

**APWSL
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NEWSLETTER FROM JAPAN COMMITTEE OF ASIAN PACIFIC WORKERS' SOLIDARITY LINKS

Unions Join Forces Against Ministry Proposals to Worsen Labor Laws

by Takasu Hirohiko

Reducing the costs of aging and high-waged white collar workers in order to increase productivity has become the most strategic issue for the survival of Japanese business in the face of global competition. In 1995, Nikkeiren, the Federation of Japan Employers Associations, released a proposal entitled, *The New Age of Japanese Management*, in which it proposed to divide the work force into three categories and manage workers as follows: 1) a small core of managerial-track employees who are employed permanently in order to develop their long term managerial knowledge, 2) specialist-type workers who are hired on fixed-term contracts to make use of their special skills, and 3) the remaining rank & file work force who are employed flexibly on short-term contracts. The aim of the proposal is 1) stimulation of a flexible wage system and employment structure, 2) introduction of a new employment system in which a company could obtain the necessary work force at a low cost whenever it needs more workers, and could terminate the contract easily when it does not need them. Actually it wants to introduce a sort of just-in-time system into the labor market. Business circles have put strong pressure on the Ministry of Labor (MOL) to revise of the Labor Standards Law, and the MOL has started to examine the revision of the law in response to their request.

On December 11, 1977, the Central Labor Standards Council, composed of a tri-partite advisory board to the MOL (including managers, union representatives and government officials), recommended a proposed amendment of the Labor Standards Law in spite of a strong opposition by labor. The important points of dispute are: 1) To change the current permanent employment structure to a definite term contract system with terms up to five years. As a first step, the proposed amendment targets aged workers and the specialist type work force, such as workers in the field of research and development or on long term overseas projects; 2) To deregulate the current strict overtime agreement by introducing a discretionary work system which has no fixed working hours; 3) To set a limit to overtime by imposing a non-punitive obligation for employers as a countermeasure to the abolition of protective regulations for women workers on overtime, holiday work and night work. (These protective regulations were abolished last spring and are due to go into effect in April 1999—ed.)

To combat this attack aimed at them by Nikkeiren, the MOL and the government, not only the central labor organizations including Rengo, Zenroren and Zenrokyo, but also other local unions including community-based labor clinics for organizing the unorganized, have begun

to cooperate in joint counteractions. These joint actions are the first of their kind since the split up of the confederation of labor after the dissolution of Sohyo in 1989. We have to block the passage of the amendment with all the power of our labor unions.

Takasu Hirohiko is the General Secretary of the National Union of General Workers, Tokyo South and secretary of the Network for the Rights of Limited-Term Workers.

This article was translated by Ben Watanabe.

3000 Protest Labor Law Revisions

About 3,000 unionists from around the nation gathered at Hibiya Park in central Tokyo on November 27, 1997 for a rally against the proposed loosening of the Labor Standards Act by the Central Advisory Commission to the Labor Ministry. Afterwards, participants marched to the Diet Building and met with politicians from both houses. The demonstration was attended by members of public sector unions affected by the increasing trend toward subcontracting services with private companies or privatizing whole agencies, part-time and women workers' unions, and several foreign workers unions. Earlier in November, Tokyo-based unions from the main labor federations cooperated in planning a two-week focused campaign of demonstrations, leafletting and sit-ins at the Labor Ministry. The unions feel a stronger need to cooperate in face of the coordinated challenge by the government and employers to create a "just-in-time" labor system. (JM)

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Introducing APWSL-Japan Co-Representative: Inada Junichi

by Kadokawa Toshiko

Inada Junichi is serving for a second year as one of the co-representatives of the APWSL-Japan Steering Committee. Without saying his age, he talked a lot about his difficult childhood before and during the war. His father was an employee of the Mint Bureau and his mother was a full-time homemaker. The family lived in company housing and many visitors from his father's work would come to their apartment, occasionally bringing a toy for him. Those presents always worried his mother because he would usually break them before the visitors left. In short, he had a reputation for being a naughty boy. His arms usually moved faster than his mouth. He would often fight with other boys but he would never bully the weak ones. The buttons his mother kept sewing on his clothes were often all torn off when he came home in the evening because he fought so much. When he was a 4th grade pupil he was tough enough to fight 6th grade pupils and never lose. As punishment for fighting in school, his teachers would have him stand in the hallway holding buckets of water, but he would still get into fights with the boys who came to look at him and tease him. Then he would be told to stand in the principal's office.

