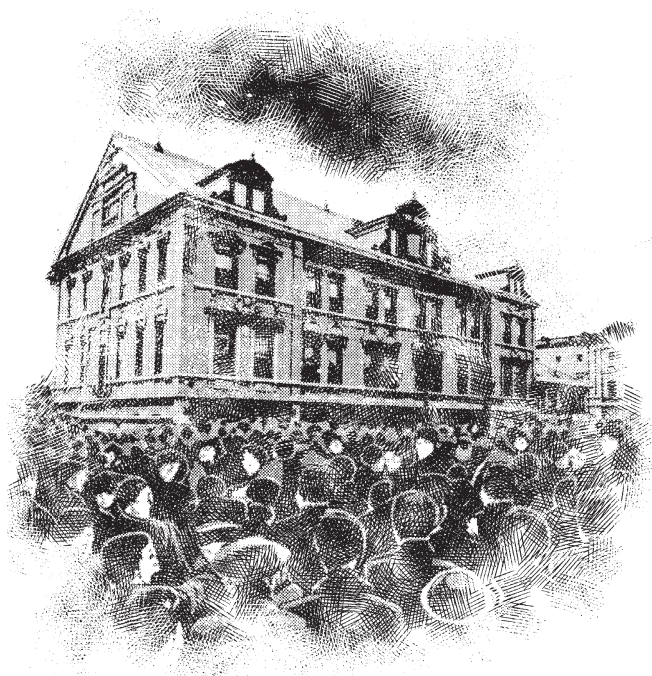


## Chapter 2

Suzuki & Co.

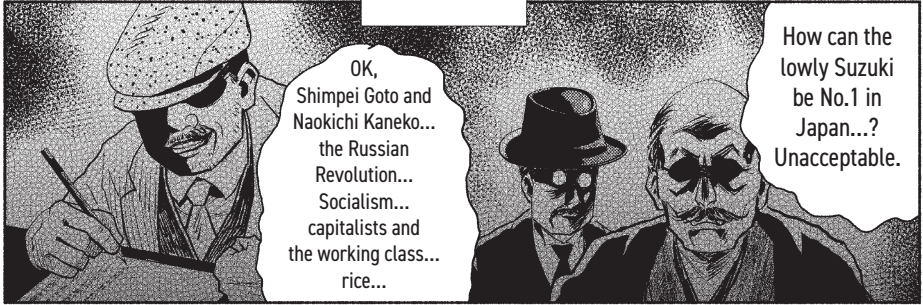
The Rice Riots of 1918 and burning of Suzuki  
headquarters





Social unrest increased as citizens struggled to scrape by.

1918 Rice prices surge.



OK, Shimpei Goto and Naokichi Kaneko... the Russian Revolution... Socialism... capitalists and the working class... rice...

How can the lowly Suzuki be No.1 in Japan...? Unacceptable.



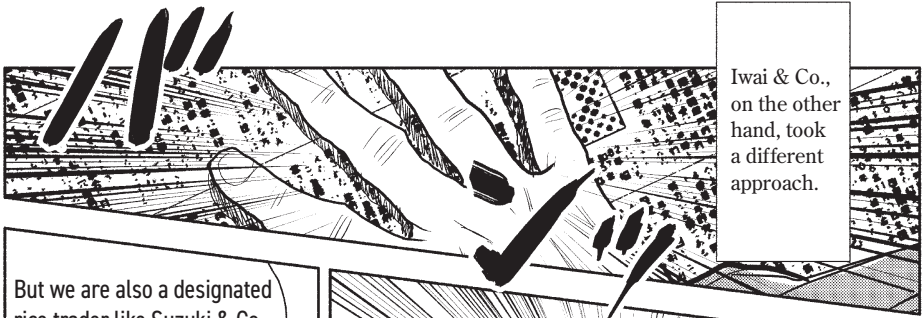
Ignore it. Suzuki has done nothing wrong.

These articles are lies, Mr. Kaneko. !!

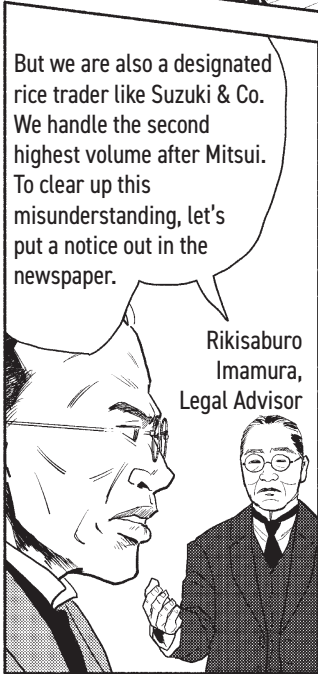
As a designated rice trader, Suzuki & Co. imported large volumes of rice from overseas and was doing its best to stabilize prices in the rice market.

Suzuki & Co.  
Baffles  
Japan with  
Exports to  
German  
Adversary

But at this rate...



Iwai & Co., on the other hand, took a different approach.



But we are also a designated rice trader like Suzuki & Co. We handle the second highest volume after Mitsui. To clear up this misunderstanding, let's put a notice out in the newspaper.

