

Introduction

Many Marxists, revolutionaries from different lands, came to the United States. They participated in and made significant contributions to the great political and class struggles in their day. Their arrival in this country goes back to the Marxists who came here prior to the Civil War. An outstanding figure among this illustrious group who came to these shores nearly a century ago was the Japanese Marxist—Sen Katayama.

He first arrived in the United States at the age of 25 (in 1884) and remained for a decade, returning later to participate in many struggles and in helping build a Marxist party. While here his indefatigable energy took him to all sections of the country where he organized Japanese workers and participated in the movement generally. He experienced the vicious racism practiced against Asians, which contributed to his first-hand knowledge of the racist policies pursued against the Black population.

A founder of the Communist Party of Japan, he was also the builder of its trade union movement. In this country he was, at first, a member of the Socialist party. He was active in the left-wing of the party, which served as the basis for the organization of a Communist Party. He then participated in the formation of the Communist Party, U.S.A. During his final years he was a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

Sen Katayama was a foremost fighter against Japanese and U.S. imperialism. In line with these aims, Katayama's whole life was an uncompromising struggle against opportunism, whether it came from the "Left" or the Right. Consequently he opposed the Lovestone Right-opportunistic clique which served U.S. capitalism in the guise of Marxism-Leninism and which later sold out to U.S. imperialism. He fought Trotskyism and all variants of "Leftism," which did precisely the same thing under a different cover. He opposed bourgeois nationalism and championed the cause of working-class internationalism. He was strongly for the unity of the Communist Party and the unity of the international Communist movement. These distinctive features marked the life

of this stalwart revolutionist.

The article by Karl G. Yoneda deals with the rich experiences and lessons of Sen Katayama's life, and his contribution to the history of the CPUSA. It helps further the understanding of the struggle against opportunism and bourgeois nationalism, and strengthens the unity of the Marxist-Leninist party.

History Commission, CPUSA

The Heritage of Sen Katayama

International Heritage

Sen Katayama's contributions to the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary movement in the United States, Mexico, Canada and Japan as well as to the oppressed peoples in colonial and semi-colonial countries are manifold and almost beyond imagination.

He is remembered by veterans of the movement in North America, Europe and Asia as a staunch anti-war fighter since 1900 and later as one of the founders and co-workers of the Communist Parties of the USA, Mexico and Canada. At the same time, he is renowned in Japan as "the father of Japan's labor movement," one of the organizers of the Communist Party of Japan, and as an advisor to the oppressed peoples in Asia, Africa and other sections of the world.

This article is intended to give an insight into Katayama's unique participation, guidance and leadership in the world revolutionary movement. It is full of experiences and lessons which should be known and shared by all, in order to illuminate our path to socialism.

Sen Katayama was born on December 3, 1859, on a farm in the village of Hadeki, Okayama Prefecture, Japan. For generations male members of his family were village headmen, but his father abandoned family, farm and position to become a Buddhist priest.

From the 8th century, when serfs' resistance to slave conditions is first recorded, Japan had numerous peasant uprisings and "rice riots." No mention of specific women's actions is made until 1866, when housewives of the Nishinomiya ghetto near Kobe started one of the biggest "rice riots," demolishing rice warehouses, pawnshops, demanding lower rice prices, etc.—a movement which spread to Osaka and Tokyo.

Katayama's birthplace and adjacent villages were no exceptions to the ferment. Major demands were for lower taxes and abolition of feudal regulations, including the village headman system. During a revolt in 1873, his brother was removed as village headman and imprisoned for participating in the uprising. His uncle was also ar-

rested and fined.

This left its mark on the young Katayama, who was then 14 years old and had to become the sole support for his mother and himself. He worked as a wood chopper, farm-helper, straw product maker and charcoal producer. At the same time, having an overpowering desire to attain a formal education, he attended classes in the village private school and became a grammar school teacher at the age of 18.

Four years later he went to Tokyo to acquire a higher education. There, while working as a printer under appalling conditions of exploitation, he continued his studies. In later years, his experiences as a farm worker and printer were to give Katayama a keen understanding of the problems faced by workers.

In 1884 his unquenched thirst for knowledge took him across the Pacific to San Francisco with only a Mexican silver dollar in his pocket. While studying English for three years, he worked as a houseboy, cook, dishwasher, farm laborer and at sundry other jobs.

In 1887 Katayama enrolled in the Oakland Hopkins Academy to take preparatory college entrance courses, staying there only 11 months because of white students' continuous racist taunts. The next year found him entering Maryville College in Tennessee, the university's first Japanese student. While in Maryville he was to witness for the first time "the harsh discrimination against the Negroes by the white people as if it was a natural thing to do," as he later wrote. From Tennessee, he went to Grinnell College, Iowa, where he received his B.A. and M.A. degrees. All his papers bore the name "Sen Joseph Katayama."

After reading *The Life of Lassalle* he began to take some interest in socialism, but went on to study at Andover Theological Seminary, transferring then to Yale and getting his B.D. degree in 1895. That summer Katayama journeyed to England to gain personal experience in management of Christian charitable social work, a path he decided to follow upon return to his birthplace.

First Trade Union Organized in Japan

After studying and working in the U.S. for more than 12 years Sen Katayama returned to Japan in 1896. He found that Japan's military victory in the Sino-Japan War (1894-95) had made Japan not only the imperial ruler of Korea and Formosa but a new upcoming capitalist nation, with intolerable working conditions in the iron,

machine, textile and shipbuilding factories that had mushroomed throughout the land.

He started Kingsley Hall in Tokyo, patterned upon observations made in England, and also set up an orientation program for those desirous of migrating to the U.S. Many Issei (Japan born) who came here in that period were briefed by him.

