

THE JAPANESE VILLAGE IN THE PACIFIC

JAPANESE IMMIGRATION TO HAWAII

The first Japanese immigrants to Hawaii, known as the *gannen mono* (first-year arrivals), arrived in 1868. The Hawaiian Kingdom's Board of Immigration had asked Eugene Van Reed, an American merchant who had served as the Hawaiian consul in Japan, to recruit contract laborers to work in the cane fields. Van Reed recommended the Japanese as excellent laborers and spoke in the highest terms of their industry and docility, their cleanliness and honesty, and their adaptability.

It proved difficult to gather the anticipated number of 350 immigrants, and in the end only 148 (of these 6 were women) were actually recruited. Their pay was to be \$4 per month with room and board provided for a three-year period, and Hawaii covered their round-trip ship passage. Many of the *gannen mono* were gamblers and idlers recruited from the streets of Yokohama who knew nothing about farming and were ill-suited for hard work in the sugarcane fields. When misunderstandings arose about their pay, this first effort at bringing in Japanese labor ended in failure. No additional contract workers came from Japan for another decade and a half.

By that time sugar had become king in Hawaii. In the late eighteenth century James Cook, the first Caucasian to set foot on Hawaiian soil, had noted in his ship journal that he had seen sugarcane. Half a century later, in the 1820s, missionaries arrived by sailing ship from New England, not only to convert the natives to Christianity, but also to teach them how to write and farm. It was the Hawaiian-born descendants of

these missionaries, called *kamaaina*, who saw the potential for sugar-cane production in Hawaii. In 1848 foreigners, who had previously leased cane fields from the Hawaiian kings and chieftains, were allowed to buy land. Haole ownership of land increased rapidly. Not only did the scale of the sugar industry change suddenly, the social structure of Hawaii was transformed as well. The power of the Hawaiian royal dynasty, established by King Kamehameha I ten years before the missionaries' arrival, began to decline.

From the beginning the greatest problem for the Hawaiian sugar industry was the lack of a labor force. Native Hawaiians worked only when they felt like it—a custom they called *kanaka*—and were not inclined toward heavy labor in the fields all day long. Their numbers were also rapidly reduced by epidemic disease brought by foreign whaling ships. In 1850 a labor contract law was enacted to increase the labor supply. Workers from China were the first outsiders to be sought out as cheap labor. Docile and hardworking, they gradually constituted the majority of cane field laborers. But after working diligently and saving money, these Chinese workers would leave the fields when their contracts were up (five years initially, three years from 1870 on) to open up businesses. Some also went to the American mainland.

From early on Chinese laborers had gone to California to work on building the continental railroad. The Taiping rebellion and other disturbances that wreaked havoc in China produced a continuous stream of immigrants seeking work in America. But the Chinese newcomers were soon perceived as a threat by Caucasian laborers. Not only did they put up with exploitation and work hard for low pay, they held fast to their own ways of life. They still wore their pigtails, they lived in their own separate Chinatowns, and they continued to gamble and smoke opium. Seeing the Chinese as immigrants who could not be assimilated, the Caucasians began to demand that the Chinese must go. When a recession in the 1870s led to severe unemployment, Caucasian labor unions took the lead in the movement opposing Chinese immigration to the United States. Gradually the quota for Chinese immigrants was decreased, and in 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act.

By this time only a quarter of Chinese laborers who had migrated to Hawaii were left in the cane fields, and the sugar planters of Hawaii had already begun to seek other cheap labor to take their place. The Japanese government signed a formal immigration agreement with the kingdom of Hawaii in 1885. During the next nine years, nearly thirty thousand Japanese crossed the ocean to work under three-year contracts for

wages of \$12.50 per month. Most were poor tenant farmers from the bottom economic strata in Japan. Unlike the gannen mono, these Japanese contract workers were accustomed to working in the fields. Seeing that the Japanese worked as strenuously as the Chinese, the plantation owners soon competed to hire them. (Plantation managers ordered the procurement of "Japs" in the same memoranda in which they ordered macaroni, rice, horses, and mules.)

The Japanese government backed the contract labor system as a way of earning foreign exchange. It declared, "If we send 3 million workers out into the world and each one of them sends back to Japan \$6 per year, the country will benefit." In fact, money remitted by the immigrants to Japan during the Meiji period amounted to more than 2 million yen annually. For a Japan struggling under foreign debts incurred to procure military equipment and other foreign goods, the foreign currency sent home by the immigrants, who hoped to return home "clad in brocade" after enduring hard labor under the broiling Hawaiian sun, was not an insignificant sum.

