

Graduation and enrollment ceremonies of March/April will be decisive.

Solidarity with teachers in Tokyo!

Refuse To Stand Up for “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” Across the Country!

Stop the Redraft of the Fundamental Law on Education, with the Power of the “Hinomaru and Kimigayo” Struggle!

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[photo] A large number of education workers gathered in front of the Tokyo Metropolitan Teachers Training Center to protest against “recurrence prevention course” aiming to brainwash the education workers who had refused to stand up and sing “Kimigayo” and got punished (August 30, 2004)

Brothers and Sisters, participants in the 54th National Conference for Education Research of the Japan Teachers' Union,

This Conference for Education Research is going to be held under a very serious situation: education workers now face historical attacks, such as enforcement of “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” and attempt of redrafting the Fundamental Law on Education. The year 2005 is a crossroad of the history, a decisive year of our struggle. Our longstanding slogans, “Never Send Our Students to the Battlefields Again!” and “Build up Democratic Education for Peace and Truth!” created during the Korean War (1950 – 1953) are now to prove their worth in this era of new wars.

Education workers have already launched fighting back against these major attacks. On March and April last year, hundreds of education workers in Tokyo refused to obey coercive order of Tokyo Governor Ishihara and Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education: “Honor and stand up for Hinomaru and Kimigayo or you will be subjected to disciplinary measures”. The refusal of education workers was a hard blow for Ishihara and the Board of Education; they announced massive punishment against 248 teachers. The punished teachers have been fighting back the unjust disciplinary measures and have energetically developed their fight into a great struggle. Their struggle has been encouraging not only education workers across the country but also workers of various industries and thus advancing working class solidarity.

The struggle on the occasion of graduation and enrollment ceremonies of March/April this year will be decisive. In solidarity with the education workers in Tokyo who are going to refuse again to stand up overcoming enormous pressure, let us fight against “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” in coming graduation and enrollment ceremonies throughout Japan. Let us stop the redraft of the Fundamental Law on Education!

Koizumi Administration's Rush to Redraft of the Fundamental Law on Education and Amendment of Article 9 of the Constitution

The Koizumi administration completed last year the Emergency Legislation in the ordinary session of the Diet. Last December a series of grave cabinet decisions was carried out one after another: prolongation of the stationing of the Self-Defense Forces in Iraq, formulation of the new Basic Defense Program, which abandoned “exclusively defensive defense policy”, revision of the “Three Principles on Arms Export”, which

had restricted arms exports, and so on. Koizumi administration is intent on introducing a bill for revision or rather total redraft of the Fundamental Law on Education to the next ordinary session of the Diet. The constitutional revision is also on the agenda. It aims for full transformation of Japan into a “war waging state”.

The second Bush administration, sucked deeper and deeper in the quagmire of Iraq war, is going to spread the aggressive war throughout the Middle East and furthermore preparing a war on North Korea and China. The Koizumi administration has accepted the plan of the transformation of the US Armed Forces, which makes Japan into the strategic staging point of a new world war. As a partner of the Japan-US Axis, it is going to step into a way of full-fledged use of armed force abroad through lifting the prohibition on “right to collective defense.”

At the same time, under its “Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Management and Structural Reform 2004”, the Koizumi administration is going to sweep away all the public sector labor unions – the Japan Teachers’ Union (JTU), All Japan Prefectural and Municipal Workers’ Union, Japan Postal Workers’ Union etc. – and to completely dismantle the post-war social security system.

Redrafted Fundamental Law on Education is a Law for Demolition of JTU and for War Education

Submission of a bill to redraft the Fundamental Law on Education to the ordinary session of the Diet is drawing near. The bill presented by the governing parties formulates the objectives of education anew: “to cultivate the attitude for respect of traditional culture, love of country, and contribution to peace and development of international community.” In other words, “to build up Japanese who are prepared to sacrifice their own lives for the country” (NISHIMURA Shingo, member of the House of Representatives). It is inseparable from their agenda for amendment of Article 9 (peace clause) of the Constitution.

The governing parties’ redraft bill definitely reverses Article 10 of the Fundamental Law on Education: “education shall not be subject to improper control...” which prohibits improper control of education by the administration and governing parties, into “education administration shall not be subject to improper control...” by inserting ‘administration’. This means an openly declared control over education by the state power. The activities of the Japan Teachers’ Union are thus considered “improper control”. The redrafted Fundamental Law on Education would be an awful weapon for demolition of the JTU and prohibition of peace education as “biased education”. The mission of education workers would be war education to make students “kill people of other nations and sacrifice their own lives.”

