

By Proxy of His Black Hero: *The Bonus March* (1932) and Eitarō Ishigaki's Critical Engagement in American Leftist Discourses

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In 1932, artist Eitarō Ishigaki (石垣榮太郎, 1893–1958) created an oil painting titled *The Bonus March* (Figure 1). Standing at nearly five feet tall and three and a half feet wide, the picture depicts a towering Black figure cradling a Caucasian-looking figure, whose limp body drapes over the muscular arm of his rescuer, his right fist tightly clenched and raised. Centrally positioned, the figures' shirtless, interlocking torsos form an unwavering triangle that dominates the image. Encroaching on this pair, however, are two men in uniform on the left and an artillery tank with its main gun threateningly aiming at the Black figure's head. Undeterred, the central figure appears to stare down the tank with unflinching determination, and the plain-clothed people behind him on the right seem to echo his action as they also defiantly face the approaching threats, forming a united front.

A work that attests to Ishigaki's superb draftsmanship, *The Bonus March*, with its pictorial style, may not look dissimilar to other paintings produced in American art during the 1920s and 1930s. The sculptural modeling of the faces, the meticulously constructed brushstrokes that highlight the central figures' musculature, and the compact composition, all seem to reflect a kind of aesthetics that would flourish in the New Deal era—evident in the public art projects by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), established in 1935 as part of the Roosevelt administration's effort to combat unprecedented economic

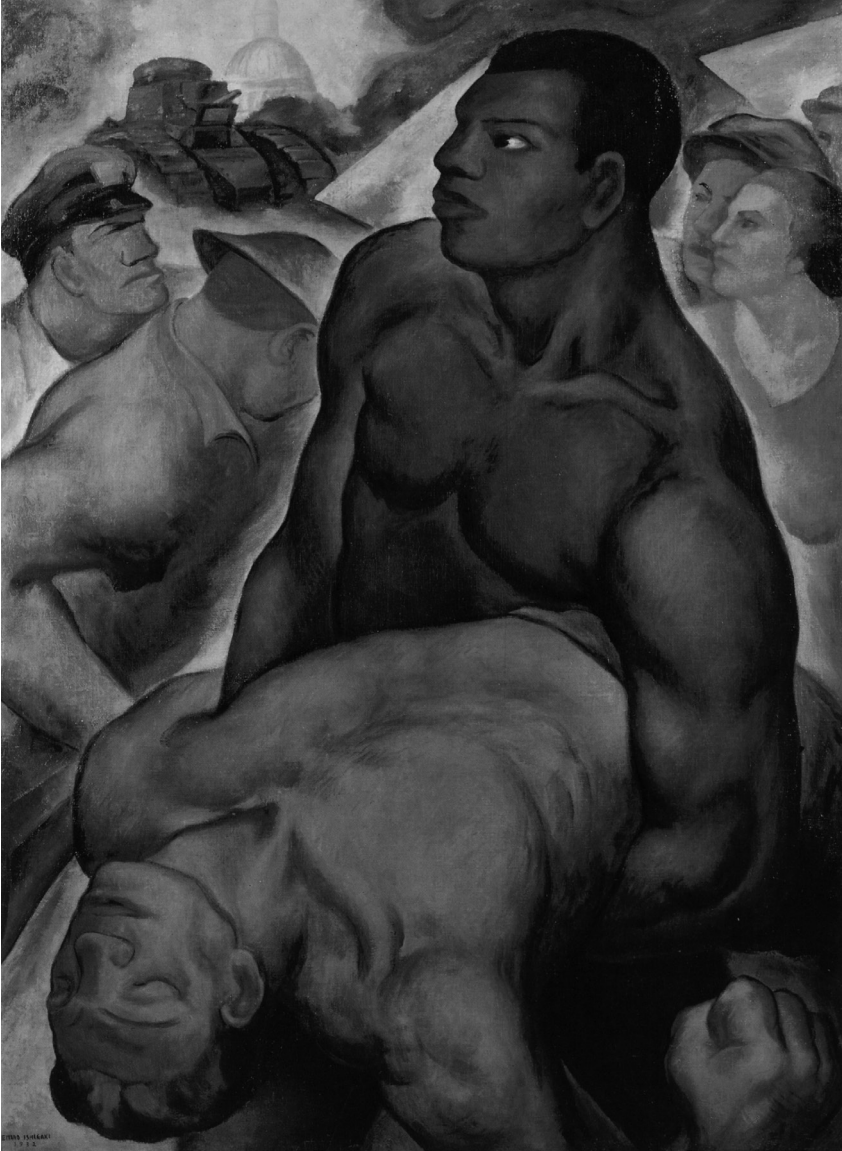


Figure 1: Eitarō Ishigaki, *The Bonus March*, 1932. Oil on canvas, 56.9 x 41.7 in. (144.5 x 106 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama, Japan.

devastations throughout the country. The subject matter of social unrest also places *The Bonus March* within the tradition of the so-called American social realist art produced in the same decades, for the painting's title refers to a historical event underlined by grave economic and sociopolitical struggles.

Ishigaki depicts a critical moment in WWI veterans' famous march into Washington D.C. in the summer of 1932 to demand that the U.S. government distribute the promised "bonus checks" to compensate for their wartime services in a time of severe economic difficulties. The pictorial representation of the masses, particularly the working class, fighting for their rights and welfare (often against the capitalistic Establishment), was indeed one that often appeared in the artistic production of many American progressives and leftists in the 1920s and 1930s.¹

However, one is also likely to recognize that Ishigaki's *Bonus March* is an unusual work in at least two respects. The artist's Japanese name may not be familiar to those who are well-versed in pre-WWII American art and thus raises immediate questions of who the artist is, what his *oeuvre* looks like, and *why* he painted a large canvas about the march. A cursory search in most English-language surveys of twentieth-century American art, or even those focusing on the art produced in the interwar years, yields little substantial information about Ishigaki. Mentioned only in passing, the artist's name appears in art historian Andrew Hemingway's *Artists on the Left: American Artists and the Communist Movement, 1926-1956*, and indicates that Ishigaki was not only an established artist but also an active member of progressive organizations in New York in the early decades of the twentieth century. Yukiko Koshiro's "Beyond an Alliance of Color: The African American Impact on Modern Japan," is the rare piece of scholarship that offers extended discussion of Ishigaki's political activism, but his artwork did not receive much critical analysis.² Furthermore, Ishigaki's rendition of a heroic Black figure stands out from the majority of artwork produced by his contemporaries, who largely chose to depict African Americans as passive victims of racism and injustice. This different pictorial strategy by a Japanese immigrant artist, who is hardly mentioned in the American art canon, not only provokes curiosity but also suggests that an investigation into the meaning, the historical context, and the subtext of *The Bonus March* should reveal a part of modern American art that merits a closer, more nuanced study.

A study of Ishigaki's *Bonus March* will also change a viewer's understanding, and expectation, of what the art of an American artist of Asian descent looks like from this period. Existing scholarship in American/Asian American art has yet fully explored the critical ways in which emigrant Asian artists, particularly those active before World War II, interrogated and re-imagined "American-ness" in their work. A few recent exhibitions and books indeed reevaluated, and re-presented, more nuanced narratives of the artistic production and broader plight of *émigré* Asian and Asian American artists in the pre-WWII decades. However, these still serve more as surveys or overviews that provide foundational research resources for future critical studies of individual artists and their collectives.³ This essay intervenes in such generalizing studies by offering a delimited analysis of Ishigaki's *Bonus March*, and his *oeuvre*, based on a conceptual approach that considers immigrant artists as agents of active contribution to, and criticism and re-definition of, what America, and

being American, meant in specific historical contexts. Many of these artists in fact used art as vital means to examine their experience in America, where expectations from divergent cultural and ideological alliances converged and clashed, and to negotiate their way through a society with underlying economic and racial inequality and conflicts. I argue that an *émigré* artist's representational strategies, including the choice of subject matter or pictorial language, reveal much about the artist's active grappling with, and construction of, his or her multivalent and oft-ambivalent positions in an Exclusionist era when his or her presence and contributions in the U.S. were regarded as alien or even marginal—by Exclusion I am referring to the U.S. laws that rendered Asian immigrants ineligible for naturalization and citizenship since the late 19th century.⁴ In other words, their work has an indexical potency to not only point to the larger historical impetus that compelled their artistic production, but also foreground the ways in which an immigrant engaged in, and intervened, contemporary discourses on a variety of sociopolitical issues through his or her artistic production.