The United States was in a period of rapid industrial growth after the end of the Civil War. A great wave of European immigrants were pouring into the East Coast as unskilled factory workers, just as the Japanese were pouring into Hawaii, still an independent kingdom. There was a significant difference, however, between the Japanese and the European immigrants. The Europeans had forsaken their homelands and had placed their hopes in the New World, where they intended to stay permanently. By contrast, the Japanese immigrants to Hawaii expected to return home. In fact, they were indentured as contract immigrants, a practice forbidden by law in the United States. Japanese Foreign Ministry documents referred to the immigrants as "officially contracted overseas laborers" (*kanyaku dekaseginin*), and they were admitted into Hawaii solely to work in the sugarcane fields.

After 1893, when the Japanese government entrusted the immigration business to private immigration companies, the number of privately contracted overseas laborers increased. The following year the Hawaiian monarchy was overthrown with the help of American marines supporting the haole sugar planters. Hawaii became a "republic." Four years later, in 1898, the republic was annexed by the United States. For the sugar planters, who engineered the whole process, joining the United States was a long-cherished goal. Annexation meant an end to tariffs, enabling Hawaiian sugar to compete better with Cuban sugar or beet sugar from the U.S. mainland.

Nearly all the sugar plantations in Hawaii were under the control of five major sugar factoring companies organized by the powerful and unified kamaaina elite. Dominating all aspects of sugar marketing and management, as well as procurement of the labor force and seeds, these companies gradually absorbed small-scale growers with meager capital. Known as the Big Five, they became the new royalty of Hawaii and exercised enormous influence over the Hawaiian territorial government.

The annexation of Hawaii coincided with the extension of American sovereignty over the territories of the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico, acquired as a result of the Spanish-American War, and with the enunciation of the Open Door policy in China. These developments marked a full-fledged American advance into the Asia-Pacific region, just at a time when Japan was expanding its power on the Asian continent after its military victory over China in 1895. In a clear display of its national strength, almost annually Japan had already been sending its imperial fleet, with rising sun flag unfurled, to Hawaii, a strategic spot in the Pacific Ocean.

Olaa Plantation, where Jūzaburō Sakamaki was hired as an interpreter, was established as a corporation capitalized at \$5 million in May 1899, a year after annexation. Anticipating capital infusion from the U.S. mainland, much new plantation land was opened up after annexation. The development of Olaa was unprecedented in scale. An enormous land reclamation project opened some 20,000 acres (8,093 hectares) of cane fields extending from a point eight miles from Hilo to the Kilauea volcano. Originally owned by the Hawaiian royal family, the Olaa area was a jungle thick with ohia trees, ferns, and shrubs. The land had been sold to private individuals, and coffee cultivation had been attempted some ten years before but had ended in failure because of too much rainfall. The climate, however, was very suitable for sugarcane cultivation.

The first person to be hired for the Olaa reclamation project was the labor contractor Jirokichi Iwasaki. Gathering about fifty Japanese laborers and with the help of three horses, Iwasaki cleared 40 acres (about 16 hectares). He was the first contractor to undertake not only clearing the land but also the entire process of sugarcane cultivation, from *kanakou* (planting of cane), *hanawae* (irrigation of planted cane), *hole-hole* (cutting of dried grass), and *kachiken* (harvesting the cane) to *furubi* (transporting the cane by waterways) and *hapai ko* (loading). And it was Jūzaburō Sakamaki's job not merely to act as interpreter but to enable the Japanese laborers and the company to understand each other.

Within six months of the opening of the plantation, the number of laborers at Olaa swelled to 1,829. The vast majority were Japanese (1,268 were Japanese, 132 were Chinese, and 429 were Hawaiian). Still there were not enough. Workers were needed not only to grow sugar cane but also to lay a railroad line to carry the cane to the port at Hilo.

Annexation advanced the interests of the sugar industry, but it was not all to the producers' advantage. When Hawaii came under American law, contract labor immigration ended immediately. Finding themselves unexpectedly free, many Japanese workers left Hawaii in search of "gold-bearing trees" on the American mainland, where working conditions were vastly better. The Hawaiian sugar producers, who had expected that American law would not apply in Hawaii for three years, grew alarmed. To deal with the exodus of Japanese laborers, the Hawaiian legislature enacted a high business tax on the go-betweens who supplied laborers to the mainland, but even this did not halt the flow of workers out of Hawaii.