However, sensing the urgency of organizing workers, Katayama, together with newspaperman F. Takano, tailor H. Sawada and shoemaker T. Jo, formed the Brotherhood of Labor in 1897. Significantly, the latter three and several others had headed a group in San Francisco in 1890 which had studied the American Federation of Labor program so they could establish unions in Japan.

The first trade union in Japan came into being on December 1, 1897, when over 1,100 iron workers were formally organized into the Iron Workers Union with Katayama elected its paid secretary. He began to publish a monthly, *Labor World*, in Japanese and English simultaneously. The tone and spirit of the Japanese labor movement at that time was reflected in his papers statement of principles:

“The people are silent. I will be the advocate of this silence. I will speak for the dumb; I will speak for the despairing silent ones; I will interpret stammering; I will interpret the grumblings, murmurings, the tumults of the crowds, the complaints, the cries of men who have been so degraded by suffering and ignorance that they have no strength to voice their wrongs. I will be the word of the people. I will be the bleeding mouth from which the gag has been snatched. I will say everything.”
(Sen Katayama, *The Labor Movement in Japan*, p. 39, Chicago, 1918.)

The labor movement in Japan made tremendous strides; many unions were organized and countless strikes conducted with the help and encouragement of Katayama. The lasting title “Father of the Japanese Labor Movement” was bestowed on him as a result of these activities.

Public Peace Police Law Enacted

The year 1900 was to be one of epoch-making history in imperial Japan. Katayama’s knowledge of and activity in Japan’s growing socialist and labor movement led to his selection to be on the

International Bureau of the Second International headquartered in Brussels. His articles in the *Labor World* (later *Socialism*) were reprinted in various socialist publications in France, Germany, Spain and England; the newspaper reached such faraway places as South Africa.

This was also the year in which Japan became an active participant, on an equal footing with the U.S., Great Britain, France, Germany, etc., in suppressing the Boxer Rebellion. It was the year in which Japan's repressive "Public Peace Police Law" (PPPL) was enacted. The PPPL outlawed all strikes, limited trade union functions and prohibited any political activity by government employees, soldiers, women and minors. The police had absolute power to disperse any public gathering or demonstration and to stop any speech.

Mine workers' circumvention of this law is described by Katayama:

"Miners in Japan have been historically considered the toughest kind of workers, so they really could defy the Public Peace Police Law. Our agitators could more readily gain access to them than to other factory, railway or iron workers. This is one of the reasons why we were able to organize the miners in the Asio Copper Mines during the late Russo-Japan War. Our miners live in congested barrack-like rows of sheds built by the mining company. They make a little community of their own, know each other and when working underground they can talk to each other freely on whatever subject they choose." (*Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.)

The very oppressive nature of the PPPL made Katayama and his associates realize the urgent need for political action. The Universal Suffrage League became the instrument in the struggle to abolish the Police Law. In the meantime, the Socialism Studies Circle, formed in 1898 under the leadership of Katayama, K. Kawakami, S. Kotoku, L. Abe and 10 others, emerged as the Social Democratic Party in 1901 but was immediately disbanded by government edict. In spite of the ban, Katayama and others soon applied for permission to form the Social Commoners' Party. The request was denied, but Katayama's confidence in the working class did not falter:

‘My personal acquaintance with many workers and their families brought many pleasant experiences and also support for the socialist movement long after the union died and they were no longer members of it. This being the case, our socialist movement never lost sight of labor’s cause and of the interest of the working class. They are naturally inclined to work out problems in practice, which as a rule is a rather slow process. Consequently, I never went to extremes in view or in tactics, but our movement was not dominated by intellectualism.’ (*Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.)

On May 18, 1903, a personal tragedy struck Katayama—Fude, his wife of 7 years, died suddenly, leaving two small children. “It was a most unfortunate occurrence for the movement,” according to an item in *Socialism*. However, he continued and even intensified his activities, editing the monthly, writing a book *Our Socialism*, and making a national speaking tour on socialism. In Tokyo on October 8, 1903, he spoke at the very first Japan anti-war mass meeting to protest the build-up of military agitation against Russia.

When several Tokyo socialists, headed by S. Kotoku and T. Sakai began to publish an anti-war weekly, *Heimin (Commoner)*, in November 1903, Katayama’s contributions were many:

“They also started to study socialism seriously, meeting every week at the headquarters of *Heimin*. Soon several ladies joined in the work, and meetings for socialist women were held once a month, separately, because ladies are prohibited from attending any political meeting.... There were then many women enlisted in the ranks of socialism.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.)

International Anti-War Leader

The call for delegates to the Sixth Congress of the Second International, scheduled for August 1904 in Amsterdam, reached Japan December 1903. Japanese socialist groups, considering Katayama to be the most qualified among them, designated him as their representative.

On the way to Amsterdam, Katayama arrived in Seattle in January 1904. There he met not only with local Japanese socialists, but leaders of the Socialist Party of America (SPA), and under its auspices plunged into a speaking tour on “The Socialist and the Anti-War Movements in Japan.” While audiences on the Pacific Coast

were predominantly Japanese workers, meeting halls everywhere were packed; the response was beyond expectations; his anti-war message was especially well received. He spoke not only in Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles, but also in Portland, Sacramento, Oakland, Pasadena, Houston, Chicago, Kirkwood and Milwaukee. In the first three cities there also were formed the Japanese Socialist Party, Japanese Socialist Association and Socialism Study Club, respectively.

After the official declaration of the Russo-Japan War on February 10, 1904, Lenin wrote "An Appeal to the Russian Proletariat" which ended with the slogan "Long Live the Japanese Social Democrats Who Are Protesting the War!"

