



NEWSLETTER

Japan International Labour Foundation <http://www.jilaf.or.jp/English-jilaf>
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International Forum Held

— The Experience of the Trade Union Movement in Australia and New Zealand —

From January 12 to 25, four trade union leaders from Australia and two from New Zealand visited Japan under the JILAF invitation program, and on the occasion of their visit, an international forum was held under the theme of “Globalization and Labor-Management Relations: The

Challenge of the Trade Union Movement toward Neoliberalism.”

From Australia, it was reported that the ACTU is conducting a large-scale opposition campaign to the revision of the labor law that is currently moving forward in that country. In addition, RENGO Department of International Affairs Director Chihiro Ikusawa reported that RENGO had made demands to the Australian Embassy in Japan as part of its cooperation with the ACTU campaign. From New Zealand, there was a report on the effects and reviews of deregulation and labor reforms. The reports were followed by a Q&A session with the

many trade unionists who came to attend the Forum.

Australia is currently governed by a conservative coalition of the Liberal Party and National Party, which is carrying out an anti-trade union policy line. It was reported that there are plans to change decision-making on labor conditions from collective bargaining to individual agreements, and to restrict access to workplaces for organizing purposes. In Japan, too, reforms have been carried out toward deregulation and smaller government, and from the reports from the two countries, we learned afresh that social regulations and economic regulations must be carried out separately.

We are planning to publish the contents of the Forum soon on the JILAF website, so please take a look.



▲NZCTU Vice President Ms. Helen Kelly reports on the experience of the trade union movement in New Zealand.

The Indonesia Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Gains Membership in the ICFTU

At the 124th Executive Board meeting of the ICFTU, held from December 9 to 10, 2005, approval was given to the membership of the Indonesia Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Together with the global union federations (GUFs), JILAF has provided support for four of the unions that formed the core of ITUC when it was established in February 2003 (FSPTSK in textiles, FSPMI in metals, FSPKEP in chemicals and energy, and ASPEK in finance and commerce). Since FY2004, we have consolidated our support into ITUC, and have given support to educational programs in areas such as “basic education for trade unions,” “trade union structure,” “minimum wages,” “union management”

and “collective bargaining and labor agreements.” Meanwhile, the results of the 2004 Basic Survey on Trade Unions (which decides the quota for labor representatives in the tripartite committees composed of government, management and labor representatives), released in September of last year, ITUC was found to have the largest membership of any of the national centers, and this represents a large step forward along with its ICFTU affiliation.

Further, from November 14 to 16, a joint ITUC/JILAF seminar was held in Samarinda on the theme of “collective bargaining and labor agreements.” On the basis of “Labor-Management Relations and Labor Agreements: Guide for Problem

Resolution” formulated by ITUC, spirited debates were held on the fundamentals, legal basis and points of caution to be considered in the various stages of union activities from the gathering of opinions in the workplace, to negotiations, and the conclusion of agreements, as well as the structure of labor agreements, and challenges to be overcome.

From JILAF, the Forum was attended by Koji Suzuki, director of the Field Projects Department, who talked about negotiation procedures for revising labor agreements in Japan.

JILAF Participates in ICFTU-APRO/ILO Regional Review Meeting on Child Labor

In Colombo, Sri Lanka, from December 20 to 22, 2005, 30 people from 14 organizations in 13 countries gathered to attend the ICFTU-APRO Regional Review Meeting on Child Labor. The purpose of this meeting, pursuant to resolutions adopted at the ICFTU World Congress held in December 2004, as well as the ICFTU-APRO Regional Conference held in February 2005, was to review efforts up to the current approach and formulate an action plan for the future.

From each national center, reports were given on the existence of anywhere from several hundreds of thousands to several million child laborers in each country, and presentations were also made on the efforts being carried out in cooperation with governments or organizations such as the ILO. In addition, ICFTU-APRO, ILO, IFBWW, RENGO and JILAF all gave presentations on their activities. The report from JILAF introduced our non-formal school project operating in Nepal in cooperation with NTUC from Nepal and INTUC from India.

At the end of the meeting, discussions were held on the formulation of action plans at various levels (Asia Pacific region, national center, and workplace), and the meeting ended after adopting a plan calling on ICFTU-APRO to hold similar meetings in the future, and

for trade unions to include the problem of child labor in their collective bargaining.

JILAF plans to continue operating the non-formal school, and we expect that the national centers will cooperate with related organizations and carry out activities centered around the action plan that was adopted at the meeting.