In the meantime anti-Japanese movements gained momentum on the West Coast. The California Japanese Exclusion League circulated pamphlets alleging that Japanese immigrants "don't mind low pay and long hours of work"; that they "have a strong sense of patriotism, and send money to their homeland without contributing to the American economy"; that they "do not make efforts to learn English"; that they "do not throw off their own culture, and refuse to assimilate"; and that they "engage in public urination, gamble with *hanafuda* cards, and, even on Sunday, get drunk and buy women." When there was an economic downturn, Caucasian workers targeted Japanese immigrants just as earlier they had worked to exclude Chinese low-wage workers.

Against this background, in 1907 President Theodore Roosevelt issued an executive order on termination of labor migration from Hawaii. Since Japan showed its ambition to dominate East Asia with its victory in the Russo-Japanese War two years earlier, American wariness toward Japan was rapidly on the rise. In 1906 the San Francisco School Board had resolved to segregate Japanese pupils in the public schools. When the Japanese government objected, the federal government in Washington, D.C., forced the city of San Francisco to rescind its resolution. But at the same time Roosevelt issued his executive order preventing Japanese immigrants from going to the mainland from Hawaii.

In 1908 the so-called Gentlemen's Agreement was reached to appease anti-Japanese feelings. The Japanese government agreed to voluntarily restrict emigration to the United States to reentering immigrants and

their parents, wives, or children. Until the Gentlemen's Agreement the majority of Japanese immigrants had been single men, and with so few women, relations between the sexes in the Japanese immigrant community provided one source of anti-Japanese feelings among the Caucasians. To put an end to this situation "picture bride" marriages—marriages of convenience contracted by prospective partners who exchanged photographs—were encouraged.

ON THE EVE OF THE FIRST OAHU STRIKE

The Hawaiian consul in Japan, Van Reed, who had sent the first group of Japanese immigrants to Hawaii, assured the Hawaiian authorities that the Japanese were "docile." From the time the first shipload of government contract immigrants arrived, however, they constantly called for improvements in their harsh working conditions. The *lunas*, the overseers in the cane fields, were mostly Scottish, Portuguese, and Hawaiian. The Scottish, many of them former ship hands, in particular, were known for their mercilessness. They patrolled the fields on horseback, occasionally wielding their long snakeskin whips. A Department of Labor official sent to investigate labor conditions in the cane fields in 1910, reported that callous exploitation and abuse by the lunas were common on many plantations. He concluded that psychological oppression of cane field workers in Hawaii was no different from that suffered by black slaves in the South.

The Japanese laborers reacted to brutal treatment by the company by escaping, setting fire to cane fields, and other hostile acts. When contract labor was outlawed after annexation, the number of strikes, formal protests marked by organized negotiation, suddenly increased. For example, all the Japanese workers at Olaa Plantation struck on June 25, 1905. The origin of this strike was the death of a laborer who had taken medicine given him by the plantation hospital doctor. In those days plantation hospitals were often hospitals in name only, staffed by doctors with questionable qualifications, who sent workers home with laxatives for stomach- or headaches and Mercurochrome for cuts. The main work of the plantation hospital doctor, it was said, was to judge whether a worker was feigning illness.

The details of the 1905 Olaa strike are sketchy, but remaining documents indicate that the laborers demanded the dismissal not only of the plantation doctor and the clinic janitor but the plantation company in-

terpreter, Jūzaburō Sakamaki, as well. The disturbance subsided the next day, however, and Sakamaki was not dismissed. Calling this protest a “strike” was clearly overreaction on the part of the company, but strikes on other plantations occurred around the same time. In 1901 cane cutters on Ewa Plantation struck for higher pay, and similar strikes took place at Waialua and Lahaina plantations in 1905 and Waipahu Plantation in 1906. But plantation workers also protested other kinds of exploitation and abuses as well.¹

The first Oahu strike occurred in 1909, the year after the Gentlemen’s Agreement. Approximately seven thousand Japanese laborers in all plantations on Oahu abandoned the cane fields for three months just before harvest, and the resulting collective bargaining was on an unprecedented scale. For the first time strikers called for the abolition of racial discrimination in treatment of workers and demanded wage increases to improve living conditions.