Rikisaburo Imamura, Legal Advisor



Iwai is not guilty of speculation.

What a terrible article! To say there was a search of an Iwai executive's home based on suspicions of Iwai cornering the market?



The riots would spread across the country like sparks from a fire...

The Rice Riots of 1918 first broke out in Toyama on July 22, 1918.

Alright. I suppose it's unavoidable.

**急 告**

弊社が外米指定商タリシ爲メ弊社及弊社重役が家宅搜索ヲ受ケタルガ如キ新聞記事有之候へ共右ハ全然無根ニ有之甚ダ迷惑ヲ相感シ居候次第ニ付此段爲念廣告仕候也

大正八年六月十九日 株式會社 岩井商店 岩井勝次郎

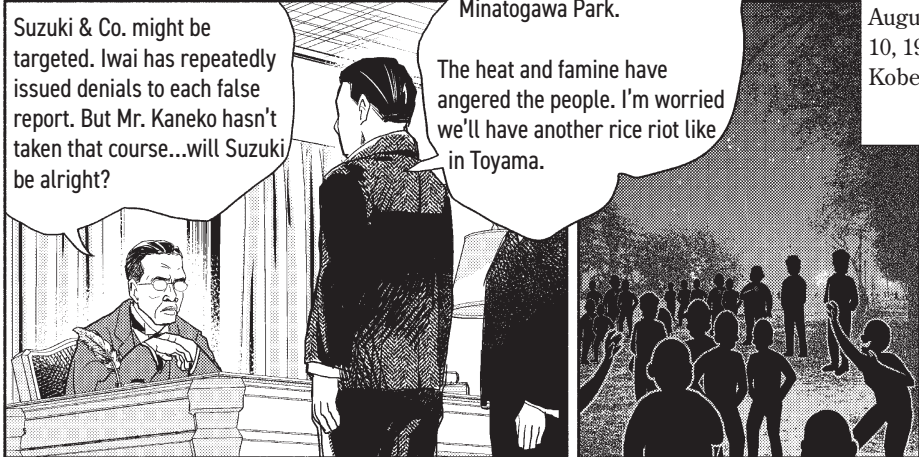


August 10, 1918  
Kobe

Suzuki & Co. might be targeted. Iwai has repeatedly issued denials to each false report. But Mr. Kaneko hasn't taken that course...will Suzuki be alright?

A mob has gathered in Minatogawa Park.

The heat and famine have angered the people. I'm worried we'll have another rice riot like in Toyama.



They want 100,000 yen for Mr. Kaneko's head.

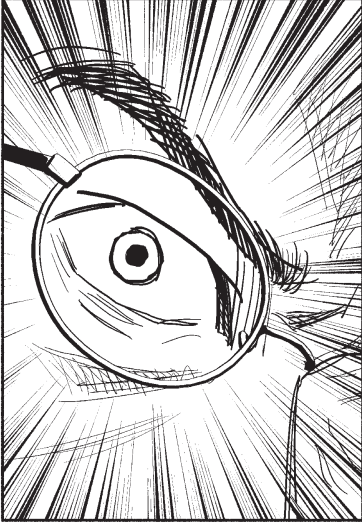
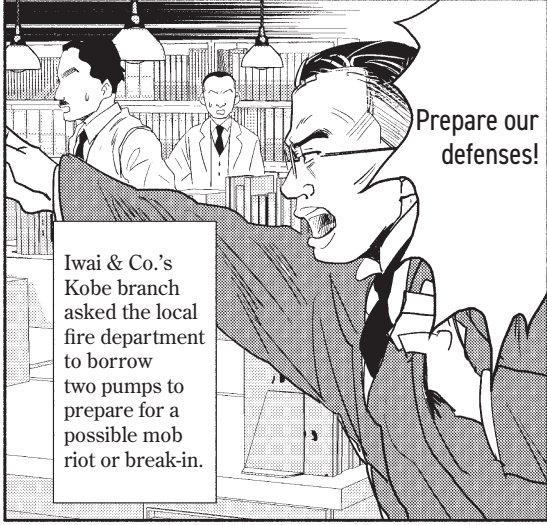


Take a look.



Iwai & Co.'s Kobe branch asked the local fire department to borrow two pumps to prepare for a possible mob riot or break-in.

Prepare our defenses!

