

beloved baby, the universal suffrage, we as a nation must eradicate this injury before it **finally** grows up. We must make every effort to reform those public organs that inflicted this injury. In this sense, the fiftieth Diet session has only started the process and has not been able to complete it.

It is clear that the compromise measure that finally passed was almost a verbatim replica of the House of Peers version. . . Take, for example, the phrase "on account of poverty" in the law. We need not have members of the Seiyū Hontō tell us how ambiguous these words are. The phrase is obviously based on the notion that property is the prerequisite to enfranchisement, which is diametrically opposed to the basic principle of universal suffrage. It does cast an unpleasant shadow over the passage of this nationally significant law. It happened this way. The three political groups [the Kenseikai, Seiyūkai and Kakushintō] and their [coalition] Cabinet, which supported universal suffrage, approved an amendment presented by the Privy Council that anyone who received public or private relief ought to be disenfranchised. Then the House of Peers claimed that the meaning was not clear enough and expanded the phrase to read: "A person, who in order to make a living, requires relief or assistance from public or private sources." But **this** phrase created difficulties. If a person was to be disqualified on account of receiving assistance from private sources, how could that fact be determined? Would it not infringe on the privacy of many of the citizens, and even create some uneasy feelings? Thus a clause, "on account of poverty," was inserted in place of the clause "in order to make a living." Yet this change does not alter the basic unsoundness of this provision.

Then there is another provision which imposes a one-year residence requirement. This is a digression from the present law. As a result of this provision, **those** mine workers and those who move from place to place to engage in seasonal employment will lose their right to vote and eligibility for election. The government claimed in the Diet deliberations that about 200,000 people would be affected by this provision. Our guess is that the number will go up much higher. . . .

In this way, on all major issues relating to the basic principles of universal suffrage, the compromise bill accepted amendments proposed by the House of Peers. . . We suspect that the House of Representatives conferees did not expend as much effort on behalf of the basic rights of the people as they would normally do in electioneering for their own parties. The nation will **forebear** this inadequate law for the time being. What we have feared has been the disapproval of the universal suffrage bill, disruption in the collaborative arrangement between the three political groups before its passage, and the resulting corrosive influence of intrigues and political poison that can darken our political landscape and endanger our concept of society. Unsatisfactory as it is, we hope that once franchise is extended, there will be a change for the better, with the status quo symbolized by the established political parties and privileged politicians changing to become more responsive to the wishes of the people. We believe people

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will show a renewed hope in new politics, for example, politics in which the people can participate. We know that the people can anticipate another Diet session that will grant to the people the rights taken away by the amendments insisted upon by the House of Peers.

With the emergence of the compromise measure, the Seiyū Hontō could have stated that the three political groups supporting universal suffrage have acquiesced to its original view, and it could now vote for the final compromise version. This would have been a **wise** thing to do, but for the sake of opposition, it lost the chance to change its course. It foolishly conveyed to the nation an impression that it was a political party determined to oppose universal suffrage.

However, the worse villain to emerge from the past session of the Diet was not the Seiyū Hontō but the House of Peers. In the past election, the three groups supporting universal suffrage won overwhelmingly against the Seiyū Hontō, which was willing to serve as the mouthpiece for the House of Peers. The meaning of that election was completely negated by the House of Peers' insistence on reviving a minority view that was already rejected by the House of Representatives. The House of Peers disregarded the will of the people as shown in the general election and challenged it. We now realize that unless we can reform the House of Peers and destroy the practice of government by the privileged, our national politics can never reflect the will of the people even with this universal suffrage. The battle has not ended. We must raise anew our banners to attain true universal suffrage and to reform the House of Peers. With these new banners, those of us who are interested in participating in national politics must continue our fight through the next session of the Diet and then onto the next general election.

## 11 Peace Preservation Law, April 22, 1925<sup>13</sup>

ARTICLE 1. Anyone who organizes a group for the purpose of changing the national polity (*kōkutai*) or of denying the private property system, or anyone who knowingly participates in said group, shall be sentenced to penal servitude or imprisonment not exceeding ten years. An offense not actually carried out shall also be subject to punishment.

ARTICLE 2. Anyone who consults with another person on matters relating to the implementation of these objectives described in clause 1 of the preceding article shall be sentenced to penal servitude or imprisonment not exceeding seven years.

ARTICLE 3. Anyone who instigates others for the purpose of implementing those objectives described in clause 1, article 1, shall be sentenced to penal servitude or imprisonment not exceeding seven years.

ARTICLE 4. Anyone who instigates others to engage in rioting or assault or

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 466-67.

other crimes inflicting harm on life, **person**, or property for the purpose of attaining the objectives of clause I, article I, shall be sentenced to penal servitude or imprisonment not exceeding ten years.

