



# NEWSLETTER

Japan International Labour Foundation <http://www.jilaf.or.jp/English-jilaf>  
Office: Kinmei Building, 3-23-2, Kanda-Jimbocho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0051, Japan  
Telephone: 81-3-3288-4188 Facsimile: 81-3-3288-4155 E-mail: [info@jilaf.or.jp](mailto:info@jilaf.or.jp)

International Symposium held on September 6

## Thinking about Middle East Peace ~What labour unions do~

### The Background

Seven junior labour leaders from the Middle East and North Africa were invited to Japan from August 31 to September 13, 2006. Besides one from the Kuwait Trade Union Federation (KTUF) for the first time, one representative from each of the Union Generale des Travailleurs Algeriens (UGTA), the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF), General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU), Union Marocaine du Travail (UMT), and two representatives from the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) made up this team.

The most remarkable point was that an international symposium was jointly held with the two representatives from the General Federation of Labour in Israel (HISTADRUT), who were invited to Japan at the same time. A high official from the ILO who visited Japan around the same time stated that it was a miracle that such a symposium could be held at that time. JILAF has in the past held symposium jointly with PGFTU and HISTADRUT as part of its Invitation

Programs. JILAF also held joint seminars in the region under its Field Projects. However, both of these are currently suspended.

Due to the recent continuing tension caused through the worsening situation in the Middle East, this program began in a very sombre mood. For a while it was uncertain whether or not the symposium would go ahead. However, thanks to the trade union solidarity as well as the common determination among all the participants for the realization of peace in the Middle East, the symposium could finish more or less safely. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has held a slogan "Bread, Freedom, and Peace" and indeed we cannot be so sure for bread and freedom without peace.

### The Outline of the Symposium

The first part of this International Symposium on the Labour Movement in the Middle East and North Africa, jointly sponsored by JILAF and FES, and with the support from RENGO, consisted of reports from each organization and the second part was a panel discussion. In the first part, the participants reported on the labour situation and the current state of the labour movement in each country.

In the second part, coordinated by Mr. Shigeru Nakajima (a worker member of the ILO Governing Body), the panel went on in such a way as seeking the views of each organization on the Middle East peace, particularly on the role of trade unions in solving the current situation. With



each of the participants giving an energetic presentation of his or her feelings, a common perception was reached between PGFTU and HISTADRUT that an immediate cessation of mutual armed attacks should be the first thing to do for peaceful coexistence. Other participants stated the opinion to the effect that the two sides must engage in same dialogue with each other and that solidarity and lobbying from regional and international trade union organizations could help to bring about an early solution. During the panel, the Egyptian participant proposed that an international workers conference for Middle East peace be held in Japan.

### Towards the Realization of Peace in the Middle East

The holding of this symposium confirmed that everyone had a common thought and feeling about the realization of peace in the Middle East. All the participants strengthened their perception that trade unions shared support peaceful coexistence between Israel and the Arab states and should strengthen international solidarity towards the realization of peace.



▲About 70 participants attended the symposium

## INTUC/JILAF School Monitoring

# Contributing to the eradication of child labour in India Solidarity with local society is indispensable

From October 16 to 23 the Field Project Department carried out monitoring at Kovilpatti School, in Tamil Nadu, India, previously operated by JILAF from January 1999 to September 2003, and also at Markapur School in Andhra Pradesh, which is currently being operated by JILAF. Concerning developments at Kovilpatti School, following the end of JILAF support, the school was operated by INTUC with support provided by NCLP (National Child Labour Project), an organization run by the Indian Government and the ILO. We were told that, "Compared to when JILAF established the school, child labour in the city has decreased more than 40 to 50%." At Markapur School also, active efforts to eradicate child labour were apparent, for example by making time available during school hours for the singing of poems for the elimination of child labour.

Child labour still exist, however, as can be seen by the great number of children working as cattle minders or firewood gatherers. It was explained by a member of the school management that, "The reasons why child labour does not disappear are poverty and the lack of sufficient education for children and parents." In a meeting to exchange opinions with a representative of MVF (M. Venkatarangaiya Foundation), a local NGO, the interesting state-

ment was made that, "When Indian people see child labour, they think it is quite natural, and it is this lack of awareness of the problem that must be corrected."

Ongoing solidarity with local society will surely be an indispensable element in the activities of current and future projects.



