initiated in these crucial years.

It was understood that a generally good education, not only the one provided to upper class girls and women, was essential to strengthen Japan's national

155 Ibid.

156 Ibid., pp. 330–331.

157 Ibid., p. 334.

158 On her life and works see: Yoshiko Furuki, The White Plum. A Biography of Ume Tsuda, Pioneer in the Higher Education of Japanese Women, New York 1991; Kameda Kinuko, Tsuda Umeko. Hitori no meikyōshi no kiseki, Tokyo 2005.

159 Shinohara, Gender and the Great War, p. 337.

160 Ibid., p. 342.

capacities that were deemed necessary to protect the wealth of the nation state. The percentage of girls who continued their study at institutes of secondary education doubled between 1905 and 1920, although it "only" reached 10%.[161] It was the indirect impact of the First World War that "shaped women's education and gender ideology or socially expected gender roles,"[162] although many women did not consider their education to contradict their position within the state as a supportive force. The discussion was consequently often not directed against the existent social norms, but rather pointed to the necessity of better education for female students, who would willingly fulfill this demand. The actual gender discourses in relation to education were consequently rather fueled by political ideas, not the sense of righteousness of female demands.

The dispute about gender roles was related to political discourse and led by the Japanese Left, whose members demanded more equality, and that not only for male workers. While the Left was dealing with other issues following the Russian Revolution, especially the ana–boru debate (anarchism vs. Bolshevism), due to which anarcho–syndicalists led a theoretical struggle against Marxist socialism, female anarchists and socialists argued about the shape of a post–revolutionary society from a woman's perspective.[163] Gender equality was one of the main aspects demanded by these women because this was one of the central expressions of revolutionary change, although the feminist perspectives of anarchists and socialists were quite different: "anarchist feminists generally espoused gynocentric or woman–centered feminism while socialist feminists adhered to a version of humanist feminism."[164] While the latter were represented by Yamakawa Kikue (1890–1980),[165] the anarchist position was argued

161 Ibid., p. 345.

162 Ibid., p. 346.

163 E. Patricia Tsurumi, Visions of Women and the New Society in Conflict. Yamakawa Kikue versus Takamure Itsue, in: Sharon Minichiello (Ed.), Japan's Competing Modernities. Issues in Culture and Democracy 1900–1930, Honolulu 1998, pp. 335–357, here p. 335.

164 Ibid.

165 Elyssa Faison, Women's Rights as Proletarian Rights. Yamakawa Kikue, Suffrage, and the "Dawn of Liberation", in: Julia C. Bullock/Ayako Kano/James Welker (Eds.), Rethinking Japanese Feminism, Honolulu 2018, pp. 15–33. On Yamakawa's role during the First World War also see Frank Jacob, The First World War, Women's Education, and Yamakawa Kikue's Socialist View of Gender Roles in Japan, in: Sebastian Engelmann/Bernhard Hemetsberger/Frank Jacob (Eds.), War and Education. The Pedagogical Preparation for Collective Mass Violence, Paderborn 2022, pp. 119–141.

for by Takamure Itsue (1894–1964).[166] While the theoretical struggle took place in the late 1920s, it was initiated by the changes taking place during the years of the First World War. Yamakawa Kikue published an article about "Women's Opinion that Stabs Women in the Back" ("Fujin o uragiru fujin ron") in the journal *Shin Nippon* (*New Japan*) in August 1918. This article expressed criticism against bourgeois–conservative feminism as it was expressed, e.g. by Yamada Waka (1879–1957),[167] in the tradition of the Meiji state's "good wife and wise mother" ideology. It was argued that the biological differences between the two sexes were overemphasized by conservative feminists and, according to the article, the conservatives used "biology as an excuse to defend male absolutism."[168] While "[a]ttacking Waka's arrogant proclamations about woman's nature, Kikue did not directly offer her own definition of woman's nature," and the socialist feminist "was content to express her hopes for the future in terms of the awakening of women, the building of a women's movement, a changed economic system, and equality of men and women."[169]

Kikue might have agreed with Yosano Akiko (1878–1942), another feminist of the Meiji and Taishō periods, that "more and better education was urgent," but she disagreed with regard to Yosano's "hopes for individual effort to achieve education, employment, financial independence, and political suffrage illusory within a society that systematically denied equal opportunity to the vast majority of its members."[170] For the socialist Kikue the problem was not an individual one but one that could only be saved by a transformation of the existent society. The individual path to emancipation was consequently only available for a few Japanese women who had access to sufficient monetary assets, i.e. the bourgeois women in Japan, especially since the majority of women were exploited, as "in the capitalist labor market women were paid very little, and their presence there was manipulated to lower remuneration for all laborers, while women's work within the family was entirely unremunerated."[171] Kikue pointed out that conservative feminists had neglected the social responsibility to reach gender equality and demanded that the problem be addressed on a broader scale, as the majority of women were not

166 For her autobiography see: Takamure Itsue, Hi no kuni no onna no nikki. Takamure Itsue jiden, Tokyo 1966. For a collection of her anarcho–feminist writings see: Takamure Itsue, Zoku anakizumu josei kaihō ronshū, Tokyo 1989.