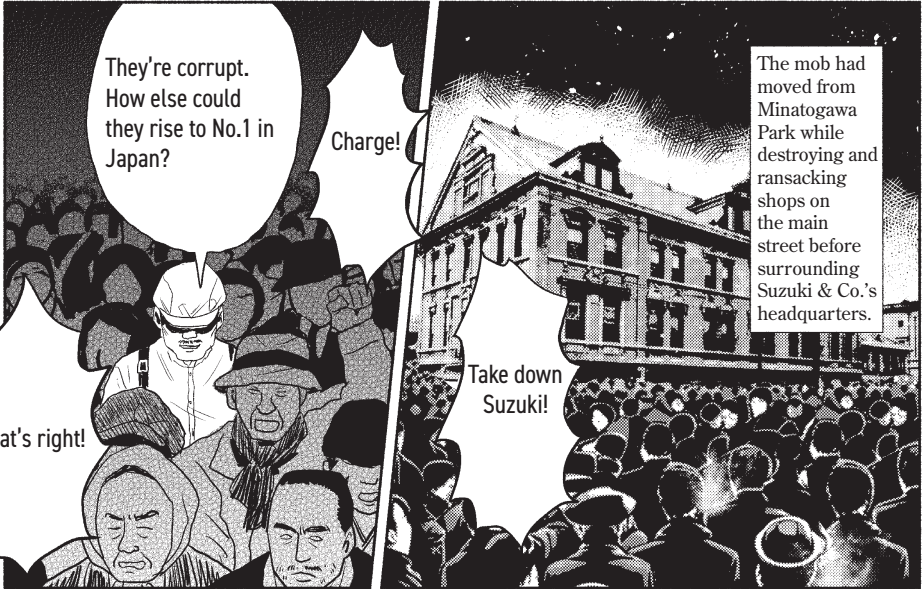




Hand over the rice!

OK, we're going in!

The fears of Suzuki & Co.'s executives and Katsujiro Iwai were soon realized.



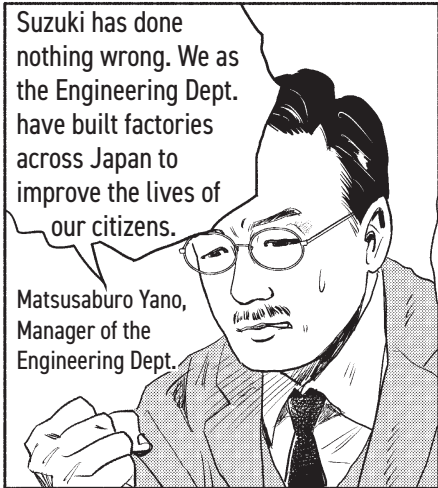
They're corrupt. How else could they rise to No.1 in Japan?

Charge!

Take down Suzuki!

The mob had moved from Minatogawa Park while destroying and ransacking shops on the main street before surrounding Suzuki & Co.'s headquarters.

That's right!



Suzuki has done nothing wrong. We as the Engineering Dept. have built factories across Japan to improve the lives of our citizens.

Matsuburo Yano, Manager of the Engineering Dept.

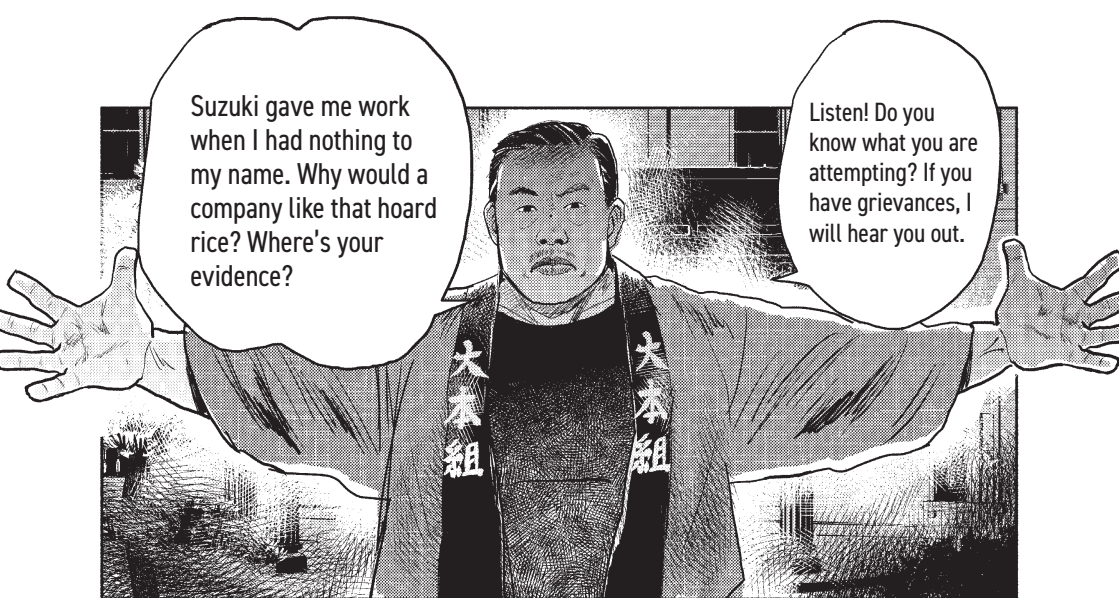


Suzuki & Co. Headquarters, Engineering Dept.

How did this happen...

