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Becoming Internationalist Subjects: The Growth of Multiracial Labor Organizing among Japanese Immigrant Communities in California, 1925–1933

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INTRODUCTION

In this article I attempt to reconstruct the history of Communist-led labor organizing in California in the 1920s and 1930s involving Issei (Japanese born) and Kibei (US-born Japanese who were raised in Japan and eventually returned to America). Two key analytical concepts I address are found in the terms “un-becoming Japanese American” and “internationalism.”¹ Much previous scholarship in Japanese American history has emphasized the narrative of “becoming Japanese American.” These scholars have assessed the racially differentiated vulnerability of Japanese immigrants and their American-born descendants by investigating the sociolegal institutionalization of anti-Japanese racism, including bans on Japanese immigration, denial of naturalization rights, denial of property rights through alien land laws, limited work opportunities, and segregation of schools and residency. Many of these discriminatory practices were underpinned by derogatory Orientalist representations and outright mob violence. An analytical framework that measures social vulnerability by the distance from full American citizenship, however, impedes a critical

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examination of those Japanese immigrants whose visions did not conform to ideas of American civil nationalism, inflated boasting about Japanese American economic ascendancy, or the preservation of middlemen ethnic economy.² These individuals, rather, questioned the US system of racial capitalism and attempted to expose and deflate the model-minority myth that had captured the minds of mainstream Japanese American community leaders. My goal is to rescue the history of those early Japanese immigrants who looked beyond liberal capitalist property rights and sought racial and economic justice for all.³

This topic is relevant not just for those Issei but also for Nisei (US born, second generation living in the United States) and Sansei (third generation) and their descendants because it alters the narrative of victimization that culminated in Japanese internment during World War II. Though Japanese internment is a prime example of the violation of Nisei and Sansei civil liberties, a thorough understanding of it must include sovereign power over immigration that controls labor influx and outflow, expulsion, detention, and deportation—all of which were previously used on Issei. In the 1920s and 1930s, the US government found that their ability to detain and deport migrant workers was an indispensable method of maintaining a desired labor pool and deradicalizing agricultural workers in the interests of capitalist agribusiness.⁴

Although I follow and expand on the emergent scholarship of global radicalism and internationalism, I wish to pay keen attention to the differences between transnationalism and internationalism. “Transnationalism” refers to a mode of analysis or description of movements that cross national boundaries, usually because of undesirable conditions (e. g., such as slavery and global color line) that extend beyond a single nation-state. Movements built by subjects of diasporas tended to overarch home and exile because these immigrants have to deal with problems in one or more countries. Understanding “internationalism,” in contrast, involves a fundamental critique of the nation-state as the basic unit through which racial capitalism operates with its antiradical laws, anti-foreign-born deportation policies, lack of labor protection laws, and other state-sanctioned differentiation of social vulnerability. When the movement of capital overseas dramatically increases in the form of imperialist projects of colonization, monopoly, and bloc economies, internationalism leads struggling groups to become involved in cross- or supranational solidarity movements. Although many scholars have used the term “transnationalism” with the implication that it involves “internationalist” politics, I use the term

“transnational” as a neutral descriptive adjective.⁵

In addition, I use the adjectives “multiracial” and “multiethnic” not to refer to persons of mixed ancestry but to point to the diverse composition of organizers and participants who aimed to abolish racially and ethnically differentiated wage hierarchy by not excluding anyone from their labor unions and by not working as strikebreakers.⁶

Historian Josephine Fowler has, significantly, investigated both Japanese and Chinese immigrant radicals in the United States by using not only American sources but also Russian archives related to the Communist International (Comintern). While Asian Americans tended to be invisible in such oral histories of Communist California agricultural labor organizing as Dorothy Ray Healey and Maurice Isserman’s *California Red*, she argues that the experiences of Issei and Kibei leftists was not simply peripheral but integral to the historical narratives of Asian Americans and the US Left. Fowler provides a powerful analysis of communications within CPUSA apparatuses (spanning New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles). The campaigns of Japanese Communists in California, however, receive little analysis in the context of California’s political economy. In this article I attempt to correct this lack by providing a more specific description of their activism in and around Japanese American communities.⁷

Historian Scott Kurashige has given a concise overview of Japanese Communists in Los Angeles with an emphasis on their relationship with African Americans and forms of solidarity for racial and economic justice. He duly argues that the campaign in support of the black Scottsboro youths was a crucial part of the solidarity work. While his account sheds light on divergent class interests within the local Japanese community, his interpretation of the isolation of Issei radicals from the mainstream Japanese community does not go far enough. I analyze this isolation resulting from the oppressive racial regime in the United States, including California, that combined antiradical laws and police brutality, immigration policies that created pools of migrant workers, as well as intra-ethnic alienation caused by Japanese community leaders’ accommodationist politics.⁸

THE LOS ANGELES JAPANESE WORKERS ASSOCIATION

A new generation of labor activists emerged both independent of and dependent on the heritage of Sen Katayama and Shusui Kotoku. The trans-Pacific travels, sojourning, and migration of these two prominent Japanese socialists and their comrades stimulated antiwar and anti-imperialist

discourse among Japanese students who were working their way through college by doing menial jobs in the San Francisco Bay/Oakland area in the first decade of the twentieth century. Kotoku criticized the American Federation of Labor's (AFL) refusal to organize Asian immigrant workers and tried working with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), which advocated inclusionary policies under "One Big Union." Tetsugoro Takeuchi and others under Kotoku's anarchist influence founded the Fresno Labor League in 1908 and attracted more than four thousand members. Their pointed criticism of the militarism of *Tennosei* (the Japanese emperor system) provoked the spying program by Japan's Department of Interior as well as Japanese consulates, resulting in the infamous 1910 High Treason Incident in which Shusui Kotoku and some other anarchists were hanged. This had a chilling effect on Japanese immigrant communities, particularly among immigrant leftists. Despite this setback, the seeds of labor activism among Japanese immigrants continued to be sown by Sen Katayama, who returned to the United States in 1914.⁹

One of the New York-based student laborers, Yada (an alias), who was under the influence of Katayama and founded the New York *Nihonjin Rodo Kyokai* (NY Japanese Workers Association) with other comrades in 1923, came to Los Angeles with Japanese immigrant radicals from San Francisco, Waseda graduate Sadaichi Kenmotsu and farmworker Tetsuji Horiuchi. They found there the Okinawan leftist youth group *Reimeikai* (New Dawn Society) and many Issei and Kibei-Nisei who were willing to organize Japanese immigrant laborers. Together, they eventually founded *Rafu Nihonjin Rodo Kyokai* (Los Angeles Japanese Workers Association, hereafter JWA) in spring 1924. They sought to organize a broad constituency of workers including gardeners, farmhands, domestics, housewives, and day workers, along with some students. The membership of JWA grew to nearly three hundred during the 1930s.