▲Pupils at the INTUC/JILAF Markapur School smile and wave

## VGCL/JILAF Seminar on Union Organizing

# Supporting Union Organizing in Japanese-Affiliated Enterprises Voluntary and Continuous Efforts Anticipated

In response to a request by VGCL (Vietnam General Confederation of Labour), currently aiming to increase its membership (nominally about five million at present) by one million in the five-year period between 2003 and 2008, a "Seminar on Union Organizing" was held in the largest port city of northern Vietnam, Haiphong. Bro. Sogo Yoshimiya, RENGO Director of Organizing and Organizational Affairs Department, and Bro. Kimihiko Yanagitani, a staff member of the Field Project Department of JILAF, attended the workshop.



▲RENGO Director, Bro. Yoshimiya (right), greets participants at the opening ceremony

The participants at the seminar were 30 trade union officials active in trade union activities of the Japanese-affiliated enterprises in the Nomura Industrial Park developed in 2005. VGCL gave an explanation of changes in the labour situation and the role of trade unions and their union organizing experiences in the industrial park following the transition to the Doi Moi reform policy. Bro. Le Trung Nghia, Chairman of the Ho Chi Minh City Industrial Park Trade Union, who was invited to Japan by JILAF in 2004, reported on the experiences of union organizing in the industrial park. Bro. Yoshimiya gave a lecture on the Japanese labour movement, and experiences in collective agreements and membership expansion. Participants engaged in active discussions in group work following each of the sessions, and drew up action plans based on their current situations. Opportunities for workplace visits and hearings on the current state of industrial relations were realized on the final day of the workshop through the kind cooperation of two Japanese-affiliated companies, Nichias Haiphong Co., Ltd. and AS'TY Vietnam Inc.

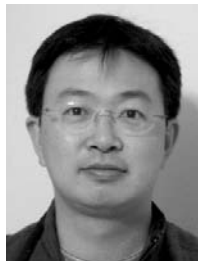
We sincerely hope that VGCL will support the activities of the participants in their efforts to further protect workers' rights and improve working conditions.

## 「JILAF's Social Development Activities」

At JILAF, I took charge of various kinds of work. The experience of inviting union leaders from the USA, Europe and so on, and implementing exchanges of opinions and workshops in Japan has been useful in observing the American labour movement in Detroit.

However, if I were asked what the most interesting work that I did was, I think I would have to say the school projects in India. "Labour union social development activities" are not limited to activities for union members by local unions, but are activities that are carried out for the benefit of all the residents of the region, and I feel that in the future these activities will become more and more important. I was extremely impressed by the way in which union officials in India were making serious efforts to tackle the local social problem of child labour. I think that trade unions, which represent the interests of all workers, should be strengthening their work for the socially disadvantaged outside of union membership, who are suffering from poverty and a variety of other difficulties. At the same time, I was impressed once again in India by the global issue of the poverty gap. I was reminded of the thoughts and feelings I had when I was a university student majoring in social development in developing countries.

### PROFILE



### Miki Hatsuzawa

Researcher/Adviser to the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit

April 1997: Joined the staff of Japan Institute of Labour (now the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training)

April 2003 to January 2006: seconded to JILAF

February 2006: Assigned to current position

I hope that JILAF will continue, and hopefully expand, support for these social development activities. Recently in Asia, there have been several natural disasters like the tsunami and earthquake, which have affected a great number of workers. I think, given the networks that JILAF has built up in the past, there is much that JILAF, with the possible cooperation of RENGO, can do in this area.

## International Cooperation Efforts by Trade Unions – No.13

### 「Construction of Schools in Cambodia」by AJI-NO-MOTO Workers Union, Federation of All Japan Foods and Tobacco Workers' Unions(JFU)

The AJI-NO-MOTO Workers Union is scheduled this year, working with the NPO ASAC (Association of School Aid in Cambodia), to construct its tenth school building, which will be in the of Kampot Province in southern Cambodia. The Union has constructed one school building each year since 1998 as part of its social contribution to provide educational opportunities for children. Union members visit Cambodia on such occasions as the opening ceremonies for the schools, and present the

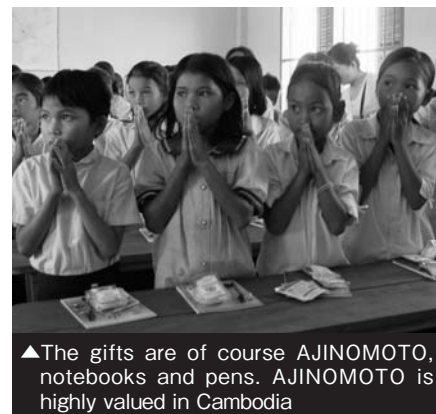


▲New school built with support from the AJI-NO-MOTO Workers Union

children with notebooks and pens, as well as their company's flagship product "AJI-NOMOTO."

Because of delays in bringing primary education to all areas, literacy rates are extremely low in Cambodia, and many children have to walk several dozen kilometres to attend school. Up to now the Union has focussed on building schools in areas where aid and development have been delayed until recently by landmines remaining from the Pol Pot civil war.