In Ishigaki's case, he chose to deploy African American figures in *The Bonus March*, and his other paintings, as his multivalent proxies to pictorially elucidate his critical views on sociopolitical issues being fought along the ideological fault lines during his times. As a topical image painted in a "realistic" (representational) manner, *The Bonus March* serves as both a pictorial documentary and critical interpretation of a contemporary event—a kind of interpretative realism. This pictorial strategy points to an ideological position from which Ishigaki enunciated his social commentary and criticism that actually *distinguishes* him from other American social realists. That is to say: the artist's protest against inequality and racism, imparted through his Black pictorial subjects, is informed by, and connected to, his personal experience and intimate understanding of the status as the minority, the marginalized, and the disenfranchised, in an era when the American society was unable to fulfill the democratic ideals of liberty and equal rights for all. An investigation of Ishigaki's paintings of African Americans serves as a rare, but much needed, visual study that contributes to the significant body of critical literature on the complex, collaborative, and ambivalent historical relationships between Black Americans and Asian Americans. It also illuminates a kind of fluid "trans-racial" positioning that Ishigaki constructed in his visual rhetoric that predates our contemporary discourses on racial identity politics. It provides nuance to, and simultaneously expands, the existing narratives of American history especially from immigrant/racial minority viewpoints.⁵

Forming a Pictorial Alliance with the Labor (under) Class

An economic factor was the driving force behind the "Bonus Army," as the D.C. marchers were called. The demonstration organizers had hoped that the presence of about 20,000 unemployed veterans at the doorsteps of the nation's

capitol would persuade, and pressure, the U.S. Congress to pass a bill that could make immediate payment of veterans' adjusted compensation certificates, valued at \$1,000 each. The certificates, awarded to them by Congress in 1924, were not redeemable until 1945, but the veterans thought President Hoover and the government could allow them to cash in early to help them stay afloat in the dire economic straits. The long wait for the Congress's decision on the bill resulted in the marchers' prolonged encampment in the Anacostia area near Capitol Hill—the "Hoovervilles" as their make-shift camps were called. As the marchers' stay lengthened, criticism from various quarters of the society grew—the most publicized and certainly damning of which were accusations of the marchers succumbing to the manipulation of communist agitators among them. Critics denounced the Hoovervilles as a hotbed harboring the so-called "undesirable elements," namely members of the Communist Party U.S.A. (CPUSA), and the opponents of the march pressured the Hoover administration to take action to dissolve the encampment. Historians have since reconstructed a more nuanced picture of the various, sometimes ideologically conflicting camps among the marchers, including the fact that the marchers themselves were weary of the CP members as well and at one point "expelled" several of those members and even surrendered some them to the police. But the cries for the "red hunt" were arguably the most overwhelming at the time and precipitated in the D.C. authorities' eventual forced evacuation and clash with the marchers.⁶

Referred to as the "Bonus Incident" by some, this historic march captivated the nation's attention in 1932 and fueled the artistic production of American progressives and leftist intelligentsia, with whom Ishigaki had long been alliance. The eventual confrontation between the unarmed veterans and the government's overpowering show of force provided artists yet another grave example, and ripe subject, of how the Establishment (perceived to be controlled by capitalist powers) continued to refuse to take care of its economically disadvantaged (and politically disenfranchised) people. *The Bonus March* indeed represents Ishigaki's unequivocal support for the demonstrators. While he does point to the casualty of the conflict by including a fallen man in his image, albeit in a rather understated fashion, his main emphasis is on foregrounding (literally) the defiant marchers. The men in uniform and the artillery tank on the left represent the D.C. police and U.S. Army troops, sent in by the Hoover administration and commanded by Douglas MacArthur, then the Army's Chief of Staff, to reinforce the removal of the marchers from the Anacostia area. The Capitol Building in the background indicates not only that the forced evacuation took place near the capital of the nation but also, as it hovers above the troops, that the U.S. government sanctioned the deployment of military forces against its own citizens. By pictorially minimizing the presence of the Army, the D.C. police, and the tank, Ishigaki unmistakably declares his solidarity with the marchers and represents them as compositionally dominant—and symbolically winning—manner, taking up two thirds of the canvas. In reality, however, the

mostly unarmed demonstrators could not match the firepower of the troops and several veterans were actually killed and numerous marchers injured.⁷

The Bonus Incident had a profound impact on Ishigaki, both personally and ideologically. Living in New York at the time, his next-door neighbor was a WWI veteran (also an opera-signing bachelor and highly-skilled dress maker) who usually seemed to be indifferent to sociopolitical events, yet abruptly abandoned his business to join the marchers in D.C. in the midst of a June heat wave in 1932. Ishigaki was said to have been glued to the radio listening to “every second of the broadcast news” about the March. And moved by the action of the veterans, Ishigaki quickly and passionately completed the painting toward the end of that summer.⁸ His support for the unemployed veterans, many of whom became laborers after the war, was also more than a sympathetic gesture, for he strongly and intimately identified with the working class due to his own immigrant background. Having emigrated to the U.S. in 1909 to join his father, a migrant worker in Bakersfield, California, Ishigaki experienced America as many Asian immigrants did at that time through performing underwaged, physically punishing itinerant work along the Pacific Coast. At the age of sixteen, Ishigaki worked as a day laborer for fruit farmers, a busboy at restaurants with a Mexican laborer clientele, and sometimes a hotel cleaner, in Seattle, Bakersfield, and San Francisco. In a series of autobiographical essays published in *Chūōkōron* (中央公論, *The Central Review*) in 1952, Ishigaki vividly recalled surviving the 120-degree heat and living near Chinatown in Bakersfield, where some 600 prostitutes paraded their scantily clad bodies in front of a babelic community of multinational laborers. At the same time as he learned English at a Christian church and studied the Bible, he was introduced to literature on socialism. His full exposure to Marxist and socialist thought came after he moved to live with his aunt in San Francisco 1912, reportedly because of heightened tensions among residents of Japanese descent in Bakersfield: between those who advocated assimilation into American society, with whom Ishigaki allied, and those who upheld staunch, Japanese nationalistic views.⁹

In the Spring of 1914, Ishigaki met Sen Katayama (片山潜, 1859–1933) in San Francisco and began their friendship of nearly two decades. Katayama would become a mentor and father figure to Ishigaki; Ishigaki was to serve as the first editor of Katayama’s autobiography published in a well-known Japanese journal *Kaizō* (改造) in 1922. Katayama was a unique figure in Japanese political history—“Japan’s first Bolshevik” as historian Hyman Kublin calls him—who pioneered sociopolitical radicalism and labor movement, including organizing Japan’s first Social Democratic Party.¹⁰ As scholars Daryl J. Maeda and Vijay Prashad have also pointed out, Katayama played a pivotal role in the founding of not only the Japanese Communist Party but also the CPUSA.¹¹ A Japanese radical on his third sojourn in the U.S., Katayama was regarded as an influential political activist among small groups of Japanese immigrants in San Francisco, and later in New York in 1918, where Ishigaki had lived from 1915 to 1952. Ishigaki recalled that Katayama studied books such as Karl Marx’s

Capital: A Critique of Political Economy on “a desk made from orange crates” while working as one of a group of Japanese day laborers in San Francisco. Ishigaki also wrote that Katayama strongly identified with the workers: “He was not sympathetic of the work performed by laborers from the perspective of a different class of people. He was a laborer himself.” In fact, Ishigaki added that Katayama “worked as a cook in the house of a white man. The name of his occupation on his [Communist] party card was ‘cook’.”¹² Katayama’s conviction in advocating for the welfare and rights of workers gave voice to (Asian) emigrant laborers, who were perceived to be taking jobs away from, and threatening the livelihood of, white Americans.¹³

Like his mentor Katayama, Ishigaki identified himself as a worker even as he began to study art at schools in San Francisco and later attended evening classes at the Art Students League in New York. His instructors at the League included John Sloan, whose oeuvre of American urban genre paintings, rebellion against the conservative National Academy of Design, and 22-year tenure at the League, influenced generations of artists.¹⁴ Sloan’s heartfelt portrayals of ordinary people surviving their daily lives, some in the neglected corners of a bustling city, seemed to have made an impact on Ishigaki, as he also devoted his early paintings to depicting urban dwellers of vast economic and social differences encountering each other in often awkward situations, as exemplified by *Town* (originally titled *Processional-1925*) and *Nuns and Flappers*, both painted in 1925, and *Jobless Music Band* (also called *Penny Musician*) in 1928 (Figure 2).¹⁵ However, Ishigaki went further by focusing on the conflicts, psychological and physical, between the economically disparate dwellers. He called attention to the juxtaposition of fur-clad female figures and a handicapped man in *Town*, for instance, not from the detached perspective of a flaneur, but from his identification with the begging man attempting to alleviate the hardship in his life.

