

TRANSNATIONAL ANARCHISM, JAPANESE REVOLUTIONARY  
CONNECTIONS AND THE PERSONAL POLITICS OF EXILE\*

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*ABSTRACT: In the autumn of 1913, Japanese radical journalist Ishikawa Sanshirō (1876-1956) fled Japan for Europe on a self-imposed exile that would last more than seven years. While there, he mingled with English social philosopher Edward Carpenter (1844-1929) and his circle of friends, and resided for several years with the family of French anarchist Paul Reclus (1858-1941), nephew and professional heir of famed nineteenth-century geographer Elisée Reclus (1830-1905). Ishikawa's travels contributed to the development of an intricate web of non-state, non-institutional links, fuelling an exchange of knowledge that spanned four decades. His personal trajectory highlights the significance of individual-based activism to the early twentieth-century global spread of anarchism. The experience of exile is also a valuable opportunity to explore how chance encounters, emotional ties and subjective politics shape ideas of social change in tension with ideological consistency.*

On 1<sup>st</sup> March 1913, a taciturn Japanese man in his mid-thirties named Ishikawa Sanshirō (1876-1956) boarded a French ship in Yokohama. He was on the run from his country's government, travelling with false papers under the protection of the sympathetic Belgian Vice-Consul in the city. As a journalist and self-proclaimed socialist, Ishikawa attracted constant monitoring by the Japanese police. Censors had just forbidden the publication of his *History of the western social movement*. A few years earlier harsh repression had resulted in the execution of several close friends. Escape was the sensible solution and so he waved goodbye to the Japanese coast. After a stopover in Shanghai where he visited Chinese revolutionaries, Ishikawa made the long journey to France, finally arriving in Marseille after thirty-eight days at sea.

He had little money, did not know French or anyone in the country, and genuinely wondered how he was going to stay alive.<sup>1</sup>

Thus started a seven and a half year spell of self-imposed exile. On a few occasions, the 'wanderer' – as he called himself – came close to an early demise. But he managed to survive against the odds, which included a close encounter with the outbreak of World War I in Belgium. While in Europe, he mingled with English social philosopher Edward Carpenter (1844-1929) and his circle of friends. Ishikawa also lived for several years in Belgium and France with the family of Paul Reclus (1858-1941), nephew and professional heir to famed French anarchist and geographer Elisée Reclus (1830-1905). The intellectual and emotional links he forged during those years endured for the remaining forty-five years of his life.

At first glance, the Japanese radical's foreign journey seems of little weight in the context of the dramatic geo-political turbulence of the period. What should historians make of the peregrinations of an impoverished revolutionary from East Asia in a dislocated Europe? My contention is that Ishikawa represents a crucial link in a complex web of intellectual connections that held multiple ramifications at the local and global levels. These connections fuelled an anarchist discourse of dissent that the geo-political chaos helped to re-shape. Ignoring Ishikawa means losing one of the threads of connectivity that provided the intellectual foundations of the modern era in ways that have increasingly preoccupied historians.<sup>2</sup>

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\* The author is grateful to the anonymous reviewers of the *Historical Journal*, whose insightful comments have helped to improve this article.

Note: Following normal usage, Japanese names appear with the surname first, except in instances where the Japanese author publishes primarily in English.

<sup>1</sup> Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Chosakushū* [Works] (8 vols, Tokyo, 1977), VIII, pp. 299-306.

<sup>2</sup> On the merits and demerits of global intellectual history, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam's critique in 'Global intellectual history beyond Hegel and Marx', *History and Theory*, 54 (2015), pp. 126-137; Stephanie Gänger and Su Lin Lewis, Forum: 'A world of ideas: new pathways in global intellectual history, C. 1880-1930', *Modern Intellectual History*, 10 (2013), pp. 347-51; Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, eds., *Global intellectual history* (New

By tracing Ishikawa's travels in the 1910s, this article engages with the history of anarchism from two fresh angles. First, it addresses individual agency and lived experience as driving mechanisms in the articulation of anarchist ideas and activism. Specifically, I highlight how Ishikawa's physical displacement affected the circulation of knowledge in the wider world. This approach is inspired by recent historiography, notably the work of Benedict Anderson on the role of personal bonds in the development of global anarchism. In *Under Three Flags*, Anderson broadens the significance of transnational activism through the examination of the lives and travels of late nineteenth-century Filipino intellectuals José Rizal (1861-1896) and Isabelo de los Reyes (1864-1938).<sup>3</sup> Indeed, historians now agree that organizational connections, such as those that emerged from the First International, do not fully explain the reach of the anarchist movement. They stress the role of informal links stretching across borders to explain the resilience of anarchist thought and practices, at least up to the First World War.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, a focus on individual trajectories highlights the role played by chance encounters and the contingencies of travel in shaping ideas of social change. These ideas appear sometimes in conflict with ideological consistency, such as the anarchist attachment to pacifism, and the exploration of subjectivity through Ishikawa offers a unique opportunity to trace some unexpected turns in the formation of global anarchist thought.

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York, 2013); Kris Manjapra and S. Manjapra Bose, *Cosmopolitan thought zones: South Asia and the global circulation of ideas* (Basingstoke, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Under three flags: anarchism and the anti-colonial imagination* (London, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> See Constance Bantman, *The French anarchists in London, 1880-1914: exile and transnationalism in the first globalization* (Liverpool, 2013); Constance Bantman and David Berry, eds., *New perspectives on anarchism, labour and syndicalism: the individual, the national, and the transnational* (Newcastle, 2010); Constance Bantman and Bert Altena, eds., *Reassessing the transnational turn: scales of analysis in anarchist and syndicalist studies* (New York, 2015); Davide Turcato, *Making sense of anarchism: Errico Malatesta's experiments with revolution, 1889-1900* (Basingstoke, 2012).

Second, this article revisits the development of early twentieth-century Japanese anarchism via a methodological approach that rejects a simplistic centre-periphery framework of understanding.<sup>5</sup> The emphasis here is on intellectual zones of congruence and fluidity of exchanges, thus contesting the assumption of a unidirectional transmission of ideas from west to east. Instead, anarchism is re-evaluated as a dynamic set of concepts and practices that drew from a wide range of inspirations and ambitions, both foreign and indigenous.

Anarchism in East Asia has been conventionally viewed in terms of the influence of European ideas. Historians investigated how these ideas were reconfigured in local settings, as typified by the case of modern China.<sup>6</sup> Initial studies of Japanese anarchism followed the same pattern of analysis,<sup>7</sup> with a disproportionate amount of scholarship devoted to two prominent figures, Kōtoku Shūsui (1871-1911) and Ōsugi Sakae (1885-1923).<sup>8</sup> Kōtoku's alleged involvement in the High Treason Incident, a 1910 plot to kill the emperor, reinforced the violent image of anarchism in historiography, whereas closer attention to, for example, Ishikawa, would give a very different view.

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<sup>5</sup> The need to 'provincialize Europe' is still a debated issue, which studies of anarchism cannot elude. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: post-colonial thought and historical difference* (Princeton, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Representative studies include Arif Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese revolution* (Berkeley, 1991); Edward Krebs, *Shifu, soul of Chinese anarchism* (Lanham, 1998), Robert Scalapino and George Yu, *The Chinese anarchist movement* (Berkeley, 1961); Peter Zarrow, *Anarchism and Chinese political culture* (New York, 1990).

<sup>7</sup> John Crump, *The origins of socialist thought in Japan* (London, 1983); Peter Duus and Irwin Scheiner, 'Socialism, liberalism, and Marxism, 1901-1931' in Peter Duus, ed., *The Cambridge history of Japan, volume 6: the twentieth century* (Cambridge, 1988), pp.654-710; Stephen Large, 'The romance of revolution in Japanese anarchism and communism during the Taisho period', *Modern Asian Studies*, 11 (1977), pp. 441-67; Fred Notehelfer, *Kōtoku Shūsui: portrait of a Japanese radical* (Cambridge, 1971); Thomas Stanley, *Ōsugi Sakae, anarchist in Taisho Japan: the creativity of the ego* (Cambridge, 1982).

<sup>8</sup> Exceptions include John Crump, *Hatta Shūzō and pure anarchism in interwar Japan* (Basingstoke, 1993); Hélène Bowen Raddeker, *Treacherous women of imperial Japan* (London, 1997).