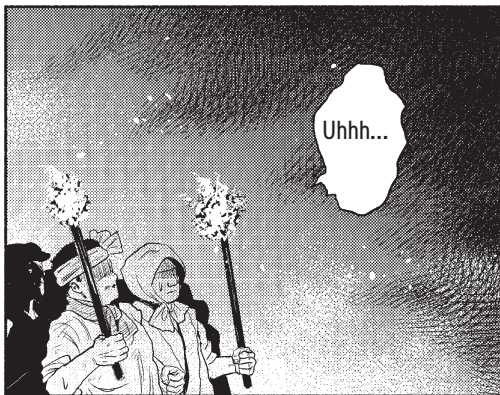
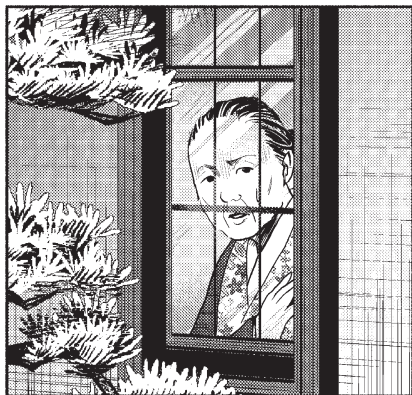




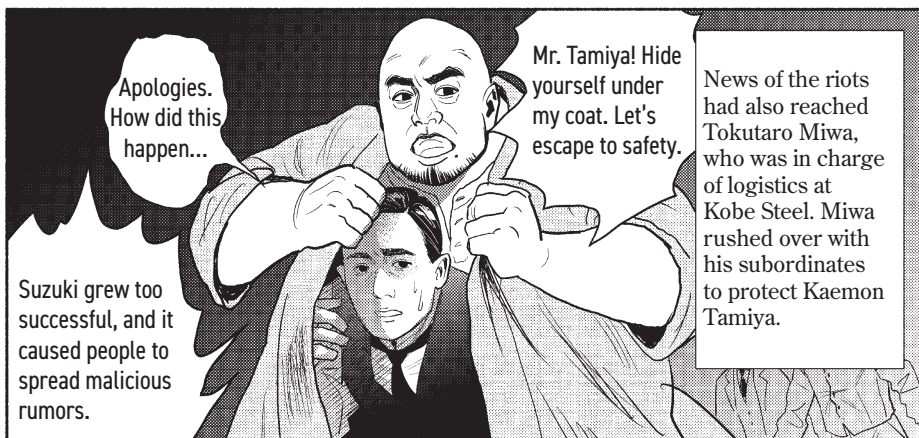


Suzuki gave me work when I had nothing to my name. Why would a company like that hoard rice? Where's your evidence?

Listen! Do you know what you are attempting? If you have grievances, I will hear you out.



Uhhh...



Apologies. How did this happen...

Suzuki grew too successful, and it caused people to spread malicious rumors.

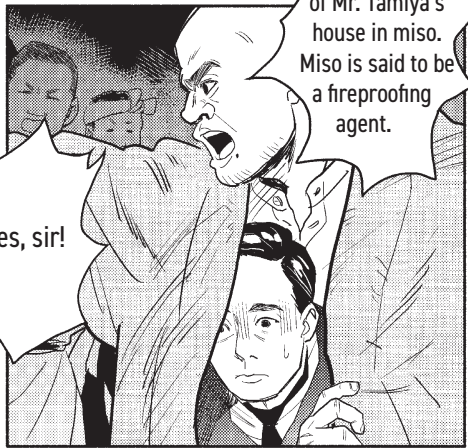
Mr. Tamiya! Hide yourself under my coat. Let's escape to safety.

News of the riots had also reached Tokutaro Miwa, who was in charge of logistics at Kobe Steel. Miwa rushed over with his subordinates to protect Kaemon Tamiya.





Quick, Mr. Tamiya. Now is our chance to escape.



You there! Go cover the walls of Mr. Tamiya's house in miso. Miso is said to be a fireproofing agent.

Yes, sir!