The Liberal Democratic Party and a part of the Democratic Party are aiming for massive introduction of history and civics text books edited by “Tsukurukai”^{*} into high schools, starting with introduction of those into six-year high schools in Ehime Prefecture and Tokyo. The redraft of the Fundamental Law on Education would trigger revision of the Basic Objective of Education under the School Education Law, Education Ministry Curriculum Guidelines, and Criteria of Textbook Screening. They are intent on pressing education workers into glorifying aggressive wars in classrooms; the obligation to use official textbooks would be a lever for it.

^{*} “Tsukurukai”: a far right revisionists group, “Society for New History Textbook” or “Society for History Textbook Reform”,

In Tokyo, those teachers are now under severe administrative repression who do not sing “Kimigayo” and who cannot make student sing it. They are labeled as “ill-qualified teachers” and as “teachers lacking in teaching ability” respectively. The MOE is going to introduce teacher’s license renewal system with the aim of dismissing teachers who do not meet the norm of loyalty to the state under renewed Fundamental Law on Education.

The redraft of the Fundamental Law on Education is an attack against education workers in order to utilize them as advance guards of aggressive wars. This must be stopped by every means.

Unity in Workplaces Against Busyness and Tightening of Control and!

For us education workers, workplaces have been rendered into a hellhole with busyness and tightening of control. Education workers are now boiling with rage. The JIU leadership is responsible for all that in abandoning struggle and adopting the line of “partnership with the Ministry of Education (MOE)”, The MOE has been hammering out “reform” after “reform”; education workers are swamped with meaningless works, such as giving grade for grade’s sake and submitting reports for reports’ sake. As a result, teachers are deprived of times and have no time to share common experience with the students or talk with fellow teachers. Overloaded schedule with 5 days week and drastic change of working time are forcing teachers run around second after second without break time. Moreover, practice of supplementary lessons on Saturdays has been spreading. Number of overwork deaths, juvenile retirements and sick leaves has been sharply increasing due to longtime and overloaded work and extreme stress created by mounting difficulties in education.

On the other hand, control over education workers has been tightened: teachers evaluation system, “teachers lacking in teaching ability” control system, introduction of managerial positions under assistant principals, enhancement of principals over personnel relocation. Discrimination and division among teachers have been brought in and silence has been imposed on workplaces. Deprivation of the right to independent research and training, educational training by administration, prior censorship of supplementary materials and even of classroom correspondence, in a word, tightening of education control, are suffocating independent and creative education practices. A lot of fellow education workers are sharing the feeling: “We can no longer continue working in a situation like this. It’s enough.”

The JIU leadership’s “partnership” with the MOE is responsible to these circumstances of schools. Abandonment of “five pillars of workplace struggles” is the principal cause of destruction of unity of education workers in the workplaces. Regeneration of the JIU is the most urgent agenda of life and death for us.

Confront the “Education Reform” for Making War State

“Yutori education”(education at ease) means concentration of resources on the education of tiny percentage of elites who lead international competition and cutting down of competency-based education for most of the students. “It is important not to waste resources and effort in raising the lower level of unsuccessful students, but to concentrate instead on helping talented children,” said former chief of the Agency for Cultural Affairs MIURA Shumon, “With the slow children, it’s more important to nurture their honest spirit.” Under this education policy, diversification is promoted from the elementary school level – introduction of nine-year elementary-junior-high schools and six-year high schools – and expansion of classes formed according to degree of advancement. Processive description of the textbooks widens gaps of contents of learning. Recently a policy of boosting the academic achievement was made in response to criticism against decline of achievement. This policy accelerates competence race and screen out children from families’ of little financial strength.

It is an illusion to stop the redraft of the Fundamental Law on Education without confronting by unity of workplaces the “education reform” and enemies’ attacks in anticipation of the redraft.

However, the leadership of the JIU resorts to the MOE for maintenance of state contribution to the education and for establishment of Education Advancement Program and barter away the struggle against the redraft of the Fundamental Law on Education for it. Today, “to send our student to the battlefields” has become a reality. Just in these circumstances the JIU leadership do not fight at all against war mobilization of education workers. Capitulation of the JIU leadership to the redraft of the Fundamental Law on Education means final abandonment of our slogan: “Never Send Our Students to the Battlefields!” We cannot tolerate this complete betrayal.

There is no middle way for us: whether we accept the complete turn of an education into war education, patriotic education, or not; whether we become the advance guards of war to “send our student to the

battlefields” or refuse and fight against it.

Refusing to Stand Up is a Very Struggle Against the Redraft of the Fundamental Law on Education

Hundreds of education workers who refused to stand up last spring have awakened the “fighting JTU” and showed the course of its regeneration.

In their “Regulation of October 23, 2003” on school ceremonies, Ishihara and the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education gave minute instructions including 12 provisions from the position of the national flag and aspect of seats to the manner of command: “stand up!” to sing the national anthem. It is aimed to transform the graduation and enrollment ceremonies to loyalty ceremonies for the state. All the teachers were handed out instruction paper, which ordered, “to seat at the designated seat, then stand up straight ahead of the flag and sing the anthem there.” The ceremonies were besieged and monitored by the staffs of the Board of Education. The explanation on “freedom of inner conscience”(in regard to the individual attitude to the national flag and the national anthem), which had been made in former ceremonies, was suppressed.