While Katayama was still on tour in the U.S. his comrades in Japan sent solidarity greetings to the Russian Social Democratic Party on March 20, 1904:

"Your government and our government have been plunged into fighting... to satisfy their imperialistic desires, but to socialists of both countries there is no barrier of race, territory or nationality. We are all comrades, brothers and sisters, and have no reason to fight each other. Your enemy is not the Japanese people but our militarism and so-called patriotism. Nor is our enemy the Russian people, but your militarism and so-called patriotism.... We socialists must fight a brave battle against them..." (*Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.)

The Russian comrades' reply appeared in the May 14, 1904 *Iskra*:

"This manifesto is a document of historic significance. If we Russian Social Democrats know only too well with what difficulties we are confronted in time of war, when the whole machinery of government is working to the utmost to excite patriotism... we must bear in mind that far more difficult and embarrassing is the position of our Japanese comrades, who, at the moment when national feeling was at its highest pitch, extended their hands to us... What is important for us is the feeling of solidarity which the Japanese comrades have expressed in their message to us. We send them a hearty greeting. Down with Militarism! Hail to the International Social Democracy!" (*Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.)

These remarkable statements issued in 1904 preceded by eight years the position taken by the Second International, which followed these precedents, in the Congress of 1912, by declaring that “the proletarians consider it a crime to fire at each other for the benefit of the capitalists’ profits....”

However, when the dam broke and WW I began, the Second International succumbed to national chauvinism and virtually all Socialist Parties turned to support of their own imperialist governments. This betrayal of a clear anti-imperialist position led to the rapid decline of the Second International as the main revolutionary force in the world. In 1919 the Third International was formed, and reflected the revolutionary movement which gave life to the statements of the Japanese and Russian socialists of 1904.

May 1904 found Katayama in Chicago attending a national convention of the SPA:

“I have never shaken hands nor conversed with so many people as at the Socialist Party banquet where 500 invited guests and 400 party delegates, including many known socialist leaders as Debs,... The M.C. asked me to say a few words which were received with tremendous enthusiasm. It was a remarkable sight to see so many nationalities including Russians, Poles, Africans and others gathered under the same roof with one principle—Socialism.” (*Katayama Sen Chosakushu*, Vol. 2, pp. 176-177, Tokyo, 1960.)

With great enthusiasm Katayama went on to Amsterdam to participate in the Second International Congress proceedings. George Plekhanov, a Russian delegate, and he were chosen co-vice chairmen. Upon being introduced to the assemblage, they shook hands, each pledging to fight against the Russo-Japan War. After Katayama’s address, which he delivered in English, was translated into German by Clara Zetkin and into French by Rosa Luxemburg, everyone stood and applauded for several minutes. Thus was his international anti-war reputation established. It was to continue not only throughout his lifetime but to this day.

At the conclusion of the congress he came back to the U.S., reporting its results to various socialist and anti-war gatherings.

Seeking a retreat where he could enjoy a much needed rest and decide on his future course, in October 1904 Katayama went to visit a friend, T. Okazaki, who operated a rice farm in the Houston, Tex-

as, area. Having worked off and on in Japan and the U.S. as a farm hand, he undertook to help operate the rice-growing land. His hope was that the knowledge and funds thus gained would lead to establishment of a utopian rice colony in Texas which could provide a livelihood as well as a haven for some comrades who were under constant police harassment and persecution in Japan.

Although there is no full explanation of “the Texas period” in his autobiography, utopian colonies were not unknown among Japanese immigrants in the U.S. Evidence points to Katayama’s awareness of their existence.

After diligently working and studying rice farm operations for over a year, however, Katayama abandoned the colony idea because Okazaki had declared “no socialist would be allowed on the farm.”

Gompers Calls Katayama ‘Jap’

One of the most blatant U.S. racists, Samuel Gompers, had actively campaigned for the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. As president of the AFL, he together with other racists replaced the “Chinese Must Go” with “Japanese Must Go” agitation.

On May 7, 1900, the San Francisco AFL Labor Council called its first anti-Japanese meeting; the main speaker, Edward Ross, a Stanford professor, said in part: “...should the worst come to the worst it would be better for us to turn our guns on every vessel bringing Japanese to our shores rather than to permit them to land.” (*San Francisco Call*, May 8, 1900.)

The racist campaign continued, with Gompers telling the delegates at the 1904 AFL Convention “the American God was not the God of the Japanese” and demanding that “the Chinese Exclusion Act be broadened to include Japanese and Korean immigrants.” At Gompers’ insistence, the convention passed an anti-Japanese resolution that stated “they are as difficult to assimilate into American culture as the Chinese.”

During Gompers’ entire “career,” he and his corrupt lieutenants not only enforced the policy of Jim Crowism in the trade unions but refused to allow Asians into membership on any basis. Unbeknownst to them, however, there were a few exceptions being made, mainly in Wyoming and Colorado mining and railroad locals.

In the May 1905 *American Federationist*, Gompers’ article contained a slanderous attack upon Katayama:

“...presumptuous Jap with a leprous mouth whose utterances

show this mongrel's perverseness, ignorance and maliciousness... Perhaps this Japanese socialist may be perturbed by the fact that the American workmen, organized and unorganized, have discovered that the Japanese in the United States are as baneful to the interests of American labor and American civilization as are the Chinese."

Return to Socialist Activity

Upon returning to Japan in January 1906, Katayama became part of the mainstream of its socialist activity. With his assistance a required government permit was obtained and the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) was activated in February.