ARTICLE 5. Anyone who, for the purpose of committing those **crimes** described in clause 1. article 1. and in the preceding three articles, provides money and goods or other financial advantages for others, or makes an offer or **commitment** for same, shall be sentenced to **penal servitude** or imprisonment not **exceeding** five years. **Anyone** who knowingly receives such considerations, or makes demand or commitment for same, shall be punished in a similar manner.

ARTICLE 6. Anyone who has **committed** the crimes described in **the** three **preceding** articles and has surrendered himself voluntarily to authorities shall have his sentence reduced or be granted immunity from prosecution.

ARTICLE 7. This law shall be **made** applicable to anyone who commits crimes described in this law outside of the jurisdiction in which this law is in effect.

## LIBERATION OF WOMEN

*in 1911. Hiratsuka Raichō (1886-1971) founded a new literary journal, Seitō (Blue Stockings), to promote women's causes. She was joined in this endeavor by other famed female writers including Yosano Akiko (1878-1942). Hiratsuka was inward looking, and when speaking of liberation, she often equated it with discovery of self and of one's own talent. Her work marked the beginning of women's liberation movement in Japan. The following document is her proclamation at the time of the founding of her Seitō Society.*

**12 Restoring Women's Talents, 1911**<sup>14</sup> In the beginning, woman was the sun and a true being. Now woman is the moon. She lives through others and shines through the light of others. Her countenance is pale, like a patient.

We must now restore the sun, which has been hidden from us.

"Let the hidden talent, our hidden sun, reemerge!" This has been our continuous outcry directed inwardly to ourselves. It represents our insatiable longings, our final instinctive feelings encompassing our total beings, unifying all our different sentiments. . . .

**Freedom and Liberation!** Oftentimes we have heard the term "liberation of women." But what does it mean? Are we not seriously misunderstanding the term freedom or liberation? Even if we call the problem liberation of women, are there not many other issues involved? Assuming that women are freed from

external oppression, liberated from constraint, given the so-called higher education, employed in various occupations, given the right to vote, and provided an opportunity to be independent from the protection of their parents and husbands, and to be freed from the little confinement of their homes, can all of these be called liberation of **women**? They may provide proper surroundings and **opportunities** to let us **fulfill** the true goal of liberation. Yet they remain merely the means and do not represent our goals or ideals.

However, I am unlike many intellectuals in Japan who suggest that higher education is not necessary for women. Men and women are endowed by nature to have equal faculties. Therefore, it is odd to assume that one of the sexes requires education while the other does not. This may be tolerated in a given country and in a given age, but it is fundamentally a very unsound proposition.

I bemoan the fact that there is only one private college for women in Japan and that there is no tolerance on man's part to permit entrance of women into many universities maintained for men. However, what benefit **is** there when the intellectual level of women becomes similar to that of men? Men seek knowledge to escape from their lack of wisdom and lack of enlightenment. They want to free themselves. . . . Yet multifarious thoughts can darken true wisdom and lead men away from nature. Men who live by playing with knowledge may be called scholars, but they can never be men of wisdom. Nay, on the contrary, they are almost like blind men, who lack the perception to see the things in front of their eyes as what they are. . . .

Now what is the true liberation that I am seeking? It **is** none other than to provide an opportunity for women to develop fully their hidden talents and hidden abilities. We must remove all barriers that stand in the way of women's development, whether they be external oppression or lack of knowledge. And above and beyond these factors, we must realize that we are the masters in possession of great talents, for we are the bodies that enshrine the great talents. . . .

## ELITE AND SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

*In April 1910, Mushanokōji Saneatsu (1885-1976), Shiga Naoya (1883-1970), Arishima Takeo (1878-1923), and others joined together to form a group called Shirakaba-ha, and adopted as their literary organ a journal named Shirakaba (White Birch). Most of the writers of this group graduated from Peers School and represented the aristocratic society and upper class of Japan. The group advocated fulfillment of human will through realization of individual talents. They were variously influenced by Christianity, humanism, naturalism, and the notion of art for art's sake. Among their heroes were Uchimura **Kanzō**, Leo Tolstoy, **Auguste Rodin**, Walt Whitman, and Romain **Rolland**.*

*Mushanokōji envisioned an ideal society in a fann commune where everyone could work together and engage in communal sharing. Such a commune, named*

<sup>14</sup>Hiratsuka Raichō. "Genshi, Josei wa Taiyō de Atta" (In the Beginning Woman Was the Sun), in *Seitō*, first issue, September 1911, reproduced in the *Chūō Koron*. November 1965, pp. 354-57.