

A Step Forward Towards Free Education

Starting from April 2010, education fees in public high schools became free. This is a significant outcome of a popular campaign Zenkyo built by mobilizing local residents and parents nationwide for "lesser burden on parents for school education of their children".

It can also be appreciated as a step towards "free education" common around the world, departing from the rationale that beneficiaries must pay, because one's education is in one's indi-

vidual interest.

However, although the tuitions in public high school (about 120,000 yen) have become free, parents still have to pay 200,000 yen annually to pay for textbooks, school supplies, membership fees for parents and teachers association and for students association. More problematic is the fact that increasing number of parents are unable to pay these fees.

There is also the problem of increasing tax burden on par-

ents who send their children to part-time or correspondence course high school whose tuitions have been set at lower levels. In addition, 30 percent of high school students go to private schools but the annual fees for these schools amount to about 400,000 yen. It is therefore necessary to make education free for both public and private high schools and Zenkyo continues to campaign for it.

International Activities

Action in New York for NPT Review Conference

Shiro Isozaki, Deputy General Secretary, and Ryosuke Imura, National Executive Committee Member, took part in the delegation to New York from April 29th to May 6th, 2010. They met with the representatives of the UE and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and participated in a solidarity rally with the US Labor against War (USLAW).

Meeting with NUT

On May 25th, Kumiko Honda, Zenkyo's National Executive Committee Member, visited the headquarters of the National Union of Teachers (UK) to exchange information about national achievement test, poverty and neo-liberal reform in education in the two countries.

Additional Information (5th) to CEART

Kumiko Honda, Zenkyo's Vice-President also, called at the CEART Office in Geneva to hand Zenkyo's additional information to Mr. Bill Ratlee and discussed with him.



Zenkyo Participates Zenroren's Women's Section Study Tour to Nordic Countries

Hideko Kihara, Zenkyo's National Executive Committee Member, took part in the study tour organized by Zenroren Women's Section that visited Finland and Denmark. The delegation visited various social institutions for children and seniors and learned about gender equality and trade union movement in these countries.



Study Tour to Australia on Basic Labor and Trade Union Rights

Yoshihisa Kitamura, Zenkyo's General Secretary participated in the study mission on the problems of basic labor and trade union rights that visited Australia from November 7th to 12th. He had exchanges for the first time with the representatives of Australian Education Union (AEU).

Berlin Tour of Young Teachers



From December 25th to 30th, thirty-nine young teachers and school staff visited Berlin, Germany on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of unification of the country, met with German teachers and studied about peace.

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MARCH 2011

ZENKYO NEWSLETTER

No.27

Zenkyo Holds International Forum Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of Its Founding

Zenkyo celebrated the twenty's anniversary of its founding in March 2011. On February 11th and 12th, it held its annual statutory convention, adopted an action plan for making a new advances building on the achievements of the last twenty years of its existence, and elected a new leadership responsible for the implementation of the plan.

Capitalizing on its past experiences, in particular those acquired through the allegation to the CEART and the active bilateral exchanges with trade unions of other countries, Zenkyo is currently having discussions at different levels within the organization about applying for membership of the Education International (EI), a major international trade union organization of teachers. Reflecting the increases in international exchanges, it invited representatives of foreign organizations to its annual convention for the first time.

On February 13th, the following day of the Convention, Zenkyo organized an "International Forum" to learn the realities of education and teachers and their trade union movement in each country. Mr. Barrett Gough (Local 896 of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America or UE), Mr. Henri Nouri (International Department, Syndicat National des Enseignants du Second Degre or SNES, France) and Mr. Kim Sukkyu (International Director, Korean Teachers' Union or KTU) kindly attended the forum.

Mr. Barrett Gough of the UE reported about cuts in education budget, privatization and changes in the context of history textbooks insidiously introduced by the rightwing forces in the U.S. Mr. Henri Nouri of SNES talked about large-scale cuts in teachers posts, adverse reform of pension system, salary freeze of public personnel, introduction of merit-based pay and promotion and rapid increase in teachers with precarious employment status. Mr. Kim Sukkyu of KTU



spoke about the situation in his country where the government is violently attacking union activities and political rights of teachers. This attack is

About Tohoku-Kanto Earthquake Message from Zenkyo

March 16, 2011

Dear brothers and sisters,

We would like to thank you sincerely for the words of encouragement we have received from your organization during the last days.