Although that August he had to go to Texas to close out the rice farm dealings, which took five months, he did not neglect his socialist work. In *The Revolution*, monthly of the Social Revolutionary Party, organized in June 1906 by some 50 Japanese socialists in the San Francisco Bay Area, he wrote:

"Glad to hear that you are starting a socialist organ to fight for and advocate the cause of socialism among the Japanese on the Pacific Coast and Hawaii... some jingoistic persons talking on a possible war between Japan and the United States... War under the capitalist government will never benefit working classes, we know it... from the late experience... our duty to tell the American workers that it will never result in good by war. The working classes get always the worst....

"Our mission is to tell the American workers also that we are capable of organizing ourselves into a Union and fighting the cause of workers as well as they do here in the United States... Our workers can stand by the American workers only if they can allow them... We know too well that the ultimate aim of workers will be best attained by the very co-operation of workers nationally and internationally.

"The complaints often presented by bigoted trade unionists that Japanese workers work cheaper than Americans will be easily remedied by the co-operation of the two... I shall help you as much as I can." (*The Revolution*, No. 1, December 1906, Berkeley.)

During its one year existence before the Japanese government ordered it to dissolve, the JSP was confronted with two different

ideologies—Katayama’s group advocated use of the electoral process, whereas Kotoku—by now an avowed anarchist—and his followers asserted that only “direct action” would bring successful overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

Katayama continued a heavy schedule throughout these years, writing, publishing the newspaper *Social News*, speaking and organizing. In 1910 he became secretary of the Universal Suffrage League, issuing a pamphlet “Popular Vote” which was immediately confiscated by the authorities. Copies of his book “Our Socialism” were also seized, as were issues of *Social News* as they came off the press. Readers of the paper were followed and questioned by plainclothesmen.

That same year 26 “anarchists,” including Kotoku and S. Kanno (his common law wife), were arrested and charged with “treason” for allegedly plotting to assassinate Emperor Meiji. In January 1911, Kotoku, Kanno and ten others were executed, 12 had their death sentences commuted to life imprisonment and two received lesser prison terms. This was a great blow to the entire movement in Japan.

World-wide protests were held before and after the execution, particularly in the U.S., where Jack London, Emma Goldman and others, including Japanese socialists, arranged protest meetings and delegations to Japanese consulates. At Katayama’s suggestion, the Second International passed a resolution protesting the execution.

In spite of the imperial government’s constant repressive actions, Katayama went on speaking tours, during which he never failed to advise those in attendance to “read and study the books of Marx and Engels.”

The effective agitation and propaganda carried on by Katayama and his group resulted in 6,000 Tokyo streetcar engineers and conductors going on strike, bringing to a halt the entire city of two million during the holiday rush period – December 31, 1911, to January 4, 1912. The strikers won their demand for a year-end bonus. Soon after, police arrested Katayama and over 150 others on the charge of “inciting workers to strike.” During the ensuing trial, the prosecutor characterized Katayama as “a tiger with sheep skin and the most dangerous person in Japan.” He received the heaviest jail term—five months, while 63 others were sentenced to three months in jail.

Upon release from prison he found himself under 24-hour surveillance. A lookout was posted in front of his home; he was con-

stantly tailed and hounded by plainclothesmen. He continued his many activities, including writing for publications in Japan and abroad such as the *International Socialist Review*, *Die Neue Zeit*, etc., and also found time to attend theater and opera performances, writing more than 20 reviews for newspapers and magazines. His review of Ibsen's "A Doll's House" is a classic:

"I do not know how so-called writers and artists will interpret the play "A Doll's House." Helmer's view on women is that of the modern bourgeois. Helmer, a merchant, values his honor and position more than his wife, Nora. He thinks a woman is vanity-minded and only money can satisfy her. Furthermore, he believes that a wife is a husband's object of pleasure. Yes, the bourgeoisie's view on women is nothing but a total lie." (*Tokyo Keizai Shimpo*, October 5, 1911.)

Organizing Japanese Workers in the U.S.

During 1914, subjected to persistent government persecution in Japan, Katayama decided to come to the U.S. "to appeal to comrades abroad to help Japan's socialist movement." Leaving his second wife and three children behind, he landed in San Francisco, residing in the home of long time friends, Mr. and Mrs. S. Oka. Yasuko, his 15-year old daughter, later joined him.

He began to publish a monthly paper *Heimin* in English and Japanese with the support and aid of local Japanese socialists. Its purpose was "to speak for the interest of the majority of the Japanese in America and to study political, economic and social matters of the Japanese here from the viewpoint of the commoners.... It is *Heimin's* immediate aim to break the ground for the labor union movement among our countrymen in this country."

Here, too, he was to experience harassment from the San Francisco Japanese consulate's personnel. After he assisted in uniting the San Francisco Day Workers Association and the Oakland Japanese Laundry Employees Union into the Japanese Labor Federation of America, consulate officials refused him admittance to its inaugural meeting. Moreover, the government of Japan dispatched a watchdog to the U.S., under the guise of being a correspondent of the *Yamato Shimbun*, to keep tabs on Katayama's activities, according to the informer's own story (K. Ito, *100 Year Cherry Trees of the Northern USA*, p. 851, Seattle, 1969).

Notwithstanding this, Katayama delivered lectures in Seattle and other cities under the auspices of the SPA and wrote articles for its organ, *New York Call*, and for various publications in Japan and elsewhere. At the same time he worked as a cook, day laborer, interpreter and scrivener and organized a Japanese Socialist Club which met in his basement abode.

Because of the reformist, class collaborationist policies and petty bourgeois leadership of the SPA during World War I, Left-wing and anti-war elements began to gather their forces within and outside of the SPA. One of these groups was the Socialist Propaganda League of America (SPLA) headed by S. J. Rutgers, which issued a manifesto on November 26, 1916, sharply repudiating the war, and condemning as treason the Right opportunist position of the Second International. Lenin replied to this document, greeting its general line and expressing the desire to “combine our struggles with yours against the conciliators and for true internationalism.” (Foster, *History of the CPUSA*, p. 131, New York, International, 1952).