Indeed, Ishigaki reminisced that he was always struggling to pay rent as he pursued his art training. At one point he decided to accept an offer to live at a friend’s vacant apartment at 73 Horatio Street in Greenwich Village, only to discover that the apartment, which could not retain any regular renters, was located in the poor ghetto where “dreadful odors floated up from the banks of the Hudson River” and “drunks and prostitutes lurked in the dark shadows of the tenements.” Ishigaki’s story had a positive outcome, however, for he was able to make friends with hostile kids, by offering to draw their portraits, and eventually with other adults. He also realized that his friend, Morris Stransky, correctly predicted that Ishigaki would make a positive impact on the neighborhood and new renters consequently moved in to fill up the building. Among the tenants was a “female news writer” on the second floor, who was most likely Margaret Sanger, the controversial, pioneering advocate of birth control, as Ishigaki biographies count Sanger, and Agnes Smedley, among Ishigaki’s acquaintances in this period.¹⁶ While he was able to exhibit at art shows throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and had his first one-man show at



Figure 2: Eitarō Ishigaki, *Town*, 1925. Oil on canvas, 48.5 x 34.5 in. (123.2 x 87.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama, Japan.

the American Contemporary Art (ACA) Gallery in 1936, he never achieved financial affluence in his career, a struggle common among his contemporary artists. It was partly because of this personal experience of economic hardship

that led Ishigaki to proclaim, in his article about life in Greenwich Village, that “the poor and artists will always be related” because painters and the poor live next door to each other and “the poor work with their muscles and artists work with their senses and physical strength.” In his view, artists and laborers in effect are both members of the same economic underclass.¹⁷

Painting from the Left: *New Masses* and the John Reed Club

A larger ideological impetus, in addition to Ishigaki’s personal experience, compelled him to paint *The Bonus March* as well. The painting needs to be considered in the context of Ishigaki’s close association with American leftists, along with the formative mentorship of Katayama, and the changes and challenges that the American Left faced in early 1930s. *The Bonus March* illustrates Ishigaki’s own continuing move toward an earnest production of imagery that fully engaged in sociopolitical struggles of the People in a clearer, straightforward visual rhetoric. His earlier paintings already showed an alliance with, and advocacy for, the downtrodden and the disenfranchised: his stylized *Man with a Whip* (1925), for example, dramatized the conflicts between the oppressed labor class and the exploitive management, manifested in anonymous but imposing figures straddled on menacing horses attempting to squelch any unrest or resistance from the workers—a painting that had a “touch of Marxist class struggles,” in Ishigaki’s own words (Figure 3).¹⁸ Before creating *The Bonus March*, Ishigaki also painted *American Cossacks* (originally titled *Unemployment Demonstration*) in early 1932, in which policemen on horses fought back unarmed demonstrators whose outfits of overalls and caps identified them as workers. Ishigaki’s shift in pictorial strategies in fact corresponded to a shift among American leftist artists in search of a more effective way to produce the kind of art that could relate to the masses and tackle problems of socio-economic inequality—a shift best exemplified by the change of direction that the leftist magazine, *New Masses*, undertook during the same period.

It should be noted here that existing scholarship on the history of *New Masses* rarely includes Ishigaki, who was in fact a regular contributor. For instance, in Susan Platt’s summary of graphics in *New Masses*, she mentioned Hugo Gellert’s July 1931 cover, William Gropper’s letter, Elizabeth Olds’s and Mabel Dwight’s satirical lithographs, and Bernarda Bryson’s etchings, but Ishigaki’s name was overlooked.¹⁹ However, Ishigaki made his first appearance in *New Masses* as early as July 1929, the issue that used a photographic reproduction of his oil painting, *Undefeated Arm* (also titled *Arm*), as its cover—only three years after the first issue of *New Masses* was published in May 1926 (Figure 4). His *Fight*, also called *Man on a Horse*, was the cover image for the June issue of *New Masses* in 1932. His list of other contributions to the magazine was by no means negligible. His *Unemployed Demonstration* was included in the “Workers Art” section in the February issue in 1932, and it was



Figure 3: Eitarō Ishigaki, *Man with a Whip*, 1925. Oil on canvas, 57.2 x 41 in. (145.5 x 106.5 cm). The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan.

re-published as *American Cossacks* in October 1935. His *Ku Klux Klan* (1936), which accompanied a *New Masses* report of a Klan meeting in Atlanta in 1936, reappeared as *South, U. S. A.* in *Daily Worker* (March 9, 1936), a New York-

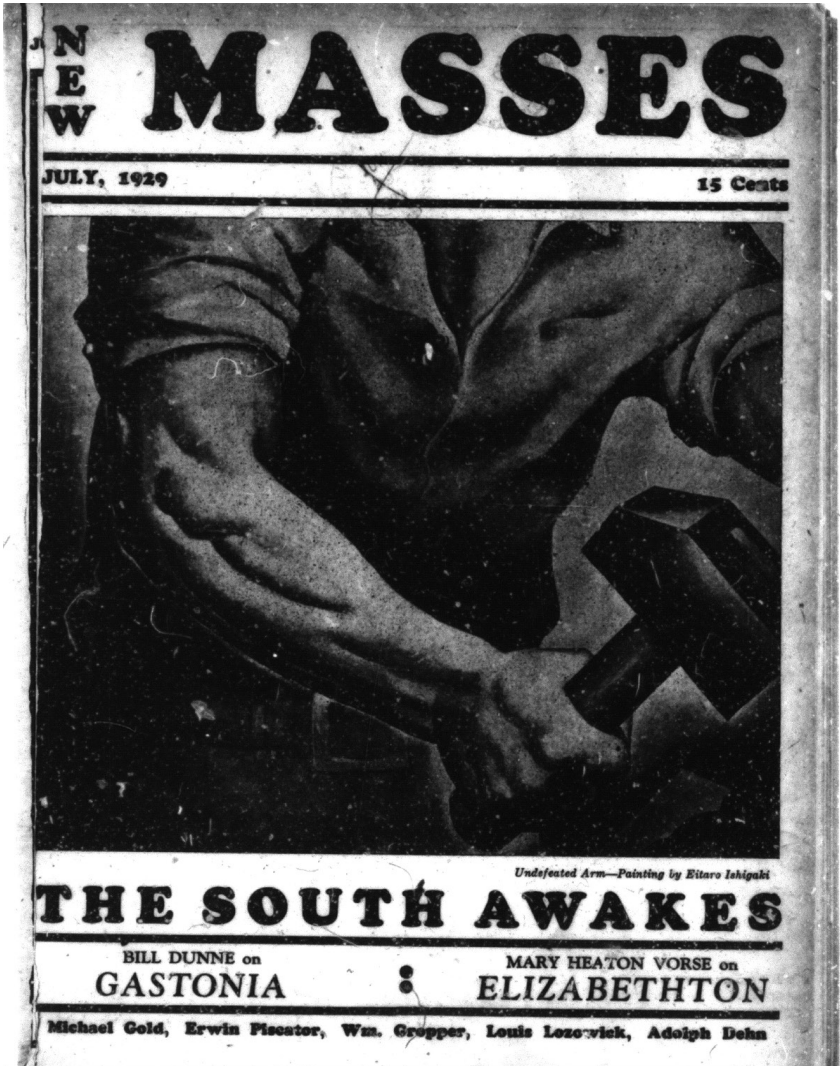


Figure 4: Cover Art of *New Masses* by Eitarō Ishigaki, July 1929.

based newspaper published by the CPUSA since 1924 (Figure 5). Additionally, *New Masses* published reproductions of Ishigaki's *Down with the Swastika* (March 1936); *The Zero Hour* (December 1936), also titled *Soldiers of People's Front*; and *Flight* (December 1937), alternatively titled *Chinese Refugees*.²⁰ There is no evidence to suggest that *The Bonus March* was created for, or commissioned by, *New Masses*, but its subject matter clearly corresponded to the kind of imagery that the magazine promoted during that period.