The JWA published its program in one of the major Japanese-language newspapers in Los Angeles, *Rafu Shimpo*:

We intend to organize all Japanese workers in the U.S. and carry on economic and political struggles; we will work together with all anti-capitalist groups such as trade unions and socialist, communist, anarchist, and syndicalist organizations; . . . we are against nationalism, imperialism, racism, as well as colonialism and semi-colonialism; we will aid any form of struggle against the capitalists; our final goal is the nationalization of production and distribution; we will teach and

advocate to the proletariat how to achieve this transition from a capitalist to a socialist society; we firmly believe in the organization, unity, and education of the proletariat; the JWA declares that our work cannot be accomplished without the support and help of all working people.¹⁰

The start of their organ and the peripatetic movement and networking as organizers marked their early activity. In 1925, Horiuchi, Yada, and Kenmotsu launched a monthly JWA journal, *Kaikyusen* (Class war). Soon Kenmotsu traveled east to Passaic, New Jersey, where the Communists led the textile strike, and also took the summer training course of the Party school in New York, where he met a member of the Young Workers League of America, Seizo (Seiya) Ogino. The YWL was a Communist youth organization established in 1922 in New York. Returning to San Francisco after this exciting experience, Kenmotsu resumed editing the journal in September 1926 along with Hoko Hideo Ikeda, an Issei farmworker, newspaperman, and participant in the 1920 Oahu sugar strike.¹¹

JWA members considered the California Criminal Syndicalism Act of 1919 as an impediment to their labor organizing as well as something that made foreign-born activists especially vulnerable. In 1927, in the eleventh issue of *Kaikyusen*, contributor Ogino introduced the organization International Labor Defense to its readers. Established in Chicago in 1925, the ILD defended the rights of strikers, exploited farmers, and victims of political frame-ups. Because defending foreign-born workers from deportation was a central issue to them, the JWA founded a Japanese Branch of ILD in Los Angeles on August 5, 1927. (The Japanese Branch of ILD in NY had been organized in fall 1926.) Nisei, as well as those born in Japan, could be targets of the Criminal Syndicalism Act, receiving long prison sentences. It was crucial to solidify the ILD branch before the JWA started their planned organizing drive in California's rural farming communities.¹²

Karl G. Yoneda, a Kibei, returned from Japan to the West Coast at this juncture and, recruited by Einosuke Yamaguchi, joined the Los Angeles JWA and ILD, Japanese Branch in 1927. Yoneda's trajectory shows his distinctive politicization process in Japan. In the upsurge of labor activism after the 1918 rice riots, in which poor port laborers of Toyama Prefecture tried to prevent the transportation of rice to protest excessive rice prices—the uprisings spread to about 360 municipalities in forty-one prefectures in the following three months and involved more than a million people—Yoneda organized rubber factory workers and printers in Hiroshima and

corresponded with local Japanese anarchist journalist activists Etsuta Tan and Ryuzo Hironaka. Yoneda returned to the United States to evade conscription. He had been unfamiliar with American racist practices until Yamaguchi explained how Japanese had been excluded from unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL), which supported the Immigration Act of 1924, also known as the Asian Exclusion Act. Yamaguchi also informed him that the Workers Party of America (after mid 1929 known as the CPUSA) had begun paying special attention to organizing what we now would term workers of color.¹³

ORGANIZING AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

In 1928, the JWA took up the issue of wage cuts that many Japanese farmhands suffered at that time. Though the monopolization and consolidation of land through white settlement and discriminatory land laws set the fundamental conditions, a Japanese agriculture economy was established through coordination among family farms, ethnic wholesale markets, and *nogyo kumiai* (associations for commercial agriculture). California's intensive farming, however, required cheap, plentiful seasonal labor—the presence of a migratory agricultural proletariat. In 1925, 46 percent of employed Japanese in California worked in farming, with most being migrant workers. Japanese farmhands often shared their difficult labor conditions with Mexican, Filipino, and Chinese workers. As historian Mae M. Ngai has deftly analyzed, the “agricultural labor market and immigration laws worked in tandem to create a kind of imported colonialism” to recruit Filipino colonial subjects, who were not under the jurisdiction of the 1924 immigration exclusion laws, to meet labor needs. The laws also exempted workers from the Western hemisphere from quotas, thereby maintaining a transnational flow of Mexican laborers, while excluding them from the American polity through restrictive immigration controls.¹⁴

JWA members needed to place themselves in a historical context in order to understand the formation of racial hierarchy within the California farming industry and how their precursors resisted labor exploitation by multiracial and multiethnic labor organizing. It set up a separate organization for organizing farmworkers, the Japanese Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (JAWOC). Bakunin Fukunaga took the lead in gathering a history of Japanese farmworkers' struggles in the West. Especially significant were the examples of multiethnic organizing in the 1903 Oxnard beet strike, the 1920 Oahu sugar strike, and the Fresno Labor League, which

organized four thousand Japanese grape pickers and sought the collaboration of Italian and Mexican IWW organizers in 1908–10.¹⁵

JAWOC's organizing drive through the small farms of Stanton, San Gabriel, Fresno, and Lodi beginning in spring 1928 gave them the indispensable experience of achieving the goal of obtaining "equal wages for equal jobs" among different ethnicities. Though JWA members who were fluent in English played an important role in communicating with Filipino and Mexican fellow laborers, the organizers felt a need to hire an organizer from each ethnicity. They also were concerned about how to intervene in the larger power structure of the industry made up of landowners, growers, shippers, and market owners.¹⁶

JWA AND ILD SOLIDARY WITH WORKERS IN CHINA AND WITH COMMUNISTS IN JAPAN

While organizing locally, the JWA also paid attention to the struggles of the proletariat in East Asia. The May 30, 1925, killing of Chinese student labor protestors in Shanghai, known as the Nanjing Road Incident, had triggered the rapid spread of a global movement in defense of China's factory workers known as the May Thirtieth Movement. In Los Angeles, Communist Party organizers held two "Hands Off China" mass meetings, with help from local Chinese and Japanese.