167 On Yamada's life and impact see: Tomoko Yamazaki, The Story of Yamada Waka. From Prostitute to Feminist Pioneer, Tokyo 1985.

168 Cited in: Tsurumi, Visions of Women, p. 337.

169 Ibid., pp. 337–338.

170 Ibid., p. 339.

171 Ibid.

able to secure a better education because they were unable to afford it. The bourgeois conservative feminists had only made the argument for upper class women and not taken into consideration that most Japanese female workers or mothers had neither access to nor the capacities for a social advance on an individual level. According to Kikue, only a change of the existent economic system could eventually pave the way for the development of true equality. As long as women were exploited by a capitalist system, they would be unable to obtain a better education and therefore the precondition for true gender equality.[172] The female author was also influenced by the Russian Revolution, although she never demanded a combination of the socialist revolution with the liberation of women in Japan.

A different position was taken by the anarchist Itsue. Her works focused on two main aspects, namely 1) community care for Japanese mothers and 2) the abolition of marriage. Since women were responsible for the upbringing of the next generation, they should not take care of this task alone and in isolation, but should be supported by society: "Reproduction and child care were to be supported by a self–governing, nonhierarchical community in which men and women would be equal producers and womanhood highly esteemed. A corollary of this was [the] abolition of institutionalized marriage. The purpose of both was to allow [the] woman to enjoy passionate carnal and spiritual loving that, along with motherhood, was part of her basic nature."[173] She reflected upon the role of women, but in contrast to many others, did so not as a single reinterpretation of Western discourses but as it related to the development of the Japanese society in the recent years and decades. She consequently offers an original insight into the feminist discussions during the war and shows how it determined the necessity for such discourse. However, there were not only immediate consequences related to the First World War, but also a long–term impact on the perception of gender issues in Japan.

Usually the Taishō period is described as a dawn with regard to urban life in the metropolis, but such views neglect the other side of the coin, namely the Japanese countryside, where the "jump" into global capitalism and the consumer modernity it represented did not happen abruptly but took much longer to manifest itself. Nevertheless, it did not stay outside of the processes that took place, nor can it be considered traditional or premodern.[174] The "modern girls" eventually also reached the countryside, although they were not really

172 Ibid.

173 Ibid., p. 342.

174 Mariko Asano Tamanoi, The City and the Countryside. Competing Taishō "Modernities" on Gender, in: Sharon Minichiello (Ed.), Japan's Competing Modernities. Issues in Culture and Democracy 1900–1930, Honolulu 1998, pp. 91–113, here p. 92.

welcomed there and not considered modern, as a letter by a Japanese man, Suzuki Saburō, who lived somewhere in the countryside, to the journal *Ie no Hikari* (*The Light of the Home*), shows: "I occasionally meet a woman who cuts her hair very short and makes up her face with rouge, lipstick, and an eyebrow pencil. But when I scrutinize her clothes, I find them not matching her hair style and makeup. She seems to be satisfied with herself only because she can catch the attention of others. I find her modern, but my feeling toward her is that of contempt. She lacks something to be truly modern."[175] The modern urban girl of the Taishō city was "a glittering, decadent, middle–class consumer who, through her clothing, smoking, and drinking, flaunt[ed] tradition,"[176] but she was rather an urban phenomenon of the war years and did not immediately show up in little villages, which remained rather peripheral. Regardless of this fact, however, the migration of people to the cities, who then might have visited their hometowns or villages, would sooner or later spread new fashions even to far away spots. The availability of train travel in particular made it easier for people to cross the distances that separated the two spaces from each other.

When the boom created by the First World War ended in the early 1920s and the prices for crops began to fall while taxes increased, many farmers in the countryside began to detest modernity, resembled by the perverted city life, globalized markets, and international stock markets. Even the silk farmers lost due to the decrease in prices and suffered due to their steadily decreasing income. When the global depression then hit Japan in the late 1920s and early 1930s and the prices for rice and silk dropped even further, it caused "distress [for] the roughly two million farm households engaging in agriculture throughout rural Japan."[177] When the now unemployed workers from the city then returned to their rural hometowns, it increased the economic and social pressure there, where different ideas and experiences naturally clashed in such a time of crisis. The above–mentioned tenant disputes tended to increase year by year and socialist and communist ideas naturally spread because they offered an alternative, especially for the impoverished farmers. The state, in the meantime, tried to suppress dangerous ideas, i.e. anarchism, socialism, and communism, to avoid the recruitment of "*Marukusu bo'oisu*" (Marx boys), as young Japanese

175 Ie no hikari, October 1928, p. 144 cited in ibid., p. 93.
176 Miriam Silverberg, The Modern Girl as Militant, in: Gail L. Bernstein (Ed.), Recreating Japanese Women, 1600–1945, Berkeley 1991, pp. 239–266, here p. 239 cited in ibid.
177 Tamanoi, The City and the Countryside, p. 95.

interested in politically left ideas were called, into the ranks of the labor movement and the related party structures.[178]