The Union's school building efforts are playing an important role in the development of the regional society, and have been recognized, for example, by the awarding of letters of appreciation from the provincial government. Mr. Syou Hiroshima, Executive Committee member, AJI-NO-MOTO Workers Union says that their efforts have also had a favourable effect on the company. "The company has built libraries on the grounds of the schools the Union has con-



▲The gifts are of course AJINOMOTO, notebooks and pens. AJINOMOTO is highly valued in Cambodia

structed, and we have also received kind donations from the company."

We hope that the schools constructed by the AJI-NO-MOTO Workers Union will play an ever more important part in their local societies, and look forward to a bright future for Cambodia envisioned by the children who study in these schools.

(Takeru Kato, Research and Publicity Department of JILAF)

## The 11th JILAF International Activists Training Course Begins

# New "Entry Course" for Language Training ~New Course Provides Grounding for Basic English Competence~

The objective of this course, as well as to aid participants acquire the basic English competence necessary for international activities, is to gain knowledge about international activities and the domestic and international labour movement in order to train personnel who will be able to play an important role in the field of international labour in the future. The course consists of English study based on



specially developed teaching materials, lectures on labour-related matters, and visits to Global Union Federations (GUFs). Further, the curriculum is revised and improved each year based on previ-

ous experience. Starting with this year's course, the English study program has been revised and an "Entry Course" newly established. Participants who do not have sufficient confidence in their English ability, study a simple English grammar review aimed at actual English use in the field, materials for English listening, how to study and acquire English, how to acquire a grounding for basic competence in English in preparation to enter the course proper. On completion of this Entry Course, the participants receive individual advice on how in future to further their study of English, what kind of learning materials they should use, and so on.

Last year, nine participants completed the 10th International Activists Training Course, and this year the 11th International Activists Training Course has begun with twelve participants, two of whom will participate only in the Entry Course.

## JILAF Calendar

### Activities Report (September-December 2006)

#### 1. Invitation Programs

- French Speaking, Portuguese Speaking Africa Team (September 21-October 4)
- Central America Team (October 19-November 1)
- Europe Team (November 9-22)
- "Fighting Against HIV/AIDS at Workplace" Team (November 30-December 13)

#### 2. Field Projects

- China ACFTU Seminars for Organizing Workers in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (September 9-16)
- Mongolia CMTU POSITIVE Regional Seminar (September 10-17)
- Indonesia ITUC Seminars for Training POSITIVE Core Trainers (September 17-22)
- Vietnam VGCL Seminar on Union Organizing (September 25-30)
- Philippine TUCP POSITIVE Monitoring (October 8-15)

- India INTUC School Monitoring (October 16-23)
- Vietnam VGCL POSITIVE Regional Seminars (October 16-28)
- Nepal NTUC POSITIVE Monitoring (November 18-25)

#### 3. Other Projects

- International Symposium on The Labour Movement in the Middle East and North Africa (September 6, Tokyo, Japan)
- Survey on Employment Measures, "Cross-National Research on the Subject of Temporary Agency Work" (September 29-October 13, France, Germany, Belgium)
- Survey on Employment Measures, "Cross-National Research on the Subject of Temporary Agency Work" (October 7-20, Washington, D.C., New York, San Francisco)
- 11th JILAF Training Program for Young Japanese Trade Union Leaders (From November 8, Tokyo, Japan)
- Survey on Employment Measures, "Cross-National Research on the

- Subject of Temporary Agency Work" (November 15-23, UK)
- 49th Board of Directors/Board of Councillors Meeting (November 22, Tokyo, Japan)
- International Symposium on "Fighting Against HIV/AIDS at Workplace" (December 6, Tokyo, Japan)
- KOILAF (Korea International Labour Foundation) Bilateral Meeting (December 11-15, Tokyo, Japan)

### Activities Schedule (December 2006-)

#### 1. Invitation Programs

- Eurasia Team (January 18-31, 2007)
- South America Team (February 1-14, 2007)
- "Youth Employment Issue and the Role of Trade Union movement" Team (February 15-28, 2007)

## Inside Out

Hello, everyone, I'm Hinako Watanabe. I am seconded to JILAF from the International Division of RENGO. I believe that relations with developing countries are one of the most important elements within the international labour movement. Through JILAF's Field Projects and Invitation Programs, which make it possible to engage in exchanges

with many sisters and brothers around the world, and also making use of my 20 years of international experience, I hope I will be able to play an active role and make a good contribution to JILAF's work. I'm very happy to meet all of you!

**Hinako Watanabe**  
Director