From the outset the sugar planters’ policy toward laborers was based on racial discrimination. When the plantation owners imported Chinese low-wage labor, one of their motives was to raise the competitive spirit of the Hawaiians, who they thought took things too easily. On the plantations workers of each nationality set up their own living areas, forming Japanese camps or Chinese camps. Immigrant workers preferred to live together with their fellow countrymen. The plantation owners turned this to their own advantage by cleverly manipulating the competitiveness among the different nationalities to increase productivity. In the order of their arrival, the nationalities were Chinese, Japanese, Polynesians, Portuguese, Germans, Norwegians, Spanish, Australians, Italians, Puerto Ricans, African Americans, Koreans, Filipinos, and Russians.

As the Asian worker population grew, the plantation owners attempted to balance the labor force by hiring at least 10 percent white workers. They offered Europeans much better conditions than the Asians. The white workers were technicians and skilled workers in the mills, not manual laborers in the plantation fields. Records for 1896 show that while Japanese were given transportation costs plus wages, Germans were paid three times the wages of Japanese and given board as well. Rather than the shabby row houses allotted to Japanese, single-family houses were the norm for whites.

Although European workers were treated preferentially, most of them left for the American mainland when their three-year contracts expired.

Few stayed on in Hawaii. The Portuguese were the exception. The majority had come to Hawaii with their families intending to settle. The Portuguese came from a country close to the African continent and were swarthy, so the Hawaiian sugar planters did not recognize them as 100 percent white, but they did consider them best suited to oversee Asians in the fields.

Three months before the start of the first Oahu strike on January 29, 1909, a committee investigating agriculture in Hawaii sent a report to the secretary of agriculture in Washington, D.C.:

There are some things about the Japanese situation in Hawaii that I believe the President should know. We are having industrial troubles with this race and there have been threats on the part of the Japanese of murder, assassination and destruction of plantation properties by fire, although thus far nothing more serious than to be a concerted effort to get all the Japanese laborers in Hawaii to go on a strike, has come of it.

The report, conveying the sugar planters' alarm about the Japanese laborers, was forwarded by the secretary of state to the secretary of the interior and on to the president. It forecast that strikes were coming in Hawaii. From the planters' perspective the attitude of the Japanese laborers was threatening.

When the 1909 strike began, for example, it was not unusual to see editorials such as the following in the Japanese-language newspapers.

Now is the time to act in the spirit of national unity to assert our comrades' prestige and our comrades' rights. Even if, as you might say, we must endure coarse food, as subjects of the greater Japanese empire we will not flinch in standing up for a righteous cause. The Japanese are a people with the world's most fearsome perseverance. As long as they have rice and salt they can keep alive. In the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars, our heroic officers and soldiers sustained themselves for many months eating almost nothing but rice and pickled *ume* plums. That demonstrated our national glory in the world.²

During the 1909 strike opponents called those demanding wage increases "agitators," "irresponsible men," "opportunists," and "outlaws"; similarly, those who were against the strike were called "planters' dogs," "planters' pigs," "insurgents," "traitors," and "Czarist spies."

The number of Japanese immigrants increased sharply after the Russo-Japanese War. In 1906, 30,393 Japanese immigrants arrived in Hawaii, slightly more than the 29,669 who had come during the nine-year government-sponsored contract labor system. The majority were younger sons of farming families, who had returned safely from the war

front but were unable to find work or inherit land. The government in Tokyo as well as prefectural governments fanned an "American fever" among these returning veterans. But the arrival of these immigrants, who had survived the battlefield, not only incited anti-Japanese feelings on the American mainland, it brought a sudden increase in the number of Japanese groups with patriotic names in Hawaii as well.

The book most often packed in the trunks of these former soldiers was Sen Katayama's *Tobei annai* (Guide to Going to America), a slim volume of seventy-nine pages first published in 1901. The initial printing of two thousand copies sold out in one week, and the book went through many subsequent printings, becoming a best-seller of the day. Its message was forthrightly patriotic. "For our country Japan to build up a strong power in the Orient and to attempt to achieve an independent destiny, Japan must promote thriving industries," the author noted. "That is to say, our country Japan should not remain an isolated island in the Orient but should pursue its advantage by expanding into the rest of the world. . . . *It is my deepest belief that our fellow Japanese who depart their country and brave the vast wild ocean to enter another land, engage in business abroad, and make themselves economically viable are the most loyal to the Emperor and patriotic among our countrymen.*"