By 1926, there were 16,940 Japanese living in Shandong, China, and 150 million yen had been invested under Japanese imperialist control. In May 1928, when Japan announced its military intervention against the Chinese Nationalist Party's Northern Expedition that was trying to reunify China, in order to "protect the life and property of Japanese," the JWA denounced it and had their Chinese comrades translate their anti-imperialist statement to distribute it in the Chinatowns of New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.¹⁷

The February 1928 Japanese general election, the first one since the passage of universal male suffrage in 1925, gave an opportunity for leftists to gain seats in the central Diet. The Japanese Communist Party (JCP), though outlawed, openly supported some leftist candidates. Prime Minister Giichi Tanaka evoked the provisions of the 1925 Peace Preservation Laws and ordered the mass arrest of Communists on March 15, 1928. Five hundred of the 1,652 arrested Communists and sympathizers were tried. Members of the JWA and the ILD Japanese Branch protested by sending telegrams to the Japanese government and raising funds for their comrades'

trials. All were found guilty and sentenced to stiff jail terms. Sadaichi Kenmotsu denounced the mass arrests at the 1928 May Day demonstration in Oakland, California, and the gathering sent a protest resolution to Japan. Months later, at an ILD mass meeting at Los Angeles's Union Church on San Pedro Street members expressed their support for the prisoners and their families. This campaign was a crucial part of JWA's internationalist politics.¹⁸

TUUL-AWIU FARMWORKER ORGANIZING

Organizing agricultural workers continued to be one of the main foci of the JWA. The Trade Union Unity League (TUUL) was formed at the national level at the beginning of September 1929 to create independent industrial unions inside and outside the AFL and to prepare the Los Angeles JWA organizers for a larger strike. From its founding convention, Jim Yanai and Kaizo Hakomori brought back the exciting program based on class struggle and industrial unionism. JWA members unanimously joined the Agricultural Workers Industrial Union (AWIU), which was affiliated with the TUUL. It clearly opposed nativist unions and racial discrimination in general. The AWIU's membership card of 1931 reads: "Experience has shown us that in fighting for better conditions we must not only fight against the growers and other bosses, but also against the misleaders and agents of the bosses, the fakers in the reactionary trade union movement." The AWIU welcomed "all those who, regardless of race, color, age, or sex, are ready to fight." Their organizing strategy was to form farm committees that would analyze the working conditions and the demands of each ethnic work force on a given ranch.¹⁹

In California's Imperial Valley in 1930, the new TUUL-AWIU effectively organized farmworkers across racial and nationality lines. The Great Depression had tremendously lowered the prices of agricultural products, leading to reduced agricultural pay, so that Mexican, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, and Chinese workers earned starvation wages under inhumane conditions, while growers pitted racial and nationality groups against one another. Farmhands in the area responded enthusiastically to the call from the organizers, overcoming the barriers that the Mexican Mutual Aid Association maintained between Mexicans and other workers. As union organizing spread from field to field, some eight thousand workers became involved, according to *Rodo Shimbun* of January 15, 1930. (JWA's organ, *Kaikyusen*, was renamed *Rodo Shimbun* [Labor newspaper] in March 1928).

The workers' militant demands were: "union recognition; abolition of the labor contractor system; abolition of piecework; a minimum wage of fifty cents an hour; a fifteen-minute rest period after every two hours of work; abolition of child labor; equal pay for equal work; free ice to be furnished by growers; better housing; better water; and no racial segregation." The Communist Party in tandem with the ILD organized support for a strike.²⁰

With the appearance of this militant labor movement led by Communists, white-supremacist vigilante groups became increasingly aggressive in California. These included the Associated Farmers, a powerful right-wing group of growers in rural communities in the Imperial Valley such as Brawley and El Centro, the Silver Shirts in San Diego, and a revived Ku Klux Klan in the Central Valley. In the Imperial Valley, police and vigilante forces aligned against the strike movement with their sheer numbers and brutality. All outside shipments of food and other supplies for the strikers were blocked. Although the Workers Defense Corps protected union headquarters from tear gas and gun violence, arrests came on April 14, 1930, when the union was holding a meeting to prepare a conference of all agricultural workers in the Imperial Valley.²¹ ILD organizer Frank Spector described that meeting:

One after another the workers spoke, each in their own language. They told of starvation and sickness of their wives and children, of constant wage-cuts, of the long hours of bitter toil under a scorching sun . . . of the readiness to fight under their union's militant guidance. Suddenly the door burst open. Into the hall rushed an armed mob of policemen, deputy sheriffs and privately hired thugs, with revolvers and sawed-off shotguns. . . . Out of this mob stepped Sheriff Gillette, chief gunman of the Imperial Valley bosses. Ordering the workers to throw up their hands . . . [there was] a frenzied search of the 108 workers . . . they were chained in groups. Then the mob, with a brutal display of force, threw them into huge trucks [and] . . . into the El Centro County jail.²²

Nine Communist organizers were sentenced from six to forty-two years in state prisons for violating the Criminal Syndicalism Act. Tetsuji Horiuchi was sent to Folsom prison and chose to be deported after he served over two years of his term.²³ The foreign-borns were especially vulnerable to deportation. Horiuchi was not the first JWA member to be deported. Sadaichi Kenmotsu had been arrested at an antiwar demonstration in front of the San Francisco Chinese Consulate on July 27, 1929. On January 3, 1930,

Einosuke Yamaguchi was arrested at a forum at a small hall on Brooklyn Avenue in Los Angeles. Under the Criminal Syndicalism Act, the police were able to hold anyone in custody without bail for seventy-two hours before filing specific charges.²⁴

At an “organize the unemployed” demonstration spearheaded by the TUUL in March 1930, Yamaguchi, Hakomori, and Fukunaga were arrested and thrown into jail and fined \$500 each. Yamaguchi, who had been an earnest mentor for Karl Yoneda, was eventually ordered to be deported. Just two weeks after the mass arrest in the Imperial Valley, two other Issei Communists, John Isamu Kobayashi and Meikichi Nishimura, were arrested at an antideportation and anti-imperialist demonstration at Battery and Washington Streets in San Francisco that was organized by Japanese and Chinese branches of the ILD. They were also ordered to be deported.²⁵

This series of deportations of radical activists shows that those who contributed to the movement cannot be grasped within the scope of a “becoming Japanese American” narrative. Rather, their existence makes us reconsider their vision of community building through a radical labor movement and racial and economic justice. In other words, without recovering the working-class perspective in the Japanese community in America, it’s not possible to properly assess the Issei’s vulnerability to institutionalized racism and anti-radicalism and their experience of intra-ethnic prejudice.