Under the Fascist Governor Ishihara, who openly states his intention to abrogate the Constitution, schools in Tokyo have been put under actually wartime control. Citation of wordings concerning the Constitution, the Fundamental Law on Education, and the Convention on Rights of the Child disappeared from *Tokyo’s Objective and Basic Policy of Education*. The Tokyo Board of Education adopted instead “nurturing of Japanese who respect the history and culture of our country.” The Board has been enforcing an allegiance test on education workers.

The Ishihara and the Board of Education are attacking education workers with an aim of breaking up their class-consciousness as members of working class, to devastate their personality and conscience, and to make them to assume the role of war educators. To allow obediently this attack means the “demise of education workers.”

Although the union members face these realities, the leadership of the JTU issued a policy to “obey the instruction of the Board” in the name of “focusing on defense of the organization” to avoid conflict. This leadership’s policy put the rank and file members in agony. We cannot allow this gross sell-out.

However, hundreds of rank and file union members carried through refusal to stand up, after their great suffering and distress. They could not behave obediently to the administrative order against their conscience in front of their students whom they had told “importance of conviction and courage to carry out justice” and stuck to their own conscience as education workers.

Last Year’s Great Advancement of the “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” Struggle, with the Punished in it Forefront

This defiant uprising gave heavy blow to Fascist Ishihara and the Board of Education and caused enormous repercussions in the whole Japanese society; even the national papers – *Asahi*, *Yomiuri*, *Mainichi*, *Sankei* etc. – argued among each other in their editorials over the issue. The struggle against coercion of “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” has attained a central position in the struggle against the planned revision of the Fundamental Law on Education and the Constitution. Thus a broad united front of their supporters and sympathizers has been created.

The punished teachers are carrying on independent struggle in strong unity. They have brought the case to the court as preventive lawsuit and have been touring throughout Japan for support and calling for enhancement of resistance struggle in workplace as graduation and enrollment ceremonies are approaching.

The congress of the Tokyo High School Teachers’ Union (THSTU) last June adopted a lot of amendments submitted by the punished teachers demanding support of the struggle for withdrawal of the punishments in the “Hinomaru and Kimigayo” issue and other problems. The adoption of their amendments indicates that the

refusal of the enforcement of the “Hinomaru and Kimigayo” ceremony represents general feeling of teachers and that the resolute struggle has encouraged them through its determination as education workers with their entire existence. Even the national leadership of the JTU was moved and eventually admitted the punished teachers, executive members of a union and its local, as speakers in the “National Rally to Defeat Authoritarian Education Administration” in Hibiya Open-air Stage on Dec. 3 in Tokyo sponsored by four different teachers unions and endorsed by the JTU.

An enthusiastic appeal for the support of the punished teachers was issued also by the “Stop the Revision of the Fundamental Law on Education! National Rally”, held on Nov. 6 in Hibiya Open-air Stage gathering 5,500 workers and citizens. The rally declared in its statement: “The teachers refused to stand up in the “Hinomaru and Kimigayo” ceremony, risking inevitable punishment. This struggle is offering a stiff resistance against the administrative repression on education workers that precedes the revision of the Fundamental Law on Education. This struggle will lead on to a movement to crush the reactionary attempt.

The teachers’ struggle has given a great impact on the entire labor movement as an example of rank and file struggle to take back union’s power in their own hand and also of struggle in the workplace to refuse involvement in war.

On Nov. 7, “National Workers’ Rally” was held in Tokyo sponsored by the Kan-Nama (Solidarity Union of Japan Construction and Transport Workers Kansai Area Branch), Minato-Godo (Metal and Machinery Workers’ Union in Osaka), and Doro-Chiba ([National Railway Motive Power Union of Chiba](#)). The following is the main slogans of the rally:

“Make a National Network of Fighting Unions!”

“International Solidarity to Fight Against Massive Unemployment and War!”

3,600 workers from around Japan joined in the rally and pledged international solidarity of working class together with the guest participants, seven unionists from the U.S. including the official delegate from the ILWU Local 10, Brother Jack Heyman, and two unionists from South Korea, Brothers Pak San-yun and Mun Mun-ju, Secretary General and Organization Director of the KCTU Seoul Regional Council respectively.

The rally wholeheartedly and enthusiastically welcomed the twenty teachers who fought against the “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” ceremony in Tokyo and were punished or dismissed. They energetically emphasized the cause of their struggle on the platform.