The growth of print capitalism was also responsible for a growing number of newspaper publications in the smaller villages, which thereby were more and more integrated into political discourses of the time, although the main topics of interest, e.g. the self–government of smaller villages, were quite different sometimes. Next to such discussions, the main information from the government and that which was related to state issues also reached this particular space of Japan. In some issues, the voices of women were also expressed, although this was still an exception and not the norm.[179] New media, i.e. the photograph or the radio, provided other forms of audio–visual communication that were used as platforms for the discussion of social issues, including gender roles. As a consequence of all these possibilities and the steady discourses about gender norms, as Mariko Asano Tamanoi's research confirms, "the clear division of labor by gender became blurred in the Taishò period; there emerged masculine women, independent and self–confident, as well as feminine men, dependent, fragile, and indecisive."[180] One of these local publications in 1925 summed up the demands for rural women, as they were requested to

(1) use time in the most effective way;
(2) curtail unnecessary costs in their everyday lives;
(3) save money for the education of their children;
(4) buy daily necessities with cash, not on credit;
(5) use public markets;
(6) use simple makeup;
(7) wear simple clothes;
(8) respect work, do side jobs, and utilize scraps;
(9) curtail unnecessary costs of weddings;
(10) respect the Shinto–style wedding ceremony; and, lastly,
(11) reserve one day a month as a day of women's volunteer work.[181]

At the same time, other articles criticized the modern girls in the cities, who should not have left their countryside home to begin with:

178 Ibid., pp. 96–97. The role of the countryside for revolution was later also debated by Marxist intellectuals. See: Germaine A. Hoston, Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Prewar Japan, Princeton, NJ 1986, pp. 223–250.
179 Tamanoi, The City and the Countryside, pp. 97–99.
180 Ibid., p. 100.
181 Motohara jihō, 15 June 1925, cited in ibid., p. 103.

> Why, Ms. N, do you have to transmogrify yourself with such heavy makeup every morning? [. . .] When you walk carrying a big bag on the glittering city streets at night, you really look like a monkey. [. . .] Ms. N, I secretly adored you when you were here [in this village] working so diligently picking mulberry leaves, wearing a white cotton apron. Don't you know that the sweat on your forehead sparkled in the sun? A woman's beauty shines only when she works in the countryside.[182]

There obviously existed a conflict about different identities related to the city and the countryside, respectively. For those in favor of the countryside, women's and girls' true beauty was destroyed by city life, as Japan's tradition might be destroyed by the mix of influences in the urban space. Traditional Japan and its beauty, represented by rural womanhood, could only be found far away from the pulsing centers of modernity, i.e. the Japanese metropolises. The countryside was consequently part of the sphere that was impacted by the First World War and discourses about modernity, here expressed through the discourse about gender roles and true beauty. The transformations eventually reached all parts of Japan, although with a little delay, and demanded a discourse about modernity. It can consequently be stated that the war years were the trigger for a national process of change that would lead into the second half of the Taishō period, when its impact reached all regions of the country. That the multiple socio–economic transformation processes would not be accepted without hesitation or resistance, however, must be clearly understood, which is why a much closer look must be taken at the protests that accompanied these transformations.

3.5 The First World War and the Protests at Home

Although the Japanese economy had flourished during the war years, prices rose at a faster pace than wages did. This increased the sorrows of those who were not part of the new urban middle class or those who got tremendously rich during the war. Many people suffered from low wages and the increasing living costs, which is why socialist or communist ideas became more and more interesting for many people, especially in the cities. In the industries that boomed during the war, e.g. shipbuilding, more and more unions were established to represent the demands of the workers who, due to the actual demands of the workforce, were in a position to better and more often successfully express their demands. Although the war triggered the activities and establishment of unions

182 Kamishina jihō, 15 January 1925, cited in ibid., p. 104.

in all kinds of industries, the socialist activities during the war represented a continuation of the years before.

While socialist publications and anti–war activities had been suppressed during the Russo–Japanese War, the aftermath of the war was characterized by increased activity of the socialist movement in Japan. Socialists had been active in different mines since the early 1900s, and when in 1907 a riot at the famous Ashio copper mine occurred, the riots there spread to other mines across the country once the military had crushed the socialist–led riot after three days of protests.[183] The national impact of the riot at Ashio emphasized that the socialists had established a network of cooperation and solidarity and were actually no longer solely an intellectual phenomenon expressed in local study groups. The Left in Japan, however, was disunited about the future course it should take. The anarchists assembled around Kōtoku Shūsui (1871–1911)[184] demanded direct action, while the socialists led by Katayama Sen demanded reforms within the legal limits of the state.[185] Like the European Left, the Japanese anarchists and socialists discussed theory, often weakening their own movement due to internal divisions and struggles.[186] The government had already taken fierce action against the anarchist movement in 1911 due to the so–called High Treason Incident, when 26 anarchists were accused of having planned the assassination of the Meiji Emperor and were tried in secret. 11 of them, among them Kōtoku, were eventually executed, an act that showed that the government was not willing to accept the uncontested existence of dangerous ideas of the political Left. This caused further tension between anarchists and socialists on the one side and the state on the other.[187] The repression of the state was immediately felt when "[a]ll books on socialism were confiscated and all the public libraries were ordered to withdraw socialist books and papers. Even moderate papers like ours were severely censored and a few months after the said trial it was practically suppressed by the authorities."[188]

The First World War, however, also presented a chance for the socialist movement in Japan, whose members were now able to spread their ideas in unions and

183 Katayama Sen, The Labor Movement in Japan, Chicago 1918, p. 112. On the riot see: Kazuo Nimura, The Ashio Riot of 1907. A Social History of Mining in Japan, Durham, NC 1998.

