

tendency here to neglect one important factor: the extent to which local elites, either unofficially or through local government machinery, were willing to provide emergency relief. This may have been a significant variable which helps explain the geographical distribution of food riots and which Gailus has underestimated.

Nevertheless, *Strasse und Brot* is an interesting book, one which belongs in any good collection of nineteenth-century social history and which specialists on the German Revolution of 1848–1849 will ignore at their peril.

*Richard Tilly*

MARSLAND, STEPHEN E. *The Birth of the Japanese Labor Movement. Takano Fusatarō and the Rōdō Kumiai Kiseikai.* University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu 1989. ix, 271 pp. \$ 27.00.

In the field of Japanese labor history, comparatively little has been written in languages other than Japanese. New publications in English are therefore to be welcomed, and as far as this latest English language addition to the field is concerned, one receives a strong impression that talent and hard work has gone into it, especially when one learns that the author is not a specialist in the field, but rather is active within the business world. It is unfortunately the case, however, that as a work of research, the book cannot be evaluated very highly. This review will clarify the reasons for such a conclusion.

Of the book's 280 pages, the text accounts for only 157 pages; the rest is taken up with appendixes, notes, bibliography and index. The text is made up of eight chapters: (1) The Setting, (2) Takano Fusataro, (3) Birth of the Labor Movement, (4) The Metalworkers' Union, (5) Growth of the Labor Movement, (6) The Turning Point, (7) Crisis and Collapse, (8) Legacy of the Movement.

The first chapter, The Setting, which accounts for fully one third of the entire text, gives a general description of Japanese politics, law, economics, labor markets, labor relations and the labor movement. Just from a reading of this one chapter, it is clear that the author's knowledge of Japanese history is neither very wide nor his understanding very deep.

The second chapter describes the life and activities of Takano Fusataro, the founder of the Japanese trade-union movement, but already here in his discussion of this individual whom he considers to be so significant, the author makes a number of errors in connection with the elementary but vital details – the when, where and why – of Takano's biography. For example, Takano's date of birth, the very beginning of any biographical consideration, is given incorrectly. Takano Fusataro was born on 6 January 1869, and not on 24 November 1868. This simple error results from the author's ignorance of the fact that the lunar calendar was in use in Japan until 1872. Marsland also implies that Takano moved from his birthplace, Nagasaki, directly to Yokohama where he spent his youth, but this is his own invention. In fact, in 1877 the Takano family moved to Tokyo where young Fusataro lived until he finished higher elementary school in 1882 and went to work for his uncle in Yokohama.

The author writes that “from all indications his family was poor”, but this statement is without foundation. The reason why Takano’s father moved the family to Tokyo was not, as Marsland presumes, owing to financial pressures, but because his uncle, who ran a successful shipping agency in Yokohama for the Mitsubishi Steamship Company, wanted to expand his business and invited Fusataro’s father to come up to Tokyo to manage the new venture. Opening a shipping agency and inn in downtown Tokyo was hardly possible for a poor family.

Marsland emphasizes the extreme poverty of the Takano family in a number of other places, because he is fixated on the idea that it was his family’s experience of poverty that motivated Takano’s interest in the trade-union movement. But other statements in the book contradict this emphasis on the family’s poverty. For instance, he describes how, after graduating from higher elementary school, Takano went on to study at Yokohama Commercial School where he received a level of higher education equivalent to today’s university standards. This is quite correct. At a time when only 40% of children attended elementary school, and then for an average of only some two years, Takano attended elementary school for eight years and then went to the Yokohama Commercial School. Yet Marsland portrays Takano as the son of a poor family, a young man who suffered working long hours for low wages. This kind of *idée fixe* is prevalent throughout the book and is evident again in the author’s treatment of industrial disputes and the labor movement which are all interpreted one-sidedly as responses to economic deprivation.