His temperament has not changed since he became an adult. The only change is that he does not use his arms for violence: he stopped that when he was 18 years old. However, the president of his company is like one of the 6th grade bullies of his primary school days. After becoming a sanitation worker in his 30s, he has devoted himself to struggles with his employer as the vice president of his labor union.

Like most Japanese during and right after the war, Inada and his family suffered from the severe food shortages. Upon graduation from junior high school, his one wish was to have a job where he could feed himself. Since he wasn't suited for white-collar work, he thought about learning a trade. He had a relative who was a carpenter and one who was a tailor. He chose the latter and became an apprentice in his house, cooking, sweeping and washing clothes for the master's family and the senior apprentices. He got no salary except for an allowance of 300 yen per month, half of which would disappear after watching one movie and having a bowl of ramen noodles. One good thing was that it was the time when electric washing machines appeared on the market in Japan so he did not have to wash the clothes by hand. He went on to study for two more years at another master's shop and then opened up his own shop at age 20. In the postwar turmoil, he had to support his unemployed parents and younger sisters with that job.

Several years later, department stores began to sell men's suits through loans paid in 10 installments. Individual tailor shops could not compete with the cheaper prices of department stores and most customers started buying suits there instead. Since Inada did not like to bully weak people, he found it hard to demand to be paid when customers could not pay. He remembers being paid once in mochi, or pounded rice cakes, which are traditionally eaten around the New Year holiday. Then, his wife asked him to close the shop and become a salaried employee, no matter how low the salary was. After a

few years, he was employed as a sanitation truck driver and has continued this work until now.

Soon after entering the company, Inada became involved in forming a union. At the time, working conditions for the young employees were not good and they wanted to form a union. He was asked by them to serve as vice-president. The employer hated the union and tried to bust it. The company dismissed two young workers but the labor union demanded their reinstatement. They got support from other locals of the Tokyo Public Service Garbage Workers Union and went on strike. Inada was arrested in a confrontation with the police and was held in detention for 27 days. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government, hearing of the union struggle, canceled its contract with the company, so it lost all its income for one month. Finally, the company accepted the union's demands and the strike was settled.

Inada laughs about that time now but sighs with some bitterness, "The company learned the hard way that it's better to have good relations with the union." He adds that he is very grateful to his wife because she did her best during that difficult period, without shedding any tears. Being held in detention was very embarrassing for his family because he had started coaching baseball for the boys in his community. When he did not show up for practice, everybody asked where he was and it was impossible to say nothing. When she went to visit him at the detention center, his wife asked him how she should answer that question. Inada told her to tell them that he had gone away to a very far place and could not be contacted. Also, he did not know when he would be back. Even with such a difficult answer, she did not complain.

Ordinary weekdays for Inada begin at 5:30 am. Since his wife works as a seamstress in a factory often until late at night, he doesn't like to wake her up. So he leaves his house around 6 am and takes some bread to eat for breakfast with his coworkers. His job driving the garbage truck starts at 7:30 am and finishes at 2:30 am. In the afternoon, he returns home and reads or writes for his union. If his wife knows she will be home late from work, she leaves him a memo to do some shopping, which he does once or twice a week. He often goes out in the evenings for meetings and socializing with union friends. On the weekends, Inada is busy managing the town co-ed softball league. He goes to practice every Sunday morning at 9:30 am.

Inada is the type of person who cannot tell a lie. He is so honest that he is often criticized for his sharp tongue. He said he has to be that way in order to defend himself. He added that he has continued his activities with the union all these years in order to defend himself. "Without a labor union, workers cannot confront those with power over them," he concluded, leaving this interviewer persuaded and impressed.