More recent work rejects western modernity as the sole interpretive grid while stressing both indigenous and transnational factors in the development of Japanese anarchism.<sup>9</sup> It also expands the concept of anarchism itself, which is seen as not just a form of politics, but an intellectual template that reconfigured the cultural, social and scientific spheres of the time too. In the same vein I show that Ishikawa's interaction with his network of friends goes further than – and even departs from – a purely political view of dissent and revolution. If the critique of state power as principle of socio-political organization remains crucial, the overwhelming preoccupation is with a mode of participation in the world which eschews hierarchical relations in all the forms of lived experience.

Historians of modern Japan have so far paid limited attention to Ishikawa. Although mentioned on occasion, typically he is dismissed as an irrelevant exile or for being too intellectually abstract.<sup>10</sup> Studies that note his active contribution to the history of Japanese anarchism tend to proceed from a theoretical standpoint in defining his various roles. Thus, according to this approach, he is a contributor to the ecological critique of the country's rapid industrialisation.<sup>11</sup> Alternatively, he is a leading proponent of anarcho-syndicalism during the 1920s.<sup>12</sup> His philosophical vision has also been placed within the current of 'cooperatist anarchism' that swept Japan during the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Sho Konishi, *Anarchist modernity: cooperatism and Japanese-Russian intellectual relations in modern Japan* (Boston, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Notehelfer, *Kōtoku Shūsui*, p. 201; Stanley, *Ōsugi Sakae*, p. 53; See however Daniel Schnick, 'Walking the thin line: Ishikawa Sanshirō and Japanese anarchism' (Master's thesis, Vancouver, 1995).

<sup>11</sup> Robert Stolz, *Bad water: nature, pollution and politics in Japan, 1870-1950* (Durham, 2014), pp. 117-58; and, 'So you've converged – now what? The Convergence of Critique', *Japanese Studies*, 34 (2014), pp. 307-323.

<sup>12</sup> John Crump, *The anarchist movement in Japan, 1906-1996* (The Anarchist Library, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> Konishi, *Anarchist modernity*.

While these accounts have validity, they omit Ishikawa's transnational experience and its effect on him as a mediator of people and ideas. Over the years he developed a loose network of like-minded thinkers and activists and the fostering of this borderless community was crucial to his anarchism. Likewise, his familiarity with French culture, history and contemporary events adds an extra dimension to his intellectual journey. The present article investigates these neglected aspects of Ishikawa's life and thought, re-evaluating in the process the significance of individual-based activism at both the local and global levels.

## I

As a libertarian offshoot of socialism,<sup>14</sup> Japanese anarchism gradually emerged as a critique of the capitalist ideology that underpinned the country's sweeping economic transformation after the Meiji Restoration of 1868. By the 1890s, the expression '*shakai mondai*' (social problems) had become a familiar occurrence in the press, particularly in *Kokumin no Tomo* (The Nation's Friend), a progressive periodical that promoted socialist ideas.<sup>15</sup> The first generation of socialism-inspired intellectuals, such as pioneering labour leader Katayama Sen (1859-1933) and Unitarian preacher Abe Isō (1865-1949), drew attention to the darker side of industrialization and made frequent comparisons with England's urban poverty to support their ideas. They associated activism with notions of Christian charity.

At the same time, the Meiji oligarchy became increasingly oppressive, stifling radical thought whenever possible. The enactment of the Public Order and Police Law

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<sup>14</sup> Constance Bantman defines anarchism in the context of the history of European ideas as 'a libertarian strand of nineteenth-century socialism, based on the rejection of the state in favour of spontaneous and voluntary political and economic organization.' Bantman, *The French anarchists in London*, p. 8.

<sup>15</sup> Kōtoku Shūsui and Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Nihon shakaishugi' [Japanese socialism], in Yoshino, ed., *Meiji bunka zenshū: shakairon* [Complete works on Meiji culture: social discourse] (Tokyo, 1927), p. 353.

of 1900 directly targeted organized labour while imposing restrictions on freedom of speech, assembly and association. The looming war with Russia during the first years of the 1900s saw a strengthening rather than dampening of opposition to the ruling elite. In 1903, Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko (1871-1933) founded the Heiminsha (Society for the People), publisher of the *Shūkan Heimin Shinbun* (*People's Weekly*), the country's first socialist paper and an outspoken critic of conflict with Russia. Ishikawa joined them soon after, thereby becoming a pivotal figure in Japan's non-war movement.<sup>16</sup> Anarchist ideas spread, including rejection of the very idea of the state itself. In the *People's Weekly*, Ishikawa denounced the state as a 'collectivity founded on self-interest and ambition'. He claimed that only by cutting the bond between individuals and state governance would people stop identifying with its war-making tendencies.<sup>17</sup>

Over the following years, the young journalist participated in a hard-fought campaign at the side of Tanaka Shōzō (1841-1913), the country's famed "first environmentalist", championing the victims of pollution caused by over-exploitation of the Ashio Copper Mine in the rural northeast of Tokyo.<sup>18</sup> The experience strengthened Ishikawa's solidarity with peasant communities, who were acutely affected by rapid industrialization and heavy taxation. It also drew him toward a mode of political activism disengaged from institutional links.<sup>19</sup> The relationship between anarchist activism and the agrarian world - seen as the locus of practices of cooperation and a balanced human-nature interaction - would remain one of Ishikawa's life-long preoccupations.

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<sup>16</sup> On the non-war movement, see Konishi, *Anarchist modernity*, pp. 142-208.

<sup>17</sup> *Shūkan Heimin Shinbun* [*People's Weekly*], 6 Nov. 1904, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> About the role of Tanaka in the Ashio pollution case, see amongst others Kenneth Strong, *The ox against the storm: a biography of Tanaka Shōzō, Japan's conservationist pioneer* (Tenterden, 1977); Stolz, *Bad water*.

<sup>19</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, I, p. 396.

In an ideological climate dominated by frequent theoretical disputes about the means, modes and goals of socialism, Kōtoku’s public embrace of anarchism in 1906 stoked the fires of radicalism that threatened the state-led modernization drive. He famously declared his preference for the tactics of direct action over parliamentary politics,<sup>20</sup> splitting socialist supporters into two opposing factions.<sup>21</sup> Ishikawa would soon also reject electoral suffrage as a means of effecting change, stating that he preferred the freedom of a communicator to submission to a party.<sup>22</sup> But he was more reserved in his support for direct action, claiming to be ‘an educator, rather than an agitator’.<sup>23</sup>

Controversy similarly flared up about the place of class struggle in socialist thought. Sakai Toshihiko, to become a founding member of the Japan Communist Party in 1922, adhered strictly to Marx’s concept of revolution. For his part, Ishikawa asserted that social change depended on the gradual awakening of the individual rather than on a mechanistic process of class struggle.<sup>24</sup> There was a certain dose of utopianism in Ishikawa’s words, as he eagerly referred to universal love and brotherhood as an ultimate political goal. His anarchism, which he would increasingly promote as a holistic worldview – based on principles of cooperation and non-hierarchy in all facets of lived experience – was never a purely political project.

The execution of Kōtoku and eleven other dissidents in January 1911 in connection with the High Treason Incident left an enduring scar on socialist and

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<sup>20</sup> In generic terms, direct action refers to ‘workers’ general strike’. At the time, however, very few workers were sufficiently organized to launch such a strike, and protest could easily degenerate into violent action. Also, electoral suffrage was limited to a small fraction of the male population, which gave hardly any representative power to the working class. See Crump, *Origins of socialist thought*, pp. 165-7.

<sup>21</sup> Crump, *Origins of socialist thought*, pp. 250-6; Notehelfer, *Kōtoku Shūsui*, pp. 141-5.

<sup>22</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, VIII, p. 142; Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, I, p. 127.