Katayama, who had returned to Japan after spending more than a decade living and studying in America, was a Christian Socialist. He founded Kingsley Hall, the first modern settlement house in Japan, participated in forming Japan's first labor union, became the editor of the first trade union paper, and joined with Shūsui Kōtoku and Isoo Abe to organize the Society for the Study of Socialism (Shakaishugi Kenkyūkai). As he traveled throughout Japan publicizing the labor movement, Katayama urged Japanese youth to emigrate to America, and he established the American Emigration Association (Tobei Kyōkai), which held monthly meetings at Kingsley Hall. Readers who subscribed to his trade union paper, *Rōdō sekai* (Labor World), automatically became members of the society.³ Not only did Katayama want to stabilize the paper's finances by gathering readers interested in going to America, he also hoped to inform these youths about labor issues and socialism. The back cover of *Tobei annai* carried an advertisement for *Rōdō sekai*. "Those who have been tyrannized by authority, come and enjoy *Labor World*," it said. "Those who are oppressed by the wealthy, come and make your appeal to *Labor World*." While Sen Katayama was a socialist, he was

also a thorough realist. His argument for emigration was well within the bounds of a nationalist argument, which expected the emigrants to return to Japan.

SUSPICIOUS JAPANESE IN AMERICA

Not all the Japanese immigrants who crossed the Pacific were field laborers or ambitious students. The United States, particularly the West Coast, was also a haven for those whose political views were too radical to be tolerated by the authorities at home. At first many were refugees from the "popular rights movement," which had fought to force the Japanese government to adopt a constitution establishing a popularly elected national assembly. By the early 1900s Japanese with more extreme views began to arrive on the West Coast. The San Francisco region, including the city of Oakland across the bay, became a hotbed of antigovernment political malcontents. It is likely that the activities of these Japanese on the West Coast heightened the anxieties of the Hawaiian sugar planters and territorial officials.

In 1907, two years before the first Oahu strike, an open letter addressed to "Mutsuhito, Emperor of Japan from Anarchists-Terrorists" was posted at the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco. It began, "We demand the implementation of the principle of assassination." After claiming that the emperor was not a god but, like other humans, an animal who had evolved from apes, it went on, "[The first emperor] Jimmu, the most brutal and inhumane man of his time, ruled as sovereign; under the name of being ruler he relished in every kind of crime and sin; his son followed his example and his grandson after him followed the example of his father; and so on and on down until 122 generations later." The "open letter" concluded, "Hey you, miserable Mutsuhito. Bombs are all around you, about to explode. Farewell to you."

This head-on attack against the authority of the emperor system shocked both Prime Minister Kimmochi Saionji and elder statesman Arimoto Yamagata, who immediately called in the head of the supreme court and the chief prosecutor to demand a review of the control of socialists. The incident sharply changed the attitude of the Japanese government toward leftist movements. The following year secret documents identifying "dangerous persons requiring close scrutiny" were prepared by the Police Bureau of the Home Ministry for distribution within the government. Socialists, anarchists, and communists were to be put un-

der secret surveillance, but all those who criticized the existing national political system were targeted as well.

It is of particular interest that in this secret document are to be found many reports about “those residing in the U.S.” According to an August 31, 1909, report by the consul general in San Francisco, “The anarchist movement had its origin in young men who gathered in San Francisco to hear Denjirō [Shūsui] Kōtoku advocate socialism on his visit to the U.S.”⁴ Shūsui Kōtoku spent eight months in San Francisco after arriving in November 1905. He had been imprisoned for five months for violating press ordinances in articles written for the *Heimin shinbun* (Commoner’s Paper), and after his release from jail he left for America to recover his health. In San Francisco he relied on the help of Shigeki Oka, a former colleague at the newspaper *Yorozu chōhō*, who headed the San Francisco branch of the Heiminsha, a radical organization, and eked out a living in the freight business. With Oka’s help, Kōtoku made contact with American socialists and anarchists. What most influenced him during his stay were San Francisco’s Great Earthquake, which occurred six months after his arrival, and his contacts with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), an organization that found its way into the Police Bureau’s top secret report.⁵

The mainstream of the American labor movement was represented by the American Federation of Labor (AFL), the largest labor union since its founding in 1886. The AFL took as members only skilled laborers and tended to exclude people of color. The IWW was formed in opposition to the AFL and welcomed members regardless of nationality, race, religion, or gender. An epoch-making federation, it included those abandoned by the AFL, those at the bottom of society, unskilled laborers, blacks, and new Asian immigrants unable to speak English. Unlike the moderate AFL, which put cooperation between labor and management first, the IWW adopted a strong ideology stressing that there were no common interests between employer and employee and that the mission of the working class was to “abolish the capitalist system.” The IWW proclaimed that the sole road toward working-class liberation was through direct action such as strikes and boycotts. From its inception, the American authorities put the IWW under close scrutiny as a radical group.

