

Zenkyo staged creative initiatives to oppose the passage of “War Bills”. Now that the bills were voted, we are determined to fight through to scrap them.

Until the last moment of the most prolonged Diet session in the entire postwar period, Zenkyo joined actions around the Diet and in many other places in the country to manifest its firm opposition of the unconstitutional so-called “War Bills” (International Peace



Support Law and Legislation for Peace and Security). Zenkyo mobilized all its strength for that crucial struggle, putting protest posters in workplaces and holding an all-teacher and school staff referendum. The result of the referendum showed the strong resolve of 50,000 teachers and staff not to hand down a war-making Japan to the next generations. Despite the mounting pressure of the public opinion and wide ranging popular mobilizations, the ruling parties (LDP

and Komei Party) rammed through the bills.

Popular outrage did not subside after the bills were passed. Workers and citizens across differences in political position have got together to call in one voice for the abolition of “the War Laws”. Upholding the slogan “Never send our

children to the battlefield again”, Zenkyo is participating in protest rallies and street drives held around the Diet as well as at various places in Japan. In addition, Zenkyo, together with other civil society organizations, is working on a petition campaign of abolishing “the War Laws” aiming at gathering a total of 20 million signatures. All Zenkyo members are committed to building a bright future for Japanese society.

“Education Forum 2015” held in the city hit by Great Eastern Japan Earthquake

A three-day-Education Forum 2015 was held in Sendai City, Miyagi prefecture, a region hit by the 2011 East Japan Great Earthquake. With the main theme “70 years after the war, let us join hands to pass on a peaceful future down to children”, 5000 people in total attended this forum, listening to keynote lectures and taking part actively in discussion in workshops. The forum was held in the middle of the struggle of the people of Japan against Abe cabinet, a crucial struggle for our country’s future: whether Japan will be fighting wars overseas in disregard of the Constitution or it will take a path towards a peaceful and democratic country where fundamental human

rights will be respected under the Constitution. The forum recognized the importance of establishing a society where human lives are valued and humans can live in dignity, and stressed the need for outreaching and uniting to fight jointly against all that become obstacle to the realization of such a society.



Education Forum 2015 held in Sendai

Abe's "Education Rebuilding" Reform makes Education Difficult

The education policy implemented by Abe government under neoliberalism is causing excessive competition in education. The government actually aims at concentrating "public funds" on the education of a small number of motivated competent children while providing "cheap education" to those who are not. Although receiving education is a guaranteed right, the governments has tried to hold down the national education budget on the pretext of self-responsibility and beneficiary liability of students and their parents. As a result, Japan's public spending on education in 2011 accounted for only 3.8% of GDP, the lowest among 34 OECD member countries (average 5.6%) for 6 consecutive years. This is evident from the fact that the U.N. Committee

on the Rights of the Child pointed Japan's poor public funding for education in its recommendation to the Japanese government.

The "Association for adequate learning conditions," for which Zenkyo assumes the role of secretariat, collected during the last 26 years more than 4.4 million signatures for the petition for better educational conditions. The petition carrying the demands of the parents, local communities, and teachers has been submitted to the national and local governments and has won improvements in educational environment, in particular smaller class size and free high school tuitions: the upper limit of 40 students per class has lowered to 35 in the first and the second years of elementary school and free high school tuitions was introduced, however, parents' income restriction has been imposed



The "Association for adequate learning conditions" held an assembly and appealed that they collected 7,464,065 signatures this year.

since 2014.

Japan is the only country among 34 OECD members that has neither free college education nor grant-type scholarship program. One out of two college students (in total 1.4 million) has to resort to scholarship programs but most of them are actually "loans" (about 70 percent with interest). The Education Ministry (MEXT) has declared that it will consider increasing the interest free loan-type scholarship programs. Zenkyo believes that more drastic solutions are needed including the creation of learning allowance system and eventually free college education and is campaigning for these goals.

Solidarity with people of Okinawa in resisting Construction of a New Base

For 70 years after the war, people of Okinawa have suffered from various problems associated with the US military bases. Today, U.S. and Japanese governments are trying to impose a huge military base to be built at Henoko. Led by the governor of Okinawa, local residents in Henoko area are fighting tenaciously against the planned construction of a new

base. Zenkyo organized a tour to support and to extend solidarity with their protest campaign last July. 65 colleagues from all over Japan participated in this three-day-tour.

They joined direct actions for blocking the construction and had valuable experiences through exchanges with the local people, listening to their wishes and hopes. Some young



In front of the planned military base construction site in Henoko

members of the tour asked themselves what they could do to correct such an injustice.

Zenkyo Demands the Government Change its Nuclear Plants Restart Decision

Five years have passed since the accident of Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima No.1 Nuclear Power Plant and the big earthquake. More than 178 thousand people are still displaced today. However, considering nuclear power plants as one of the important "base-load power

sources" for Japan, it has already restarted three nuclear plants and is promoting nuclear plants export to other countries. Zenkyo takes part in local initiatives held all over Japan to prevent the restart of nuclear power plants. Moreover, it is carrying on a project of taking children living in radioactively contaminated



On June 7 a mass rally held in Ehime against the restart of Ikata Nuclear Power Plant

areas to safer places so that they can play outdoor freely without fear of radiation exposure.

