Abstract
Samezō Kuruma's career as a Marxist economist spans a period of roughly six decades, stretching from the beginning of the 1920s, when Marxism was quickly taking root in Japan, up to the early 1980s, when the nearly hegemonic influence Marxist scholars had enjoyed in the postwar period was on the wane. Kuruma was born in 1893 in Okayama prefecture, west of Osaka. As the eldest son of a prosperous paper merchant, Kuruma was expected to take over the business one day, which did not interest him. Although not eager to become a capitalist, the study of capitalism attracted Kuruma early on, spurred by reading *The Wealth of Nations* at the age of seventeen. In 1914, Kuruma entered prestigious Tokyo Imperial University (now Tokyo University), where he had intended to study economics but switched to political science after finding the economics courses uninteresting. Graduating in the spring of 1918, he found a job working for Sumitomo Bank in Osaka. Kuruma had been assured that the job would afford him an opportunity to pursue economic research, perhaps related to China, but his duties turned out to be far more mundane. He soon realized that he was not at all suited to a career in banking.