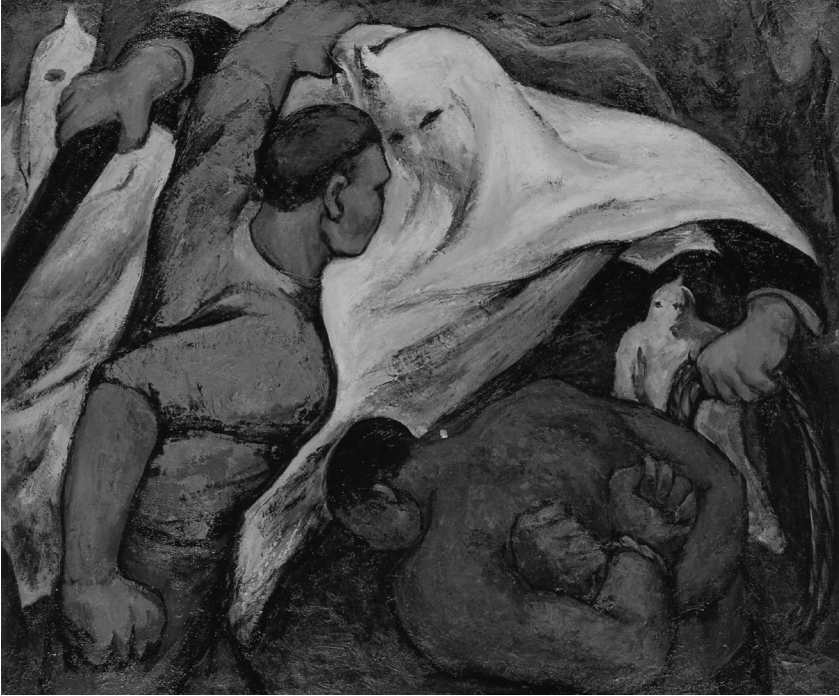


Figure 5: Eitarō Ishigaki, *South. U.S.A. (Ku Klux Klan)*, 1936. Oil on canvas, 30.1 x 36.1 in. (76.5 x 91.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama, Japan.

New Masses provided a fertile venue for leftist artists to showcase the kind of socially engaged work that in Ishigaki's view was "avant-garde" in American art at the time.²¹ Since the beginning, *New Masses* had always maintained an explicit alliance with the worker but was ostensibly adamant about not proclaiming any affiliation with any political party in its initial years. In fact, the magazine was founded in 1926 by contributors to *The Liberator*, a left-wing journal, who disagreed with the American Communist Party's take over of *The Liberator* in 1922. However, while it was not an official CPUSA publication, many of its contributors were indeed involved in, or associated with, the causes advanced by the Party. Its editors and contributors were engaged in extensive debates on what constituted a socially relevant art that could provide advocacy for the worker, and they also maintained a productive debate over the "relationship between artistic issues of technical skill and formal innovation and the more political issues of subject matter and ideology."²² Michael Gold, a Communist writer who was one of the six original editors, took over as editor-in-chief in June 1928 and sharpened the publication's focus on advancing labor causes through publishing more explicitly political content.

Under Gold's direction, *New Masses* strove to become the forum where workers contributed and showcased their writings and graphics, and the journal greatly foregrounded contributors' working-class backgrounds, as opposed to their "professional standings" as simply artists. Gold also strongly favored a kind of "proletarian realism" with an accessible and straightforward style and revolutionary content—precisely the kind of art that Ishigaki was beginning to produce during the same period.²³

The push for publishing a more clearly revolutionary journal by Gold was connected to, and acknowledged by, compatriots elsewhere, most notably exemplified by a letter, "Resolution on the Work of the New Masses in 1931," sent by Bruno Jasienski, Secretariat of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers (IURW) from Moscow, the Soviet Union, on June 27, 1932. Jasienski opens the letter by declaring: "The Secretariat of the IURW places on record that the magazine made a whole series of achievements in its own reorganization, on the basis of fulfilling the decisions of the Kharkov International Conference of revolutionary writers." The Kharkov Conference took place in 1930 and the American delegation to the conference had pledged to actively participate in all the important cultural and political campaigns in the United States. Jasienski acknowledged that "all the important strikes that took place in America in 1931 were mirrored on the pages of the magazine," and it must be credited with achieving considerable success in "reflecting clearly and continuously the struggles of the working class." But the magazine still must pursue a stronger, political stance, for it "has given altogether too little attention to the struggle against Fascism. As regards social-fascism, the NEW MASSES has put up a disgracefully poor fight." And its literary treatment of the labor movement and the workers' struggle "suffer from schematism and abstractness in which the concrete content of this struggle is lost."²⁴ In effect, Jasienski and the IURW believed that *New Masses* ought to feature literary and visual works that deployed *realism* to advance the fight against capitalists and their control of an unequal socioeconomic structure—to which "fascism" referred in this context—and to advocate for the workers in an ideologically unambiguous way.

Jasienski further elaborated on the kind of visual arts that the IURW believed should be featured more prominently on the pages of *New Masses* by way of citing specific, unsuccessful examples from 1931:

Very often, in the drawings published in the magazine, we find revolutionary content sacrificed for esthetic innovations and experiments in form (Gropper's cover for the April number; Soglow's drawings for the May and June numbers; the September cover, etc.) together with a fetishistic approach to capitalist technique (Lozowick) and its underestimation of the consciousness and militancy of the revolutionary movement with corresponding overestimation of the might of American capitalism. . . .²⁵

Similar to its criticism of the “schematic” and “abstract” literary work, the IURW favored more realistic imagery. However, the criticized artists, Louis Lozowick in particular (who was Ishigaki’s colleague and friend, and one of the magazine’s founders and editorial staff), had long held that abstract paintings, rendered in hard lines and geometric shapes, represented a radical pictorial innovation that corresponded to radical politics—in other words, their “revolutionary art” and *homage* to Russian constructivists active in the 1910s and 1920s.²⁶ One can regard Ishigaki’s *Man with a Whip* and his semi-abstract (and almost cubist) treatment of the menacing horseman and the ominous factory as the artist’s corresponding effort in this camp of American leftist art. Responding to the IURW resolution and the new direction of *New Masses*, however, both Ishigaki and Lozowick subsequently created more representational imagery that offer clearly topical and socially-engaged commentary in the 1930s, evident in Ishigaki’s *The Bonus March*, as well as *The Noose (Lynching)* (1931), *K.K.K. (South U.S.A.)*, and Lozowick’s much-reproduced *Lynching* (1936)—all of which addressed racially-motivated violence and race relations that will be examined later in this essay.