At the invitation of Rutgers, who first met Katayama in 1904, Katayama and his daughter moved to Rutgers’ New York home in December 1916. There he frequently attended “Left-wing” meetings, met many Russian political refugees and spoke to anti-war audiences. He continued to write for the *International Socialist Review*, the *Western Comrade* and the *Radical Review*, among others, and helped publish *Class Struggle*, while simultaneously issuing *Heimin*. Under his guidance, Japanese socialists in the area later formed the Japanese Socialist Study Circle.

Having lived, studied, worked and organized in the U.S. off and on for more than 20 years, Katayama witnessed and suffered from racism practiced against Asian and other minority peoples in this country:

“The Asiatic laborer works cheaper than white, therefore wages of the whites are lowered. This is the chief reason so loudly enunciated by labor leaders along the Pacific Coast against incoming of Asiatic workers.... Their wages have never been affected or lowered by the Japanese workers; on the contrary; their wages have steadily increased.

“They, both whites and Asiatics, are getting far higher wages than those in other parts of the country where there is no Asiatic labor. It is racial prejudice against the Japanese that the

clamor of danger from Asiatic labor and anti-Japanese agitation has been kept up. The racial prejudice against the Japanese, coupled with seemingly sound economic reasons for lowering wages of the whites, while there was no fact nor basis for such fear, was successfully elaborated by cunning labor leaders in order to get the labor vote; so it is too a political reason that the unjust anti-Japanese movement was gotten up.”(*Heimin*, New York, August 1917.)

Impact of the Russian Revolution

News of the 1917 Russian revolution was to bring inspiration and encouragement to millions throughout the world and Katayama was no exception. The impact of the October Revolution was so great that the word “Bolshevik” became popular among vast numbers of working people and hated by the ruling class.

In 1918, as Japan prepared to send her interventionist army to Siberia, dealers and profiteers began buying up rice, which resulted in a price increase of 100 to 150 per cent. Longshorewomen (yes, women!) of Uozu, a fishing village facing the Japan Sea, raised the cry “Give Us Rice” and attempted to stop rice from being transported out of the village. The rice riot spread to major villages and cities throughout Japan and lasted 52 days, with nearly ten million participants and more than 8,000 arrests. This was the largest spontaneous revolutionary uprising yet of workers, poor farmers and housewives.

Katayama pointed out that “this rice riot made a deep impression upon every stratum of the people. Poor people have discovered a powerful weapon in mass action.” (*The Class Struggle*, December 1918.)

When the U.S., Japan and their allies sent troops into Siberia for counter-revolutionary intervention against the first workers’ and peasants’ government, Katayama took an active part in protest meetings, strongly condemning the piratical action of the imperialist powers. He wrote “Japan and Siberian Intervention” (December 1918) and “The Hara Ministry and the Bolsheviks” (August 1919) for *Revolutionary Age*.

It is significant to note that while many labor historians recall that a Japanese Labor Association (JLA) donated \$50 to the 1919 Seattle General Strike, none realize that the JLA was an outgrowth of Katayama’s agitation there and the subsequent formation of the

Seattle Japanese Socialist Party in 1904. Two years later the JLA helped organize large numbers of sawmill, cannery and railroad workers into the Association and start its monthly *Doha* (*Brotherhood*), which exposed Japanese labor contractors' outright cheating and other methods of exploitation.

At every opportunity, Katayama wrote and spoke out in support of the peoples' struggles in the colonial and semi-colonial countries under the yoke of Japanese as well as U.S. imperialism, taking special interest in the Korean independence and Chinese revolutionary movements:

“Deeply we sympathize with Koreans in their brave and heroic struggle for their national independence. Present is an age of national independence everywhere... Now, if the assertion of mine is right, then I ask you, the Koreans in America and in other countries, to consider whether your nationalistic aspirations and narrow agitation are advisable or not. Is there a sure hope for attaining it soon?

“Is it not wise to make a common cause for freedom with the Japanese working people and the working masses of the world? In that case you may not readily get help from American capitalists and Christians, but then you will get sure support from fifteen million Russian Bolsheviks and their Soviet government and the entire new International.” (*Heimin*, New York, May 1919.)

The inevitable split within the American Socialist Party culminated in September 1919, resulting in the formation of two Communist parties—the Communist Party of America (CPA) and the Communist Labor Party (CLP). Although their programs were essentially parallel, Katayama sided with the CPA because it had a large number of foreign born workers in its ranks. The Japanese Socialist Study Circle members joined *en masse* and became part of CPA's Oriental Bureau.

When the U.S. government sponsored an International Labor Conference in Washington, D.C., October 1919, trade unions of Japan refused to participate, but the Japanese government sent a hand-picked “labor delegation.” Katayama and two others issued a signed statement which exposed the “Japanese delegation” as a fraud. Copies were distributed to conference delegates, causing the resignation of two Japanese “labor advisors.” Much to the chagrin

of the Japanese government, these two later became friendly with Katayama.

Miraculously escaping the infamous 1920 Palmer raid dragnet, he stayed in seclusion for four months at the Atlantic City home of K. Naito, where he started to write his autobiography.

Returning to New York despite difficult underground conditions, he remained active and helped in the unification of the various U.S. Communist groupings into a single Communist Party. During the course of the unity movement, Katayama was appointed to serve on the American Section of the Communist International (CI or Comintern).