184 On Kotoku's influence and the conflict with the state authorities see the important study Maik Hendrik Sprotte, Konfliktaustragung in autoritären Herrschaftssystemen. Eine historische Fallstudie zur frühsozialistischen Bewegung im Japan der Meiji–Zeit, Marburg 2001.

185 Katayama, The Labor Movement, p. 122.

186 Ibid., p. 124.

187 Ibid., p. 135.

188 Ibid., p. 140.

among workers, especially the recently increased working class of the cities, where the demand for manufactured goods had increased not only the number of workers representing the industrial proletariat of Japan but also the chances for them to use their potential for a fight for better wages. Katayama Sen therefore correctly argued that the members of the working class of Japan "have lately awakened."[189] This was also related to the impact of the Russian Revolution, which had shown that the dictatorship of the proletariat could be established, and many Japanese socialists admired the results of the protests in February 1917, although not all agreed with the Bolshevists' actions since October. As Katayama put it: "The living fact that the Russian revolution was accomplished by the joint action of the workers and the soldiers is the great revelation to the Japanese who are oppressed under militarism and conscription."[190] While the revolutionary events in Russia might have stimulated the discourse among the socialist intellectuals, it was the consequences of the growth of the war industry and global capitalism in Japan that were responsible for the workers' demands related to better wages and other benefits.[191] Katayama later described the rise of socialism during the First World War, but had remarked in an article in 1910 that the working class lacked "any form of lawful protection and [were] totally defenseless when [. . .] at the mercy of capitalist exploitation."[192] He added that there was "no law, no constitution, and no freedom"[193] for socialists and the Japanese police were, according to his own experiences, "worse than the Russian."[194] In 1911, he wrote that a small upper class that profited from the suffering of the working class ruled Japan, while emphasizing that this order was based on violence: "To perpetuate this regime of violence by a small minority over the large mass of the people, the government and the bourgeoisie have to betake themselves to police despotism and suppress every freer government."[195] According to Katayama, socialists suffered the most from this situation. The municipality of Tokyo was said to have spent ¥ 50,000 in 1910 to spy on 170 members of the Socialist Party, leaving no space for socialist activities at all.[196] The leadership was arrested within a year, and those who were still free were not only constantly monitored but also

189 Ibid., p. 5.
190 Ibid., p. 7.
191 Ibid., pp. 5–6.
192 Katayama Sen, Industrie und Sozialismus in Japan, in: Die neue Zeit. Wochenschrift der deutschen Sozialdemokratie 28 (1910) 25, pp. 874–880, here p. 878.
193 Ibid., p. 880.
194 Ibid.
195 Katayama Sen, Die politischen Zustände Japans, in: Die neue Zeit. Wochenschrift der deutschen Sozialdemokratie 29 (1911) 4, pp. 107–111, here p. 109.
196 Ibid.

struggled to earn a living.[197] In 1914, Katayama eventually left Japan and would never come back. He had surrendered and did not believe he was able to achieve anything in Japan, where police violence suffocated popular movements.[198] In exile, however, he remained in touch with leftist activists in Japan and was an active member of the global socialist network as well as a leading figure within the Communist International.

Due to the Russian Revolution of 1917, Katayama himself became more radical and wrote numerous works on behalf of Lenin's Bolshevism. He instructed members of the Socialist Party of America to join the Communist International in March 1919 and furthermore encouraged the founding of the Communist Party of the United States in September 1919. In addition, he led a group of Japanese communists who joined the American party.[199] In the same year, in a communication with the People's Russian Information Bureau in London, Katayama criticized Japan's position towards Soviet Russia, which is why his influence on the Japanese socialists was considered dangerous by the government in Tokyo. According to Katayama, the Japanese involvement in the Siberian Intervention was useless:

> Our soldiers in Siberia, since the beginning of the intervention, died 'a dog's death,' a useless death, and war expenses are simply wasted. We regret the loss on account of our mistaken policy, indeed! But by withdrawing our troops now we shall hereafter commit no more of such a senseless sacrifice and, moreover, the inimical attitude of the Russians can be eliminated. This is the opinion of the best people of Japan. [. . .] The Japanese Government's Siberian policy is upheld by the Allies, including America. It is a most outrageous policy. To them the Russian people are only the bourgeois class who are against the Bolshevik government and trying to sell Russia to the foreign capitalists![200]

Such criticism was considered dangerous in Japan, where the government intended to use the Siberian Intervention to push back the Russian zone of interest in East Asia and strengthen the country's position on the Asian continent.

197 Ibid., p. 111. Katayama declared the Japanese proletariat to be the most exploited in the world. Katayama Sen, Die Ausbeutung der Arbeiter in Japan, in: Die neue Zeit. Wochenschrift der deutschen Sozialdemokratie 29, 52 (1911), pp. 917–921, here 921.

198 Katayama Sen, Der Verfall des bureaukratischen Regimes in Japan, in: Die neue Zeit. Wochenschrift der deutschen Sozialdemokratie 32 (1914) 1, pp. 16–20, here p. 18.