In Jasienski’s criticism of *New Masses*, he also pointed out that the magazine had not established “sufficient contacts with the John Reed Club and the numerous similar workers’ cultural organizations in America” in order to fulfill its role as the “central organ of the IURW in the U.S.A.”²⁷ His critique was not entirely accurate, for the John Reed Club was actually founded by a group of *New Masses* staff members in October 1929 to serve as an organization with a mission to nurture proletarian artists and produce a revolutionary art that tackled issues of “anti-militarism, anti-lynching, economic exploitation, etc.”²⁸ Ishigaki, Lozowick, and William Gropper (1897–1977), another artist named in the IURW letter, were all active Club members and prolific contributors to *New Masses*. Similar to the editorial debates at *New Masses*, the John Reed Club artists had also grappled with the question of what the appropriate form and content of a revolutionary art ought to be since the founding of the club.²⁹ While the Club artists were largely in agreement in terms of their pictorial content that highlighted socio-economic issues (their imagery unequivocally proclaimed their anti-capitalist protest), their formal expressions varied—best exemplified by *An American Landscape*, a collaborative illustration by the Club artists that was published in the April issue of *New Masses* in 1930. Its subject matter is clearly a protest against the oppressive Establishment, embodied in a large, menacing police horseman clubbing men on the street, with the grim, towering Capitol building looking on in ominous silence. But the picture is a somewhat odd mixture of abstraction and realism that correspond to Club artists’ divergent pictorial styles and choices.³⁰ In part to respond to the IURW’s push for more explicitly proletarian, and realistic, literary and visual work, the John Reed Club held its first national conference in May 1932 and produced resolutions that included a pledge to “make the club a functioning center of proletarian culture, to clarify and elaborate the point of view of proletarian as opposed to bourgeois

culture; to extend the influence of the club and the revolutionary working class movement."³¹ Until its dissolution in 1936, the John Reed Club artists indeed devoted much attention to the revolutionary causes and showcased its artists' pictorial protests in its annual exhibitions, including the explicitly titled *The Social Viewpoint in Art* in 1933.³²

Taking into consideration this historical context and Ishigaki's active association with these groups, *The Bonus March* can thus be regarded as one in his series of pictorial contributions to this collective effort, both as a John Reed Club member and a contributor to *New Masses*. It also served as a critical means with which he participated in the Left's fight against what it perceived to be a government backed, manipulated, and corrupted by capitalists and their cohort. Indeed, *The Bonus March*, and *American Cossacks* (shown in a small, solo exhibition at the John Reed Club in 1932) along with his later works such as *Revolt in the Cuba Island* (1933), *Crash on the Street* (or *Demo*, 1934), and *Uprising* (1935), represent Ishigaki's persistent effort in intensifying a visual rhetoric that directs critical attention toward the violent conflicts between oppressive regimes and underclass resistance.³³

Engaging in the Race Discourse, by Proxy of His Black Heroes

Similar to the ideological impetuses that compelled Ishigaki to choose the March as a subject matter, Ishigaki's deployment of an African American figure as his heroic protagonist in *The Bonus March* and other imagery appears to have been driven by his engagement in the discourses on race as well.³⁴ As it was uncustomary for Ishigaki to explain his intentions behind his artistic production, one would not be able to secure any proof, from primary sources, to ascertain Ishigaki's decision in *not* taking a more autobiographical approach by painting people of Asian descent to address issues concerning race and class. But he was undoubtedly aware of the ramifications of both racist and exclusionary policies promulgated by the U.S. government, as he strove to establish his reputation as an American artist and actively participated in artists groups. For instance, when he was dismissed from the Federal Art Project of the WPA in July 1937, along with many other prominent emigrant artists, because they were legally "aliens," his statement was wistful:

I have lived in this country for thirty years, but because Orientals cannot become citizens, they have taken our only means of livelihood from us. Though we live like other Americans—have been educated here, pay taxes, and have the same stomachs as American citizens—we are not allowed to become naturalized. You can see how unfair the whole thing is."³⁵

His comment reveals a deep dissatisfaction with the inequality that he and fellow immigrants had to endure despite his assimilationist claim—of having *become* American in almost every aspect of life. It also points to the artist's conscious grappling with issues of race as an Asian émigré who, like African Americans, was relegated to the space of minority and the disadvantaged. This interracial affinity had been part of the long-standing sense of solidarity between Asians and Blacks—at times ambivalent and complicated, as Prashad and Mullen have examined. As such, one can consider *The Bonus March*, a painting of a heroic African American by an Asian artist, Ishigaki's pictorial affirmation of that Afro-Asian alliance.³⁶

But the valorization of a Black hero in Ishigaki's painting can also be regarded as the artist's deliberate pictorial intervention in broader discourses on racial inequality, and in prevailing pictorial representations of African Americans. His choice of foregrounding a Black veteran called attention to a contingent of African American WWI soldiers who served as a segregated regiment in the war but marched alongside, and lived among, other white veterans—an important aspect of the March that even many historians have subsequently sidestepped or overlooked.³⁷ While some photographic reportage included Black veterans, the presence of African Americans proudly marching arm-in-arm with their Caucasian comrades was not featured in any prominent way in drawings or paintings about the Bonus Army.³⁸ Historically, few artists (non-Black or African American) portrayed WWI Black veterans in their paintings, according to art historian Jacqueline Francis. Even the rare example that Francis cited, *Negro Soldiers* (1934), a mural by artists Malvin Gray Johnson and Earle W. Richardson depicting bands of “doughboys” bravely fighting for their country, shows no visible facial features of the soldiers who form a united but anonymous front.³⁹ And the dust jacket of John Henry Bartlett's 1937 book, *The Bonus March and the New Deal*, shows a singular white veteran in tattered uniform walking toward the Capitol Building with his arms outstretched while braving hurling rocks.⁴⁰

In Ishigaki's *Bonus March*, on the other hand, the African American veteran has a degree of realism and specificity, but he is also rendered as a larger-than-life presence that was *leading* the march. In effect, Ishigaki unapologetically represents a strong Black figure who not only marches side-by-side with his white compatriots, but also confidently spearheads the charge to champion and fight for his and his fellow marchers' rights. Ishigaki's intervention in *glorifying* a Black protagonist was indeed an unusual representational strategy among his fellow artists who were producing socially- and racially-conscious imagery, African American and non-Black alike.

As scholars have pointed out, many progressive artists, who were Ishigaki's contemporaries and colleagues, by and large portrayed African Americans as victims of social injustice and rendered them “helpless” and in need of the rescue of the whites, at least in pictorial terms. The prevailing subject matter of lynching in these artists' work enabled them to protest against racist vigilantism,

to argue for tougher anti-lynching legislations, and to raise public awareness of racial inequality in American society. However, such anti-lynching imagery tended to focus on the zealous and savagery mob and the gruesome violence that was inflicted on Black victims, instead of giving these victims any agency to fight back, pictorially speaking. The figure that is about to be devoured by the vicious flames set by a masked mob in George Bellows's lithograph, *The Law Is Too Slow* (1923), the charred and mangled body that hangs lifelessly in Isamu Noguchi's sculpture, *Death* (1934), and the castrated man who is bound to a broken column and left to die in Harry Sternberg's lithograph, *Southern Holiday* (1935), are just a few examples among many that portray lynched African Americans as casualties of racism and barbarism. Lozowick also contributed to the anti-lynching cause with his 1936 *Lynching* (*Lynch Law*). However, while he pushes the contorted face of a victim on a noose right up against the picture plane, thus forcing the viewer to occupy an ambiguous and uneasy position of a witness/conspirator, his chiaroscuro highlights (literally) the suffering man without giving him any (pictorial) agency to speak, or resist and fight, for himself.⁴¹

New Masses offered a slightly larger variety of pictorial representations of African Americans in the late 1920s and early 1930s. There were indeed imagery of Black victims, such as the agonizing face of a noosed man by Jacob Burck on the magazine's June cover in 1931, and Phil Bard's illustration, *By the Way Sheriff, What Did That Nigger Do?*, that shows a Black man dangling from a tree in the August 1931 issue of *New Masses* (16)—the same subject of Mitchel Siperin's *Southern Holiday* that appeared in *New Masses* in April 1930 (9). But William Siegel's two covers for *New Masses*—November 1929 and July 1930—both portray African American faces in a solemn and dignified manner that differs from the other imagery of terrorized Black bodies and faces (Figure 6). Gropper, Ishigaki's close friend and colleague, also offered some representations of empowered African Americans in *New Masses*, including the May 1931 cover that shows Blacks and whites marching side-by-side in a parade, and an illustration, "Invading Grafters' Paradise" (February 1932, 15), that depicts a towering Black protester defiantly walking toward the Capitol Building, while politicians (or bankers) and a policeman scampered and raised their arms in surrender (Figure 7).