Kadokawa Toshiko is a member of the coordinating committee of APWSL-Japan.

This article was edited by John McLaughlin.

Report of APEC People's Summit in Vancouver

More Discussion - Not Just Saying Hello !!

by Akimoto Yoko

First of all, I have to apologize to all of our readers for my comments on the People's Summit in Vancouver reflecting my disappointment. I hoped to meet many people, discuss different topics with them, and achieve some results, but I cannot say that the Summit met my expectations. I participated in two meetings: the Women's Conference and the Labor Summit. My report is as follows:

Women's Conference

The Women's Conference, held Nov. 17 - 18, was designed to follow the previous conference in Manila and advance our efforts or struggle as women workers. According to the communique, 500 delegates, about 100 of whom came from outside Canada, packed the conference room. I expected that our discussion would be fruitful, and I would have opportunities to talk about the situation of Japanese women exposed to the attack of deregulation, and exchange views, but unfortunately these hopes were in vain. I chose to attend two workshops on Export Processing Zones and the Roles of Unions. It's true that all the participants, in particular, Canadian women, were eager to listen to experienced activists and expand their knowledge, but I felt the discussion was not enough and we should have delved into issues to find clear and concrete strategies.

At the first workshop, Cecilia, from the Philippine Workers' Assistance Center, spoke on labor atrocities in the Cavite Export Processing Zone. Some Canadian participants seemed surprised by her talk, adding that this was the first time they had heard about such brutal conditions. For myself, I wanted participants to obtain basic information about factual matters in advance, and I preferred discussing strategies for getting information because our time in Vancouver was limited.

The other workshop on Roles of Unions was interesting to me. Various trade unionists and NGO activists

assembled in the room. The discussion was very lively. It seemed to me that there is a conflict of opinions or strategies between both kinds of activists in Canada.

Labor Summit

The meeting was held only for one day on Nov. 21. The Labor Summit had the feeling of a festival. At the opening plenary, several well-known persons in the labor world made speeches. I found their speeches to be rather commonplace. Obviously, lengthy talks were not what we were there for.

The climax of the festival came at lunch. The British Columbian Premier, Glen Clark, came to the Landmark Hotel to make a speech, calling on Suharto to free jailed activists and promising to protect human rights and endorse the principles of the ILO. The audience applauded his speech.

After lunch, we moved on to workshops. I joined in the workshop on the Informal Sector. The number of participants was small, but I think we could get some ideas about defining what the informal sector is and what is required of us to address its problems. However, it is almost impossible to address such a critical topic in a few hours. Organizers at the Summit should have given participants more time to discuss issues, and the Summit should have focused on discussion.

People's Summit in Malaysia

Now, I hope we have learned lessons from the Vancouver People's Summit. The coming People's Summit should have substance as well as a fruitful and lively discussion. Let's start exchanging information and planning now !!

Akimoto Yoko, introduced in the previous issue, is a member of the APWSL Japan Steering Committee.

News Follow-ups:

East Asia Symposium on Monitoring TNCs Sparks Lively Debate

The Second Annual International Asian Symposium on Monitoring TNCs in East Asia brought together over 80 labor and NGO activists from Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan during the two-day event held in Tokyo on November 23-24, 1997. The discussion and debate was very lively on both days, going past the time allotted for it. The involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and their cooperation with labor unions in monitoring transnational corporations in Asia was a bigger point of contention than expected by the host organization, TNC Monitor Japan. First, compared to other countries in Asia, there is much less contact between labor unions and NGOs in Japan and perhaps unions are suspicious of NGOs which are critical of the labor movement here. Secondly, NGOs, as they are commonly known, do not exist in China and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) does not recognize any Chinese unions, so there are many difficulties for international cooperation, information gathering and sharing in the region. (JM)