Kōtoku contrasted his impressions of the IWW and AFL as “idealistic versus realistic, revolutionary versus reformist, radical versus moder-

ate, those that put weight on the propagation of ideology versus those that place emphasis on winning elections." He confessed, "If I were to choose between these two, I prefer the idealistic, revolutionary, and radical."⁶ On his return to Japan, Kōtoku squarely denounced the parliamentarianism of the moderate socialists and declared that the only strategy for the workers was to mount a general strike. He had become an advocate of the revolutionary methods of syndicalism. By urging a strategy of direct action imported from America, Kōtoku hoped to reinvigorate the socialist movement, which was being stifled under intense repression from the authorities.

In San Francisco, Kōtoku had again met Katayama with whom he had organized the Society for the Study of Socialism. Although the two men were opponents within the socialist movement, and although their personalities and ways of life were quite different, they were cordial toward one another in a foreign land. Katayama had been in the United States and Europe since December 1903. He had just returned to America after attending the Sixth International Socialist and Trade Union Congress in Amsterdam, where he served as vice-chairman along with the Russian representative. The congress had unanimously passed a resolution opposing war. During his stay in the United States, Katayama had planned to lead a group of immigrants to open up rice cultivation in Texas, but this plan ended in failure. However, he had succeeded in forming socialist groups among Japanese immigrants in Seattle and other areas on the West Coast.

Just before his return to Japan in 1906 Kōtoku had organized a socialist revolutionary party whose party membership register included the names of fifty-two persons from San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Sacramento, Chicago, Boston, and New York. Among them was Sakutarō Iwasa, who later became a central figure along with Sakae Ōsugi in the anarchist movement. The incendiary open letter posted on the consulate door in San Francisco was instigated by a member of this group. Having promoted his ideas freely in the United States where he could evade the Japanese authorities, in what seems to be an irresponsible decision, Kōtoku summarily returned to Japan. The explosion of free thought he stimulated drew the attention not only of Japanese officials but also of American authorities.

Even before the open letter incident, the socialist revolutionary party had created a furor by publishing an article suggesting the assassination of the American president in its organ, *Kakumei* (Revolution). The *San Francisco Chronicle* ran the headline "Secret Servicemen on the trail of

Japanese publishers—Japs favor killing of President Roosevelt.”⁷ And across the bay, the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* warned, “Hotbed of Japanese Anarchists located here—the Yellow Peril.”⁸ The author of the radical statement, Tetsugorō Takeuchi, a member of the revolutionary party, was forced to move to Fresno, where he organized the Japanese Fresno Federation of Labor and published its magazine, *Rōdō* (Labor). In 1908 he led five thousand Japanese seasonal migrant grape pickers in a strike demanding better working conditions and wage increases. It was supported by Italian and Mexican members of the IWW. Four months before, Japanese immigrants had participated in a strike started by Mexicans in the sugar beet fields of southern California. Although the strike was quickly suppressed, the new involvement of Japanese laborers with the IWW attracted the notice of American authorities.

It was against this background of radicalism and labor unrest among Japanese workers on the mainland that the 1909 Oahu strike began. Sakutarō Iwasa and other Japanese sympathizers in San Francisco, calling themselves the Japanese Federation Strike Investigation Committee, sent a reporter from the newspaper *Nichibei* to Hawaii. An editorial in the paper strongly supported the strike: “This strike is the only way to struggle against capitalists.”⁹ Although the Japanese supporters on the mainland showed extraordinary interest in the Oahu strike, the largest ever mounted by Japanese immigrant workers, neither Japanese leftist activists nor the IWW became involved. Neither did the Police Bureau’s secret report list any activists related to Hawaii.

The first Oahu strike ended in failure when all of its leaders were arrested. Soon after the strike, however, working conditions improved when treatment of workers on the basis of racial discrimination lessened and wages were increased. But the strike also spread anti-Japanese sentiments among the Hawaiian governing elite. The “Japanese problem” in Hawaii eventually came to the surface in the late 1910s in the controversy surrounding the oversight of the Japanese-language schools. As a participant in World War I, America had gone through a campaign of “one nation, one flag, one language.” It was vital that an awareness of being an American was instilled in a nation made up of immigrants from so many countries. At a time when this “100% American movement” was at its height, the Japanese-language schools in Hawaii became the object of attack.