THE UNEMPLOYED COUNCIL CAMPAIGNS

On July 4, 1930, the National Unemployed Council was organized in Chicago as the result of an escalating struggle for “work or wages,” which proposed relief at full wage rates. In its first iteration this amounted to \$25 per week for the unemployed person and \$5 for each dependent.²⁶ Ripples from the Great Depression also reached the Japanese community in Los Angeles. Unemployed cooks, chauffeurs, and gardeners, who had been let go by formerly well-off white families, filled Little Tokyo employment agencies. Soon, Japanese branches of the National Unemployed Council were established in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York. The Los Angeles branch estimated that there were approximately three thousand unemployed Japanese in Southern California. It asked the Japanese Association (a national organization founded in 1908 and led by the economic elites of Japanese American communities as a proxy for the Japanese government and consulates) and the Sumitomo and the Yokohama

Specie banks to contribute to an unemployment relief fund. They all refused. In contrast, the Tokyo Club, a gambling joint where working-class Japanese hung out, opened its dining room daily to feed jobless Japanese. Dr. Toshio Ichioka, a medical physician, and Dr. Jinkichi Matsuda, a dentist, ex-*Reimeikai* member, and longtime JWA supporter, provided Japanese Unemployed Council members with free services. Intra-ethnic coldness toward Japanese Communists was clear, but members of the Unemployed Council also knew that relying on private charity would not in itself solve their distress.²⁷

Thus, the Unemployed Council began campaigns that demanded distribution of state aid to both US citizens and foreign-borns. On February 25, 1931, the Unemployed Councils of every major city held hunger marches and petition campaigns in support of the Workers' Unemployment Insurance Bill. Early in 1931, the Los Angeles City Council submitted a bond issue to city voters for five million dollars to fund a work-relief program. The *Los Angeles Times*, owned by anti-union Harrison Gray Otis, expressed skepticism about funding the unemployed to engage in public works projects, commenting that Mexicans and other unemployed workers of color were "mostly vagrants profiting from the public purse." Nativist discourse was surging in strength, since immigrant laborers were frequently seen as the cause of job loss among whites in the context of the harsh economic downturn. Charles P. Visel, the city's coordinator of unemployment relief, came to view Mexican repatriation as a one of the more effective means of solving the unemployment problem. On March 23, 1931, the first train of Mexican repatriates left Los Angeles, and many more followed in the next few years.²⁸

Policymakers who wanted to remove foreign-born laborers always had to negotiate with urban nativists and the rural agricultural industry that needed cheap migrant labor. In August 1931, the state legislature in Sacramento passed the Alien Labor Act (Stats. 1931, Ch. 398), which made it illegal for any company doing business with the government to employ "aliens" on public works projects such as building schools, highways, and government offices. The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce withdrew its support for repatriating Mexicans because its ties with rural landowners made it consider the potential economic damage resulting from a decreasing pool of mobile Mexican workers.²⁹ Japanese farm owners feared labor shortages and started an informal "return-to-America" campaign. They attempted to maintain an influx of Japanese workers, despite the 1924 Immigration Act that prevented immigration from Asia, by bringing back Kibei, though it was

the later passage of the Filipino Repatriation Act of 1935 that decisively accelerated the effort to secure Japanese farmhands for Japanese-owned farms.³⁰

POLITICS OF SOLIDARITY AND COMMUNISTS' POSITIONALITY IN THE JAPANESE COMMUNITY

Japanese CPUSA members (most of whom were also JWA members) worked to introduce the idea and practice of solidarity in the struggle for economic and racial justice. *Rodo Shimbun* highlighted the intersection of race and class. Its January 15, 1930, issue drew attention to the exclusion of colored workers in the AFL, exemplified by the racially isolated non-AFL 1929 Japanese launderers' strike in Salt Lake City and the Chinese launderers' strike in San Francisco. It also reported on an African American attendee at the ILD's national convention at Pittsburg who called for fighting against lynching, and a protest against the oppression of Mexican leftist labor activists in Mexico, staged in front of the Mexican embassy in Washington D.C., and the Mexican consulate in Los Angeles on January 4, 1930. *Rodo Shimbun's* coverage of workers of color included the protest against the lynching of Filipinos in Watsonville in early 1930; the protest against the death penalty sentence levied on six organizers of a coalition of blacks and whites that campaigned against lynchings in Georgia; supporting the strike by two thousand Mexican and Filipino farmhands in Bakersfield in November, 1930; reporting on the decreasing number of embroidery jobs for women; demanding full-coverage accident insurance for coal miners of color; expressing solidarity with Filipino strikers at pea farms in San Luis Obispo and Lompoc in February 1931; and criticizing Japanese scabs.³¹

When the Scottsboro youths were arrested in March 1931, major Japanese-language newspapers and the liberal Nisei-oriented Japanese American Citizens League remained indifferent. In contrast, *Rodo Shimbun* avidly protested the injustice of the white-supremacist testimony process. As the historian Rebecca N. Hill has argued, the ILD changed the definition of labor defense by including the defense of working-class African Americans accused of nonpolitical crimes. She reported that the ILD "invoked mass heroic ideals, celebrated a multiethnic working class as a vehicle of liberation for the imprisoned and called for popular mobilization." Karl Yoneda, then the district literature agent of the Southern California ILD, mobilized the sale and distribution of the *Labor Defender*, the national ILD monthly. *Rodo Shimbun* on July 15, 1931, reported the beginning of a

speaking tour by an ILD black organizer, Richard Moor, from San Diego. Eight Issei and Kibei from the ILD Japanese Branch, the Japanese section of the AWIL-TUUL, the JWA, and the newly formed Japanese Proletarian Artists League attended the district-wide ILD conference at Long Beach on October 4, 1931, which mustered support for the Scottsboro nine; Tom Mooney, the socialist labor leader wrongly convicted of the bombing of the prowar parade in San Francisco in 1916; and the Harlan, Kentucky, striking coal miners. Subsequently, Eighty-four organizations decided to hold an indoor mass meeting to widen and deepen the scope of their solidarity at the Philharmonic Auditorium in downtown Los Angeles on October 30. But the police Red Squad blockaded and then attacked the crowd of over three thousand people with blackjacks and tear gas.³²

Rodo Shimbun was fighting an ideological struggle within the Japanese immigrant community, too. They were often at odds with the dual nationalism views of Kyutaro Abiko, the founder and publisher of the daily *Nichibei* (Japanese American news). Abiko hoped that Nisei would be able to assimilate into white America through what George Lipsitz called the “possessive investment in whiteness.”³³ He also believed that this generation was playing a role of improving relations between the country of their birth and the country of their parents’ birth by removing white American “misunderstanding” of both Issei and Japanese living in Japan. *Rodo Shimbun* of February 25, 1930, stated that “it was disappointed by the solution of the Nisei problem proposed by Japanese Association and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce,” which supported a cultural nationalism that is aloof from the labor problem. For the editors of *Rodo Shimbun*, the economic insecurities that Nisei were facing in the form of discrimination in work opportunities were part of a larger racialized labor hierarchy. They were insistent on trying to bring awareness of class struggle to these American-born Japanese. *Rodo Shimbun* of December 10, 1930, in expressing its support of a strike by young reporters at *Rafu Shimpo*, indicated that it saw class conflict within the Japanese American community as inevitable.³⁴