16 Dismissed Language Teachers Heat Up Pressure on College

A year ago, we reported on the struggle of 8 teachers dismissed by the Tokyo Foreign Language College in a union-busting tactic by the management. The entire executive committee of the TFLC Teachers Union was dismissed as well as other active union members. In March, 1996 the management fired the rest of the union membership. Although labor commission and district court hearings have dragged on for over 20 months, members of the Kaiko 16 (*kaiko* means dismissal in Japanese) and their parent union, the National Union of General Workers, Tokyo South have been busy in the past year gathering a broader base of support among unions in the area. Particularly critical has been the support of high school teachers' unions because their members advise students on which schools to consider after graduation. As a result of these efforts, the case of the Kaiko 16 is becoming a cause celebre in the Tokyo and foreign worker labor movements. On November 20, 1997, over 200 union leaders and supporters gathered to affirm their commitment to trying to resolve the dispute by the spring, applying whatever pressure they can. (JM)

NGO Corner

Introducing the Asian Women Workers Center

by Araya Yukie

In this issue, we would like to introduce our readers to the Asian Women Workers Center (AWWC). Since it was founded in 1983, the AWWC has worked tirelessly to help Asia's female laborers and promote grassroots exchanges among workers in the region. To learn more about the group, I interviewed its general secretary, Hiroki Michiko, who has been involved in the Center from the beginning.

The AWWC was originally established in cooperation with another NGO, the Hong Kong based Committee for Asian Women (CAW). In the 1960s and 1970s, many East Asian and South-East Asian countries established export-oriented industrial policies, which were heavily dependent on foreign capital. Young female workers were exploited as a cheap labor force, leading to serious labor problems and human rights violations. The problems were particularly severe for employees working for TNC's, most of which were subsidiaries of Japanese, American, and European enterprises. In 1981, through the support of Christian groups in the region, the CAW was founded to tackle this problem. The AWWC was established two years later to give full-fledged support to CAW activities.

At first, the TNC problem was the main focus of the AWWC's activities. However, the AWWC's activities evolved through the years, along with the CAW's policy and the changing condition of Asian women workers. At present, the Center still has some relation to Christian groups, but it operates independently. It currently boasts some 700 members.

The AWWC's activities are manifold. It publishes a newsletter in Japanese four times a year, called *Ajia no Nakama* ('Asian Friends'), which provides in-depth coverage of the true state of Asian women workers. It also publishes an English newsletter for overseas readers twice a year, *Resource Materials on Women's Labor in Japan*, which gives information about conditions in Japan. Additionally, the AWWC promotes direct exchange among Asian women workers by (1) conducting symposia on common issues for women workers in Asia; (2) inviting women workers and labor activists to Japan; (3) organizing study tours to Asian countries; and (4) coordinating training programs. Lastly, the organization supports other Asian labor groups in overseas labor struggles, writing protest letters and raising Japanese awareness of the disputes.

The AWWC could be called a pioneer in Japan in the fields of international labor issues and international solidarity with overseas workers. However, its work does not extend to organizing demonstrations in Japan in support of workers overseas. Regarding this, Hiroki said that the AWWC doesn't have enough power to organize campaigns directly in Japan. More importantly, the organization does not think that labor disputes overseas are the sort of problem that can be settled by direct demonstrations, because such disputes invariably involve very complicated issues. Rather, it is important (1) to find out what happened and why, (2) inform those concerned and their sup-

porters, and (3) raise public awareness. There should be appropriate information to enable communication and understanding of the issues in question for everyone concerned. If there were "rules" for building international solidarity, this would be one of them. In practice, of course, it is a difficult rule to follow.

Another issue that is current in labor circles these days is the possibility of establishing international labor standards like social clauses or codes of conduct for TNCs. Regarding this, Hiroki said that it would be worth setting up such standards, but also that it is necessary to realize that they would not be that effective in developing Asian countries, even if they were established. She noted that she has always been asked about this issue by journalists influenced by Western notions of value. She believes she needs to learn why Asian people are uninterested in the issue before she comments, by observing the situation in Asian countries and talking with Asian people.