199 Rudolf Hartmann, Japanischer Revolutionär und proletarischer Internationalist. Sen Katayama, in: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung 26 (1984) 2, pp. 238–246, here p. 243.

200 Katayama Sen, Japan and Soviet Russia, London, 6 September 1919, Warwick Digital Collection, 36/R30/22, 2.

Critical anti–government voices such as that of Katayama were suppressed, especially during the later years and immediately after the First World War. Katayama therefore also emphasized that Soviet Russia was the victim of corrupt capitalist governments, like that of Japan:

> All lies, falsehoods and twisting the facts about the Russian Soviet Republic and its doings have been poured on the people of the world over for the past eighteen months to fool and mislead them. These lies, skillfully fabricated by the capitalists and their paid agents – journalists, editors and pressmen of big dailies, even those truth–loving Christians and god–fearing men, may mislead and cheat the people for a while, but they are like a house built on sand, or storm clouds before the sun: they will soon fall away before the truth.[201]

In his criticism, Katayama seems to have been blinded by his hope in the Communist International and his strong belief in Lenin and that the Bolshevik leader was working for a better world. The Japanese socialist did not realize that Lenin was rather the leader of a regime that would use yet another ideology to suppress the people while employing the same brute force the Japanese government had used in the years before. Emphatically, Katayama argued: "Capitalistic governments and their diplomats will not make a lasting peace in the world. We know that. There is only one true lasting peace of the world, that is the Russian Bolshevik peace proposed by Lenin and Trotsky when they formed the Soviet government. At least this is the consensus of opinion among the great masses of the world, and I am glad to say that the Japanese Socialists are of firm belief on this aspect."[202] Such pro–Bolshevik statements from a leader whom the Japanese government perceived as an agent of the Comintern further discredited the socialist movement and naturally incited further anti–leftist persecution at the end of the First World War. The rice riots that will be discussed in more detail below were at the same time the result of Japan's economic problems, and the post–war crisis made the government tighten its grip on the labor movement to prevent instability and suppress its revolutionary potential.[203] It feared a repetition of the Russian events on Japanese soil too much to let the activities of the socialist movement among Japanese workers be carried out uncontested.

201 Ibid.
202 Ibid.
203 On the rice riots, see: Inoue Kiyoshi/Watanabe Tōru, Kome sōdō no kenkyū, Tokyo 1997.

In 1920, when Katayama gave the lecture "Recent Tendencies in the Labor Movement in Japan"[204] at the Rand School of Social Science in New York,[205] he argued that the First World War and its aftermath had vitalized the labor movement in Japan (Tables 3.4 and 3.5). Socialists had been effective as union leaders during the war, and Katayama's statistics, dated 31 December 1919, show the increase in union membership and provide numbers for the increasingly numerous strikes since 1914, especially those related to or within the workers' movement.[206]

Table 3.4: The Status of Unionism in Japan, December 31, 1919.

Industry	Total number of workers	Number of union organizations	Total number of members	Percentage of unionized workers	Average number of workers per union
Textiles	713,620	90	61,643	6.6	685
Machinery	222,366	82	40,125	18.0	495
Chemicals	141,769	67	9,047	6.4	135
Mining	433,843	94	52,135	12.0	555
Total	1,511,598	333	162,950	10.8	489

Table 3.5: The Increase in Strikes in Japan between 1914 and 1919.

Year	Number of strikes	Number of strikers	Average number of strikers per strike
1914	50	7,904	158
1915	60	7,852	123
1916	108	8,413	78
1917	397	57,309	144
1918	417	66,457	159
1919	497	63,137	127
Total	1,534	211,072	

204 Katayama Sen, Recent Tendencies in the Labor Movement in Japan, Rand School of Social Science Papers (Dep't of Labor Research), The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, Box 2, Katayama–Tractenberg, Folder 1, Katayama–Laidler. Following quotes will refer to Katayama Sen, Labor Union Movement, New York, October 21, 1920, a handwritten lecture manuscript within the named folder.

205 On the school, see Rachel Cutler Schwartz, The Rand School of Social Science, 1906–1924. A Study of Worker Education in the Socialist Era, PhD Thesis, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1984.

206 Katayama, Labor Union Movement, p. 2. The two charts are taken from these notes (pp. 2–3).

The government, frightened by possible further unrest in the country, suppressed the strikes by force: "In Aug[ust] 1919, there was a general [printers' union] strike of [. . .] the daily papers (17) in Tokyo for few days. The metropolis of 2,000,000 without a daily paper! But violent suppression of [the] strike and arrests of strikers executed during and after the strike and many other big strikes were suppressed by brutal police forces and some by calling out troops killing many strikers."[207] Katayama reported that the government's brutality was a consequence of "Japanese workers [showing] . . . a deep interest in the Russian revolution."[208] However, the interest in the revolution in Russia was not as important as the actual sorrows the workers in Japan had to face in their daily struggle against inflation and too low wages.