In March of 1921 he went to Mexico to help strengthen its Communist Party and establish closer ties with the CI and in July was instrumental in the unification of Canada's two Communist groups.

Another task performed by him was to select and send a U.S. resident Japanese delegation to an upcoming Far East Peoples Congress (FEPC) scheduled to be held in Irkutsk, Siberia. In October 1921 S. Nonaka, U. Nikaido, H. Watanabe, S. Maniwa and M. Suzuki departed via Moscow for the FEPC.

Toward the middle of November Katayama bid what turned out to be his last goodbye to the shores of the U.S., going to Moscow on his CI assignment.

Hero's Welcome in Moscow

The Moscow welcome accorded Katayama was described:

“On December 14, 1921, Sen Katayama arrived in Moscow. The name of the old man is well known internationally, not only as the pioneer of the Japanese labor movement, but as a great figure in the world Communist movement. Furthermore, he is well remembered among the Russians as the man who shook hands with Plekhanov during the Russo-Japanese War. News of this distinguished guest's arrival in Moscow made headlines in the Soviet and world press.

“On that day, we (five Japanese delegates attending the FEPC) went to the station to greet the old man. At the depot, practically all the dignitaries of the Soviet government and the CI—headed by Premier Kalinin, Trotsky of the Red Army, Stalin of the CI Nationality Commission and other leaders—were

on the reception line, as was a Red Army Honor Guard. Lenin, due to ill health, was out of the city.... The old man, who had undergone all sorts of hardships, never dreamed of such welcome, and was overwhelmed with emotion. It must have been one of the proudest moments in his life—as it was with us.” (H. Watanabe, *Memoirs About Revolutionaries*, Tokyo, 1968, pp. 114-115.)

Watanabe also pointed out other great honors bestowed on this son of a Japanese farmer, who had gradually developed from a Christian socialist leader into a mature Marxist-Leninist revolutionary. He was made an honorary citizen of the Soviet Union, given membership in the Red Army Academy and had a factory named for him. Picture postcards and pin emblems of Katayama were popular among the Russians, second only to those of Lenin.

During January and February 1922, attending sessions of the FEPC in Moscow and Leningrad (the site having been changed from Siberia), he was elected honorary chairman and participated in its deliberations. There was a full exchange of opinions on actions to take against the imperialist intervention forces, and of the possibilities of organizing the unorganized and building Communist parties in the countries represented at the gathering.

Katayama went to Siberia in May to guide the anti-intervention campaign among the Japanese Imperial Army forces. Three leaflets were drawn up by him which appealed to the Japanese soldiers not to be tools of Japan’s militarists, not to kill Russian workers and peasants who were building a socialist state in which neither big capitalists nor big landlords existed, and which pointed out that the great number of unemployed and the extreme poverty in Japan were directly caused by its enormous military expenditures. He personally went into battlefield areas, directing the distribution of the handbills which concluded with these slogans:

“Down with Japanese Militarism! Down with Japanese Capitalists! Long Live the Socialist Revolution! Long Live the Unity of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers! For a Soviet Japan! (*Imprecor*, No. 45, 1922.)

A few other Japanese comrades also carried on frontline activities, while others who had attended the FEPC, after consultation with Katayama and other CI leaders, returned to Japan and secretly

helped organize the Communist Party of Japan (CPJ) in Tokyo on July 15, 1922.

Meeting Lenin

No one with any knowledge of the October Revolution or the founding of the CI could be unaware of the role of Lenin in those history making events. Meeting Lenin was an honor and privilege and Katayama had that rare opportunity, shaking hands with him on December 21, 1922, at the Ninth All Soviet Union Congress which Katayama had been invited to address.

“I had read and studied his works and was prepared to meet him, nevertheless he impressed me much more than I had anticipated. We easily conversed in English,” Katayama recalls in his autobiography. They met again in January 1922, when he presented an Asian delegation to Lenin, who was aware of the conditions and problems of each delegate’s country and told them there must be unity among the Asian proletariat to successfully fight Japanese imperialism. At the Fourth CI Congress, held November 1922, where Katayama was elected to its Presidium, he was to speak with Lenin for the last time.

One of the most difficult personal decisions Katayama had to make was to sign divorce papers in March 1923 in order to save his wife and children in Japan from social torment and constant police harassment. The divorce was “officially” arranged by two old friends in Tokyo.

Representing the CI at the Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, his address to the April 25, 1923, session was received with a prolonged ovation. That year he made a long, hard journey to Vladivostok to confer with CPJ leaders on problems facing the party in Japan and how to overcome them.

When Lenin died in 1924, Katayama was among the pallbearers. Quotes from one of many articles written by him about Lenin will help throw light not only on Lenin but also on Katayama’s growth:

“He chatted with us—Presidium members at the Fourth CI Congress—for more than an hour in excellent German... Among many people I have met in my lifetime, no one surpassed the unforgettable appeal and charm of Comrade Lenin. His conversational style was simple and yet full of deep mean-

ing, he would never give one an impression or put on airs of being the giant of the world revolutionary movement. He had a special ability to draw out a listener's confidence so they could converse at ease.

"Each comrade's impression of Lenin, if told, would give a chance to successors to enhance the lessons of the superb character of this outstanding revolutionary leader and theoretician. We should not only study Leninism but also learn about his life. Studying Lenin and Leninism would aid in carrying out the heritage of this great proletarian leader." (*Krasnaya Neva*, No. 4, Moscow, 1928.)

In 1925 Katayama made an extensive four month trip which included a stop in Vladivostok, where he again met with CPJ leaders. He attended the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of China, and held meetings in Shanghai, Peking and Ulan Bator in Mongolia, giving the CI's political report and making suggestions and giving advice where warranted.