The AWWC emphasizes direct worker-to-worker exchanges for information and mutual support. The Center goes beyond mere labor issues to deal with women workers' lives as a whole, reasoning that the latter cannot be separated from the former. For instance, an AWWC-sponsored exchange program with Korean women workers in Tokyo in 1993 focused on the issue of the child care facilities. Child care is an inevitable problem for women workers in every country, and there had been some discussion and activism related to this issue in Japan (albeit ultimately insufficient) that organizers believed would be useful for Korean women workers to know about. Not surprisingly, no one, not even union members or child care experts, had ever heard about the Japanese experience, let alone realized that hearing this history would be useful for other Asian women workers. Why? Labor unions have little awareness of child care, since they have tended to marginalize women's issues. Conversely, child care experts do not conceptualize child care as a labor issue. This is the sort of gap that the AWWC seeks to fill.

At the same exchange program, the AWWC provided information about various consumer and workers cooperative movements, workers collective movements, and self-production or self-governance movements. Although it is possible that none of the case studies were directly relevant to workers in other Asian countries, given the different conditions that prevail in each area, the AWWC hopes they can serve as models for similar initiatives in the attendees' home countries.

Hiroki said that the Center hopes to spread information about the Japanese labor experience, including both successful and unsuccessful cases, focusing particularly on women's issues, which conventional labor activism tends to marginalize. It should serve as a coordinator linking Asia and Japan on labor issues and other issues in the future. Hiroki's final message is that understanding and cooperation among different peoples starts when they simply meet together. We hope that the AWWC will continue to promote cooperation in its unique way, and flourish more than ever.

Araya Yukie is a staff member of the Center for Transnational Labor Studies.

This article was edited by Tim Stuhldreyer.

Draft of NGO Charter on Transnational Corporations, Part II

Proposed by the People's Action Network to Monitor Japanese TNCs

translated by Iba Mika

Editor's Note: In the previous issue (No. 27), we ran the first main part of the draft proposal for a Charter on Transnational Corporations to coincide with the Second Annual International Symposium on Monitoring TNCs in East Asia held in Tokyo in November 1997 which APWSL-Japan co-sponsored. Here is the remainder of the proposal:

II. TNC Monitoring Activities

The following provisions on TNC monitoring and international support and solidarity actions regarding TNC monitoring are drafted for the purpose of developing the basis of a joint action guideline for NGOs working on TNC issues in the Asia region:

1. In monitoring TNCs, it is necessary to establish an organization(s) and system to monitor TNCs on a daily basis and to strengthen national and international networks both in the parent countries of the TNCs (i.e. investors) and the affiliated countries (i.e. recipients of the TNC's investment).

2. TNC monitoring requires closer cooperation among NGOs in various sectors and of different backgrounds. In particular, it requires stronger links and networks between citizens organizations and labor unions/organizations. International cooperation and the network of NGOs between the investors' countries and the recipient countries are especially important.

Responsibility and roles of the NGOs in the investors' countries

3. In the investors' countries, it is required for NGOs to conduct daily research on the movements/trends of TNCs based in their own country. When any problem relating to TNC operations is confirmed, the NGO shall immediately contact the head office of the TNC and the relevant authorities for confirmation and submit the necessary demands and proposals for a solution.

4. In the investors' countries, the NGOs shall provide the necessary information including the managerial data when they are requested by labor unions, residents' or citizens' organizations or other NGOs working on issues in the recipient countries.

5. When the NGOs receive requests for support actions from NGOs in other countries working on the problems relating to a TNC based in their country, they shall plan and carry out the following support actions. However, in such cases, they shall adopt the principle of developing responses to direct requests from the NGO in the other country who is directly involved with the problems relating to the TNC. They shall acquire accurate and clear information on the chronology of events and other details on the issues of dispute or problems the other party is involved in.

(i) Confirm and clarify the details of the dispute or problems by contacting the head office of the TNC, the relevant authorities and relating organizations.

(ii) When the dispute or problem is confirmed on their side, the following initiatives shall be taken;

a) Present the demands for a solution to the TNC management and/or perform protest actions if neces-

sary.

b) Develop closer communications and cooperation for the solution among the relevant authorities and organizations and;

c) Organize a campaign within their country.