▲Participants present reports on their activities

JILAF Co-Sponsors Workshop in Thailand for New Trade Union Leaders

For three days from December 16 to 18, 2005, in Pattaya, Thailand, JILAF held a field project workshop along with IMF-JC. The workshop was attended by Shinya Iwai from the International Affairs Bureau of IMF-JC, and Tomotaka Inoue of JILAF's Field Projects Department.

The Confederation of Thai Electric Appliances, Electronics, Automobile and Metal Workers (TEAM), is composed of four industrial federations, organizing workers in the automobile, electric and electronic appliances, metal, and steel sectors. Thus, it is IMF-JC's counterpart which is affiliated with the IMF. TEAM has its headquarters in Samut Prakan Province, east of Bangkok, and is organized mainly in the eastern seaboard industrial zone, including Chon Buri and Rayong Provinces. The President is Charlee Loiysoong from the National workers' Union, and the General Secretary is Mongkol Tanakanya, from the Isuzu work-



▲Group photo taken at the end of the workshop

ers' Union.

The current workshop targeted new union officials with little experience in union activities, and used group work to help them learn the significance and role of trade unions. The participants, who included 43 people from 16 unions affiliated with TEAM, cooperated as they worked on the various tasks. TEAM is working actively in Thailand, where the trade union movement is weak with an organization rate of just 2-3%, and now has a membership of nearly 50,000, thanks to the establishment of new unions and the affiliation of existing ones. While Thailand is experiencing strong economic growth, inflation is very high, and this has put pressure on the lives of workers. There have been an unusual number of labor disputes this year, and much expectations have been placed on TEAM's activities to lead the trade union movement.

JILAF's field projects are carried out through national centers, but because there are many national centers in Thailand, support is being given to local industrial organizations in conjunction with the GUFs, in the hope that this will lead to future unification. Four organizations were given assistance in FY2005, and they each held workshops. We can take pride in the fact that positive outcomes have been achieved, and we plan to continue the same policy next fiscal year.

Our Expectations of JILAF

As globalization goes forward, driven by finance and the economy, poverty is growing more severe and the gap between rich and poor is widening throughout the world. A few individuals and companies enjoy immense wealth, while impermissible social ills, such as starvation, child labor, human trafficking and forced labor, have become ever more prevalent.

We are conscious of the fact that trade unions have a crucial role to play in resolving these global issues. To ensure that globalization has a human face, it is important for civil society organizations to participate in the process of problem solving and to promote sound social development.

As you are well aware, since its foundation in 1989, JILAF has acted as our counterpart in carrying out various activities for trade unions in developing countries on the basis of this perspective. These activities have included educating workers on labor-management relations, collective bargaining, occupational health and safety, and labor law, as well as activities geared toward social development, including the elimination of child labor, promotion of women's participation, improvement of health care, and environmental conservation. These activities have been highly appraised by the various parties concerned.

There is a close relationship between RENGO's international activities in the ICFTU, ILO, Trade Union Advisory Committee

PROFILE



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to the OECD, etc. and JILAF's activities supporting developing countries, and these activities complement each other like two wings of the same bird. We hope to further strengthen the linkages between the two organizations so that new synergies can be produced. We will continue to make efforts to build public awareness on the significance and positive outcomes of trade union activities in the area of development cooperation, to ensure that an increasing share of ODA funds can be channeled into development cooperation activities of the international trade union movement, and to carry out effective and efficient activities for creating a better life for working men and women.

International Cooperation Efforts by Trade Unions – No.10 Tsunami Trauma Counseling Project

Yuzuru Nakamura
General Secretary
Japan Teachers' Union

On December 26, 2004, a tsunami that began off the coast of Sumatra caused the deaths of many children and entire families. The children who survived the tsunami suffered not only physical injuries but also emotional trauma.

Since May 2005, the Japan Teachers' Union (JTU), together with Education International (EI), has implemented a Trauma Counseling Project in Sri Lanka and Aceh, Indonesia. Based on the experience of the rehabilitation program following the 1995 Kobe Earthquake in Japan, the project was designed to provide local teachers with know-how on helping children to recover from trauma. A special program was drawn up in accordance with the needs of local people, and training was given under the special program to produce core trainers who would play a major role in the project. In addition, counseling training was offered mainly by core trainers to teachers in the disaster areas.

"It is comparatively easy to send relief goods to disaster areas. A more important

task is to offer mental support," said General Secretary Nakamura, "We would like teachers to learn from the lessons of past disasters and teach children how to prepare for future ones. We hope that education for disaster mitigation will help people learn about the importance of human life and of helping one another."