<sup>23</sup> Ishikawa Sanshirō, ‘Kaiko gonen’ (The past five years), *Dinamikku*, 1 Oct. 1934, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> See Ishikawa Sanshirō’s letters to Sakai about class struggle as an end or a means to social revolution, in Tsurumi Shunsuke, ed., *Ishikawa sanshirōshū [Ishikawa Sanshirō’s collected works]* (Tokyo, 1976), pp. 27-34.



anarchist circles. The opacity of the proceedings and violence of the government’s reaction silenced political radicalism for about decade, a period known as the ‘winter years’ of Japanese socialism.<sup>25</sup> Ishikawa was interrogated but not charged, and it fell on him to retrieve the body of his friend from prison.<sup>26</sup>

Assessed in terms of European socialist doctrine, the ideas of Japanese political dissenters in the first decade of the twentieth century reflected a certain degree of ideological confusion. Ishikawa readily admitted that during the period socialism, communism and anarchism were not clearly differentiated.<sup>27</sup> What was a common thread amongst dissenters of all allegiances, though, was compassion for the powerless victims of modernization. As Ishikawa recalled in his memoirs:

When I think about it now, there is no doubt that the philosophical stance of the Heiminsha coterie was very naïve, even romantic. But the fact that a high spirit of humanism<sup>28</sup> was permeating the chaos of the time is a beautiful thing I cannot forget, even now. I think that Japan’s socialism, communism, anarchism and the like were rooted in sound, fertile soil then.<sup>29</sup>

Ishikawa’s own blend of anarchism grew from this soil. He was less of an original thinker than a connector and synthesizer of an eclectic set of ideas from east and west, all the while remaining focused on social realities that he perceived as

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<sup>25</sup> Duus and Scheiner, ‘Socialism, liberalism, and Marxism’, p. 655; see also Masako Gavin and Ben Middleton (eds.), *Japan and the High Treason Incident* (Abingdon, 2013).

<sup>26</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, VIII, p. 227.

<sup>27</sup> Ishikawa Sanshirō, ‘Nihon museifushugi no yūrai’ [The Origins of Japanese anarchism] in *Nihon shakaishugi undōshi* [History of the Japanese socialist movement] (Tokyo, 1928), p. 81; see also Yamazaki Kesaya in conversation with Ishikawa Sanshirō, in Sōichi Ōya, ‘Ikiteiru nihon shisōshi zadankai: taigyaku jigen zengo’ [Round table on Japanese living history of ideas: before and after the High Treason Incident], *Bungei Shunjū*, 50 (1950), p. 64.

<sup>28</sup> Ishikawa uses the English word ‘hyūmanizumu’ (ヒューマニズム) in the text.

<sup>29</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, VIII, p. 101.

unjust and exploitative. Over the years, he strove to offer an alternative model of socio-political organization that reworked European knowledge in light of East Asian indigenous thought and context, in particular its agrarian traditions. The concept of *domin seikatsu* ('life of people of the earth') that he promoted upon his return to Japan in 1920 supported the creation of a loose and center-less network of autonomous human communities operating through an unmediated relationship to industrial and agricultural production.<sup>30</sup> Although Proudhonian in inspiration, this model also relied on Buddhist cosmology in its conception and practices of self-introspection for its realization, and referred to Japan's history of peasant resistance to feudal authority.

The Nōmin Jichikai, a nationwide network of self-governing farmers' councils that Ishikawa helped to set up during the mid 1920s, encouraged rural regeneration through education and self-sufficiency. Although relatively short-lived, the scheme was meant as a non-violent anarchist path to farmers' liberation and competed with many other dissenting visions at the time, from communism to pure anarchism and agrarianism. Ishikawa's trademark remains the willingness to conceive of human communities as rooted to the land - he extolled agricultural work and cooperative practices found in agrarian settings -, but without referring to the emperor-centred ideology that characterized popular agrarianism and fueled militarism during the pre-war period.<sup>31</sup> The transnational encounters explored in this article provided Ishikawa with a platform for the articulation of his anarchist philosophy and conduct of 'personal politics'.

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<sup>30</sup> Ishikawa, 'Kinsei domin tetsugaku' [Philosophy of the modern people of the earth], in *Ishikawa sanshirōshū*, pp. 39-111.

<sup>31</sup> About pre-war agrarianism, see Tetsuo Najita and H. D. Harootunian, 'Japanese revolt against the west: political and cultural criticism in the twentieth century', in *The Cambridge history of Japan*, VI, pp. 711-74.

## II

Close association with Kōtoku and other executed figures of the High Treason Incident made Ishikawa's presence in Japan increasingly precarious and motivated his departure in 1913. He first reached Belgium and sought the company of revolutionary contacts established through common acquaintances. Calling on Paul Reclus in Brussels in the summer of 1913, he was immediately shown by his host a photograph taken in 1904 to commemorate the first year of the *People's Weekly*.<sup>32</sup> It portrayed Ishikawa together with Kōtoku, Sakai, and Nishikawa Kōjirō (1876-1940). The photograph had circulated overseas at the time of the High Treason Incident, suggesting that Ishikawa was already a known figure in European anarchist circles.<sup>33</sup> As he recalled, 'from that first meeting I was treated as a member of the family'.<sup>34</sup>

Exile also provided Ishikawa with the long-anticipated chance to meet Edward Carpenter, the radical intellectual whose civilizational critique had struck a chord among Japanese dissidents. On the initiative of Ishikawa, both men had corresponded earlier on. Recognizing their commonality of views, Carpenter wrote in 1910:

How sweet it is to hear from you all across the world and to know that the same thoughts are moving you far away in the land of the Rising Sun, as here on the shores of the Atlantic! The same inspirations and hopes of a newer truer human society, and the same struggles and battles against the forces of

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<sup>32</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, VIII, p. 18.

<sup>33</sup> In France, the photograph was sold as a postcard with the caption 'Les martyrs japonais (Tokio, 24 janvier 1904)'. See Tanaka Hikaru, 'The reaction of Jewish anarchists to the High Treason Incident', in Gavin and Middleton, *Japan and the High Treason Incident*, p. 85.

<sup>34</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, VIII, p. 20. Paul Reclus was briefly in exile in Switzerland after the Paris Commune of 1871, then, from 1895, spent twenty years in England, Scotland and Belgium. Ishikawa spent several months in prison in 1907-8 and again in 1910 for contravention of public order.

Tyranny.<sup>35</sup>

Friendship progressed over the years, as attested by the steady exchange of letters.<sup>36</sup>

Although unsuccessfully, Carpenter tried to help Ishikawa find a job when he was in England in early 1914, even putting an advertisement in the *Manchester Guardian* publicising the skills of a 'Japanese young man, well educated' seeking 'light warehouse or office work in a shipping or other business'.<sup>37</sup> Whilst socialist thought provided a common anchor of understanding, the scope of their shared interests was wide indeed.

Carpenter's biting critique of modern (western) civilization, especially in his *Civilisation: Its Cause and Cure* of 1889, answered the lurking unease in Japan generated by the pressures of modernization at the turn of the century. For dissenting intellectuals, his views offered an antidote to pervasive social Darwinism as a framework of understanding. Such unease grew after Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, an event which seemed to support the official notion that Japan was rapidly moving forward on a path of linear progress. In *Hibunmeiron* (*Theory of un-civilization*), a series of essays published between 1900 and 1905, thinker Taoka Reiun (1870-1912), also a contributor to the *People's Weekly*, denounced the overreliance of modern society on rationality and efficiency as an 'inversion of progress'. He credited his readings of Carpenter, among others, in reaching his conclusion.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Carpenter to Ishikawa, 18 Feb. 1910, Honjō. City Library (HCL), Ishikawa papers, foreign correspondence (FC), N. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Held at the HCL. For an overview of this correspondence, see Chūnichi Tsuzuki, "'My Dear Sanshirō': Edward Carpenter and his Japanese disciple", *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies*, 6 (1972), pp. 1-9.

<sup>37</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 17 Jan. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Loftus, Ronald, 'The Inversion of Progress: Taoka Reiun's "hibunmeiron"', *Monumenta Nipponica*, 40 (1985), pp. 191-208.