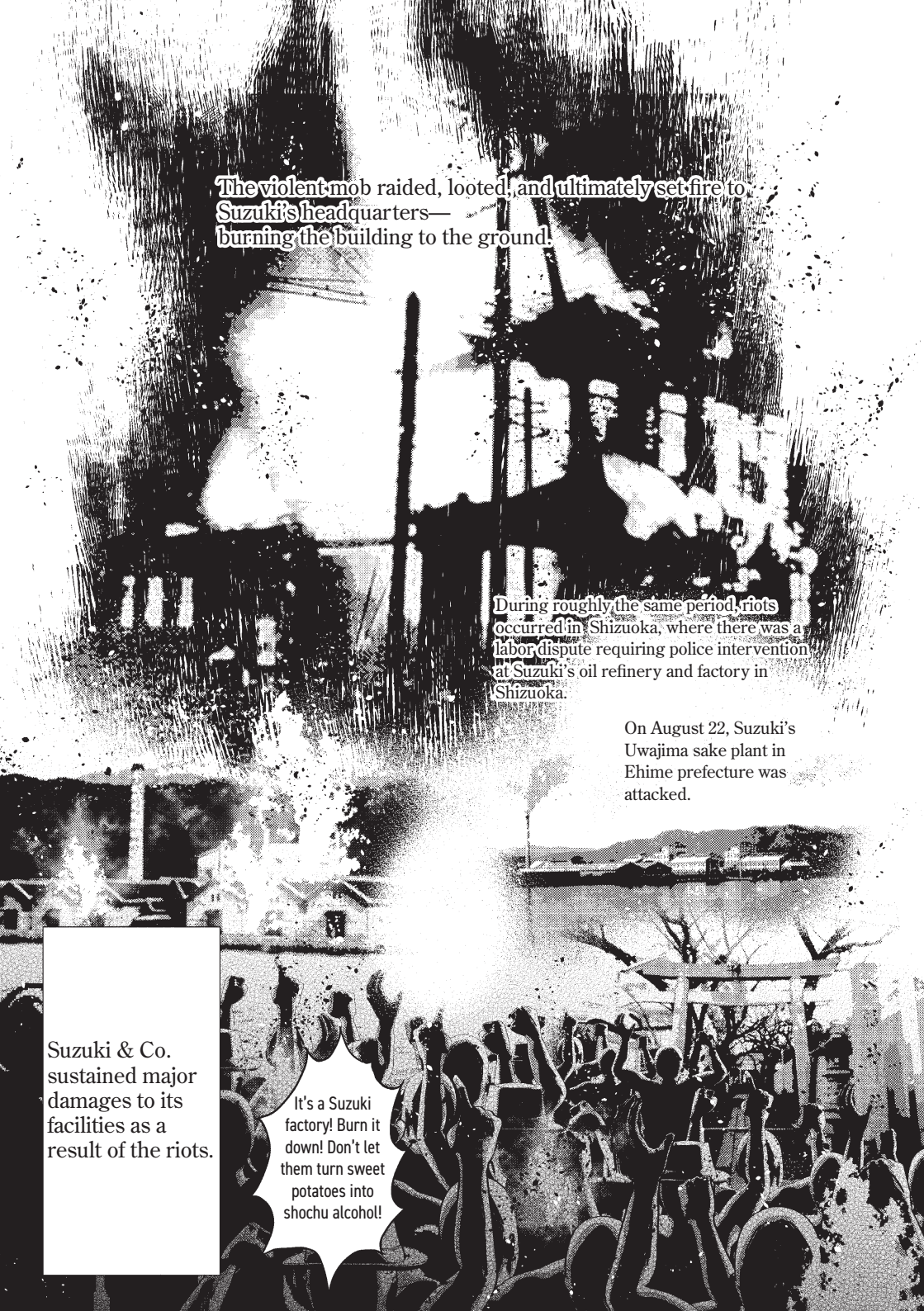
What are those flames?



Ugh, those imbeciles...!

...it can't be... Suzuki's headquarters?!





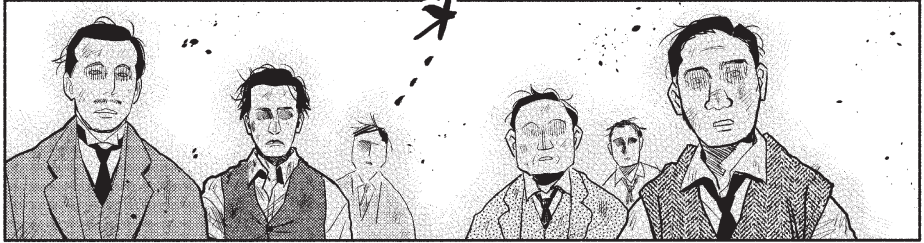
The violent mob raided, looted, and ultimately set fire to Suzuki's headquarters—burning the building to the ground!

During roughly the same period, riots occurred in Shizuoka, where there was a labor dispute requiring police intervention at Suzuki's oil refinery and factory in Shizuoka.

On August 22, Suzuki's Uwajima sake plant in Ehime prefecture was attacked.

Suzuki & Co. sustained major damages to its facilities as a result of the riots.

It's a Suzuki factory! Burn it down! Don't let them turn sweet potatoes into shochu alcohol!



Oh no....

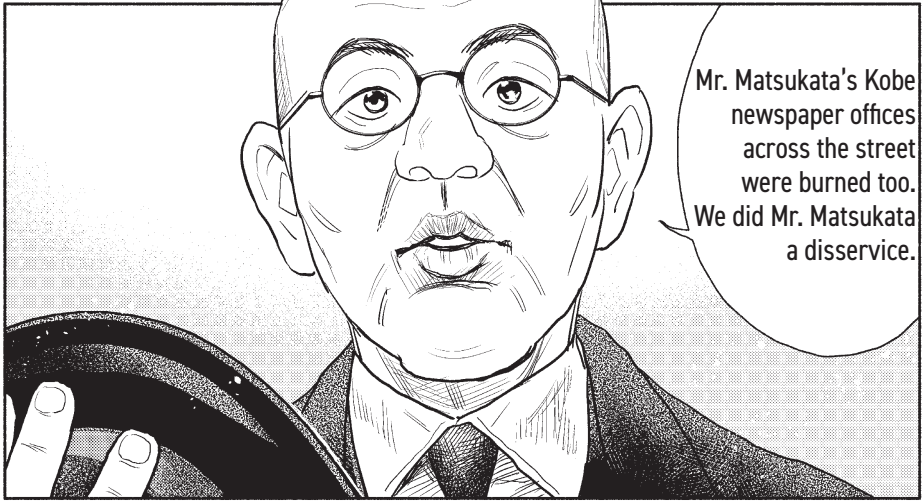
When passing through Shizuoka Station the bellboy gave Kaneko a telegram.  
H-E-A-D-Q-U-A-R-T-E-R-S  
B-U-R-N-E-D

At the time, Kaneko was enroute from Kobe to Tokyo to negotiate the Agreement to Exchange Ships for Steel.