The rice riots of 1918 were a chance for the socialists to gain the attention and support of the masses who had suffered from the economic boom, while the upper class had simultaneously made a fortune out of it, especially due to the exploitation of cheap labor.[209] Katayama therefore considered the rice riots to be "direct revolutionary training,"[210] and the 7,831 rioters who were arrested and tried were the first representatives of the coming revolution. The Japanese government could consequently not tolerate such "revolutionary activities," especially not during the war itself. Thus, the fact that the "labor strikes [that] developed from the riots [. . .] [had] always [been] crushed by troops" was not a surprise at all, at least not for Katayama.[211] The strike of 26,000 laborers at the Yedamitsu Steel Works, to name just one example, was violently crushed, and many strikers were injured or killed.[212]

Katayama's account highlighted that the Japanese government, 14 years after the end of the Russo–Japanese War, continued its harsh anti–left course. The war had initially caused an economic boom, which was, however, followed by a recession after the war, and the danger of internal turmoil needed to be prevented again. Like in 1905, anti–left persecution and violence seem to have been the accurate means used to achieve these governmental aims. More than 50,000 workers had already participated in close to 400 strikes in 1917, which means that the potential for unrest was not suddenly expressed, but rather increased during the war. The financial gains of the nouveaux riches were criticized, not only by the workers but by publicists in Japan as well, but there was little one

207 Ibid., p. 4.
208 Ibid., p. 5.
209 James, The Rise and Fall, pp. 160–161.
210 Katayama, Labor Union Movement, p. 5.
211 Ibid., p. 6.
212 Ibid.

could do against the capitalist development that had created this super–rich class. Its representatives continued to gain from cheap labor and the political authorities did not seem interested in challenging them or their wrongdoings.[213] However, when the price of rice took off and due to ruthless speculation reached a level unknown before,[214] many people saw no other option but to openly challenge this development and the political order it stood for.

Between 1914 and 1920 the price of rice had increased by 174%, which is why it got more and more unattainable, especially in the non–urban parts of the country, where wages had not gained value during the war years.[215] This became even more problematic once the boom ended in 1920 and more and more people felt the beginning recession.[216] The end of war–related exports to the Allied powers hit the Japanese economy quite hard, and while the political leaders discussed the future world order at Versailles, Japanese producers had to face the end of the golden years created by the financial surplus due to the steady export of manufactured goods to the warring Europeans. Regardless of this initial shock, Japanese companies were able to recover and continued to record positive balances until the crash followed with its full impact in 1920. The economic bubble in Japan burst, and prices fell so fast that factory workers lost their job without any warning. The price of Japanese yarn dropped by 60%, and that of silk by 70%. The stock market in Tokyo crashed and lost 55%.[217] The unavailability of competitors in Asia had led to an overproduction of Japanese manufactured goods that now, after the return of the European trade companies, could no longer be sold. The consequence, in addition to dropping prices, was overproduction, and a financial crisis was inevitable. This crisis had been accompanied by rice riots since 1918, due to which the newly rich and other upper class representatives, as well as speculators, were accused of being responsible for the misery of the poor people in Japan.[218]

Producers and export companies had probably acted too jauntily during the war years, not considering that the economic boom could and would end with the conclusion of the First World War. They were probably intoxicated by

213 Young, Japan under Taisho Tenno, p. 114.

214 Ibid., p. 115.

215 Tobata Seiichi, Nihon nōgyō no ninaite, in: Nihon Nōgyō Hattatsushi Chōsakai et al. (Ed.), Nihon nōgyō hattatsushi, vol. 9, Tokyo 1956, pp. 561–604.

216 Andrew Gordon, A Modern History, pp. 139–140.

217 Ōno Ken'ichi, World War I and the 1920s. Export–led Boom and Bust, http://www.grips.ac.jp/teacher/oono/hp/lecture_J/lec07.htm (4. 7. 2016).

218 Michael Lewis, Rioters and Citizens. Mass Protest in Imperial Japan, Berkeley et al. 1990, pp. 100–110.

the extreme margins and profit and did not wish for this trend to end, eventually neglecting the simple possibility that time would change again. The overpriced products of the war years could no longer compete on the Asian markets and left many of the nouveaux riches impoverished again. Their luxurious lifestyle disappeared as quickly as it had occurred. Due to the crisis of the silk market and the crash of the Japanese stock market, the banks also faced a severe crisis, and the money owned by the common people lost a lot of its worth. On the one hand, the number of unemployed workers rose, while on the other, the rift between poor and rich got more intense, especially since most of the wages remained low while the rice prices exploded. This situation was intensified due to speculations with rice. In more than 350 cities, rice riots (*kome sōdō*) protested against the exploitation of ordinary consumers.[219] The latter attacked real and supposed speculators and many rice traders.

Considering the long–term perspective with regard to the postwar years, the developments were even worse. The Japanese economy entered a "chronic crisis."[220] This was also due to the international crises in the 1920s and 1930s, which further intensified the problems already faced at the end of the First World War. The gross national income rose by 6.2% between 1914 and 1919, but this trend declined to 0.7% in 1931.[221] The economist and political scientist Shizume Masato divided Japan's economic history from 1914 (when the First World War started) to the late 1930s (when the Second World War began in East Asia in 1937/39) into five time periods.[222] First, there was an economic boom between 1914 and 1919, with high rates of economic growth and inflation, then came a decade of deflationary measures between 1920 and 1929 before the Shōwa depression in 1930/31. Between 1932 and 1936 the economy partly recovered, before another upswing occurred in the first period of the Sino–Japanese War (1937–1945).[223]

Regardless of these long–term developments, we should return to the local riots between 1918 and 1920 once more, as they resembled the global unrest at the end of the Great War and therefore must be seen as a symptom for the

219 Reinhard Zöllner, Geschichte Japans: Von 1800 bis zur Gegenwart, Second edition, Paderborn 2008, p. 341.

220 Shizune Masato, The Japanese Economy during the Interwar Period. Instability in the Financial System and the Impact of the World Depression, in: Bank of Japan Review. Institute for Monetary and Economic Studies, 2009–E–2, Tōkyō 2009. https://www.boj.or.jp/en/research/wps_rev/rev_2009/data/rev09e02.pdf (10. 4. 2016).