Likewise, Ishikawa respected Carpenter's philosophy. He had published in 1912 a book entitled *Carpenter: Poet and Prophet*, a copy of which he sent to his friend. He would later acknowledge that Carpenter's vision of life and the universe, completely different from that of other social thinkers, had rescued him from the profound dissatisfaction he felt due to the lack of unity in his thoughts, feelings and daily life.<sup>39</sup> Thus, in November 1913, Ishikawa actively sought to meet the person who had inspired his reflections on progress and civilization. He located Carpenter in London and accompanied him to Millthorpe, the cottage that the Englishman owned near Sheffield. Carpenter had acquired it in 1883, determined to embrace a life of rural simplicity, away from the social degeneration caused by industrialization and what he perceived as the corruptions of his class. Ishikawa remained there for three days, retaining a vivid impression of his host's lifestyle and intellectual acumen.<sup>40</sup>

In his autobiography, Carpenter distinctly recalls his first meeting with Ishikawa, while acknowledging his place in the larger group of activists he esteemed.<sup>41</sup> He notes his intelligence, also that

Anything less dangerous-looking as a revolutionary it would be hard to imagine. Small in stature, timid in manner, and with a very gentle voice, he seemed the embodiment of quietude and sympathy. It was not difficult however in his case, as in that of many Japanese, to discern, beneath that composed exterior, a strong undercurrent of resolution and courage.<sup>42</sup>

Carpenter cultivated an extended circle of friends and acquaintances, both in

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<sup>39</sup> Ishikawa Sanshirō, 'Ka-ō no museifu shisō' [Edward Carpenter's anarchist thought], *Dinamikku*, 1 June 1930, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, VIII, p. 336. Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Ishikawa sanshirōsenshū* [Selected works] (7 vols., Tokyo, 1977), VII, pp. 24-8.

<sup>41</sup> Carpenter, Edward, *My days and dreams* (London, 1916), pp. 276-9.

<sup>42</sup> Carpenter, *My days and dreams*, p. 278.

his home country and abroad. As the title of Tsuzuki Chūnichi's book so aptly states, he was a 'prophet of human fellowship', someone who not only believed in the value of human bonds but also in their fundamental ability to foster a fair and equal society.<sup>43</sup> The breadth of his personal contacts embodied his aspiration of creating a world of men and women linked to each other not by the rigidities of class and institutional structures, but by a spiritual sense of brotherhood.<sup>44</sup>

Carpenter also expressed faith in 'the ultimate triumph of the common people',<sup>45</sup> something he conveyed in *Towards Democracy*, one of his most influential works:

If I am not level with the lowest I am nothing; and if I did not know for a certainty that the craziest sot in the village is my equal, and were not proud to have him walk with me as my friend, I would not write another word - for in this is my strength.<sup>46</sup>

These egalitarian aspirations lie at the core of anarchist philosophy. They were equally nurtured by Ishikawa and expressed in his frequent claim to be a *heimin*, a commoner or ordinary person, as in the title of the newspaper to which he contributed. He saw it as his mission to align himself with ordinary people.<sup>47</sup> In his view, the word also designated those with the moral fortitude to help forge a new era free of

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<sup>43</sup> Chūshichi Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter, 1844-1929: prophet of human fellowship* (Cambridge, 1980).

<sup>44</sup> Millthorpe Cottage was a privileged place for nurturing these contacts. See Sheila Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter: a life of liberty and love* (London, 2008), pp. 229-243.

<sup>45</sup> Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter*, p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> Edward Carpenter, *Towards democracy* (Manchester, 1896), p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, III, pp. 103, 115.

oppression and hierarchical distinctions.<sup>48</sup>

The term *heimin* originally referred to the formal class of commoners, excluding aristocrats and former samurai families. They were designated as such in 1870 by the Meiji regime and endowed with new privileges. After the Russo-Japanese War, radical intellectuals gave it a morally charged political meaning. The *heimin*, whether rural or urban, became the antithesis of the power cliques (*batsu*) – political, financial and others – that for them defined capitalist control and its war-mongering tendencies.<sup>49</sup>

At the time, the attempt of ethnographer Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962) to define an “abiding folk” (*jōmin*) responded to similar preoccupations. The *jōmin* embodied the quintessence of local, mostly rural, traditions as unaffected by the ravages of capitalism.<sup>50</sup> But whereas Yanagita sought to identify some kind of essential Japanese-ness, Ishikawa’s emphasis was on the recognition of a common people regardless of differences based on nationality, class, ethnicity, and gender. And for him, the *heimin* was not only naturally antagonistic to capitalism, but also imbued with a spirit of revolt against any kind of oppression, a spirit he would in later years trace back to the farmers’ rebellions of pre-modern Japan.<sup>51</sup>

Carpenter had written to Ishikawa in 1910 that ‘the future of mankind is leading us beyond patriotism to humanity’.<sup>52</sup> Both men shared a loose anarchist philosophy which envisaged the creation of a human community superseding state

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<sup>48</sup> For example Ishikawa Sanshirō, ‘Shinshi taihei o utai heimin ken o migaku’ [Gentlemen sing for peace, commoners polish their swords], *Shinkigen*, 10 Sept. 1906, p. 38.

<sup>49</sup> On the use of the term *heimin* after the Russo-Japanese War, see Konishi, *Anarchist modernity*, esp. pp. 160-77.

<sup>50</sup> See H. D Harootunian, ‘Figuring the folk: history, poetics, and representation’, in Stephen Vlastos, ed., *Mirror of modernity: invented traditions of modern Japan*, p. 145.

<sup>51</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, I, pp. 206-8; II, p. 318.

<sup>52</sup> Carpenter to Ishikawa, 21 May 1910, Honjō, HCL, Ishikawa papers, FC, N. 6.

relations and whose strength lay in its egalitarian creed.

Further congruence of thought can be deduced from the articulation of the universal within the individual. Carpenter advocated 'cosmic consciousness' as the key to the attainment of genuine democratic ideals.<sup>53</sup> As Kirsten Harris explains, cosmic consciousness refers to the awareness of the interconnectedness of all people and matter existing in the past, present and future.<sup>54</sup> This awareness leads to a point where all distinctions of caste and class disappear, and equality and freedom can truly become the guiding principles of life in society. But it is only when individuals have come to the realization that they are all part of a universal self that this can happen.<sup>55</sup> Carpenter likened thus the achievement of cosmic consciousness to overcoming self-consciousness, a process that, for him, induced flashes of illumination or a kind of mystical revelation.<sup>56</sup>

The kind of activism espoused by Ishikawa also saw social transformation as the result of individual awakening, which itself demanded a gradual process of self-cultivation. This leaning toward a spiritual, almost mystical, understanding of social activism is explicit in Ishikawa's first full-length essay, *Kyomu no reiko* (Chaotic spirituality).<sup>57</sup> The text deserves particular attention for its evocation of Buddhist practices of introspection aimed at refining and purifying the mind. Ishikawa refers to the need for self-examination, or soul-searching, in order to attain a higher truth that

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<sup>53</sup> Carpenter referred to 'cosmic consciousness' as the third stage of human consciousness after animal and self-consciousness. He also termed this stage 'cosmic universal life'. See for example in *Pagan and Christian creeds: their origin and meaning* (London, 1920).

<sup>54</sup> Kirsten Harris, 'The evolution of consciousness: Edward Carpenter's "Towards democracy"', *Victorian Spiritualities (Leeds Working Papers in Victorian Studies)* 12 (2012), pp. 226-235. See also Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter*, p. 104.

<sup>55</sup> Harris, 'The Evolution of Consciousness', p. 233.

<sup>56</sup> Carpenter, *Pagan and Christian creeds*.

<sup>57</sup> Written during a stay in prison between April 1907 and May 1908.



implicitly rejects hierarchical constraints.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, the revolutionary epiphany he experienced at the village of Yanaka during the Ashio anti-pollution campaign in April 1906 proceeded from the sense of ecstasy that filled him during meditation.<sup>59</sup> The practice was important for him personally and also attests to an intimate association between political activism and spirituality.<sup>60</sup> Both Carpenter and Ishikawa related their socio-political visions to the notion of revelatory experience.

Such faith in self-introspection as a tool of social change does not square well with a conventional interpretation of revolutionary politics. Like his host, however, Ishikawa was adhering to a pervasive intellectual current of the turn of the century that valued non-rational, spiritual modes of apprehending reality. As a reaction to materialistic and utilitarian conceptions of development, this current took many expressions, of which interest in theosophy and occultism was an extreme example.<sup>61</sup> From a European point of view, it also embodied a critique of western civilization, which encouraged some thinkers to turn to sources of eastern tradition, particularly religious and spiritual ones.<sup>62</sup> Carpenter himself derived much insight from eastern thought in the course of his intellectual development. He located his understanding of the ‘universal self’ within a long philosophical tradition, which included the Hindu

<sup>58</sup> Ishikawa Sanshirō, ‘Kyomu no reikō’, *Ishikawa sanshirōshū*, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> Ishikawa Sanshirō, ‘Rō’ [Wander], in *Shakaishugi bungakushū* [Collected socialist texts] (Tokyo, 1963), p. 212.