6. Standing on the principle that a settlement to the dispute must be carried out through direct negotiations with the parties involved, the NGOs in the investor countries shall press the TNC head office to work for a solution as the responsibility of the investor. When the representatives of the directly-involved party such as the labor union and the local residents association visit the country to seek negotiations with the TNC's head office, the NGOs shall offer their full support. Such support shall be provided on the understanding of the following principles:

(i) Fully respect the decision of the representatives on the agenda, the demands and agreements regarding the negotiations with the TNC head office, as they are the directly involved party. (The negotiations shall be carried out based on the decisions and responsibility of the mission of the representatives.)

(ii) Fully respect the decision of the host NGOs, i.e. the supporting group in the investor's country regarding how and what to support and organize for the representative's mission.

Roles of NGOs in recipient countries

7. The NGOs in the countries where the TNC has made investments, may inform and request for the necessary cooperation to the NGOs in the countries where the head offices of the TNCs are located when human rights violations, environmental destruction and other similar problems have occurred due to or in relation to the TNC's business.

International support and solidarity actions

8. Strengthened global NGO network is required to effectively monitor and regulate the TNCs who operate globally. As a first step for such a network, the directory of NGOs working on and are involved with TNC issues in Asia shall be completed while strengthening the communications among them.

9. In terms of logistics and desirable formation of the international support and solidarity on the problems caused by TNCs, labor unions/workers associations have developed their own networks and rules as a result of their experiences in dealing with many cases. However, NGOs in other sectors need to build up and share the lessons from actual cases in the various countries to serve as a guideline.

10. In the international support and solidarity actions relating to TNC issues, the following shall be taken into account with special attention:

(i) Provide and inform accurate information.

(ii) Respect the demands of the directly-involved parties while conforming to the integrated strategy and objectives as a shared group.

(iii) Develop and grow based on face-to-face support and solidarity actions.

Message from Jane Kelsey:

Further Thoughts on Combatting Deregulation After Visiting Japan

In September 1997, Professor Jane Kelsey of Auckland University in New Zealand, an outspoken critic of structural adjustment programs and deregulation in New Zealand and other countries, came to Japan upon the invitation of a group of female lawyers and labor activists who had received a grant from the Tokyo Women's Foundation to arrange her visit. The idea for this lecture tour came from the second visit of Japanese labor activists to New Zealand sponsored by APWSL-Japan early last year.

My short visit to Japan in September last year was a valuable opportunity to share insights and experiences with unions, women's organisations and NGOs as we face the pressures and effects of deregulation in our two countries.

There are three main impressions of our common problems and challenges which I would like to share.

First, the rhetoric of those who demand deregulation is the same almost anywhere in the world. Government intervention, they say, prevents 'the markets' from achieving maximum efficiency. Policy and regulation have been captured by unaccountable bureaucrats, in alliance with those whom they regulate. International competitiveness is undermined by heavy regulation, protected borders, full employment and high government spending. For markets to operate 'freely', there must be minimal rules with few compliance costs, and incentives to maximise profit and growth. The same logic applies to all regulation, whether financial markets, government administration, social security or education. A growth economy also demands flexibility, especially in the workforce. People must adjust their expectations in this more dynamic, and less secure, modern world.

Some of their economic arguments are true. But they assume that the costs always outweigh the benefits. This equation is almost never openly addressed, because their vision of the economy is totally detached from the social world. The first challenge, then, is to break the grip which economists, economic models and economic theories have secured over the deregulation debate and relocate it in a social, and human, context.

Second, their vision of a deregulated global economy, which is governed primarily by market forces, suggests the same model can be applied anywhere in the world. International agreements seek to lock in this minimalist approach, and promote standard rules for intellectual property, foreign investment, trade in goods and services across the globe. This leads to claims that there is little that governments can do, and that differences of national politics, law, culture and values are increasingly irrelevant.

There is no doubt that markets are increasingly global. Finance capital, transnational enterprise, international financial institutions and elite informal networks all enjoy considerable autonomy from individual national states. But states are not powerless; nor are all states the same.