To be sure, Ishigaki also created imagery that similarly portrayed African Americans as helpless victims, such as in *The Noose* (*Lynching*) and *K.K.K. (South U.S.A.)*. The former depicts a mob that is about to hang a bound Black man in the dark of the night. The vast darkness that surrounds the lynchers and Ishigaki's choice to put the viewer at a (safe) distance render the picture a somewhat detached scene. While the latter places the viewer right in the middle of a man's fight against hooded Klansmen, the Black man (bound and presumably about to be lynched) is depicted in a passive, bowed pose waiting to be rescued. Reviewing a John Reed Club show in 1936, in which *K.K.K.* was included, Margaret Duroc of *Art Front* praised Ishigaki's commitment to

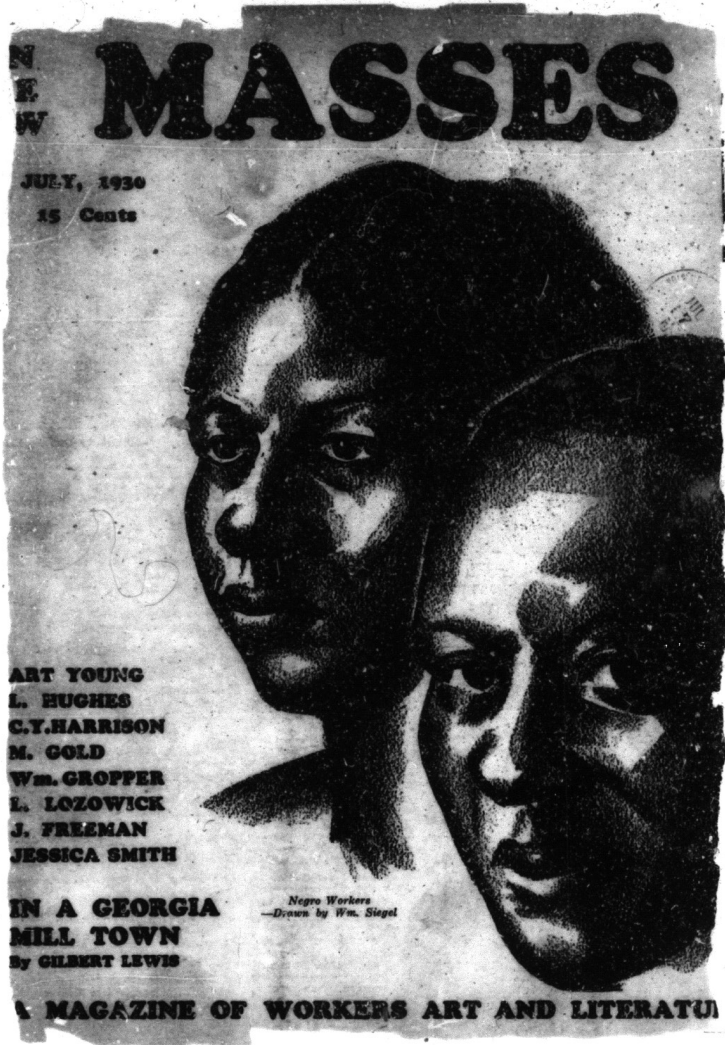


Figure 6: Cover Art of *New Masses* by William Siegel, July 1930.

portraying progressive causes—”Of all the painters Ishigaki alone has indicated that the workers are ready to fight”—and that his painting is a “rhythmical and dynamic composition of the white worker fighting a Ku-Kluxer in order to free a magnificent Negro.” But Duroc also criticized Ishigaki’s representation of the Black figure, for it “places too great an accent on the bowed head, to the detriment of the dynamic intention of the painting, and, as meaning, it falsely suggests that the Negro relies upon the white worker alone for his freedom.”⁴²



Figure 7: William Gropper, *Invading Grafters' Paradise*, *New Masses* (February 1932): 15.

With the figure's defiant pose and active role in *The Bonus March*, however, Ishigaki moved toward a different pictorial narrative that showed an African American man as an unwavering pillar—pictorially and symbolically—of the American society in turmoil. And the viewer is given not only a clear view of, and direct access to, the hero, but also an implied, spatial alliance with him and

the marchers, as the towering figure stands up against the picture plane (near the viewer) and the “enemies” (law enforcement and government) are confined to the background. It serves as Ishigaki’s critical means to recognize African American veterans’ vital participation in the March in particular, African Americans’ important contribution to the country in general and, at the same time, to subvert the horrific, racist photographs that had been circulating in the public.⁴³

In this regard, Ishigaki’s pictorial intervention can be regarded as the artist’s contribution to a vocal contingent in the discourses on race that pushed for an unequivocal recognition of African American veterans’ participation in defending their civil rights, and the complete abolishment of any Jim Crow remnants. In addition to some news reports, *New Masses* devoted a number of reports and editorials to supporting the marchers, including Harry Raymond’s “The Siege of the Capital,” in which he listed that one of the ex-servicemen’s demands to the U.S. government was the request that there ought to be no “jimcrowing or discrimination against Negro veterans.” He also pointed out that while two thirds of the Chicago delegation was white, they “smashed down the jimcrow barriers” and elected Joe Gardner, Communist Candidate for Assembly in Chicago and an African American, to be their commander.⁴⁴ Roy Wilkins, a rookie writer for W. E. B. DuBois’s *Crisis*, an official magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), visited the marchers’ camps in 1932 and enthusiastically declared, “there was one absentee, James Crow.” He observed:

There I found black toes and white toes sticking out side by side from a ramshackle town of pup tents, packing crates, and tar-paper shacks. Black men and white men, veterans of the segregated army that had fought in World War I, lined up equally, perspired in sick bays side by side. For years the U.S. Army had argued that General Jim Crow was its proper commander, but the Bonus Marchers gave lie to the notion that black and white soldiers—ex-soldiers in their case, couldn’t live together.⁴⁵

The description of “toe-to-toe” camaraderie and black-and-white alliance is reminiscent of Ishigaki’s depiction of the interlocking torsos in *The Bonus March*. While this de-segregated and united front seemed to still provoke criticism from various sectors in society that had yet come to terms with a post-Reconstruction America, the visual and textual support for racial equality and civil rights that Ishigaki and his allies put forth was emphatic and determined.

In effect, Ishigaki created *The Bonus March* as a pictorial statement of defiance against racial inequality and racism, underlined by both his solidarity with the socio-economically disenfranchised and a humanistic camaraderie that extended beyond racial boundaries and societal conventions—an “alliance

beyond color,” to borrow Yukiko Koshiro’s phrase. By proxy of his Black hero, Ishigaki not only formed a sociopolitical coalition with African Americans but also thrust himself and, by extension, the viewer, into the heart of an ideological struggle for the democratic rights for *all* Americans regardless of racial or national origins.

As such, *The Bonus March* illuminates a kind of fluid, “trans-racial” positioning that Ishigaki constructed in his visual rhetoric and casts a different light on not only a contentious historical event with underlying ideological and racial struggles, but also an America as critically perceived and represented by an immigrant, a story of “Americanness” that differs from that in many of his colleagues’ work. This delimited study hopefully has also evidenced that American artists of Asian descent (Japanese in this case) were by no means “apolitical” in the pre-WWII or even pre-1965 era. Their sociopolitical work points up their passionate engagement with critical issues of ideology and race—manifested in pictorial representations of the minority by the minority—that deserve to be more carefully studied. In other words, their artistic production offer pivotal insights into the “other” side of American modernity that calls for more scholarly exploration in order for us to better understand these artists’ vital participation in, and contributions to, twentieth-century American artistic and cultural history.

Notes

1. For books on social realism, there is the seminal, edited volume by David Shapiro, *Social Realism: Art as a Weapon*. Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1973. Other recent publications include: *The Social and the Real: Political Art of the 1930s in the Western Hemisphere*. Alejandro Anreus, Diana L. Linden, and Jonathan Weinberg, eds. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006; Stacy I. Morgan, *Rethinking Social Realism. African American Art and Literature, 1930-1953*. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2004.