It is said he could sense the civilian unrest before he departed from Kobe Station.

Where was Naokichi Kaneko?





Mr. Matsukata's Kobe newspaper offices across the street were burned too. We did Mr. Matsukata a disservice.



What? Is everyone alright?

Mr. Kaneko!!

...Mr. Kaneko

Mr. Kaneko



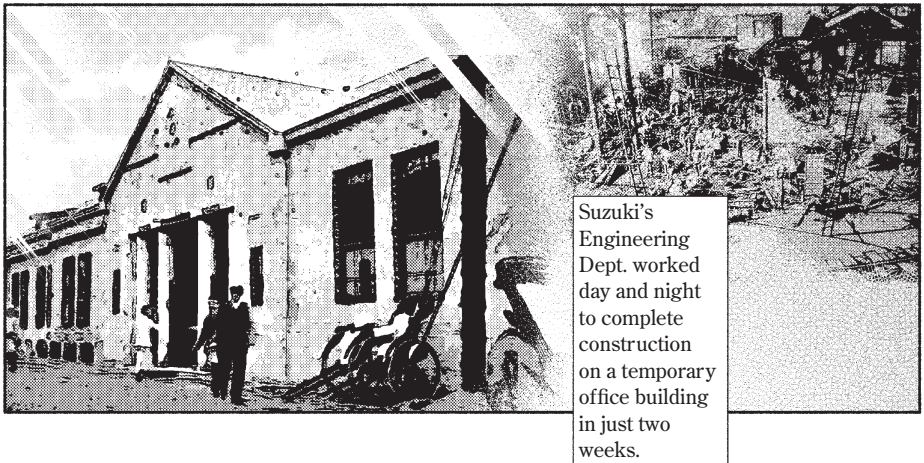
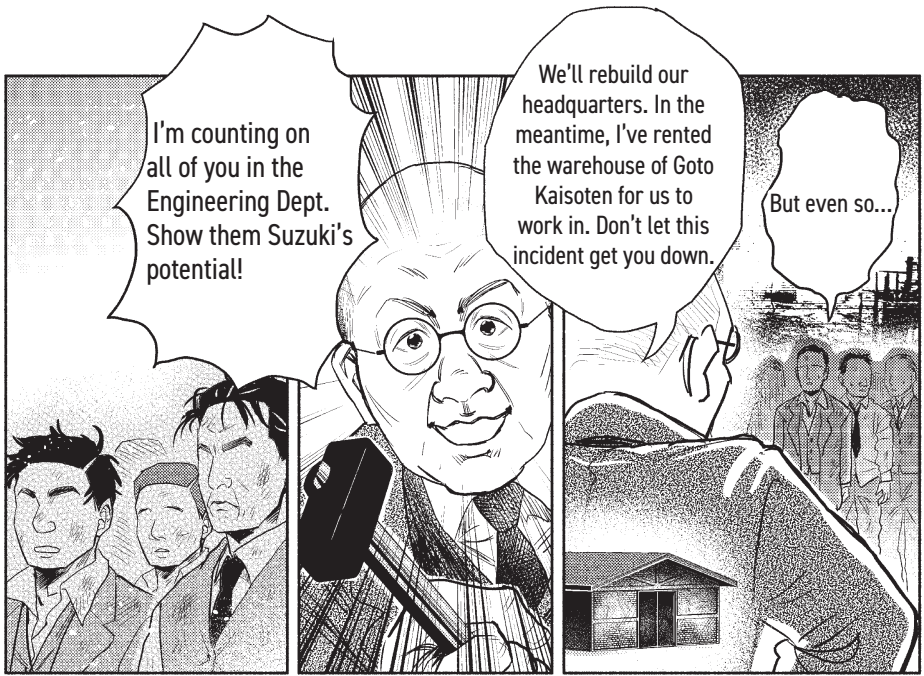
Let's bury this fire debris at the landfill to expand Kobe Steel.

Never fear. If we have ambition and manpower, we can do anything!



But our headquarters...

Yes.



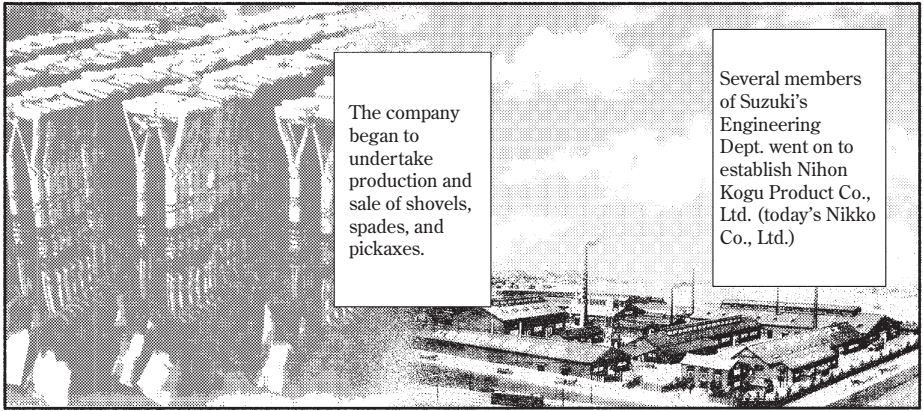




Good for you. We must continue to increase the value of our building projects. Rely on Suzuki's connections.

