

5,600-strong March through Downtown Tokyo Reinstate Fired Rail Workers! Overthrow Abe! Strong Solidarity between Doro-Chiba and KCTU against Neoliberalism

International Labor Solidarity Committee of Doro-Chiba

On November 3, All-out National Workers Rally for the reinstatement of 1,047 dismissed national railway workers took place in Tokyo, followed by a street demonstration.



Doro-Chiba's 26-year struggle against the Division and Privatization of National Railway has acquired a dimension, on which anti-labor and criminal character of the privatization was exposed to the whole Japanese society and its bankruptcy has become an undeniable reality for all. The recent ruling by the Tokyo High Court that found that mass dismissal of national railway workers at the time of the privatization had been unfair labor practice is one of the proofs of the victorious development of the struggle. A fresh 100,000 signature campaign has been launched to achieve a judgment in the Supreme Court for the reinstatement of these fired workers.

The rally confirmed a determination to continue fighting to gain a perfect victory in the national railway workers struggle to force withdrawal of their unjust mass dismissal and make it commanding heights of the struggle against ongoing over-all assault on working class by means of deregularization of dismissal or an attempt of reducing all workers to irregularly-employed workers.

Another achievement of the rally was that it has opened the way for the overthrowing of Abe administration, which is rushing into war, constitutional revision and restart of nuclear plants. All the participants joined in resolution that we should rise up for a life-and-death struggle to put an end to neoliberal onslaught in solidarity with all the workers of the world and to topple the system-friendly labor movement leadership represented by Rengo (All Japan Confederation of Labor Unions) to clear our way for the victory. Our common slogan is: "Militant Labor Union in all workplaces across the country now!"

The Korean 29-strong delegation from Korean Confederation of Trade Unions Seoul Regional Council, Special Committee for the Reinstatement of Dismissed Workers, Spec Watch Korea, and also a union member of GDL (German Train Engineers Union) participated in the rally. Numerous foreign workers in Japan, too, joined the rally.

Messages of international solidarity came to the rally from the following brothers and sisters: brother Lee Sangmu, president of the Public Transportation Workers Union of Korea, brother Bob Crow, general secretary of National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) of Britain, brother Ron Caminkow, general secretary of Railway Workers United (RWU) and sister Arlene Inoue of Unite Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) of the US. These messages of international solidarity encouraged all the workers gathering in the rally and contributed to solidify the unity to fight back privatization and neoliberalism.

Speakers of the three unions, which sponsored the All-out National Workers Rally, made addresses to the rally.

Among them, Yasuhiro Tanaka, president of Doro-Chiba delivered a speech: “Our struggle has reached a stage very close to the victory. The current class struggle situation, represented by the enemy’s attack of casualization, a total collapse of the social system and so on, is all the result of the Division and Privatization of National Railways. Let’s rise up for a struggle to overturn all these adversities! Let’s win a final victory in the legal struggle in the Supreme Court to reinstate the dismissed national railway workers, for which we have been fighting for 26 years! Let’s change the whole society!” “The 1 %, capitalist class, is destroying employment, education and medical care for its egoistic profit. Moreover, the ruling class is making a desperate drive for constitutional revision and war. It’s enough! To establish militant labor union is an urgent task for us all. We need to turn angry voices into concrete action and then we can change the world.”

Two speakers from Korea spoke from the podium. Brother Lee Jaewoong, president of the KCTU Seoul Regional Council expressed his anger against neoliberal onslaught, which destroys all kind of communities in the society. He also accused the media control by the Japanese and Korean administrations over the information on nuclear plants. He concluded his speech by the following appeal: “Let’s fight against the existing brutal society, in which interests of capitalists is pursued at the sacrifice of workers’ life”.

Brother Lee Hodong, president of Special Committee for the Reinstatement of Dismissed Workers, told about his joy of being here in Japan together with colleagues of Doro-Chiba at last and continued: “We admire the comrades who have been fighting for years, clinging to the principle of absolute opposition to the privatization and of demanding reinstatement of dismissed colleagues. Let’s continue our struggle till we gain all the working class to our side with this principle.”

Brother Kurt Schneider, member of GDL, called on the participants: “It is my conviction that there is no way for our victory than to organize a united struggle over the existing national as well as industrial barriers and division”.

These speeches were followed by Japanese rank and file workers, mostly young workers, who one after another addressed to the audience with full pride and confidence in their struggle in workplace. “United workers can overthrow neoliberalism” “Unity in workplace based on the principle of absolute opposition against capital is a guarantee of victory” – these were the conclusions drawn through their experience.

A former member of the Tosodan (fighting group of dismissed members of National Railway Workers’ Union) of Hokkaido (northern island of Japan) thanked Doro-Chiba for its support and encouragement and expressed his determination for a fresh struggle.

All-out National Workers Rally was concluded with the Declaration Against Constitutional Revision, which issued a resolute appeal for the struggle to stop Abe administration’s agenda of war and constitutional revision by the power of labor movement.

The current offensive of Abe administration of war and constitutional revision is a desperate challenge to undermine the historical achievement of Japanese working class to prevent war and reactionary revision of the Constitution for the past 60 years. In his attempt, Abe can count on the support from within the labor camp. System-friendly labor bureaucrats are accepting Abe’s war policy. We issued a declaration against this reactionary move to show the common determination strengthened through the rally. It stresses: “In solidarity with workers of the world, especially with the Asian people, we launch a decisive struggle against constitutional revision”. “We, Japanese working people, declare here to go ahead to create our future by our own hands and pledge never to repeat aggressive war any where.”

This declaration should be the starting point of a new struggle to change the whole world.

The November 3 rally has thus made a step to strengthen international solidarity with workers of the world with the brothers and sisters of KCTU at the forefront against neoliberalism.