The strike by the fifty employees of *Nichibei* on June 8, 1931 was another sign of the crevasse within the Japanese immigrant community. In June, a group of employees of the *Nichibei* and *Shin Sekai* (New World, one of the most widely read Japanese-language newspapers in Northern and Central California and a less-assimilationist rival of *Nichibei*) came to ask *Rodo Shimbun* workers for advice on how to make management hear their voices. Though they were low paid, the demand of the first *Nichibei* strike was not

for higher wages but for the dismissal of the conservative chief editor, Hachiro Shishimoto. When they achieved this goal, these reporters founded the San Francisco Japanese Press Workers' Union with an Issei reporter and CPUSA member, Yoshio Sakuma, as its head. On the news of the formation of this union, Abiko fired Sakuma. This incited another strike. Abiko fired all strikers and restarted the newspaper with scabs on August 12. When the strikers continued to picket the newspaper, Abiko called for the San Francisco Police Department to disband them. On September 21, Abiko reluctantly accepted the workers' demands, including reinstating Sakuma, and promised the reinstatement of strikers. But he reneged on the reinstatement. Another strike ensued. The San Francisco TUUL gave the striking workers full financial and moral support. Then Abiko fired the reinstated workers. On December 20, thirty of the strikers began publishing a new bilingual daily, *Hokubei Asahi* (North American Sun), which merged with *Shin Sekai* in 1935 and was renamed the *Shin Sekai Asahi* (New World Sun).³⁵

JWA's recruitment of Issei laborers was crucial for solidarity work because it helped their movement to take root in the Japanese American community. When the Southern Pacific railroad laid off fifty Japanese maintenance workers on November 23, 1931, the Los Angeles TUUL, Japanese branch tried to help them get severance pay. Although they could not obtain it, it had them join the Los Angeles Unemployed Council, Japanese branch. When Los Angeles City suddenly dismissed seventy-four Japanese streetcar depot employees on September 15, 1932, the TUUL, Japanese branch helped them put forward their demand for rehiring or one-month severance pay. The workers lost their jobs, but they became members of the Unemployed Council. With the growing number of unemployed laborers in the community, the Japanese branches of the Unemployed Council made six demands of establishment organizations. These were:

1. The elimination of the fees charged by the Japanese Consulate and Japanese Association for draft deferment and other official papers
2. An end to evictions of the unemployed by hotels and boarding houses
3. A moratorium on bank loan payments due from unemployed workers and small farmers
4. The opening of facilities of the Japanese Association, Japanese language schools, Buddhist and Shinto temples for lodging the homeless
5. The distribution of interest earned by Japanese Association "relief funds" earmarked for major disasters in Japan to unemployed workers and small

farmers

6. The distribution of 10 percent of the 1930 one hundred-million-dollar profits of local branches of Yokohama Specie and Sumitomo banks to the unemployed in Japanese communities

Little success ensued. Although some Japanese community buildings and temples donated housing space, those organizations willing to provide cash relief did so on the condition that the Communist group could not represent the unemployed and that the relief was strictly a charity handout. In other words, the establishment community organizations did not acknowledge their contributions were made because of workers' rights or empowerment.³⁶

Two statewide hunger marches organized by the National Unemployed Council starting in various locations and converging on Sacramento in 1932 and 1933 drew many people. Karl Yoneda and Harold Ono, a Kibei, joined the 1932 march. Ono wondered why tangerines were being dumped and pork and potatoes with oil were being buried during the Great Depression. He started attending a study group at Dr. Matsuda's clinic and living at the Japanese Communists' "commune" on West First Street in Little Tokyo in Los Angeles.³⁷ Ono and commune members Ishige, Murata, and Ikeda gave speeches in Sacramento's Japantown on their arrival at the state capital. On January 11, more than ten thousand people gathered in downtown San Francisco with demands for "immediate enactment of unemployment insurance," "repeal of the Criminal Syndicalism Act," and "fight against deportation." While Ono was staying at a Japanese commune in San Francisco, a Nisei newspaper carrier of *Rodo Shimbun*, Toshio Okutsu, got shot in his leg by a neighbor, Motoharu Inoue, who had been hired by the Japanese Consulate for surveillance. Inoue was indicted for inflicting bodily injury but was found not guilty after he testified that the consulate had hired him.³⁸

The relative invisibility of the practice of labor activism in the Japanese communities in the Japanese American media of the time and in later historiography by Japanese Americans owes much to repression from without, but it also comes from within the communities. Lack of Japanese community cooperation in unemployment-relief efforts and the Japanese Consulate's spying on Communists within the Japanese immigrant communities indicates that working-class vulnerability came from many directions.

RED SQUAD POLICE BRUTALITY AND DEPORTATION

While Japanese Communists attempted to get a foothold within the Japanese American communities and maintain their overarching solidarity work, they remained vulnerable to antiradicalism and police brutality directed at the foreign-born. California inflicted plainly punitive hardships on Issei Communists. On January 15, 1932, the Los Angeles Red Squad, led by Capt. William Francis Hynes and local Long Beach police, raided a lecture on the economic crisis held by the Communist Party in Long Beach and arrested about two hundred workers who attended. These mass arrests and subsequent deportation of those Issei who were arrested were one result of state-sanctioned antiradical suppression.³⁹

As historian Frank Donner has revealed in his book on the Red Squads, Captain Hynes, who was head of the Intelligence Bureau of the Los Angeles Police Department and who had appeared before the Fish Committee with a massive 1,500-page testimony and exhibits about the “red menace,” helped guide other cities in setting up their own police intelligence units. He “did not permit jurisdictional barriers to impede” his union busting “outside the city limits.” (Long Beach was not within LA City limits).⁴⁰

Of those arrested in Long Beach, forty-five were charged with “unlawful assembly.” Among them were nine Issei Communists. Although the municipal court judge dismissed the charges against all the defendants, he turned over eleven aliens (including an Indian worker and a Greek activist) to the US Bureau of Immigration for deportation. The Issei were Kaizo Hakomori, a gardener and a JWA founder; Bakunin Fukunaga, a farmworker and AWIU organizer; Kitajiro Yoshioka, a domestic worker and editor of *Proletarian Art*; Keijiro Nagahama, a chauffeur and ILD activist; and five Okinawan gardener-activists—Jun Matayoshi, Yosaburo Miyagi (Yotoku Miyagi’s cousin), Chusei Teruya, Jiro Yamashiro, and Seiei Shima.⁴¹

ILD activists who were also Communist Party organizers got busy obtaining writs of habeas corpus, organizing protests against police brutality and against the violations of the right to assembly, raising bail funds, and appealing deportation orders on the grounds that those who were deported would face long imprisonment on return to Japan. After the court granted these Issei “voluntary departure” to the Soviet Union, they had to raise fare money to get there. The Southern California target for fare money was three thousand dollars total. From 1931 through 1935, eighteen Issei Communist Party members went to the Soviet Union after the ILD communicated with the International Red Aid headquarters in Moscow about receiving them.