The many years of immersion in strenuous physical and political work caught up with him in 1926 and caused a physical breakdown. This necessitated his temporary withdrawal from activity while he recovered at a workers' rest home on the beautiful shores of the Black Sea.

As an organizer of the International Anti-Imperialist League, he attended its first congress held in Brussels in 1927, where he talked with delegates from many countries and spoke on the plight of Negroes:

"Everyone reported on the brutal oppression and exploitation suffered under the yoke of imperialism. It is impossible to describe how the imperialists suppress Negro people not only in Africa but in other countries. In the U.S., Negroes are oppressed socially, economically and politically. Jim Crowism is practiced in the Southern States, where even a Negro being suspected of having committed a petty crime could lead to his lynching." (R.G.I., No. 3, March 1927.)

At the Sixth CI Congress, held July-August 1928, Katayama had the honor of reading the "Declaration of the Comintern on the Chinese Revolution" which called upon the international proletariat to rally behind the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese workers

and peasants. He joined other Congress delegates in the overwhelming rejection of Trotsky's appeal against his expulsion from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Katayama had previously written an article on Trotsky, denouncing him as a power hungry petty-bourgeois counter-revolutionary, whose anti-Soviet actions would aid none but the Social Democrats and imperialist nations (*Imprecor*, No. 123, December 16, 1927).

As a member of the Sixth Congress American-British Section, Katayama endorsed criticism of Jay Lovestone and his anti-Marxist theory of "American exceptionalism." He also assisted in the Commission's deliberation on the U.S. Negro question, which was later to be reflected in the October 1928 CPUSA resolution:

"While continuing and intensifying the struggle under the slogan of full social and political equality for the Negroes, which must remain the central slogan of our party for work among masses, the party must come out openly and unreservedly for the right of Negroes to self-determination in the Southern states, where the Negroes form a majority of the population.... The Negro question in the U.S. must be treated in its relation to the Negro question and struggle in other parts of the world." (Foster, *The Negro People in American History*, New York, International, 1954, p. 461.)

At the Second Congress of the Anti-Imperialist League, held in August 1929 in Frankfurt, Katayama exposed the Tanaka Memorandum, which was a blueprint on "how to take over Manchuria." He also attacked Japan's China intervention and its huge military preparations, and the brutal, murderous suppression of the Japanese revolutionary and anti-war movements.

His 70th birthday banquet was held in Moscow, December 1929, and yet another Soviet honor—membership in the Bolshevik Veterans Club—was bestowed upon Katayama. He kept more than 50 speaking engagements throughout the Soviet Union during 1930 and continued writing his autobiography. When he became gravely ill in 1931, his daughters—Yasuko from Italy and Chiyoko from Japan—and a half-brother from the U.S. were at his Kremlin hospital bedside. On recovery, he joined the campaign of the International Red Aid (IRA—founded in 1924 with Katayama's help) to save the lives of the Scottsboro Nine. At the Eighth Congress of the IRA in 1932, he was elected its vice chairman.

He returned to Amsterdam, at the age of 73, to attend the 1932 World Anti-War Congress. There in his fiery address he said:

“I recall coming to this Music Hall with jubilation, and inspiration, sitting with world known socialists 28 years ago. However, none are here with me today, many of them have gone to the other side of the barricade... I took an oath that I would fight for solidarity of the international proletariat. Since then, together with Japanese Communists I have been fighting Japanese imperialism. Today, I renew my pledge to fight Japanese imperialism and at the same time, fight for the defense of the Soviet Union, fatherland of the world proletariat.” (*The International*, September 1932, Tokyo.)

At the conclusion of the speech, while the audience stood loudly applauding, he firmly embraced each delegate from China and Korea, expressing undying comradeship of the Japanese working people for the peoples of China and Korea.

Throughout the years, in spite of a heavy work schedule, Katayama found time to write letters, articles, criticisms and suggestions to his Japanese comrades in the U.S. and Canada, who were organizing and publishing working-class periodicals. The Los Angeles Japanese Labor Association began a monthly—*Class Struggle*—in 1925 (its name was later changed to *Rodo Shimbun—Labor News*), which became the organ of the Japanese Section of the CPUSA under the editorship of T. Kenmotsu. Many articles contributed by Katayama were not only directed to Japanese workers in America but to those in Japan where imperial militarism was on the upswing which was to culminate in Japan’s invasion of China.

During the early 1930’s Kenmotsu and 16 other Issei as well as a Chinese and others were arrested in California, charged with being undesirable aliens—Communists—and ordered deported. Through the efforts of the International Labor Defense (ILD), all obtained the right of voluntary departure to a country of their choice and at the invitation of the IRA they went to the Soviet Union.

150,000 Attend the Funeral

Just a month short of his 74th birthday, on November 5, 1933, with his two daughters and several close comrades at his bedside, Sen Katayama’s life came to an end. The next day, the Presidium of

the CI issued a long obituary, which said in part:

“He was an out-and-out Bolshevik, a man the whole of whose long life was entirely and wholeheartedly devoted to the proletarian fight, to the cause of the toilers and oppressed of the whole world, to the cause of the emancipation of humanity from the bloody yoke of capital, to the cause of Communism....

“Whilst in America during the world war, Katayama exposed the war and all its imperialist inciters. In the U.S. he gathered together the forces of the proletarian international. On the outbreak of the October Revolution he was wholeheartedly on the side of the Bolsheviks. In 1919 he founded the first Japanese Communist group in the U.S.A. He propagated Communism among the Japanese and American proletarians and, as a true disciple of Lenin, organized revolutionary demonstrations and strikes....