The uprising of the education workers against “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” is providing a victorious perspective for rank and file members to fight back, getting over the union bureaucracy who has surrendered to capital and betrayed the cause of the working class, while the Emergency Laws has already been legislated and workers of every industry are faced with an imminent issue of fighting war duty instruction. This is because the workers of other industrial branches are saying: “Let’s fight as the education workers do!” “For the joint struggle against the ‘Hinomaru and Kimigayo’ ceremony this spring”.

The fighting education workers joined other fighting workers who participated in the rally of Nov.7th, namely the National Railways workers who have been fighting for withdrawal of dismissal of 1,047 union members, the postal workers who fight intransigently against privatization of the Postal Services and the members of All Japan Prefectural and Municipal Workers’ Union (Jichiro) who fight against “21st Century Manifesto” of Jichiro leadership. Thus a starting point has been successfully made to defeat the “Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Management and Structural Reform 2004” and the union busting in the public sector.

The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) regards the struggle against “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” as a “struggle against revival of militarism” and shows great sympathy. The American fighting unions consider it a “genuine rank and file movement”. International solidarity is now growing around this struggle.

【photo】 3600 workers gathered in the National Workers’ Rally. Punished education workers’ appeal

intensified solidarity. (November 7, 2004. Hibiya, Tokyo)

For National Struggle Against “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” this spring

“Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” are not only the symbols of the past aggressive wars but also the instruments for new wars and a resurgence of chauvinism. The struggle against this aggressive trend is a litmus test of our slogan: “Never Send Our Students to the Battlefields Again!”

Scared of this struggle against “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo”, the enemies are aiming to force education workers to submission. Reactionary attacks against the great advancement of the struggle are now growing.

First, the Emperor, upon hearing Tokyo Education Board member YONENAGA Kunio to avow in the imperial garden party that “I feel it my duty to make sure that students and teachers raise the rising-sun flag and sing the national anthem at schools across the country. I’m doing my best”, suggested to him, “It’s not desirable to do it by force”. The Emperor meant that any dispute upon this issue should immediately be settled and “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” should be accepted without enforcement or protest. It is an imperial order to crack down the sturdy struggle of the education workers. Now, the Japanese Emperor, who had long been prohibited to have power related to government by the Constitution* after WWII, has finally started to overtly meddle in education. It is a beginning of a fierce attack upon people.

*Article 3: The advice and approval of the Cabinet shall be required for all acts of the Emperor in matters of state, and the Cabinet shall be responsible therefor.

Article 4: (1) The Emperor shall perform only such acts in matters of state as are provided for in this Constitution and he shall not have powers related to government.

Second, the Japanese Communist Party and Kakumaru* have begun maneuvering to destroy the struggle of refusal to stand up. Showing total abhorrence to the educational workers’ struggle, they insist that the refusal would incur punishment and repression and the struggle should be stopped. December last year, Kakumaru launched a “movement to accuse and impeach Governor Ishihara and the Head of the Board of Education, Yokoyama”. This “movement” beg the prosecution, that is, the state power apparatus, to indict Ishihara the Governor and Yokoyama the Education Officer, while demanding teachers to obey the duty instruction and stand up for “Hinomaru” and sing “Kimigayo” in stead of fighting the administrative enforcement. Kakumaru even smears the teachers who refused to stand up as being “provocateurs” or “odd men”. Their vicious aim is to destroy the struggle against “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” in the graduation and enrollment ceremonies this spring.

*Kakumaru is a notorious Fascist group, which had violently promoted the division and privatization of Japan National Railways.

Let’s fight back reactionary offensive and carry out refusal of “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” in the coming graduation and enrollment ceremonies.

The education workers in Tokyo are now preparing to rise up against “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” this spring in defiance of tremendous reactionary attack and enormous pressure of every kind. Ishihara and the Board of Education have resorted to severe repressive measures on teachers who refuse to stand up during the singing of “Kimigayo”: reprimand for the first refusal and reduction of pay for one month for the second refusal. They have issued a warning that “those who repeatedly refuse” would be dismissed. In face of this grave situation, the fighting teachers are expanding the struggle to defeat the unjust massive punishment.

Brothers and Sisters, fellow union membership! We must not let the fellow workers in Tokyo fight alone. If tens of thousand of education workers rise up against “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo” this spring, we can surely gain a perspective to definitely defeat the redraft of the Fundamental Law on Education and the revision of Article 9 of the Constitution.

Let us launch a new struggle of refusal and disobedience throughout the country! It is, for us education workers, a matter of our life.

With the huge struggle against “Hinomaru” and “Kimigayo”, let us stop the redraft of the Fundamental

Law on Education!

Get back the militant teachers' movement represented formerly by the Japan Teachers Union to the hand of union membership through rank and file struggle!

【photo】 700 education and other workers besieged the Tokyo Board of Education building in protest action (August 30, 2004)