<sup>60</sup> Ruth Harris has insightfully explored the link between spirituality and politics in ‘Rolland, Gandhi and Madeleine Slade: spiritual politics, France and the wider world’, *French History*, 27 (2013), pp. 579-600.

<sup>61</sup> Japanese historians refer to this trend as ‘shinpihugi’, meaning ‘mysticism’ or ‘mysteriousness’. Kawai Daisuke, ‘Shinpi o meguru shichō to zōchōshugi: 1910 nendai o chūshintoshite’ [Thought and symbolism regarding the ‘mystical’ in the 1910s], *Nihon shisōshigaku* [History of Japanese Thought], 44 (2012), pp. 231-50; Tsuruoka Yoshio, ‘Kindai nihon ni okeru [shinpihugi] gainen no juyō to tenkai’ [Importance and development of concepts of mysticism in modern Japan], in Shimazono, ed., *Kindaiteki ‘shūkyō’ gainen to shūkyōgaku no keisei to tenkai: nihon chūshin toshita hikaku kenkyū* [Formation and development of concepts of modern ‘religion’ and religious studies: Japan-focused comparative research] (Tokyo, 2001), pp. 33-43.

<sup>62</sup> This anti-westernism would culminate in Oswald Spengler’s *The decline of the west* published in Germany at the close of the First World War.

sacred treatises, the *Upanishads*, as well as Buddhism and Taoism.<sup>63</sup>

From that perspective, Ishikawa was a valuable interlocutor to Carpenter, who had a genuine interest in eastern spirituality and on the occasion of their meeting keenly discussed Zen practices and Shintoism with him.<sup>64</sup> As a participant in the spiritual trends of the times, Ishikawa found common ground with the Englishman. Mutual intellectual affinities thus validated his anarchism. By the 1910s, the two men had reached similar conclusions on the possibility of a higher egalitarian order and that its realization was 'a thing of the heart, rather than a political creed'.<sup>65</sup>

### III

The chance encounter through Carpenter with social reformers Henry Salt (1851-1939), founder of the Humanitarian League, and his wife Kate (1857-1919), added to Ishikawa's reflection on the association between eastern religious traditions and anarchism. He had read one of Salt's pamphlets on 'Humanitarianism' back in Japan already, a fact that Salt acknowledged with some curiosity.<sup>66</sup>

A close friend of Carpenter, with whom he shared the inclination for the simple life, Henry Salt remains one of the forgotten visionaries of his era. He was a noted scholar of Henry Thoreau (1817-1862) and an enthusiast for ethical socialism. Today he is mainly remembered for his ardent vegetarianism and denunciation of animal cruelty, but that obscures the wider reach of his views. Similarly Carpenter's brave and far-sighted defense of homosexuality tends to overshadow his other

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<sup>63</sup> Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter*, p. 271.

<sup>64</sup> Tsuzuki, 'My Dear Sanshirō', p. 5; Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter*, p. 349.

<sup>65</sup> Beith, Gilbert, foreword to Carpenter, *Towards democracy* (London, 1949).

<sup>66</sup> Salt to Ishikawa, 14 Nov. 1913, Honjō, HCL, Ishikawa papers, FC, N. 40.

contributions.<sup>67</sup>

Salt believed in the universal kinship of all creatures and readily contrasted Christian condescension towards animals with Buddhism's emphasis on the sacredness of all life.<sup>68</sup> He rejected the conventional divide between animals and mankind, arguing that one 'must recognize the common bond of humanity that unites all living beings in one universal brotherhood.'<sup>69</sup> In the belief that man is part of nature, not its master, he denounced despoliation of the natural environment at a time when ecological consciousness was not as prominent as today.

Salt's emphasis on 'universal brotherhood' and the Humanitarian League illustrates the special moral vocabulary favoured by the intellectual community to which he belonged. It attributed a strong significance to feelings of empathy intrinsic to the human condition and applied regardless of any distinctions of status or ethnicity.<sup>70</sup> Ishikawa shared this sense of empathy, as shown by his attachment to the term *heimin*, which had permeated his activism until then. After his return to Japan, he stressed a similar conception of *ninjō* (human feelings), a distinctly human moral consciousness that initiates and sustains changes in society: 'with all these multifarious phenomena of the cosmos as external force, *ninjō*, the internal factor that affects human society is essentially constant from ancient times to the present day and

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<sup>67</sup> See for example Antony Copley, *A spiritual Bloomsbury: Hinduism and homosexuality in the lives and writings of Edward Carpenter, E.M. Forster, and Christopher Isherwood* (Oxford, 2006).

<sup>68</sup> Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter*, p. 110; Willene and George Hendrick, eds., *The savour of salt: a Henry Salt anthology* (Fontwell, 1989), p. 12.

<sup>69</sup> Henry Salt, *Animals' rights: considered in relation to social progress* (New York, 1984), ch. 1.

<sup>70</sup> The title of Salt's last book, *The creed of kinship*, reflected his convictions.

from west to east.'<sup>71</sup>

Ishikawa's interest extended to the connections he saw between the principles of Salt's Humanitarian League and those promoted by the adepts of New Buddhist thought in Japan. In letter to old friend Takashima Beihō (1875-1949), a prominent supporter of progressive Buddhism and founder of the Heigo Press, he reported on an invitation to the Salt's cottage and enquired about the periodical on animal protection, *The Humanitarian*, which Henry Salt had offered to send to Takashima in Japan.<sup>72</sup>

Takashima was himself a fervent advocate of animal protection, together with other moral precepts such as the abolition of prostitution, temperance and gender equality. He campaigned as a core member of the New Buddhist Society.<sup>73</sup> As such Takashima was one of the many individuals involved in the rehabilitation of Buddhist religion during the Meiji era, following its eclipse by Shinto at the time of the Meiji Restoration of 1868.<sup>74</sup> This took different forms, including the rise of scholarly Buddhism in universities and the emergence of various reform movements, such as the one spearheaded by the New Buddhist Society. Reform movements had an ambivalent relationship to Christianity. The latter's expansion in modernizing Japan represented a challenge, but there was an accompanying realization that it should also serve as a model, particularly concerning methods of dissemination and campaigns to

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<sup>71</sup> Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Hishinkaron to jinsei* [Non-evolutionary theory and human life] (Tokyo, 1925), p. 8.

<sup>72</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, VII, pp. 95-6.

<sup>73</sup> Established in 1899 as the Buddhist Puritan Society, which changed its name to the New Buddhist Society in 1908. See Hoshino Seiji, 'Rational religion and the Shin Bukkyō (New Buddhism) in late Meiji Japan', in Yoshinaga Shin'ichi, ed., *Kindai nihon ni okeru chishikijin shūkyō undō no gensetsu kūkan: 'Shin Bukkyō' no shisōshi, bunkashiteki kenkyū* [Discursive space of intellectual religious movements in modern Japan: a study of the 'Shin Bukkyō' journal from the viewpoint of the history of culture and thought] (2008-2011), at <[http://www.maizuru-ct.ac.jp/human/yosinaga/shinbukkyo\\_report.pdf](http://www.maizuru-ct.ac.jp/human/yosinaga/shinbukkyo_report.pdf)>

<sup>74</sup> See James Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and its persecution* (Princeton, 1990).

encourage moral behaviour.<sup>75</sup> The New Buddhist Society kept a close interest in Unitarian practices, hence, for example, its own advocacy of temperance. In the background, a universalist perspective that aspired to the construction of a 'world religion' was never far from the minds of Meiji spiritual thinkers.<sup>76</sup>

Ishikawa and Takashima's correspondence touched upon the benefits of meditation, literary criticism and the travails of life as an exile.<sup>77</sup> Ishikawa was also keen that his friend read *The Humanitarian*.<sup>78</sup> His letters were published in *Shin Bukkyō*, the journal issued by the New Buddhist Society, an important outlet for his reflections on civilization and exile and for many years a forum of exchange between Christians and progressive Buddhists.<sup>79</sup>

Scholarship has shown that the ambitions of the New Buddhist movement went beyond the repositioning of Japanese Buddhism in the face of the Meiji administration's repressive policies. Indeed, it addressed not only purely religious concerns, but also the aspects of mysticism and self-cultivation that preoccupied many thinkers of the time and that they related to projects of socio-political reform.<sup>80</sup> Ishikawa's bonds with the movement reflected this trend. That he saw correspondences between Henry Salt's Humanitarian League and Takashima Beihō's New Buddhism highlights his role as a connector of ideas and people. The

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<sup>75</sup> Thelle, *Buddhism and Christianity*, pp. 198-201.