“This is why he always called so passionately and persistently for the defense of the Chinese people, of the Chinese Soviet, for aid for the oppressed peoples of Korea and Formosa, for the unity of all peoples of the Far East against predatory Japanese imperialism. For this reason, too, he agitated wholeheartedly, in word and writing, against the counter-revolutionary warmongering against the country of victorious Socialism. (*International Press Correspondence*, November 10, 1933.)

At his funeral on November 9th, 150,000 Soviet officials, CI leaders, Red Army soldiers, workers and others came to pay homage to their beloved comrade and working class hero—Sen Katayama. Among the 14 prominent pallbearers were Kalinin, Stalin, Wilhelm Pieck, Bela Kun and Sanzo Nosaka (who is presently chairman of the CPJ and a member of the House of Councilors-Senate). His ashes were placed in a Kremlin wall niche alongside other fallen comrades.

In Japan, which was under military police state rule, secret Katayama memorial services were held December 5th in Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, Nagoya and other cities—organized by the CPJ, Trade Union Council of Japan, Anti-Imperialist League and Japan Red Aid.

And in the U.S. the Japanese Section of the CPUSA, Katayama and Nagura Branches of the ILD, Anti-Imperialist League, John

Reed Club, *Rodo Shimbun* and *Vanguard* (Chinese monthly) jointly arranged memorial meetings in many cities. In New York Alexander Trachtenberg, Charles Krumbein, Japanese and Chinese comrades, in Los Angeles Katayama's half-brother, Y. Mizuo, in San Francisco Karl Hama of the *Rodo Shimbun* and some associates of his early days were among those who addressed memorial meetings. Memorial meetings were also held in Seattle and Vancouver, B.C.

At each meeting resolutions were passed, for release of all political prisoners in Japan, protesting the ban of *Rodo Shimbun* by the imperial government of Japan, against Japan's war scheme in China, for freedom for the Scottsboro Nine, Tom Mooney and all political prisoners.

Michael Gold, the great proletarian writer, whose writings inspired many a young hopeful to take pen in hand, and who had tens of thousands of admirers in the U.S. and abroad, paid eloquent tribute to Katayama in his "What A World" column:

"Stalin, Kalinin and all the chief Soviet leaders were pallbearers at the recent funeral of Sen Katayama in Moscow. They were paying the tribute of the first workers' republic to one who was the father of the Japanese labor and socialist movement. They were also answering those slanderers who preach that the Soviet Union had become nationalistic, and lost interest in the struggles of the workers in other lands.... The victims of fascism all over the world may be found gathered in Moscow. For years it was the home of Bill Haywood, of the U.S.A....

"Germanetto, and other Italian workers and intellectuals; Bela Illes, and hundreds of Hungarian exiles; Jugo-Slavs, Hindus, Negroes, Germans, Chinese, Egyptians, the flower of the International proletariat, may be seen in Moscow....

"Katayama, the great old man, would have been strangled by his enemies, the Japanese imperialists, had he returned to Tokyo. But in Moscow he was a leading citizen, as well known in life and death as any Russian leader, admired and loved by the Soviet masses. (*Daily Worker*, December 15, 1933.)

More than 41 years have gone by since the death of Sen Katayama, but the struggles to which he so magnificently dedicated his whole life are still with us and getting sharper. Among the working masses and their allies, men and women, in capitalist controlled nations and in areas throughout the world under colonial or semi-

colonial rule, the cry for peace, jobs, equality, justice and national liberation is ever growing louder.

Katayama's heritage lives on among the more than five million Japanese who voted, in that country's last election, for the CPJ and coalition candidates—Communists, Socialists, trade unionists, professionals, young and old.

“Labor in the white skin can never be free so long as labor in the black skin is branded.” These profound words of Karl Marx, which first saw the light of day over a century ago and to which Katayama adhered with intense proletarian internationalism, are still true. However, written or spoken in the context of present day struggles, they include red, brown and yellow skins as well.

This heritage will be a guiding factor among all peoples—white. Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Native American and Asian—in the United States, as they grasp the full meaning of Watergate, the oil scandals, the pardon of Nixon by Ford, the rising cost of living, the fast growing unemployment, the continued high military budget, the exploitation, repression and racism practiced and controlled by state monopoly capitalism. The masses are on the march as they learn about the fighting program for united struggle and progress of the Communist Party, U.S.A. which Katayama helped build 55 years ago.

History will prove that the racist, imperialist enemy can and will be defeated and that the Marxist-Leninist path followed by Sen Katayama—socialism—will be victorious.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

KARL G. YONEDA (also known as Karl Hama), born in 1906 on a small Los Angeles farm, was taken to Japan by his parents when he was 7 years old. There as a youth he became active in the student and labor movements. After being drafted into the Japanese Imperial Army at the age of 20, he went AWOL and returned to Los Angeles, where he became an organizer of farm and cannery workers. In 1927 he joined the Communist Party, and was active in the unemployed movement, labor defense, and other areas.

He was editor of *Rodo Shimbun*, Japanese organ of the Communist Party, U.S.A., from 1933 to 1936. In 1934 he was the Communist Party candidate for San Francisco's 22nd Assembly District seat, the first Asian to run for a State office. He became a longshoreman in 1936 and was an active member of ILWU Local 10 until retirement in 1972; since then he has been active in the ILWU San Francisco Bay Area Pensioners Club. He served in the CBI during WW II, after enlisting in November 1942 from one of the barbed-wire concentration camps where those of Japanese ancestry had been confined.

Karl Yoneda is the author of *Japanese Labor History in the USA*, written in Japanese, and presently lectures on "Asian Labor History in the USA" on various California campuses and in the San Francisco Bay Area Marxist Study Series. He is Chairperson of the Asian Commission of the California District, CPUSA.

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