The terrible earthquake and the tsunami that hit the northern region of Japan on March 11th 2011, have caused a great damage, with over 10,000 deaths and missing. It was a natural disaster of an unprecedented scale.

Immediately after the disaster, Zenkyo set up the crisis center to cope with the catastrophic situation. It called on teachers and school staffs across the country to raise fund to send to sufferers and asked the government to take all possible measures it can in its capacity.

In the disaster-stricken areas, many children and teachers died in the tsunami that caught them while they were in classrooms. And on each day that passes, we learn that more and more of the children who merely survived have lost their parents. Foreign rescue teams have come to work in those areas to help find survivors and assist local rescue operations and Japanese people are very grateful for their dedicated efforts for saving human lives by all means. However, the serious accident that happened in a nuclear power plant makes it even more difficult for the rescue teams and volunteers to reach the stricken areas.

We are now waiting for the recovery of power, road and telecommunication systems there so that we can send volunteers from around the country to rescue surviving teachers and children and help them begin to restore their living.

Takashi Yamaguchi
President, Zenkyo, Japan

conducted along with the introduction of and intensification of excessive competition in education.

There was a stir in the hall each time the speakers reported a phenomenon similar to those seen in Japan where a neo-liberal reform is being carried on in education.

However, there were also some good news. The UE Local 896 succeeded for the first time in 4 years in concluding a collective agreement. In France, the SNES is developing a struggle involving the entire population including high school students, while in South Korea, the KTU is campaigning for a shift from competition-based education to cooperation-based education. The Forum participants learned from each other experiences about how to organize an efficient struggle to counter governmental attacks through solidarity and joint initiatives with different groups of the population.

The International Forum also provided an opportunity to deepen the reflection about the relevance and importance of Zenkyo's affiliation with the EI.

Realizing First-Year Classes of 35 Pupils in Elementary Schools

Starting from April 2011, classes of 35 pupils are at last introduced in first grade of primary school. This represents a progress made through the review of class organization standards implemented by the State for the first time in 31 years.

It is a precious achievement that concretize two desires: the desire of parents and teachers to ensure good learning conditions for their children and that of schoolchildren themselves who wish to grow in humane conditions. The petition campaign calling for "excellent education conditions for all children" has gathered in over 400 millions signatures over

the last 22 years. Presented to the Japanese Diet, these petitions have constituted one of major forces that pressed the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology that had refused to acknowledge the effect of small-sized class on education to develop a plan to improve school class organization and to increase teachers.

On the other hand, the implementation of the plan beyond the fiscal 2011 remains extremely uncertain. It is therefore important to continue to strengthen our campaign for overcoming the insufficiency in resources allocated to high school level and special education for chil-

dren with handicaps.

37 of all 47 prefectures in the country have already taken measures of their own to organize classes of less than 35 pupils for the first year of elementary school. Now that the State has reviewed the national standard in terms of class size, it is important for our union to push for further improvements in class organization at prefecture and municipal levels. Some municipalities have already announced that they will further improve their measures building on the improved State standards. By encouraging other municipalities to do the same, we can create a strong tide for smaller class size nationwide and strengthen our campaign for ensuring better learning conditions and better care for children.

For A World Without Nuclear Weapons



The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference held in New York in May 2010 affirmed that the "achievement of peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons" is now the goal for the entire world.

Towards this conference, the Japanese Movement against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs had collected 6,910,000 signatures on the petition that called for the elimination of nuclear weapons. It sent about 1,600

peace activists to New York to present these petitions to the NPT Review Conference and the United Nations. 75 union members sent by Zenkyo witnessed the moment when the grassroots movements of the world brought the international politics forward towards the abolition of nuclear weapons.