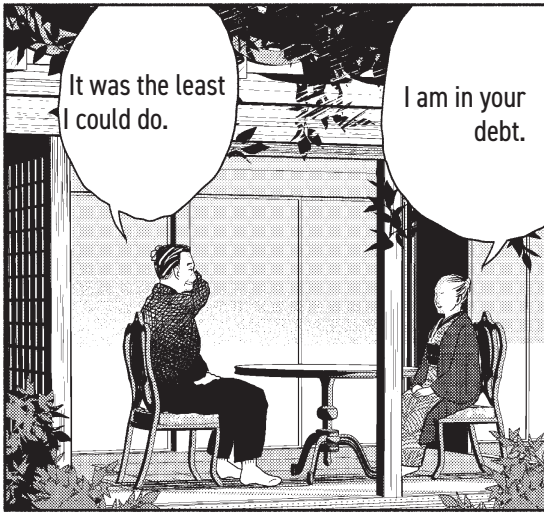
Mr. Kaneko, we are planning to use the experience we've gained on start our own business manufacturing construction tools.

Despite this progress, some were set on taking a different path.



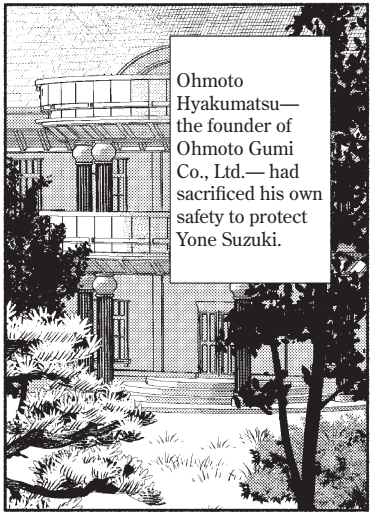
The company began to undertake production and sale of shovels, spades, and pickaxes.

Several members of Suzuki's Engineering Dept. went on to establish Nihon Kogu Product Co., Ltd. (today's Nikko Co., Ltd.)

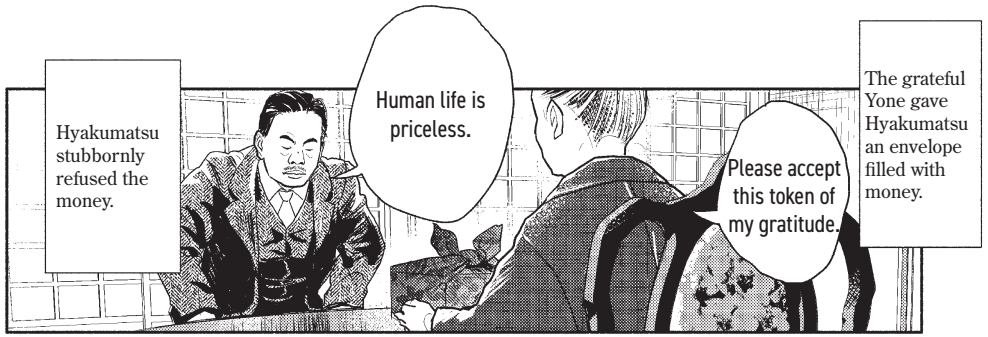


It was the least I could do.

I am in your debt.



Ohmoto Hyakumatsu—the founder of Ohmoto Gumi Co., Ltd.— had sacrificed his own safety to protect Yone Suzuki.

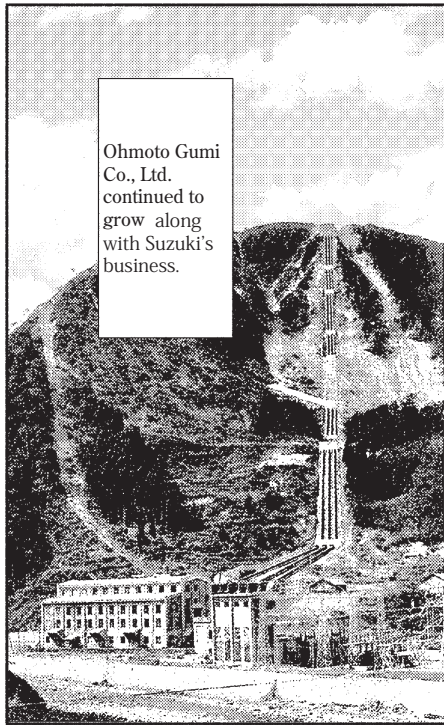


Hyakumatsu stubbornly refused the money.

Human life is priceless.

Please accept this token of my gratitude.

The grateful Yone gave Hyakumatsu an envelope filled with money.