2. Yukiko Koshiro, “Beyond an Alliance of Color: The African American Impact on Modern Japan,” *positions: east asia cultures critique* 11:1 (Spring 2003): 183-215. A short biographical sketch can be found in *Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970* (Stanford University Press, 2008), 338-339. Andrew Hemingway, *Artists on the Left: American Artists and the Communist Movement, 1926-1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 47-48, 62-3, and several places where Ishigaki’s name is mentioned within a list of artists. In Helen Langa’s book, *Radical Art: Printmaking and the Left in 1930s New York* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), Ishigaki’s name appeared, but was only listed, at a handful of places. A few publications in Japan with English translations provide the main basis for my research on Ishigaki’s biography; see Masahiro Yasugi, *Japan in America: Eitarō Ishigaki and Other Japanese Artists in the Pre-World War II United States*. Wakayama, Japan: The Museum of Modern Art, 1997; and Toru Asano, *Japanese Artists Who Studied in U.S.A. and the American Scene* (Tokyo, Japan: The Museum, 1982), 184-186; 65-70. More scholarship is needed to fully investigate and understand Ishigaki’s and his fellow *émigré* artists’ sociopolitical activities in the decades before WWII; this essay would hopefully serve as a catalyst.

3. See, for instance, Daniell Cornell and Mark Dean Johnson, eds., *Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents, 1900-1970*. University of California Press, 2008; and Julia Armstrong-Totten and Marian Yoshiki-Kovnick, *A Seed of Modernism: The Art Students League of Los Angeles, 1906-1953*. Pasadena and Berkeley, Calif.: Pasadena Museum of California Art and Heyday Books, 2008. For publications in Japanese, see Ayako Ishii, *Amerika ni ikita Nikkeijin gakatachi: kibo to kuno no hanseiki, 1896-1945 (Japanese and Japanese American Painters in the United States: A Half Century of Hope and Suffering, 1896-1945)*. Tokyo, Japan: Nihon Terebi Hōsōmō, 1995, among others.

4. The Immigration Act of 1924 established a quota system for immigration based on national origins and, with the existing Chinese exclusion laws, excluded nearly all Asians from eligibility for American citizenship. For detailed discussions of the harmful and long-term impact

of these exclusionary laws, see Lee A. Makela, "The Immigration Act of 1924," in *Asian Americans and Congress: A Documentary History*, ed. Hyung-Chan Kim, 225-261 (London; Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996); Mae M. Ngai, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," *Journal of American History*, 86, no. 1 (June 1999): 67-92.

5. Among the recently published work that investigates "Afro-Asian encounters" are: Vijay Prashad, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2001; Heike Raphael-Hernandez and Shannon Steen, eds., *AfroAsian Encounters: Culture, History, Politics*. New York: New York University, 2006; see, especially, Bill V. Mullen's "Persisting Solidarities. Tracing the AfroAsian Thread in U.S. Literature and Culture," for a historical overview of the expressions of solidarity between African American and Asian American writers and intellectuals, 245-259; Hazel M. McFerson, *Blacks and Asians in America: Crossings, Conflict and Commonality*. Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2006; and Fred Ho and Bill V. Mullen, eds., *Afro Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African Americans and Asian Americans*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.

6. "Bonus Army Drives 8 Reds from Ranks," *New York Times*, June 28, 1932, 2. There is a substantial body of literature on the historical circumstances and the many sociopolitical complications surrounding the Bonus March. See, among others, Roger Daniels, *The Bonus March: An Episode of the Great Depression*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Pub. Co, 1971; Louis Liebovich, *Press Reaction to the Bonus March of 1932: A Re-Evaluation of the Impact of an American Tragedy*. Columbia, S.C.: Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 1990; Paul Dickson and Thomas B. Allen, *The Bonus Army: An American Epic*. Walker & Company, 2004; and Stephen R. Ortiz, *Beyond the Bonus March and GI Bill: How Veteran Politics Shaped the New Deal Era*. New York: New York University Press, 2009.

7. John W. Killigrew delineates the decisions behind, and process of, deploying military forces from the Army's perspective, in "The Army and the Bonus Incident," *Military Affairs*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Summer, 1962): 59-65. Reports filed on the day of the first clash, July 28, 1932, appeared in *The New York Times* the following day with provocative headlines: "Troops Drive Veterans from Capital; Fire Camps There and Anacostia; 1 Killed, Scores Hurt in a Day of Stife" and "Bombs and Sabres Win Capital Battle," *New York Times*, July 29, 1932, 1.

8. Ayako Ishigaki (石垣綾子), *Umi o watatta ai no gaka: Ishigaki Eitarō no shōgai* (海を渡った愛の画家: 石垣栄太郎の生涯), (石垣綾子) (海を渡った愛の画家: 石垣栄太郎の生涯), 御茶の水書房 (Tokyo: Ochanomizu Shobō, 1988), 140

9. Asano, 184-186, and his "Ishigaki Eitarō—America's Japanese Painter," in *Ishigaki Eitarō*. Tokyo, Japan: Tobu Dezain, 1991, n/p. Yasugi offers a very detailed chronology of Ishigaki's life in *Japan in America*, 119-130. Ishigaki's memoir, "Amerika Horo Yonjunen" ("40 Years' Wandering in America"), was serially published in *Chūōkōron*, v. 67, n.7-10, 1952. For a discussion of the oft-divisive issues of Asian diasporic nationalism among immigrant laborers in early twentieth century, see Daryl J. Maeda, *Chains of Babylon: The Rise of Asian America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

10. Kublin offers a richly detailed biography of Katayama's tumultuous journeys through the sociopolitical landscapes in his *Asian Revolutionary: the Life of Sen Katayama*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964. He notes that Ishigaki was "deemed to be literarily gifted" to edit Katayama's autobiography (page 257, note 24).

11. Maeda, 36-37. Prashad, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting*, 32.

12. Ishigaki, "Memories of Sen Katayama," *Monthly Review of the Meiji Cultural Works*, October 25, 1955; translation by Satoko Hata of Hata Language Services, Sherman Oaks, California. Ishigaki's encounter with Katayama is also described in Asano, 184. Katayama had a short stay in Texas between 1904 and 1907, as described in Kazuhiko Orii and Hilary Conroy, "Japanese Socialist in Texas: Sen Katayama, 1904-1907," *Amerasia Journal* 8 (1981). Mitziko Sawada devoted a good deal of attention to Katayama's activities in her seminal publication on Japanese immigrants in urban America since the end of the nineteenth century, *Tokyo Life, New York Dreams: Urban Japanese Visions of America, 1890-1924*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. See especially Chapter Six "Go East, Young Man!" 117-145.

13. The relationships between Asian and African American workers were rather complicated and ambivalent. On the one hand, anti-Japanese or anti-Chinese sentiments could work in favor of directing job opportunities to Black laborers. On the other hand, leaders in African American communities also recognized, and advocated for, the needed solidarity and coalition among minority workers to combat broader, economic inequalities that people of color suffered. David J. Hellwig provided historical studies of the relationships between these communities in his unpublished doctoral dissertation, *The Afro-American and the Immigrant, 1880-1930: A Study of Black Social Thought*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1976. Chapters from this dissertation were published as "Afro-American Reactions to the Japanese and the Anti-Japanese Movement, 1906-1924," *Phylon* 38.1 (1977): 93-104; and "Black Reactions to Chinese Immigration and the Anti-Chinese Movement: 1850-1910," *Amerasia Journal* 6:2 (Fall 1979): 25-44.

14. For Sloan's biography and works, see Heather C. Coyle and Joyce K. Schiller, *John Sloan's New York*. Wilmington: Delaware Art Museum, 2007; John Loughery, *John Sloan: Painter and Rebel*. New York: H. Holt, 1995; Rowland Elzea, *John Sloan's Oil Paintings: A Catalogue Raisonné*. The American arts series/University of Delaware Press books. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991; and *John Sloan, 1871-1951: His Life and Paintings*. Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1971, among others.