Four Issei who were previously charged with violation of the Criminal Syndicalism Act—Horiuchi, Kobayashi, Nishimura, and Yamaguchi—were also ordered to leave the country along with the Long Beach nine. Kenmotsu had been deported on December 16, 1931, from San Francisco. Two gardeners (Noboru Tani and Reiji Taira), a fruit stand worker (George Hisgashi), and a farmworker (Joe Mori) were arrested for union activities and deported between 1933 and 1935. It was a huge setback for the JWA and the multilayered network that they had built through various front organizations.⁴²

It is also important to note that the Soviet Union had its own problems with political repression. Some of those who volunteered to go to the Soviet Union (Hakomori, Fukunaga, Matayoshi, Shima, and Miyagi) trained and taught at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV) and later became victims of Stalin's Great Purge, dying before a firing squad in May 1938.⁴³ This tragic result does not necessarily reduce the significance of the internationalism of these Issei. They had recognized the racial regime in the United States that rendered them unnaturalizable and undeserving aliens. They were able to join with Chinese comrades to fight both American racism and Japanese imperialism. Their internationalism helped them create a vehicle of antiracist labor movement that advocated for workers' rights and unity regardless of race and nationality.

As Karl Yoneda recalled in his 1983 memoir, much time, money, and energy were spent on the deportation cases in 1932. Despite difficult financial conditions, the ILD Japanese Branch was able to recruit two new members for each deportee, increasing Los Angeles branch membership from two hundred to three hundred. They were also able to gather three hundred dollars to publish a Japanese edition of *Labor Defender* and to expand the bimonthly *Rodo Shimbun* into a weekly. To further raise funds for *Rodo Shimbun*, they organized a Japan Night on February 11, 1933, at the Hollywood John Reed Club under the sponsorship of the Japanese Proletarian Artists League, the ILD Japanese branch, and *Rodo Shimbun* readers. The program of the night consisted of proletarian theatrical drama, speeches, and the serving of food. Five hundred guests turned out, many of whom were whites from the Communist Party, labor organizations, and progressive churches.⁴⁴

The event did not end without disturbance. Hynes's Red Squad raided the gathering and mutilated David Alfaro Siqueiros's mural, which was in the auditorium, and paintings of the nine Scottsboro youths. Historian Michael Denning has discussed John Reed clubs as important sites of leftist cultural

production. At this Hollywood branch, activists had mounted an exhibition of works by black painters to benefit the Scottsboro defendants and sponsored lectures by Mexican muralist Siqueiros. The authorities feared not the artwork in itself but the way in which these images at this particular social location demonstrated the unity of all workers of color.⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

The 1920s and 1930s saw the creation of the Communist-led JWA as a vehicle of multiracial and multiethnic labor organizing. For Japanese workers in America, who had been excluded by the AFL, this was a major chance to push forward the struggle for racial and economic justice. In contrast to the visible Japanese community that clung to an Americanization effort, many Japanese and Okinawan leftists undertook direct confrontation with racial capitalism. As they worked with Chinese organizers, discussed “the Negro problem in the United States,” denounced the global reach of racial capitalism, criticized the two empires of Japan and the United States, and organized integrated unions they developed a politics of solidarity and internationalism.

During what the Comintern called the Third Period, beginning in 1928 and featuring mass working-class radicalization, the tightly networked CPUSA and front organizations with their ethnic sections embodied the width and depth of the multiracial and multiethnic movement. TUUL-AWIU and its California branch, played a major role in organizing farmworkers when New Deal labor legislation excluded them. The racialization of Asian immigrants as unassimilable and unnaturalizable aliens enabled the commercialized agricultural industry of California to include them in their pool of cheap migrant farmworkers of color. Deprived of socioeconomic security, these farmhands remained vulnerable to the farm labor market’s conservative open shop system that left room for nonunion workforce and sometimes for scabs to be introduced. They were also vulnerable to the antiradical, anti-foreign-born state violence sanctioned by the US deportation regime. The 1930 Imperial Valley striking farmworker mass arrests and the 1932 Long Beach Communist lecture mass arrest epitomize the extent of the oppression.

In other words, some Issei had already experienced the danger of statelessness before the United States government presented them with Question 28 of the loyalty review during the World War II internment. (Question 28 asked individuals to swear unqualified allegiance to the United

States and forswear any allegiance to the emperor of Japan. Japanese immigrants were barred from becoming US citizens on the basis of racial exclusion, so renouncing their only citizenship would leave them stateless). The existence of those Issei Communists, who were deported from the United States but chose to live in the Soviet Union rather than Japan because of its persecution of Communists, points to the significance of class-based struggle and the problem of global capitalism and Japanese and American imperialism. Rather than the liberal narrative of “becoming Japanese American,” with a narrative of “becoming internationalist subjects,” they subjectively formed what Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker see as the planetary consciousness of the proletariat.⁴⁶ What was essential was that these often invisible radical Issei and their comrades were able to generate a broad critique that was also applicable to oppression of other groups and other forms.

NOTES

¹ I borrow the term “un-becoming” from historian Erica Lee, who suggested it in a panel titled “New Directions in Asian American History” at the 2015 annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians. The historical narrative norm has considered the achievement of full citizenship as the ultimate goal. “Un-becoming” means to deconstruct the norm and allow other narratives to emerge. Using the term “un-becoming” allows me to shed light on the Japanese deportees, who were a forgotten but significant part of the internationalist labor movement. For some remarkable examples of scholarship on global radicalism and internationalism, see George Lipsitz, “Abolition Democracy and Global Justice,” *Comparative American Studies* 2, no. 3 (2004): 271–86; Maia Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia: How the Ghadar Movement Charted Global Radicalism and Attempted to Overthrow the British Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); and Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Verso, 1998).

² The “middleman ethnic minority” points to a particular phase in ethnic business development, in which immigrant business owners begin to serve the majority population as well as their ethnic clientele. For example, Japanese Americans opened a wholesale produce market in downtown Los Angeles, which served the white population as well.