Teachers have direct contact with children on a day-to-day basis. The Trauma Counseling Project has not only offered mental support but also established strong ties between individuals. Many tsunami victims still suffer from trauma. We hope the care activities carried out by teachers will help heal the trauma of the afflicted children as soon as possible and that innocent smiles will once again appear on their faces.

(Takeru Kato, Department of Research and Public

Affairs Department)

Reports on the project were presented at the Asian Regional Tsunami Symposium in November 2005, which was attended by EI affiliates in Asia. The participants recognized the importance of education for disaster mitigation and post-disaster mental care and gained an increased awareness of the need for school-based care activities.



▲ Counseling training in Sri Lanka

Japan-China-South Korea Symposium

JILAF has held regular exchanges with the Korean International Labour Foundation (KOILAF) since 1999. In November 2005, Executive Director-General Yukuo Ajima and two other JILAF staff members visited South Korea to exchange up-to-date information on the labor situation from KOILAF, trade unions, employers' associations and the government. They also attended a symposium entitled "Economic Cooperation among South Korea, China and Japan and Labor-Related Challenges." In the past, the interaction took place exclusively between the two organizations, and this symposium was the first program in which three bodies participated: JILAF, KOILAF and the China Workers' Centre for International Exchange (CWCIE).

A researcher from South Korea gave a presentation, and the three organizations made their own reports. It was pointed out that the expansion of cross-border economic activities in Northeast Asia, such as the movement of firms, has also had an impact on the area of labor, as is seen in labor transfers and the outsourcing of some functions, so it is important for the three organizations to strengthen their ties to resolve interrelated problems and common issues.

KOILAF, which is a tripartite organization consisting of labor, management and government, differs from JILAF in its nature and

activities. The network has now been joined by CWCIE, which also has a different nature, but we will seek to develop concrete cooperation by holding similar symposiums to exchange information and views on the current situation and future challenges. We hope that efforts to develop such a network will deepen our cooperative relationship not only in the economic realm but in labor as well.



▲Executive Director-General Yukuo Ajima making a presentation at the symposium (left rear)

JILAF Calendar (December 2005-March 2006)

1. Invitation Programs

- Oceania Team
January 12-25
- Central Asia / Russia Team
January 26-February 8
- South America Team
February 9-22

2. Field Projects

- Thai TEAM (IMF-THAI) Workshop
December 15-19; Pattaya, Thailand
- Nepal NTUC Seminar for Training POSITIVE Core Trainers and School Project Monitoring
December 16-23; Kathmandu, Pokhara, Nepal
- ICFTU-APRO Regional Review Meeting on Child Labor
December 18-24; Colombo, Sri Lanka
- Vietnam VGCL / TUSO Coordination Meeting
January 15-20; Hanoi, Vietnam
- Philippines TUCP Occupational Health and Safety (POSITIVE) Monitoring

January 24-28; Manila and Cebu, the Philippines

- Indonesia ITUC POSITIVE Introduction Seminar
February 11-19; Puncak, Indonesia
- Bangladesh ICFTU-BC Project Follow-Up
February 12-25; Dhaka and Khulna, Bangladesh
- China ACFTU Project Follow-Up
February 14-18; Beijing, Hangzhou, China
- Thailand UNI-TLC and Pakistan PWF Workshops
February 16-23, Bangkok and Singburi, Thailand, and Karachi, Pakistan
- Basic Seminar for East Timor Trade Unions
March 5-12; Dili, East Timor
- China POSITIVE Monitoring
March 19-25; Yang Zhou, Hang Zhou, Ning Bo, Shao Xing, China

3. Others

- Survey on Employment Measures:

"Employment Creation by NGOs and the Quality of Employment" (Domestic hearings)

December 22, Tokyo, Japan

- Second Study Meeting on International Labor Issues, "Problems Faced by the European Social Model in the Midst of Globalization"
January 12; Tokyo, Japan
- JILAF International Forum: "The Experience of the Trade Union Movement in Australia and New Zealand"
January 18; Tokyo, Japan
- Survey on Employment Measures: "Employment Creation by NGOs and Quality of Employment"
January 23-February 3; Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- ICFTU-APRO / JILAF Joint Seminar for Young Women
February 7-9; Bangkok, Thailand
- 47th Board of Directors/Board of Councilors Meeting
March 3; Tokyo, Japan

Inside Out

Since coming to JILAF, I have encountered many unfamiliar country names and writing in languages that I couldn't even recognize, and have come to really feel how wide-ranging its activities are. I am very happy to have become one of the members of JILAF, whose activities are contributing to the improvement of workers' lives. I plan to do

my own small part to help advance the cause of the international trade union movement, and look forward to everybody's help and guidance.

Akiko Mizuguchi
JILAF staff