15. *Town* was a large canvas (136.0 x 186.3cm) that was exhibited at the 10th Annual Exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists in 1926. For reasons yet to be determined, it was cut in half in around 1929 and the left panel is now in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama, and the right, the Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura, both in Japan. Yasugi, 22-23; 105.

16. Ishigaki, "73 Horatio Street," *Chūō Kōron*, v. 70, no. 9, September 1955; translation by Satoko Hata. Ishigaki's wife, Ayako, also indicated Sanger's presence at this location in her biography of Eitarō Ishigaki, 16-20.

17. Ishigaki, 9. Ishigaki had two well-received one-man shows at the ACA Gallery: March 9 to 21, 1936, and May 6 to 18, 1940. In reviewing Ishigaki's exhibit, Melville Upton wrote that Ishigaki was "seemingly as American as the next without generations on the soil back of him," and that the artist was "primarily the propagandist, grimly in earnest against certain phases and menaces of contemporary life." "Wars against War and Nazis. Eitarō Ishigaki's Art on View at A.C.A. Gallery," March 12, 1936. The ACA Gallery opened on August 16, 1932, with a mission to promote contemporary American artists' work that could be considered socially engaged or at least conscious—the kind of work that would become the so-called social realism. For a history of the ACA Gallery, see founder Herman Baron's unpublished account, "History of the ACA Gallery," ACA Galleries records, 1917-1963, Archives of American Art, the Smithsonian Institution, Microfilm D304.

18. Rutsubo Ishigaki (Eitarō's pseudonym), "Review of the 9th Exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists," *Japanese Times*, March 11, 1925.

19. Susan Platt, *Art and Politics in the 1930s: Modernism, Marxism, Americanism: A History of Cultural Activism during the Depression Years* (New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 1999), 90.

20. The Eitarō Ishigaki Archives, the Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama, Japan. For a selection of reports and articles in *Daily Worker*, see *Fighting Words: Selections from Twenty-five Years of The Daily Worker*. New York: New Century Publishers, 1949.

21. Ayako Ishigaki, 117.

22. Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt, "'New Masses' and John Reed Club Artists, 1926-1936: Evolution of Ideology, Subject Matter, and Style," *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 12 (1989): 56. See also Marquardt's "Art on the Left in the United States, 1918-1937," in the book she edited, *Art and Journal on the Political Front, 1910-1940*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997.

23. Marquardt, "New Masses," 64-65. In Ayako Ishigaki's biography of Eitarō Ishigaki, she made a special point to list Gold's efforts in encouraging the kind of literary and visual arts based on the artists' actual experience as the labor class, as opposed to works that are created from the bourgeois perspective, 117.

24. Bruno Jasienski, Letter to *New Masses* and "Resolution on the Work of the New Masses in 1931," Louis Lozowick Papers, 1898-1974, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Reel 5898.

25. Jasienski, 2.

26. Marquardt, "New Masses," 62.

27. Jasienski, 3.

28. "Workers' Art," *New Masses* 8, January, 1932; Marquardt, "New Masses," 56. For more discussions of the Club's brief history and activities, see Helen A. Harrison, "John Reed Club Artists and the New Deal: Radical Responses to Roosevelt's 'Peaceful Revolution,'" *Prospects* 5 (1980): 241-268.

29. Marquardt, "New Masses," 69.

30. John Reed Club artists, *An American Landscape, New Masses*, April 1930, 20.

31. "First National Conference, May 29-30, 1932," Louis Lozowick Papers, 1898-1974, Reel 5898. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Both Lozowick (International Secretary) and Gropper were on the on the National Executive Board, and the New York representation also included writers Oakley Johnson (Executive Secretary), Whittaker Chambers and Joseph Freeman—both from the editorial staff of *New Masses*.

32. Marquardt, "New Masses," 71.

33. Yasugi, 106.

34. In 1938, Ishigaki worked on the mural at the Harlem Courthouse in New York, which was later removed because Ishigaki was criticized for "disrespectfully" rendering Abraham Lincoln with "Negroid" features—an incident that merits a separate study. The press in New York reported the controversies and criticism, much of which concerned Ishigaki's rendition of Lincoln and George

Washington with “darker” skin colors, in April 1938, including *The New York Times*, *The New York Sun*, *Daily Worker*, and *The Associated Press*. Archives of Eitaro Ishigaki, The Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama, Japan. Thanks to Mr. Yasuhiko Okumura for providing the relevant documents and hosting my examination of the artwork in 2005.

35. Louise Mitchell, “The Fight for Negro Liberation. Eitaro Ishigaki, Well Known Anti-Fascist Japanese Artist[s], Answers Slurs Against Murals in Harlem Court,” *Daily Worker*, April 5, 1938.

36. Mullen, “Persisting Solidarities.”

37. In Roger Daniels’s seminal and voluminous study of the Bonus March, for instance, there is no mention of the participation of African American veterans. Dickson’s and Allen’s *The Bonus Army: An American Epic* is the rare study that devotes more attention to this particular aspect of the March, a point that Stephen R. Ortiz also concurs in his “Rethinking the Bonus March: Federal Bonus Policy, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Origins of a Protest Movement,” *The Journal of Policy History*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (2006): 276.

38. The cover image of the Dickson and Allen book, *The Bonus Army: An American Epic*, is a photograph that shows “defiant veterans celebrate their takeover of a roundhouse in Cleveland, where railroad officials and police tried to keep them from riding boxcars eastward.” A few Black veterans stand side-by-side and arms-raised with other white veterans. The Library of Congress hosts many images documenting the Bonus March; see, for example, the photographs in the Theodor Horydczak Collection.

39. Jacqueline Francis, “Making History: Malvin Gray Johnson’s and Earle W. Richardson’s *Studies for Negro Achievement*,” in *The Social and the Real: Political Art of the 1930s in the Western Hemisphere*. Anreus, Linden, and Weinberg, eds. (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 143. For an extensive examination of Johnson’s work in relation to racial identity, see Francis, *Making Race: Modernism and “Racial Art” in America*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012.

40. John Henry Bartlett, *The Bonus March and the New Deal*. M.A. Donohue & Company, 1937.

41. These are works that have received much scholarly attention over the years. They have also been reproduced in several studies of the anti-lynching art in this period. See, for example, Marquardt, “*New Masses*”; Helen Langa, “Two Antilynching Art Exhibitions: Politicized Viewpoints, Racial Perspectives, Gendered Constraints,” *American Art* 13.1 (1999): 10-39; Milly Heyd, “Jews Mirroring African Americans. On Lynching,” in her *Mutual Reflections: Jews and Blacks in American Art*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1999; Margaret Rose Vendryes, “Hanging on Their Walls: *An Art Commentary on Lynching*, The Forgotten 1935 Art Exhibition,” *Race Consciousness: African-American Studies for the New Century*, Judith J. Fossett, and Jeffrey A. Tucker, eds. (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 153-176. Marlene Park, *Lynching and Antilynching: Art and Politics in the 1930s*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

42. Margaret Duroc, “Critique from the Left,” January 1936. Note that it is unclear if the fighting man is white, but Duroc’s assumption of this “white rescuer” was based on the skin color that is by contrast lighter than that of the Black figure.

43. See, among other important studies, Leigh Raiford, “The Consumption of Lynching Images,” in *Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self*, Coco Fusco and Brian Wallis, eds. (New York: International Center of Photography in association with Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2003), 267-274.

44. Harry Raymond, “The Siege of the Capital,” *New Masses*, July, 1932, 11-12. *New Masses* had been reporting on various bonus-related demonstrations that took place throughout the nation since 1931. These include: Gropper’s February 1931 double-page drawing (10-11); Hugo Gellert’s cover for the July 1931 issue; Michael Gold’s “Hunger March” (7-9), Gellert’s, Gropper’s, and Walter Quiet’s illustrations in the December 1931 issue; and Felix Morrow’s “The Bonus Army” on the first page of the August 1932 issue.

45. Roy Wilkins, “Up in Harlem Down in the Delta,” *The Crisis* (October, 1932): 119. Other marchers confirmed the desegregated camps in interviews with Dickson and Allen, 118.