³ Criticism of Asian Americans’ complicity in a power structure that featured racism toward blacks and white supremacy has emerged as a significant theme in Asian American history. The relationship between upper- and middle-class Japanese immigrant communities and whites in the pre-World War II period foreshadows the model-minority myth. See Ellen D. Wu, *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013). Historian Yuji Ichioka was critical of the dual nationalism upheld by Japanese American community leaders. See Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885–1924* (New York: Free Press, 1988), 253, 248–50.

⁴ Nicholas De Genova and Nathalie Peutz, eds., *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 9. See also Daniel Kanstroom, *Deportation Nation: Outsiders in American History* (Cambridge,

MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

⁵ Laura Briggs and some other scholars use “transnationalism” with an implication of internationalist politics. See Laura Briggs, Gladys McCormick, and J. T. Way, “Transnationalism: A Category of Analysis,” *American Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (September 2008): 625–48.

⁶ For an analysis of the politics of multiracial identity, see Jungmiwha Suk Bullock, “Multiracial Politics or the Politics of Being Multiracial?: Racial Theory, Civic Engagement, and Socio-Political Participation in a Contemporary Society,” PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2010. As for the similar use of the term “multiracial” to show the composition of local residents, work force, and movement builders, see Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006); Mark Wild, *Street Meeting: Multiethnic Neighborhoods in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008); and David M. Struthers, *The World in a City: Multiethnic Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2019).

⁷ Josephine Fowler, *Japanese and Chinese Immigrant Activists: Organizing in American and International Communist Movements, 1919–1933* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007), esp. chaps. 1, 2, and 8; Dorothy Ray Healey and Maurice Isserman, *California Red: A Life in the American Communist Party* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990). For Japanese scholars’ examination of the transnational network of Japanese Communists, see Iori Kurokawa, *Teikoku ni kosuru shakai undo: Daiichiji Nihon Kyosanto no shiso to undo* [Social movement against an empire: The thought and movement of the first Japanese Communist Party] (Tokyo: Yushisha, 2014); Shoki Comintern to Higashi Asia Kenkyukai (Study group on the early Comintern and East Asia), ed., *Shoki Comintern to Higashi Asia* [The early Comintern and East Asia] (Tokyo: Fuji shuppan, 2007); and Akito Yamauchi, *Shoki Comintern to zaigai nihonjin shakaishugisha: Ekkyo suru Network* [The early Comintern and overseas Japanese socialists] (Kyoto: Minerva shobo, 2009).

⁸ Kurashige, *Shifting Grounds of Race*, 77–90.

⁹ For further details of the genealogy of the early socialist group derived from Shusui Kotoku and Sen Katayama, the historical consciousness of struggle that Okinawan immigrants brought, and the distinctive politicization of Kibei, including Karl Yoneda, Paul Kochi, and Harold Ono, see Yushi Yamazaki, “Radical Crossings: From Peasant Rebellions to Internationalist Multiracial Labor Organizing among Japanese Immigrant Communities in Hawaii and California, 1885–1935” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2015), chaps. 4, 5, and 6.

¹⁰ “The Program of the Japanese Workers’ Association,” January 10, 1925, Karl Goso Yoneda Papers, Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA (hereafter KGYP), box 1, folder 11; *Rafu Shimpo*, January 10, 1925. KGYP holds various contemporary primary sources including newspapers, leaflets, and resolutions produced by movement builders so that researchers need not rely solely on Yoneda’s autobiography, *Ganbatte* for information on who built the movement and how.

¹¹ *Kaikyusen*, September 5, 1926, KGYP, box 47, folder 2; Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States* (New York: International Publisher, 1991), 10:148.

¹² *Kaikyusen*, August 5, 1927, KGYP, box 47, folder 2; Norio Tamura, “Shimibun ‘Kaikyusen’ to Kenmochi Sadaichi,” *Tokyo Keizai Daigaku jinbun shizen kagaku ronbunshu*, no. 122 (October 2006): 72–73; Karl Goso Yoneda, *Ganbatte: Sixty-Year Struggle of a Kibei Worker* (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1983), 18–19; Ichioka, *Issei*, 253.

¹³ Etsuta Tan to Goso Yoneda, June 1, 1925, KGYP, box 34, folder 10; Naoki Monna, *Minshu Journalism no rekishi* [History of popular journalism] (Tokyo: San'ichi shobo, 1983), chap. 7; Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 14–15.

¹⁴ Valerie J. Matsumoto, *Farming the Home Place: A Japanese American Community in California, 1919–1982* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 11, 23; Noritaka Yagasaki, *Imin Nogyo: California no Nihonjin Imin Shakai* [Immigrant agriculture: Japanese immigrant society in California] (Tokyo: Kokon Shoin, 1993); Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 93–95; For a more detailed history of California agriculture, see John Modell, *The Economics and Politics of Racial Accommodation: The Japanese of Los Angeles, 1900–1942* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1977); Cletus E. Daniel, *Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers, 1870–1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); Suchen Chan, *This Bitter-Sweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860–1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Devra Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton, and the New Deal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); and Matt Garcia, *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900–1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

¹⁵ Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 20, 23. For the details and the subtlety of the 1903 Oxnard beet strike, see Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Line: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), chap. 7.

¹⁶ Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 23–27.

¹⁷ Fowler, *Japanese and Chinese Immigrant Activists*, 53–59; Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 27.

¹⁸ Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 27; ILD mass-meeting flyer (January 19, 1929), KGYP, box 1, folder 11.

¹⁹ AWIU's membership card of 1931, KGYP, box 1, folder 1; Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 30, 32.

²⁰ *Daily Worker*, January 6, 1930; *Rodo Shimbun*, January 15, 1930, KGYP, box 4, folder 3. According to *Rodo Shimbun*, June 25, 1930, the number of workers involved was fifteen thousand. Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 38; Vivian McGuckin Raineri, *The Red Angel: The Life and Times of Elaine Black Yoneda* (New York: International Publishers, 1991), 15–16; Devra Anne Weber, “The Organizing of Mexican Agricultural Workers: Imperial Valley and Los Angeles, 1928–34; An Oral History Approach,” *Aztlan* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1972): 307–47. The strike did not happen because arrests were made before it could actually begin.

²¹ John H. M. Laslett, *Sunshine Was Never Enough: Los Angeles Workers, 1880–2010* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 110–11; Fraser M. Ottanelli, *The Communist Party of the United States: From Depression to World War II* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 25.

²² *Labor Defender* article, cited in Raineri, *Red Angel*, 17.

²³ Leaflet of a mass meeting on April 11, 1931, “Release the Imperial Valley prisoners!” KGYP, box 1, folder 7.