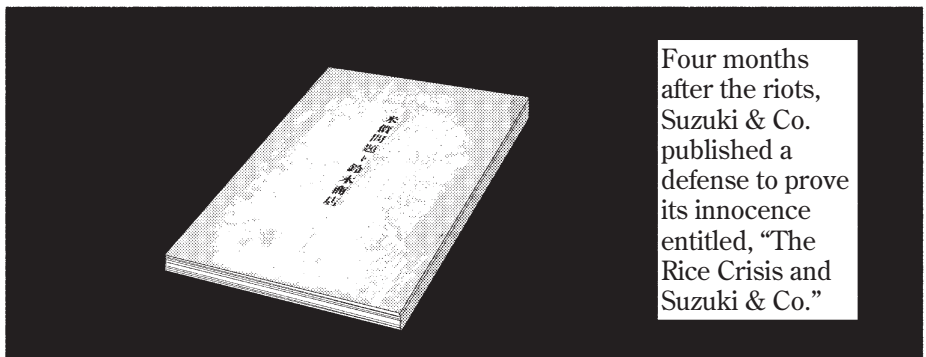
Ohmoto Gumi Co., Ltd. continued to grow along with Suzuki's business.



It's a steep cliff. Whatever you do, don't drop this steel from Kobe Steel!

Suzuki strengthened its bond with Ohmoto's company and commissioned a difficult construction project: Nakatsugawa Power Plant.

Yes, sir!



Four months after the riots, Suzuki & Co. published a defense to prove its innocence entitled, "The Rice Crisis and Suzuki & Co."



The pamphlet is said to have been written by Kotaro Nagai (one of Nissho's founders).

Suzuki & Co. bears no grudges. If anything, the company has renewed its commitment to serve the country and its citizens.

米價問題  
鈴木

Tragedy struck Suzuki & Co. in 1918.

World War I had come to an end on November 11, 1918. The war had accelerated Japan's industrial development and supported the expansion of Sojitz's three predecessor companies.

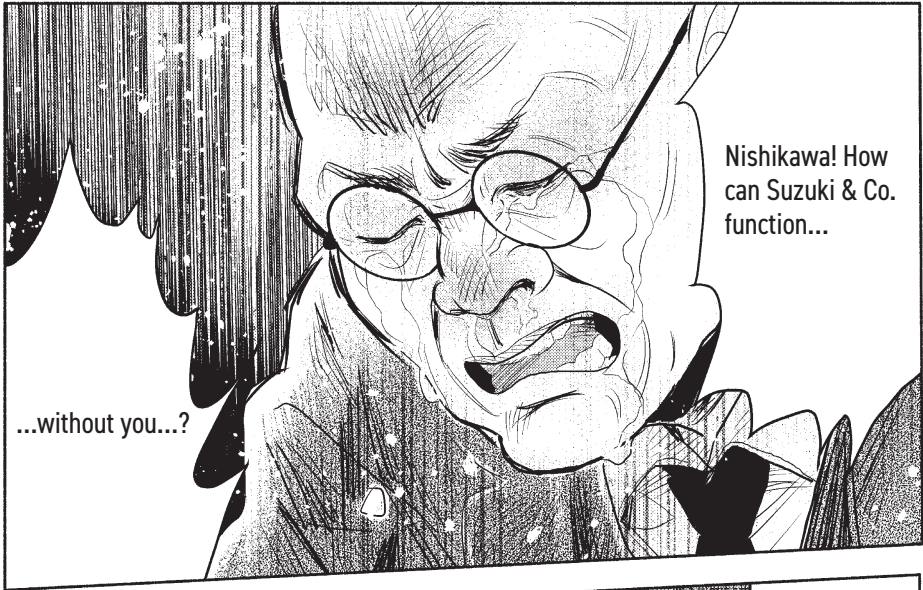
But a reactionary recession began in Japan, followed by a severe deflation.

The New York Times  
SIGNED, END OF THE WAR!  
ED BY REVOLUTIONISTS;  
LLOR BEGS FOR ORDER;  
KAISER FLEES TO HOLLAND



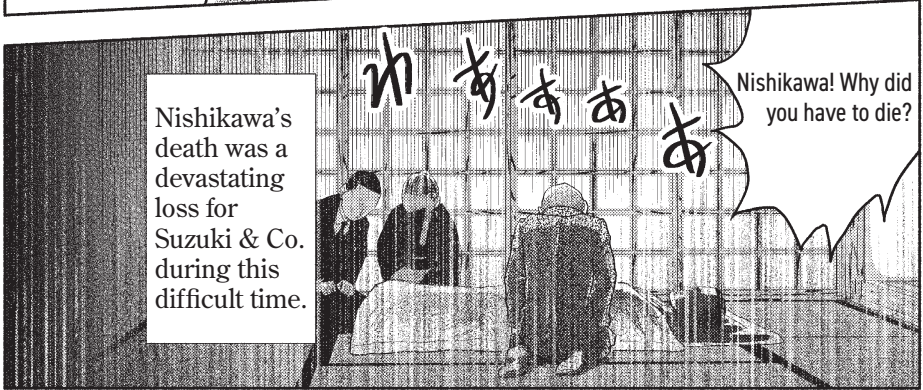
The Rice Riots of 1918 then ensued.

Kaneko's assistant director and right-hand man, Bunzo Nishikawa, died suddenly in 1920.



Nishikawa! How can Suzuki & Co. function...

...without you...?



Nishikawa's death was a devastating loss for Suzuki & Co. during this difficult time.

Nishikawa! Why did you have to die?