221 Ibid.

222 Ibid.

223 Ibid. On the Shōwa depression see: Iwata Kikuo, Shōwa kyōkō no kenkyū, Toyko 2004.

shortcomings of a globalized capitalist world order that had been based on imperialism and the exploitation of the working class alike. In 1918 the Japanese authorities had to face a strong and, due to union and socialist party activities, well–organized working class. At the same time, the unrest of the farmers in the countryside was followed by protests by the fishermen, although the price for fish had increased as well, "but there was a complicated system of marketing under which commodities passed through several hands before reaching the consumer, so that the producers were the last to feel the benefit of a rise in market prices."[224] Even if more money for fish was available and the income of the fishermen increased, it could hardly match the prices of other consumer goods that needed to be bought in exchange. The food producers, i.e. farmers and fishermen, were consequently left out from the economic gains of the new middle and upper class, suffering even while making more money than in the past.

In Kobe, protests against the price of rice, which went up by 300% between 1915 and 1918, eventually culminated in a violent eruption when the nouveaux riches, the rice speculators, and other traders were attacked by an angry mob in early August 1918, and the deployment of troops was necessary to avoid a further spreading of the violent potential in the city.[225] However, Kobe can only be considered the peak of the protests that spanned the whole country; rice riots seem to have taken place almost everywhere in Japan, in which people demanded some kind of moral economy instead of capitalism–oriented exploitation.[226] Consequently, the protests could be understood as an expression of anti–globalization in Japan, where the producing and working classes demanded an end to a capitalist–driven and in some way immoral form of economy. In Kobe in August 1918, this was one of the sentiments that made the masses act and attack those they had identified as the ones responsible for their misery. It was there that the riots also reached their most violent potential:

> Crowds collected at Minato–gawa [. . .]. They were harangued by spokesmen whom the tide of excitement carried on its crest. The names of the principal profiteers were denounced. Presently the crowd began to move towards Suzuki's, a firm which had become very wealthy during the war and whose operations on the rice market particularly attracted the mob's hostile attention. Actually Suzuki's had been buying rice chiefly on the Government's behalf as commission agents, but it was believed that they were responsible for forcing up the price. Doors were battered in, kerosene poured over the furniture

224 Young, Japan under Taisho Tenno, p. 115.

225 James, The Rise and Fall, p. 161.

226 On the rice riots see the following recent article: Tomie Naoko, 1918–nen kome sōdō ni okeru „seizonken". Moraru ekonomī to shitizenshippu, in: Fukushi shakai gakken 14 (2017), pp. 95–119.

> and the premises fired. The fire brigade – a branch of the police service – was driven away when it came up, and its hoses were cut. The firemen attempted to play on the flames from the windows of a Japanese newspaper office that stood opposite, whereupon the mob burnt the office as well. The same night the offices of a big house agency which had got the greater part of the dwellings in Kobe into its avaricious hands were burnt, besides the houses of a couple of unpopular money–lenders.[227]

Troops needed to intervene the following day to end the riots. Soldiers had to be brought in from Himeji, because they could not be sent from the nearer Osaka as this city was facing a similar situation, where angry crowds smashed shop windows as well as cars. The mob, naturally, like in Kobe as well, "expended its energies in minor mischief, but came into no extensive collisions with the troops."[228] It took the government a few days to reestablish order in the cities and bring life back to normal. In twenty places all over Japan, the military had to intervene and suppress the activities of angry mobs. At least a hundred protesters had been killed, although there is no exact number, because the government prohibited any news about the riots in their aftermath. The Japanese press, however, did not follow this order and even protested against it, which is why at least some reports provide a contemporary image of the events.

Regardless of their intensity, the riots could be suppressed, as they happened in a rather unorganized and very spontaneous manner. The fact, however, that protesters assembled all over Japan also highlights the dangerous situation the government in Tokyo had to face. The army remained loyal, however, and did not support the protests. Many people were arrested during and after the riots and were harshly sentenced in the aftermath, some protesters even facing the death sentence.[229] The Prime Minister, Terauchi Masatake (1852–1919), nevertheless, could not survive the discussions related to the events and had to resign on 17 September 1918. The new Prime Minister, Hara Takashi (1856–1921), was appointed a few days later and was "enthusiastically greeted" by labor leaders like Suzuki Bunji because he "was a common man, not a peer, and his cabinet was a party government."[230] Social change was supposed to be resembled by the new government, and although these hopes might have been a bit too high, there were, of course, also some long–term impacts from the events of 1918 on the Japanese labor movement.