<sup>76</sup> Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs*, p.41; Thelle, *Buddhism and Christianity*, p. 218; see also Duara, Prasenjit, 'The discourse of civilization and pan-Asianism', *Journal of World History*, 12 (2001), p. 102.

<sup>77</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, VII, pp. 73, 79, 80, 98.

<sup>78</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, VII, p. 99.

<sup>79</sup> Thelle, *Buddhism and Christianity*, p. 211; Ishikawa introduced the work of Edward Carpenter and Elisée Reclus in the journal, see vols. 13-4 and 15-1, cited in Yoshida Kyūichi, *Nihon kindai bukkyōshi kenkyū* [Research on the history of modern Buddhism] (Tokyo, 1959), pp. 413-14.

<sup>80</sup> Yoshinaga, 'Theosophy and Buddhist reformers'; Tedo Kiyonobu, 'Shin bukkyō' ni miru bukkyōkai no kyōyōka' [Self-cultivation and religion in the New Buddhist movement], *Tokyo University Annual Review of Religious Studies* 18 (2001), pp. 31-43.

commonality was not just animal cruelty, but extended to a common moral vocabulary.

#### IV

Ishikawa's direct experience of the First World War while staying in Brussels with Paul Reclus was another pivotal experience of his exile years. From the first day of the invasion of neutral Belgium by German forces on 4 August 1914 until his flight to France six months later, he was sucked into the brutality of the global conflict. The first words of his 'Diary of a Siege' conveyed his outrage at 'citizens who have suddenly become vicious wild animals preying on their own kind, hating and cursing and trapping each other.'<sup>81</sup> The text went on to stress that:

The so-called civilized humanity of the present times, which has organized the murderous, thieving, plundering outfit known as the state, is really as cursed as a poisonous insect of the natural world. ... If I am fortunate enough to survive, then the history of this siege will generate reflections for the rest of my life.<sup>82</sup>

For Ishikawa and his friends, reports of burning, looting, and killing, together with unspeakable humiliations incited disbelief.<sup>83</sup> Then came the news of the devastation inflicted on the university town of Louvain, including summary executions, deportations and razing of the old library and surroundings.<sup>84</sup> The massacre of civilians in the small town of Andenne in the southern part of the country

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<sup>81</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, II, p. 13. The diary was penned in Brussels between 19 August 1914 and 6 January 1915.

<sup>82</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, II, p. 14.

<sup>83</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, II, p. 18.

<sup>84</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, II, pp. 31, 67.

compounded the image of a degenerated European civilization.<sup>85</sup> On learning about some new atrocity, Ishikawa expressed the hope that 'the Japanese military, who take the German army as a model, are more sensible than them'.<sup>86</sup>

His critique reflected a typical anti-imperialist anarchist stance, as well as disgust with ethnic discrimination. As he stated, 'ultimately, this war is a fight (for expansion) amongst the capitalist great powers, and their spirit of insulting the black and yellow peoples has rubbed off amongst themselves.'<sup>87</sup> At a time when the outbreak of the war was famously hailed in Japan a 'divine aid' for the development of the country,<sup>88</sup> Ishikawa offered a contrasting view. He lamented his government's designs on the German colonial possessions of Jiaozhou Bay on the Shandong Peninsula in China, suggesting that Japan was behaving like a thief taking advantage of a fire and risking a disastrous entanglement in the worldwide conflict.<sup>89</sup> In October 1914, he cautioned that this small act of vanity seemed like a step toward a future war with the U.S. because it would fuel anxiety amongst Europeans and Americans with regard to access to Chinese territory.<sup>90</sup>

Ishikawa was well aware that Belgium, as a small country with an unfortunate geographical location, was a nation-state artificially constructed for the sake of the big powers' strategic concerns, and, as Larry Zuckerman notes, treated as 'a rag doll for neighbours to squabble over'.<sup>91</sup> Ishikawa observed that, in that sense, Belgium shared much with Korea, annexed by Japan a few years earlier. For him annexation

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<sup>85</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, II, p. 66.

<sup>86</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, II, p. 78.

<sup>87</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, II, p. 176.

<sup>88</sup> By elder statesman Inoue Kaoru, cited in Frederick Dickinson, *War and national reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 239.

<sup>89</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, II, p. 127.

<sup>90</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, II, p. 172.

<sup>91</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, II, p. 21; Zuckerman, Larry, *The rape of Belgium: the untold story of World War I* (New York, 2004), p. 8.

threatened Belgium too if France and England failed to defeat Germany.

Ishikawa undoubtedly discussed concerns about the annexation of Belgium with his host Paul Reclus, who remained in the country even after the lifting of his exile order by France in 1905. Two years into the war, the two men signed *The Manifeste des Seize* (*The Manifesto of the Sixteen*), together with several other prominent figures of the European anarchist movement. The *Manifesto*, dated 28 February 1916, reflected a difference of opinion that dated back to 1914. It declared support for allied efforts to defeat Germany, signaling a break from the non-interventionist stance of a majority of anarchists at the time.<sup>92</sup> Published first in the French syndicalist daily *La Bataille* in March 1916, then in *La Libre Fédération* of Lausanne a month later, the *Manifesto* was drawn up by Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) with the help of French activist Jean Grave (1854-1939).<sup>93</sup> It owed its name to the (assumed) number of its signatories, which included another revolutionary exile, Georgian Prince Varlaam Cherkesov (1846-1925), Dutch syndicalist Christiaan Cornelissen (1864-1942) and French anarchists Charles Malato (1857-1938) and Marc Pierrot (1887-1942).<sup>94</sup> In following months, a hundred and seven more signatories, including activists from England, Belgium, Portugal, Italy and Switzerland, added their support.<sup>95</sup> The text, unashamedly pro-Entente, sanctioned a split within the European anarchist movement, precipitating its demise according to some, and prefiguring the contradictions that would undermine socialist parties,

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<sup>92</sup> Jean Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste en France*, (2 vols., Paris, 1975), II, p. 15.

<sup>93</sup> Confino, Michaël, 'Anarchisme et internationalisme: autour du *Manifeste des Seize* [Correspondance inédite de Pierre Kropotkine et de Marie Goldsmith, janvier-mars 1916]', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 22 (1981), p. 232.

<sup>94</sup> In reality, the signatories numbered fifteen, a place-name having been mistaken for a surname.

<sup>95</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, III, p. 49.



notably after the October revolution of 1917.<sup>96</sup>

The signatories attributed to Germany not only blame for the conflict, but also accused it of having long planned its attacks on Belgium, France and Russia. They warned of peace talks that at the time would overwhelmingly favour the aggressor, exempting it from reparations and rubber-stamping the annexation of territories. The German government had deceived its workers, they claimed. Moreover, the working class had been poorly represented at the conference of Zimmerwald, thereby depriving it of any real meaning.<sup>97</sup> The signatories insisted there was no reason to believe in German peaceful intentions; the aggressor's objective was the annexation of Belgium and the territories of northern France. Therefore 'We anarchists, anti-militarists, enemies of war and passionate supporters of peace and the brotherhood of peoples, have taken sides with resistance and did not consider separating our plight from that of the rest of the population.'<sup>98</sup>

The *Manifesto*, however, immediately attracted the condemnation of the London International Anarchist Group. In an April letter to the journal *Freedom*, Italian exile Errico Malatesta (1853-1932) criticized the paradoxical idea of supporting collaboration with the government and capitalists of some countries in order to defeat the government and capitalists of others.<sup>99</sup> The London Group's stance

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<sup>96</sup> Confino, 'Anarchisme et internationalisme', p. 231. On socialists' abandonment of the principles of non-resistance at the eve of the First World War, see Marc Mulholland, 'Marxists of strict observance?' *The Second International, national defence and the question of war*, *Historical Journal* 58 (June 2015), pp. 615-40; on anarchism during the war, see especially Matthew Adams and Ruth Kinna, eds., *Anarchism, 1914-18: internationalism, anti-militarism and war* (Manchester, 2017).