On August 6, 2010, the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was held in Hiroshima, the city nuclear weapon was used on hu-

man being for the first time in history. About 8,000 people including a UN representative and many overseas delegates from 27 countries participated in the Conference. Zenkyo sent 263 delegates from all over Japan to Hiroshima to take part in the Conference. They learned about the realities of atomic damage and exchanged experiences in peace education.

In December, at the United Nations' General Assembly, the proposal for an early start of negotiations for a "nuclear weapons convention" was adopted with more than two thirds of the member countries supporting it.

The era has begun where the United Nations, national governments, municipalities and grassroots movements around the world act jointly for a "world without nuclear weapons". In February 2011, the Japanese Movement against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs launched a new international signature campaign calling on all national governments to begin negotiating for a convention to ban all nuclear weapons. Zenkyo is playing an active part in this campaign for the realization of a world without nuclear weapons and war.

Zenkyo Representative Attends the Committee on the Rights of the Child



On May 27th and 29th, the Committee on the Rights of the Child held in Geneva, examined the third report of the Government of Japan. Ms. Kumiko Honda, Vice-President of Zenkyo, attended the committee session.

A representative of Japanese Government reported about the implementation of measures for children since its previous report in 2008, including the provision of child allowance, free education for high school children and other measures putting into practice the article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the enforcement of the Law on the promotion of support for sound growth of children and young people.

The Committee questioned closely the Japanese Government asking essential questions such as "does the

Japanese Government have the intension of preparing in future specific data on the problems of children as the Committee requested in its previous recommendations"; "the State appears to be allocating more money to child allowance and other new measures and less to measures for improving living conditions of children" and "how the rights of the child are guaranteed in schools".

The fact that the Committee asked many questions make us believe that the report presented by the Japanese government was a sloppy document and that the Committee members had carefully studied the basic counter-reports prepared by the NGOs.

The Japanese Government Delegation did speak almost nothing about the actual situation of children in Japan.

Partial Recovery of Basic Labor Rights of White-Collar Public Employees

Japanese white-collar public employees have their right to organize guaranteed, but the revision of the law in 1948 deprived them of other basic rights including the right to negotiate collective agreements and the right to collective actions such as strike.

As the Constitution of Japan guarantees the basic labor rights as fundamental human rights of the Japanese people, it can be said that an aberrant situation has

prevailed for many years in terms of workers' rights. With extensive restrictions placed on the basic labor and trade union rights, Japanese public servants unions have been unable to determine their salaries and other conditions of work through negotiations between employer and employees on equal footing, a "common practice" in other countries. During the period since 2000 alone, the International Labour Organization recommended the Japanese

Government to redress this abnormal situation as many as six times.

Currently, the Japanese Government is considering the possible recovery of the right to conclude collective agreements of public personnel. However, after giving them back that right, the Government has the intension to negotiate reduction by 20 percent of the total personnel cost. Zenkyo is opposed to that personnel cost reduction plan, and is campaigning for the recovery of the labor rights to meet the provisions of the Japanese Constitution as well as the international labour standards.

Donations to Victims of Flood in Pakistan and Earthquakes in Haiti and Central Chili

Zenkyo sent donations to the victims of the flood in Pakistan through Zenroren (All Japan Federation of Trade Unions) and the UNHCR Association. Of all the donations Zenkyo collected, 375,132 yen were distributed to the victims in Pakistan through the All Pakistan Federation of United Trade Unions (APFUTU) that

has friendly ties with Zenroren. Zenroren had donated already last year the money it had collected in the first round of fundraising and received reports from the disaster areas that food and school supplies had been provided to children. 100,000 yen were taken to the UNHCR Association that is supporting the victims of

natural disasters in different countries.

2,786,755 yen were collected for supporting the victims of earthquake in Haiti and sent there through the UNHCR Association. 682,165 yen for the victims of the earthquake in Central Chili were sent through Zenroren to the CGT-Chili, a Chilean trade union national center while 381,298 yen were taken to the All China Federation of Trade Unions for the support of the victims of earthquake in Chintao Province.