²⁴ Japanese leaflets “Stop Deportation Order against Comrade Kenmotsu!” issued by CPUSA District 13, Los Angeles Branch (December 21, 1929) and “Defend Comrades Kenmotsu and Fujii, who are facing deportation,” issued by CPUSA District 13, San Francisco Branch (December 22, 1929), KGYP, box 1, folder 11; Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 38–9; Raineri, *Red Angel*, 17.

²⁵ Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 30–39.

²⁶ Karl Yoneda's 1930 and 1931 membership cards for the Unemployed Council, KGYP, box 1, folder 11; Chris Wright, “Popular Radicalism in the 1930s: The History of the Workers' Unemployment Insurance Bill,” *Class, Race and Corporate Power* 6, no. 1 (2018),

Digital Commons of Florida International University, <https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/classracecorporatpower/vol6/iss1/4/>, accessed January 11, 2020.

²⁷ Japanese leaflet “Appeal to 3,000 Unemployed Japanese in Los Angeles Area,” issued by the Unemployed Council, Los Angeles Branch (November 22, 1931), KGYP, box 1, folder 11; Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 37, 40.

²⁸ Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 40–42; Wright, “Popular Radicalism in the 1930s”; Laslett, *Sunshine Was Never Enough*, 110; George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), chap. 10.

²⁹ Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican America*, 211–15. Sanchez astutely points out, “The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, chaired by George Clements, pulled back from their initial support of repatriation and called on political officials to restore calm in the Mexican community. The ties between local urban industrialists and rural landowners in the San Joaquin Valley and Imperial Valley were strong, so despite widespread unemployment in the city, the business community was adamant about protecting the large pool of Mexican workers. What business leaders wanted was an orderly program that would lessen the burden on local welfare agencies without disturbing the availability of Mexican workers needed to complete the harvest at minimal wages” (215).

³⁰ Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 119.

³¹ *Rodo Shimbun*, January 10, 1930; January 15, 1930; February 10, 1930; February 25, 1930; March 10, 1930; May 25, 1930; June 25, 1930; and November 25, 1930, KGYP, box 4, folder 3; *Rodo Shimbun*, January 10, 1931; January 25, 1931; and May 1, 1931, KGYP, box 4, folder 4.

³² *Rodo Shimbun*, May 15, 1931; June 15, 1931; and July 15, 1931, KGYP, box 4, folder 4; Rebecca N. Hill, *Anti-Lynching and Labor Defense in US Radical History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 209–11; Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 43–45.

³³ For a definition of “possessive investment in whiteness,” see George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), vii–viii. Lipsitz deftly explains that “white supremacy is . . . a system for protecting the privileges of whites by denying communities of color opportunities for asset accumulation and upward mobility . . . nonwhite people can become active agents of white supremacy as well as passive participants in its hierarchies and rewards. One way of becoming an insider is by participating in the exclusion of other outsiders.” The economic elites of the Japanese American community tended to emphasize their economic ascendancy in order to differentiate themselves from other Asian immigrants.

³⁴ *Rodo Shimbun*, January 15, 1930; February 25, 1930; and December 10, 1930, KGYP, box 4, folder 3; *Rodo Shimbun*, January 10, 1931, KGYP, box 4, folder 4.

³⁵ Pictures of strikers and a chronological table of the strike in KGYP, box 1, folder 8; Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 46–47.

³⁶ Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 47, 54–55.

³⁷ Leaflet “Support the 1932 California State Hunger March,” KGYP, box 1, folder 12; Photo of participants in the 1932 hunger march taken in Fresno, KGYP, box 1, folder 1; Tomoyasu Takekuni, *Little Tokyo monogatari: Nikkei Communists to sono shisontachi* [Little Tokyo story: Japanese Communists and their descendants](Osaka: Shiki shobo, 1978), 31–72.

³⁸ Takekuni, *Little Tokyo monogatari*, 73–78; Harold Ono probably misremembered the date (February 25) of the shooting in *Little Tokyo monogatari*. A contemporary leaflet “Protest Resolution against Japanese Imperialism” (December 1932) addressed to Japanese Prime Minister Saito and the Japanese Consulate in San Francisco is probably more accurate.

Leaflets “Come Open-Air Unemployed Meeting! February 4, 1932!” and “Japanese Workers! Come and Hear the State Hunger March Report!” (March 2, 1932). All leaflets referred to here are in KGYP, box 1, folder 12.

³⁹ An ILD leaflet “Fight against Police Brutality! Demonstrate against Starvation on Feb. 4!” (February 1932) has some detail on the Long Beach incident, KGYP, box 1, folder 12; Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 49–52; Okinawa Club of America, *History of the Okinawans in North America*, trans. Ben Kobashigawa (Los Angeles: Asian American Studies Center, University of California, Los Angeles, 1988), 38–41.

⁴⁰ Frank Donner, *Protectors of Privilege: Red Squads and Police Repression in Urban America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 59–60.

⁴¹ An ILD leaflet “Fight against Police Brutality! Demonstrate against Starvation on Feb. 4!” (February 1932), KGYP, box 1, folder 12; Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 49–52; Okinawa Club of America, *History of the Okinawans in North America*, 38–41.

⁴² Karl Yoneda, “List of Deportees,” KGYP, box 1, folder 7; An ILD leaflet calling for donations, “11 Workers to be Deported: \$3,000 Needed by the End of November,” KGYP, box 1, folder 12; Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 50–51.

⁴³ Shun’ichi Kobayashi and Akira Kato, *Yami no otoko: Nosaka Sanzo no hyakunen* [Man in the dark: A hundred years of Sanzo Nosaka] (Tokyo: Bungei shunju, 1993), 117–44; Tetsuro Kato, *Mosukuwa de shukusei sareta Nihonjin: Sanjunendai Kyosanto to Kunisaki Teido, Yamamoto Kenzo no higeki* [Japanese purged in Moscow: The Japanese Communist Party in the 1930s and the tragedy of Teido Kunisaki and Kenzo Yamamoto] (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1994), 80, 286–301.

⁴⁴ Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 52–53. According to Harold Ono, Japan Night was held once a year for at least five years in a row. Takekuni, *Little Tokyo monogatari*, 85–88.

⁴⁵ Yoneda, *Ganbatte*, 44, 56–57. The Japanese Proletarian Artists League publication, whose name changed from *Puroretaria Geijutsu* [Proletarian art] to *Hataraku Hito* [Workingman] in 1933, was a “cultural front” where many Japanese Communists expressed their life and hope through Japanese-style poems, such as tanka and haiku, and other forms of expression; Raineri, *Red Angel*, 44–45; Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 1997), 65, 209, 486n24, 510n20.

⁴⁶ “[The proletariat] was planetary in its origins, its motions, and its consciousness.” Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), 332–33.