It is absurd to think that the nature and effect of deregulation in a country as small, remote and economically irrelevant as New Zealand is somehow the same as Japan. The differences in economic power and geo-political

role between Japan and New Zealand are huge. The form and extent of deregulation in Japan will have enormous global impact, so the debate is bound to be more cautious and complex. The two countries have very different economic histories, which emerged alongside distinct legal and business cultures. Regulation, or deregulation, carried out by governments operate within those cultures. They may adapt, but they cannot and will not simply disappear.

Most important, our countries have vastly different political and social structures, values and expectations. These, too, are the product of history. They have emerged and been fought over for centuries. Government, law, regulation and business cannot function without legitimacy. In New Zealand very little attention has been paid to these concerns; ideology has played a dominant role. There is strong support for deregulation among the commercial community. But it remains deeply unpopular among a majority of people - Maori and Pakeha, women and men, paid workers and unemployed, middle class and poor, rural and urban, old and young. They feel alienated by increased inequality and poverty. Their jobs and futures are insecure. They feel frightened by the disintegration of education, health and social services. And they find themselves living in deregulated, individualised world whose values they do not share.

The second challenge, then, is to insist that globalisation has not removed the role and responsibility of the nation-state, and to reinsert politics, culture, values and people in the deregulation debate.

My third observation is that people, families and communities in Japan, as in New Zealand, find it very hard to understand the connection between the theory of deregulation and what is happening to their lives. I heard a great deal of popular support for the idea that deregulation would reduce the power of the bureaucracy, weaken the links between government and business and help bring corruption under control. People seemed to assume that deregulation meant putting people back in charge.

The third challenge, then, is to explain the reality market-driven regulation and its impact for people in ways that are real, help them believe they can affect what happens to their lives and generate real alternatives. That is exceptionally hard to do. Those who see this as their role need to develop a sound understanding of the overall deregulatory agenda themselves. This understanding must go beyond the particular sector or region with which they are concerned to see where those policies fit into the whole. Our experience in New Zealand shows that battles have to be fought at the local level over local issues by mobilising local groups, unions and communities. But the big picture must always be kept in mind, with alliances operating at the national level, and reaching beyond that to those which pool our information, analyses and resistance internationally.

Jane Kelsey is a professor of law at the University of Auckland. She is the author of several books, including The New Zealand Experiment: A World Model for Structural Adjustment?, A Question of Honour? and Rolling Back the State.

APWSL Japan Activity Report November 1997- January 1998 and Plan of Action 1998

by **Yamasaki Seiichi**

The main activity for the last two months of the year was our participation at the People's Summit held in Vancouver in November. Akimoto Yoko, who was introduced the previous issue, represented APWSL Japan at the meeting. She also attended the International Women's Conference and the Workers' Forum held prior to the People's Summit. The main issues were the evaluation of APEC, the social clause and code of conduct. Akimoto had the impression that the debate was lead by participants from North America and that voices from Asia were undervalued. A presentation on the People's Summit will be held jointly with the Center for Transnational Labor Studies in March.

On 10 December there was a presentation in Tokyo about the East Asia Exchange program held in Hong Kong last September. Two participants from the Tokyo area, Inagaki Yutaka and Kadokawa Toshiko, made reports on the struggles of Hong Kong people for democracy and on the women workers movement there. We also invited Inoue Aiko, a reporter for the *Weekly Labor News*, to speak about the situation of the labor movement in Hong Kong after its return to China. An outstanding feature of the meeting was that it was attended by many young people. Half of the participants were in their twenties and also half were women. This was a very promising fact for APWSL Japan, which is trying to revitalize itself by recruiting young and women workers.

Also on the same day, there was a disappointing ruling at the Tokyo District Court on the Hanaoka case, in which Chinese laborers were demanding reparation from the Japanese Government and Kajima Corporation for their forced labor during World War Two. Wu Jong-

Yuan, Chairperson of the Labor Rights Association in Taiwan, and David Monkawa, National Coalition for Redress and Reparation in Los Angeles, California, visited Tokyo for the occasion. APWSL Japan had the opportunity to meet and talk with the two.