Zenkyo is resisting Government's reactionary attack on the right to vote at 18 years of age

The right to vote has recently been accorded to citizens of 18 and 19 years of age. Following this extension of the right to vote for the first time in 70 years, applicable to elections that will take place after June 19, 2016, 2.4 million 18 and 19-year-old young people have joined the electorate. Zenkyo welcomes this change as it is a favorable progress in democracy for our country. However, MEXT issued a notice that political activities by high school students can be restricted or

banned. In addition, interferences in political education by some right-wing politicians has deprived certain schools of freedom of education activities.

In this situation, high school students are actively showing their opinions by holding demonstrations and parades, demanding increases in educational budget and less school fees. High school students are also organizing themselves and form group in many places in Japan to protest against "the War Laws".



A big assembly with the title of "High School Students' Assembly on their future" held in Hibiya by high school students on December 13

On February 21, demonstrations were organized simultaneously by high school students across Japan to call for the abrogation of the "War Laws" and the resignation of the Abe Cabinet.

Youth Tour to Taiwan to learn about war, Japanese colonial rule and democracy

Zenkyo's youth committee organized a peace tour to Taiwan from December 26 to 30, 2015. 2015 marked the 70th year since the World War II and it would be a good opportunity to look at Asia and its history. Participants had lectures from the local people on the history of anti-Japan movement under the Japanese rule and how the issue of comfort women was dealt with. They also had a chance to exchange

with professors and students of National University of Governance as well as high school teachers, and learned about the education in Taiwan, including "The Sunflower Student Movement", a protest movement driven by a coalition of students in order to restore democracy in their country.



In front of Musha Incident Memorial Museum

Participation in the New York Actions for Non Proliferation Treaty(NPT) Review Conference and exchanges with US teachers' unions

In 2015 Zenkyo participated in various actions organized in New York prior to the NPT Review Conference. It was the occasion for Zenkyo to present to the United Nations the signatures it had collected on the petition calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons and to take the street in New York demanding nuclear abolition. It was also an opportunity to exchange views and experiences with young

antiwar activists engaged in the peace movements from many other countries. In addition, meetings with local unions and teachers' unions such as United Federation of Teachers (UFT), Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), and Alliance of Charter Teachers and Staff (ACTS) were arranged. During the discussions, it was confirmed that these unions were facing common challenges



Participation in the big parade organized by Peace Planet in New York

under neoliberalism and that the role all teachers' unions play is very important in taking up these challenges. These exchanges gave Zenkyo more courage to continue its struggle and helped to deepen the solidarity with the US unions.

Zenkyo teachers met with overseas peace activists in the 2015 World Conference against A&H Bombs.



"Peace Forum for teachers" with foreign delegates held in Nagasaki on August 8

2015 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was held on August 6 in

Hiroshima and on August 9 in Nagasaki to commemorate the atomic bombing of these two Japanese cities. Zenkyo held "Teachers Forum" on the eve of these commemorations.

In Hiroshima, two delegates from Philippines who had participated in the Nationwide Peace March were invited. An A-bomb survivor was

also invited and told her story. The participants then exchange views concerning peace. In Nagasaki, along with two delegates from Philippines, another one from Guam, a teacher, also joined the Forum to learn from a local teacher about peace education in Nagasaki and exchange views. This provided a valuable time for deepening our solidarity with people overseas engaged in antinuclear and peace movements.

SNES Representative Attended Zenkyo's 33rd Regular Congress

Ms. Odile Cordelier, Secretary of International Affairs, SNES, France attended Zenkyo's 33rd Regular Congress convened on February 13 and 14.

On February 12, she visited Ueda High School in Nagano prefecture. After a meeting with the school principal, she observed students' presentations and class lessons. She also talked with teachers representing each subject about teachers' continuous training

and teachers' appraisal system. Afterschool, she spent time in the school library talking with members of the English club. Being herself an English teacher, she spoke quite free and easy with students.

On February 11, she met with Zenkyo leadership and exchanged views about the OECD Educational policies and the situation in



Ms. Odile Cordelier, Secretary of International Affairs visited Ueda High School and participated in an English lesson.

France, especially in Paris after the terrorists' attacks. They agreed on the importance of international solidarity.

Study Trip to Fukushima (Watch, Walk, and Think of Affected Areas)

Zenkyo organized the fourth study tour in Fukushima on November 15th, 2015, four years and eight months after the nuclear plant accident. 24 people joined the tour and visited the affected area.

The bus kept on running without stopping. Through the windows, they could see that all wastes and debris from the earthquake had been cleared away. Instead, the land was covered with piles of black flexible containers filled with contaminated soils from cleanup operation. It was

Futaba town where the radiation level was the highest: $7.1\mu\text{Sv/h}$ inside the bus. The dosimeter did not stop beeping for a while. According to the bus guide, the annual exposure standard of $20\mu\text{Sv}$ set by the government for allowing people to return to their homes had no ground. Forests and mountains have not been decontaminated and remain with high levels of radiation.

In spite of this, the government has decided that the displaced people could return home merely because



Piles of black flexible containers filled with contaminated soil from cleanup operation

it wanted to announce that the contamination problem has been solved. All the participants of the tour could not repress their indignation and outrage at the government.