Marsland also errs in his description of the historical circumstances which led a group of Japanese in San Francisco to form a study group on labor issue, the Friends of Labor. It was founded in 1891 and not the previous year as Marsland states. He also had Takano joining the Friends after it was founded, whereas in fact he was himself a founder.

The reason why such errors are so numerous in this book is because in his second chapter, Marsland borrows very heavily from a paper written by Prof. Mikio Sumiya. Sumiya’s paper provides us a number of valuable source material which had been kept in the possession of Fusataro’s brother Iwasaburo, the first director of the Ohara Institute. And it mainly based on some of the correspondence from S. Gompers to Fusataro, but on little other source material or research papers. Further it abounds in careless errors. Although cognizant of the existence of letters which passed between the Takano brothers and of important sources such as Fusataro’s diary, Marsland used none of these material.

The author’s discussion of the Japanese trade-union movement in chapters three through seven, focusing on the Metalworkers’ Union, is detailed to a degree, unmatched in previous English language studies. Here too Marsland is dependent to a considerable extent on previously published studies by Japanese scholars. In itself, of course this is not to be criticized. Indeed he has read those studies accurately and the way he marshals them is commendable, but what is hardly fair is the fact that he often conceals them his sources and writes as if he had actually discovered the source material himself. For example, he borrows from Prof. Makoto Ikeda’s studies on the working-class activists in Kiseikai, but does not credit Ikeda. Some of the statistical data charts in the book are clearly those of Prof. Tsutomu Hyodo who collated them from a great many sources, but who is also uncredited. To be fair to Marsland, however, he does not depend entirely on secondary sources and does

seem to have checked his sources to some extent, but it should also be mentioned that the Japanese studies that he quotes are mostly of pre-1970 vintage; few are of more recent origin.

The last chapter deals very briefly with Takano's death and the Japanese labor movement thereafter. Focussing on what he claims to be the two main characteristics of the Japanese trade-union movement – "enterprise unionism" and the shop, or workplace, as "the basic organizational unit", he argues that these characteristics have arisen because Japanese workers are not "job or craft conscious", but rather, are strongly "shop conscious". This interpretation predates Marsland's book and it is certainly an important one. Marsland gives five rather unconvincing reasons to explain why Japanese workers are "shop conscious".

One of the most useful contributions non-Japanese researchers can make to the field of Japanese labor history is a comparative viewpoint which involves the situation in their own countries. They are also able to dig up material relevant to the labor movement which exists outside Japan and develop their own research accordingly. The fact that Takano was appointed an official organizer for the American Federation of Labor testifies to the considerable American influences on the early Japanese labor movement. Rather than merely adducing the work of Japanese historians, one would like to see American researchers, for example, draw on American labor history research which might show in what ways Takano and his colleagues were or were not influenced by the American labor movement. In this way they would build up their own source materials, analysis of which would help us in Japan to fill in the gap in our own knowledge. For example, there are various questions which still need to be answered regarding Takano's relationship with the Knights of Labor and the A.F. of L. or the great influence on Takano's theoretical idea of the American economist George Gunton. Researchers in America are best placed to answer these questions. Unfortunately, on this point too Marsland's book fails to come up to one's expectations. In fact, even when touching on matters relating to American labor history, he simply seems to quote Japanese scholars. This is evident from the fact that instead of Ira Steward, the Boston machinist and organizer of the Right Hour Movement who had a great influence on George Gunton, Marsland's text has Aira Steward, a clear case of a transliteration from the Japanese *katakana* rendering of the name.

Nearly a quarter of the book is taken up by appendixes which contain translations of the rules and constitutions of early Japanese labor organizations. These will no doubt be of some interest to western readers, but it is questionable to what extent these rules and constitutions were actually followed and abided by. It is certainly difficult to gain any insight into the realities of the Japanese trade-union movement from these documents alone. They are touched upon to some extent in the course of the text, but one would like to have seen more rigorous commentary on the sources themselves.

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