<sup>97</sup> Conference held in September 1915 amongst delegates of anti-militarist socialist parties from several countries with the aim of coordinating international socialist opinion and action with respect to the war.

<sup>98</sup> Manifeste des Seize in <<http://www.encyclopedie-anarchiste.org/articles/s/seize.html>> (author's translation).

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

relied on the conventional anarchist understanding that war was inevitable under a capitalist system, and that revolutionary insurrection was the only solution.

It is undeniable that the *Manifesto* strayed from some basic anarchist principles, which had sustained the movement so far. And it is somewhat odd to find a Japanese name at the bottom of a document concerned with the future of Belgium. Undoubtedly happenstance, in the form of his friendship with Paul Reclus, played a part in Ishikawa's decision to engage directly with the issue. He appeared keen to side with fellow exiles, such as Reclus, Kropotkin and Cherkosov, who viewed France as the cradle of freedom and revolutionary ideals and thus worth defending.<sup>100</sup> Ishikawa supported this view in his own writings.<sup>101</sup> In contrasting it with faceless German militarism, which he considered as a negation of humanist values,<sup>102</sup> he foresaw the path that Japan would follow two decades later.<sup>103</sup>

Ishikawa accepted Reclus and Kropotkin's distinction between the motherland and the state, the former deserving protection from the forces of oppression.<sup>104</sup> In a world of collapsing certainties, he focused on one reality: the unjust plight of neutral Belgium, sited at the heart of the conflict. The small and effectively defenceless country<sup>105</sup> had become a kind of global *heimin* caught up in a clash of imperialisms and was therefore amply deserving of empathy. In 1929, Ishikawa recalled the event in those terms:

When I saw the young and the old, women and children, of both Belgium and

France subjected to the persecution and indignity of military occupiers acting

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<sup>100</sup> Bantman, *The French anarchists in London*, p. 220.

<sup>101</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, VIII, pp. 365-366.

<sup>102</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, II, pp. 167.

<sup>103</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, II, p. 208.

<sup>104</sup> See Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste en France*, I, pp. 368-79.

<sup>105</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, VII, p. 99.

like predatory animals, I could not say I was a pacifist. Robbers entered my own house and inflicted inexcusable violence to members of my family. To fight was the only way to get rid of them. That was the meaning of our declaration.<sup>106</sup>

References to one's 'own house' and 'members of a family' were not fortuitous, as they reinforced the notion of a bond of affection between the author and his temporary land of adoption.

Ishikawa's political engagement with the plundering of Belgium added an unexpected Japanese name to the *Manifesto*, but also bore its share of contradictions. From an ideological standpoint, it was hard to reconcile with the non-war stance he had adopted during the Russo-Japanese War, even if one subscribes to the distinction between 'homeland' and 'state'. His involvement with the European anarchist movement also raised questions about his alleged rejection of violence. Although Ishikawa insisted that he never tolerated violence as a political tool,<sup>107</sup> he readily associated with figures such as Paul Reclus, and earlier in Japan Uchiyama Gudō (1874-1911), who did not always reject violent anarchist tactics.<sup>108</sup>

## V

The true legacy of the *Manifesto* lay in the formation of a community of like-minded thinkers concerned with reclaiming human agency and attached to higher spiritual values rather than debates about class struggle and revolution. The signatories were

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<sup>106</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, III, p. 50.

<sup>107</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, V, p. 416.

<sup>108</sup> Paul Reclus supported propaganda by the deed. Likewise, Kropotkin was ambiguous on violence. On Uchiyama Gudō, see Fabio Rambelli, *Zen anarchism: the egalitarian dharma of Uchiyama Gudō* (Berkely, 2013).

united in their resistance to any form of state oppression and the rejection of institutional affiliations and ideological categories. Over the years, they spread their ideas via publications and local activism, with Ishikawa as main point of contact in East Asia.

Several years after the war, the journal *Plus Loin* (Further) became a major outlet for the dissemination of their ideas. This French publication of a dozen pages described itself as a 'periodical about social progress and human emancipation, outside of any party allegiance and against any class privilege, for the whole development - material, intellectual and moral - of individuals in a freely organized society'.<sup>109</sup> Together with concerns about social progress and labour conditions, *Plus Loin* denounced Bolshevism and colonialism, with by-lines by Paul Reclus and his son, Jacques, Jean Grave, Kropotkin and others.

In his memoirs, Ishikawa remembered meeting its editor, Marc Pierrot (1871-1950), several times at his house in the company of Reclus and other friends. He described a man who expressed anarchism not just verbally, but also through his studies and attitude to life.<sup>110</sup> Pierrot, a medical doctor by training and one of the *Manifesto's* signatories, embodied the ambitions of *Plus Loin*, a title chosen to reflect the need for proponents of social change not to stop at the kind of solution Bolshevism offered, but to 'go further'.<sup>111</sup> Thus, the journal's opening issue reproduced a letter from anarchist and social historian Max Nettlau (1865-1944), urging readers to reconsider the work of celebrated geographer Elisée Reclus, Paul's

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<sup>109</sup> *Plus Loin* ran from March 1925 to September 1939.

<sup>110</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, VI, p. 261.

<sup>111</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, VI, p. 261.

uncle. According to Nettlau, Elisée was someone whose open-mindedness and tolerance transcended petty polemics, setting him 'above the movement.'<sup>112</sup>

The promotion of Elisée Reclus's legacy became one of Ishikawa's main tasks after his return to Japan in 1920. Since the spring of 1916, he had spent much of his remaining time in exile with the Reclus family in Domme, a small village in southwest France. There, he tilled the earth while familiarizing himself with Elisée's geographical and political writings.<sup>113</sup>

Ishikawa maintained links to *Plus Loin* and its contributors. A few instalments of the publication acknowledged anarchist pamphlets 'received from Japan', for which Ishikawa provided a title in French.<sup>114</sup> One of them was the 'Gospel to the Peasants', written by his friend Akaba Ganketsu (1875-1912) before his death in prison,<sup>115</sup> while others he wrote himself. The translation of an article by anarcho-feminist Takamure Itsue (1884-1964) about the women's front in Japan also made it to *Plus Loin*.<sup>116</sup> So did the report on a talk about the peasants' conditions in Japan by Shiina Sonoji (1887-1962), a Japanese resident in France and friend of Paul, through whom he also met Ishikawa.

Conflicting opinions about the 1916 *Manifesto* resurfaced amongst European anarchists in 1928. In *Plus Loin*, Paul Reclus reaffirmed that militarism had been the main enemy, denying that patriotism had swayed his views at the time. Again, he mentioned his experience of exile and explained that his homeland was 'anywhere

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<sup>112</sup> *Plus Loin*, N. 1, Mar. 1925, p. 4.

<sup>113</sup> Ishikawa, *Chosakushū*, VIII, pp. 390, 2.

<sup>114</sup> *La restauration de la vie primitive*, in N. 36, Mar. 1928; *La critique de la conception matérialiste de l'histoire*, in N. 38, May 1928; *Le mouvement makhnoviste*, in N. 52, July 1929.

<sup>115</sup> *Nōmin no fukuin/Evangile aux paysans*, in N. 52, July 1929.

<sup>116</sup> *Plus Loin*, N. 66, Sept.-Oct. 1930, pp. 14-5.

there are men of heart and intelligence, comrades and friends’.<sup>117</sup> In a subsequent issue, a letter ‘from our friend Ishikawa’ reiterated that the Japanese intellectual was ‘in full agreement’ with his co-signatories, but also, taken in by the liberal mood of the Taisho Democracy in his country, expressed some optimism about present Japanese militarism ‘which cannot resist the great popular democratic movement’.<sup>118</sup>

The Japanese equivalent of *Plus Loin* was Ishikawa’s own *Dinamikku*, a four-page leaflet printed in the village of Chitose in western Tokyo, where he moved in 1927. *Dinamikku* ran between November 1929 and October 1934, sharing with its French language counterpart several of its by-lines, including Jean Grave, Marc Pierrot, Paul and Jacques Reclus. The title, date and heading of the paper also appeared in French, reflecting the connection to the unofficial global community to which Ishikawa belonged.<sup>119</sup> In a country where nationalistic sentiments were again intensifying, however, the leaflet’s dissenting tone had consequences. Government censors banned the sale of four issues and its editor remained on the police’s watch list for many years.<sup>120</sup>

In light of Ishikawa’s aspiration to be an educator rather than an agitator, *Dinamikku* represented one important platform of communication. At the core of this endeavour, however, were the links nurtured between Ishikawa and the Reclus family. They endured until the former’s death in 1956. Contacts with Jacques were particularly abundant, totalling fifty-four letters over the years.<sup>121</sup> Ishikawa’s friendship with Jacques flourished after he had settled in Chitose. On three occasions,

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<sup>117</sup> Paul Reclus, ‘Dans la mêlée’, *Plus Loin*, N. 40, July 1928, p. 4.