227 Young, Japan under Taisho Tenno, p. 116.
228 Ibid., p. 117.
229 Ibid.
230 Takenaka, Failed Democratization, p. 92.

In May 1919 the first meeting of the Rōdō Dōmeikai (Labor League) met in Tokyo, and next to Suzuki Bunji, Ōsugi Sakae (1885–1923),[231] "a man of powerful mind, profoundly read in all revolutionary literature, and with a fanatical devotion to individual liberty,"[232] was a central figure. While a quarter of the participants of this meeting were supposedly policemen, the course of the meeting showed that confrontations between the labor movement and the state had become more severe since 1918: "[I]n spite of this ejectment the speeches continued to offend the police, who stopped them one after the other, until the assembly broke up in a storm of indignation. This became the type of Labour meeting henceforth, and though the most passionate outbursts greeted these prohibitions, disobedience and force were very rarely attempted."[233] Once the Treaty of Versailles had been signed, politicians thought they had established a return to a peaceful international order, but "the restlessness which pervaded the whole world manifested itself in industrial strikes, and Japan had rather more than her share."[234] With prices rising again, again faster than the real wages of the workers, it became quite common to request an adjustment through a strike. Considering the intensity of these developments, A. Morgan Young speaks of "an epidemic"[235] Japan had never faced before. It might have been this impression that led to the consideration that the Taishō period was a time of strong liberal demands and public unrest, i.e. a "Taishō democracy."[236] The struggle between the government and the labor movement continued in numerous ways during the period, but it is clear that the First World War had been a stronger trigger to mobilize the masses due to the created public interest than the war against Russia a decade before. In 1905, riots criticized the loss of Japan at the diplomatic table in the struggle for its future empire. In 1918 and afterward, people protested against capitalist exploitation instead. The impact of the Great War on unrest and protests in Japan, especially in the months after the war's end, can consequently not be neglected.

231 On his life and impact see: Thomas A. Stanley, Ōsugi Sakae, Anarchist in Taishō Japan. The Creativity of the Ego, Cambridge, MA 1982; Herbert Worm, Studien über den jungen Ōsugi Sakae und die Meiji–Sozialisten zwischen Sozialdemokratie und Anarchismus unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Anarchismusrezeption, Hamburg 1981.

232 Young, Japan under Taisho Tenno, pp. 152–153.

233 Ibid., p. 153.

234 Ibid., p. 167.

235 Ibid.

236 Harald Meyer, Die „Taishō–Demokratie". Begriffsgeschichtliche Studien zur Demokratierezeption in Japan von 1900 bis 1920, Bern 2005.

3.6 Conclusion

The First World War had established Japan as the "only major non–Western colonial power in the twentieth century,"[237] and in 1919, Tokyo controlled parts of the neighboring mainland as well as some islands in the Pacific Rim. The Japanese government had used the war as a pretext for its imperialist expansion in China, which it needed to secure at Versailles at all cost, eroding the principles of the League of Nations before it even existed. At the same time, Japan had gained from its rather "light" involvement in the Great War, as it had economically profited from its trade with the Entente powers and the absence of European competitors for manufactured goods on the Asian markets. Japan's economy boomed, and the nouveaux riches enjoyed the urban city life in the metropolises. As has been shown above, however, the consequence was social transformations, and not only in the urban context, and new consumer markets led to discussions about Japanese society as a whole. New gender roles were as publicly discussed as the situations of those who were not able to participate in the advantageous boom of the economy.

Regardless of its growing publicity, which print capitalism had provided for broader audiences, the social question did not become really interesting before the end of the war when the boom abruptly ended and rice prices went through the roof. At the same time, low real wages were leading to massive impoverishment and, marking the start for more critical and confrontational mass eruptions in Japan, the rice riots of 1918 marked a new period of consciousness for the Japanese working class and the socialist movement. The latter's leading figures could use the steady suffering caused by capitalist exploitation, which had been globalized and therefore increased during the war years, to make themselves heard among the workers, whether in union or party meetings.

Once social unrest had erupted in Kobe and many other Japanese cities at the end of the war, the government also realized the danger and tried to contain dangerous ideas and punish protesters to avoid increasing revolutionary potential spreading. The anger of the protesters, however, was less stimulated by revolutionary dreams, as Katayama Sen might have had them, than by capitalist realities that caused sorrows for the majority of Japanese people, which could be felt in the cities and the countryside as well. The protests in Japan were consequently an expression of social unrest that must be seen in their global

237 Michele M. Mason/Helen J.S. Lee, Introduction, in: Michele M. Mason/Helen J.S. Lee (Eds.), Reading Colonial Japan. Text, Context, and Critique, Stanford, CA 2012, pp. 1–17, here p. 1.

context. Many people had reasons to rebel against the existent order around the globe, and it was a pity that the leaders in Versailles were unable to establish a better one but instead continued to believe in principles that had just turned the world to ashes. In Japan, the new order was greeted enthusiastically, but in reality and from a long–term perspective, it worsened the situation of the workers' movement and led the country into a war that was neither glorious like the Russo–Japanese War nor economically profitable, but would instead destroy much of the country and the region for the sake of capitalist exploitation and the imperialist ruling class.