APWSL Japan has started to issue a new monthly bulletin called "APWSL TODAY". It is in Japanese and is a newsletter for its members and the public reporting both the domestic and international activities of APWSL. It also carries a translation of selected articles from this English newsletter to let our members know what we are sending abroad.

Tentative Plan of Action for this year

Our annual general meeting will be held in July. The main program of action for the first half of this year is as follows: 1. Accompanying the visit of postal workers to New Zealand in May for an exchange program with postal workers there. 2. Receiving the planned visit of timber mill workers from New Zealand as part of an APWSL exchange program. 3. Receiving the planned visit of Thai APWSL members as part of an APWSL exchange program. 4. Preparation of an Alternative Tour later in the year, possibly to Taiwan. 5. Monthly workshop on gender issues starting from February to promote equal participation of gender in APWSL activities and labor movement as a whole. 6. Reporting back meeting on the Vancouver APEC Peoples Summit scheduled in March.

Yamasaki Seiichi is the Secretary-General of APWSL-Japan.

Editor's Notes

Apologies: In our last issue, we said that we would be including a questionnaire for our readership. Although we prepared it, we did not print it and distribute it in November. It is included on the last page of this issue. Please take a few minutes to answer whichever questions you can and send it to us the easiest way possible: by post, fax or e-mail. We would like to know what kind of information about the labor movement in Japan our readers are really interested in. Also, if there are any address changes we should be aware of or you would like to stop receiving this newsletter, please let us know at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your cooperation and apologies for the mistake in the last issue.

Corrections: We request that you point out any errors that you may come across in this newsletter and we will print the corrections in our next issue. Please send them by e-mail to jmcl@gol.com or to the address listed on the next page. Also, comments and criticism of the contents of the newsletter are always welcome.

Publishing schedule: We stated in our last issue that with the reduction in pages from 12 to 8, we would try to come out more frequently than four times a year. However, we are running over a month behind schedule and it is likely that the next issues of this volume will come out in mid-May and in mid-August.

This newsletter is published so that the voices of Japanese workers and the problems they face, may be made known overseas. We ask you to send us your news, so that we can translate it into Japanese for the overseas news section of our Japanese newsletter.

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Japanese names are in Japanese order, family name first.

The APWSL-Japan Steering Committee had its annual conference last July and we chose a new editing team. The editorial committee decided to change the format of the English APWSL-Japan newsletter both in layout and in content (see previous issue for more explanation). We would like to conduct a survey of our readership because we have not received any comments on our newsletter from abroad. We wonder about whether the newsletter is useful or interesting to you. We hope you will send back the questionnaire with your remarks to us. Please mail this form to the APWSL address listed on the newsletter or you may fax it c/o John McLaughlin at 81-48-831-9056 or send comments by e-mail to jmcl@gol.com *The questionnaire was composed by Ben Watanabe.*

1. Name of your organization:
2. Mailing Address:
3. Phone and Fax Nos.
4. E-mail address(if you have one):

For the following questions, please circle the appropriate answer and add information or comments if you would like:

5. When did you get the APWSL-Japan newsletter for the first time?
a. 1980s. b. Early 1990s c. Quite recently
6. How did you get it? From APWSL Japan Through other organization networks
7. Do you read the newsletters regularly or sometimes? Regularly Sometimes
8. What kind of articles were useful for you? a. Labor in general b. Political affairs c. Economic affairs d. Gender
e. International solidarity f. Health and safety g. Migrant workers h. Book review i. Portrait of a person/group
9. May we continue to send the newsletters in the future or should we stop sending it to you now?
10. What kind of publications from other organizations do you receive regularly? (For example, Asian Update from AMRC, AAWL News from AAWL, Labor Notes in the USA)
11. If you print your publication, please give us the following information:
 - a. How often does it come out? a. regularly b. irregularly c. when:
 - b. Published in a. your local language b. English c. other languages
 - c. How much is it? a. free b. charge a subscription fee:
 - d. How many copies do you print?
 - e. Can we arrange to exchange publications with each other?

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