<sup>118</sup> Ishikawa Sanshirō, *Plus Loin*, N. 43, Oct. 1928, p. 10.

<sup>119</sup> *La Dynamique - Organe mensuel de culture anarchiste*.

<sup>120</sup> Censors banned the December 1931 and February 1932 issues, which denounced the Japanese intervention in Manchuria.

<sup>121</sup> The letters from Ishikawa to Jacques (or Paul) have not been found despite attempts to locate them.

the Frenchman traveled to Japan from China where he lived for twenty-five years.<sup>122</sup> Author of a book on the Taiping rebellion and of several translations from Chinese into French, Jacques maintained the anarchist tradition of his forebears. He mingled with Chinese activists, several of them also known to Ishikawa. He taught French and social history, also professing his faith in the gradual and non-violent diffusion of anarchist ideals.

The letters exchanged between the two men before the war reflected the chaos slowly engulfing Chinese society and growing anti-Japanese sentiments after the 1931 Manchurian Incident. Jacques, however, condemned the Japanese invasion in ambivalent terms: despite the evil nature of imperialism, he saw in foreign intervention an opportunity to clean up the endemic corruption and socio-economic mismanagement in China.<sup>123</sup> Yet, he urged Ishikawa to keep up his work on behalf of their shared moral convictions.<sup>124</sup> Harassment by the Japanese police was a constant concern for both men, and Jacques observed rightly that, given the country's authoritarian tendencies, the political situation in Japan would lead more quickly to war than revolution.<sup>125</sup>

Ishikawa could count on numerous informal channels of communication with China. Several of his Chinese acquaintances had belonged to the revolutionary fringe active in Tokyo before his exile years. He met others through Paul Reclus in Brussels and France in the 1910s. Most remained friends or contacts well into the Second World War. The efforts to reach Chinese readers relied partly on *Dinamikku*, which

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<sup>122</sup> Jacques visited Ishikawa in the summers of 1929 and 1933, and again in late 1934/early 1935.

<sup>123</sup> Jacques Reclus to Ishikawa, 15 Nov. 1931, Honjō, HCL, Ishikawa papers, FC, N. 35.

<sup>124</sup> Jacques Reclus to Ishikawa, 6 Dec. 1929 and 26 Jan. 1933, Honjō, HCL, Ishikawa papers, FC, N. 35.

<sup>125</sup> Jacques Reclus to Ishikawa, 26 Jan. 1933, Honjō, HCL, Ishikawa papers, FC, N. 35.

made its way to China, more specifically Shanghai, Beijing and Nanking, through the intermediation of Jacques amongst others.

Ishikawa was in contact with biographers and publishers of Elisée Reclus's work in several countries, including Max Nettlau who gave his assistance to a translation project.<sup>126</sup> Joseph Ishill (1888-1966), a Rumanian emigrant to New Jersey and friend of Carpenter provided the North American link to their network. As independent publisher and one of Reclus's biographers, he helped Ishikawa with the diffusion of Reclusian ideas in Japan, writing to him in 1928 'I am glad that my work is of significance (for those by) whom our ideals and ideas are so sincerely interpreted'.<sup>127</sup>

Within this anarchist community, the dangers of state control and encroachment represented a constant preoccupation. In a long letter to his Japanese friend, Paul Reclus deplored the fact that 'individual property and the supreme role of the state remain untouched dogma for the majority of men'.<sup>128</sup> Occasionally, he reaffirmed the strength of the links within the community, assuring Ishikawa that 'the Paris friends are well'.<sup>129</sup> In his last note in 1938, three years before his death, Paul would restate the commonality of their aspirations: 'I have been moved by your nice postcard, which tells me that you are well and that we have similar sentiments on many issues', but his final words also imply that the tide was running against their shared anarchist struggle against militarism: 'I hope that your book will be successful,

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<sup>126</sup> Ishikawa to Nettlau, 27 Nov. 1929, Amsterdam, International Institute of Social History (IISH), Nettlau papers, general correspondence, N. 654. Author's italics and translation from French.

<sup>127</sup> Ishill to Ishikawa, 2 Jan. 1928, Honjō, HCL, Ishikawa papers, FC, N. 24.

<sup>128</sup> Paul Reclus to Ishikawa, date unknown, Honjō, HCL, Ishikawa papers, FC, N. 38. Only the second half of the letter has been preserved. As it refers to the recent Conference of Locarno, it was probably written in 1925.

<sup>129</sup> Paul Reclus to Ishikawa, 1 Jan. 1931, Honjō, HCL, Ishikawa papers, FC, N. 38.



though [I fear that] now warlike literature has a greater chance than philosophy'.<sup>130</sup>

Indeed, he lived just long enough to see his predictions validated by the upheaval of a new world war.

## VI

The devastation brought by the Pacific War within and outside Japan's borders confirmed Ishikawa's and his friends' darkest forebodings. His government's geopolitical scheming during World War I had evolved into a reckless and bellicose imperialism. Meanwhile, Soviet communism had betrayed the hopes of proletarian emancipation and given birth to an authoritarian behemoth. As a form of silent resistance to what he perceived as ideological folly, Ishikawa retreated into self-sufficient living during the war years. It was mostly symbolic, but resistance of any sort was unusual amongst pre-war Japanese intellectuals, many of whom had flipped over to nationalism. After the war, Ishikawa resumed activism in the Japanese anarchist movement and continued to promote a model of socio-political organization inspired by ethics of cooperation and independence from state control.

In retrospect, his exile years may seem like a haphazard sequence of events, marked by the contingencies of travel, spontaneously created friendships and intellectual fellowships, constraints imposed by the First World War, impromptu political activism, and encounters with western thought. Despite, or because of, its apparent lack of structure, Ishikawa's transnational experience offers a rich source of reflection to historians interested in the early twentieth-century global exchange of knowledge. More specifically, it suggests taking into account two methodological correctives.

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<sup>130</sup> Paul Reclus to Ishikawa, 2 Feb. 1938, Honjō, HCL, Ishikawa papers, FC, N. 38.

The first one relates to assumptions about the directionality of knowledge transfer between east and west. By its nature anarchism eschews state and, often, other institutional affiliations. Ishikawa's 'wandering' years in Europe highlight the existence of transnational connections that operate under the radar of official forums of intellectual exchange, making the task of tracing them particularly difficult for historians. Freed from organizational rigidities, these connections subvert the conventional understanding that ideas are unilaterally transmitted from a more advanced and 'enlightened' space to a less progressive one – in this case, from Europe to East Asia. As Ishikawa's meeting with Edward Carpenter shows, this understanding is reductive. A complex intermingling of western and eastern concepts supplied the background to their mutual belief in non-hierarchical relations and, especially, the link between the political and spiritual spheres. The existence of a commonality of ideas, a 'shared imagination', between eastern and western thinkers thus constitutes a valid methodological assumption. Indeed, the very concepts of 'east' and 'west' may be more of a hindrance than a help to historians.

Second, Ishikawa's encounters and travels highlight the importance of subjectivity in moulding transnational experiences. Too often historians of ideas, including anarchism, are concerned with the development of concepts, and see historical actors as the carriers of abstract ideas rather than individuals with complex motivations. For example, Ishikawa's signing of *The Manifesto of the Sixteen* in 1916 shows how chance and emotional bonds influenced anarchist politics as much as pre-existing ideological convictions. Emotional affinities, randomness and contingency are rarely given much weight in intellectual history, but they are important factors in the story of the Japanese anarchist and, equally, his interlocutors on the global stage.

Ishikawa's four-decade transnational dialogue shaped his intellectual trajectory. But by conceiving this trajectory as part of a common imaginative project shared with European thinkers, who, like him, were liable to the contingencies of human encounters, we can offer a different understanding of global intellectual history.