

Our Path Over 40 Years and Today

— Activist Group SHISO-UNDO

Our Position for Creating Revolutionary Journalism and Struggling with the Age

Standing Steering Committee
Activist Group SHISO-UNDO

“How can we totally get over the capitalism modern? We set the single target as our ideological task in the contemporary society. It exists not simply as the target of the ideologists or intellectuals, but as the task of the class of contemporary proletariat. We call for deployment of ideology movement, which is tied with formation of class consciousness of the working class, as we believe that the role of the task should be regained by the working-class masses. Also, we want to regain/form the Marxist identity through facing the task squarely against the ruling trend of throwing away the clear premise.”

The paper calling for formation of our Activist Group SHISO-UNDO in 1969 began with the paragraph quoted above. For more than forty years since then we have made efforts for proceeding step by step in order to materialize the task, recalling the spirit of the “Call.”

The initial problem recognition and the cooperation beyond individual interests

1969, when our Group started activities, was a year of turmoil.

Socialism, which was materialized with the Russian Revolution of 1917 as its starting point, had established the global system after World War II through people’s democratic revolutions in the Eastern Europe and the Chinese revolution of 1949. The world structure in which the two global systems i.e. capitalism and socialism appeared. The capitalism camp with the USA as its center, however, set out for forming a new order in order to cope with the global socialism system. Its key was the International Monetary Fund (IMF) system with the US Dollar as its axis currency.

During 1960’s through early 1970’s the progress of national liberation struggles of the three Indo-China countries including Vietnam and the upsurge of the international solidarity activities by the working-class people of the world became a decisive crisis of the U.S. dollar currency. It then resulted in cancelling its exchange with gold in 1971, so-called the Nixon Shock. Simultaneously, the framework of capitalism reconstruction of the postwar years specified in the confrontation relation with socialism began to swing in the late 1960s. The high-economic-growth policy was stuck, the Vietnam antiwar movement was developed against the background of the situation which the social contradictions spouted. The youth rebellion was connected with the labor movement, the student movement, the anti-war peace movement, or the revolutionary movement, and stood in a row in the global upsurge even in Japan. Facing automatic extension of Japan-US Security Treaty in 1970, factions hung up their general plan

views, branching and confrontation were repeated, and they devoted to barren strife contending for the championship.

Contrary to this appearance that was gay and apparently fulfilled by upsurge of sentiment, however, demolition and weathering of the working class' class-consciousness were advancing in that step. The ruling classes continued eroding and destroying the working class' class-consciousness by a high-economic-growth policy, and have planted their own-house consciousness which lives peacefully in everyday life. The "New Left" factions were driving youth workers to radical street actions from end 1960s to early 1970s, it was only the other side of a coin of the situation where demolition and weathering of class-consciousness advanced. It was such a time facing the 1970s when our precursors initiated the Activist Group SHISO-UNDO.

In response to this "Call," got together were the activists in political movements, labor movement and women's liberation movements, student movements, culture and art movements, antipollution campaigns and scientist movements, and movement for protecting democratic rights of Korean residents in Japan, etc., in order to create joint struggles for anti-monopoly and defending democracy and social change beyond their individual interests.

Proletarian Internationalism throughout our activities

We have set the theory and its practice of proletarian internationalism as the axis of our activities.

There was a generally circulated trend saying that "the existing socialism is a nonsense" including the Soviet Union, when our Group was formed. However, we have continued to set our target of socialist revolution, while gazing at the weak points, the historical restrictions and difficulties which existed in the socialism system, and for international solidarity with the people of the world struggling against imperialism and for national liberation.

This standpoint has been shown in our solidarity activities with the people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea and the Cuban revolution, which are touchstones of internationalism of Japanese proletariat. It is currently connected to our activities against the government's hostile policies against the DPRK, and in solidarity with the Latin American peoples, including the Cuba Revolution's practice of socialism for five decades, and connected with it, Venezuela where President Chavez took the lead, Bolivia, Nicaragua and others, where people's revolution was in progress.

The socialism system of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was demolished in the years from 1989 to 1991. Needless to say, we received deep blows in this, because the socialist system was the axis of the three tidal currents of the world revolution with the labor movement in industrialized capitalist nations, national liberation movements of developing countries.

The bourgeois ruling class obstinately deployed its propaganda "End of History" (words of Francis Fukuyama, regarding capitalism society as the highest development stage of history of man), or "No future in socialism," taking advantage of this

opportunity. Facing the ideological attacks of anti-socialism by the totally mobilized bourgeois mass media and "intellectuals and men of culture," some of the political organizations and activists who had made efforts for socialism, and people who had worked together for democratic movements, threw away the banner of socialism, or turned it to their back, trying to find their hope in improvement in capitalism for them to survive.

However, we have not changed the position of searching the way to strengthen socialism, before or after the demolition of the World Socialism system i.e. victory of counterrevolution. Why was the socialism of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe defeated or why was it forced to be defeated? We have endeavored for analysis and elucidation of its objective and subjective factors. Of course, the primary cause of defeat was attributable to the Communist Parties and Workers' Parties of the socialist countries i.e. the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. However, they were not the sole parties to be attributable.

This defeat was considered as defeat of the international communist movement and the whole revolutionary movements and labor movements including those in the capitalist states. The causes included division of the international communist movement symbolized by the confrontation between China and the Soviet Union, failure in establishing the theory of the global revolution under the conditions of the "peaceful co-existence" between the systems, theoretical and practical prematurity of construction of socialism, relaxation of caution against capitalism, especially retreat and defeat against the struggles with the bourgeois ideology permeating constantly. etc. Our pursuit will be continued in the future, learning also to generalization by the Communist Parties of various countries about this problem. We do this because this pursuit is made into the subject which cannot be bypassed in order to clarify how the socialism should be reconstructed.

We recognize that the contemporary world holds a complex structure, where imperialism and anti-imperialism contend to each other, and capitalism and socialism contend to each other, under the current power balance which is in favor of imperialism.

The countries that have defended socialism including China, Vietnam, DPRK and Cuba are struggling hard to cultivate the roads of socialism, although they differ in how they would take the distance with capitalism world economy. Especially, the present conditions of China and Vietnam are posing complicated problems to the future of socialism. From the position to reform the world toward socialism, we are responsible for studying China and Vietnam and for dispatching our opinions actively.

For regenerating the class-conscious labor movement

The true change of the Japanese society would never happen without regeneration of class-conscious labor movement

Since 1980s the labor unions in Japan was defeated by assaults of "deregulation and privatization" as administrative reform by the Extraordinary Investigation Committee for Political Institutions setting it for getting over the crisis of capitalism. *Sohyo* (General Council of Trade Unions of Japan) was dismantled, and *Rengo* (Japan Trade

Union Confederation), standing for collaboration between capital and labor, was formed in 1987. Given fresh impetus, the capital has put forward “fluidization” and “flexibility” of employment, through thorough cost reduction, profit maximization, successive amendments to the labor law system, and created massive non-regular workers with low cost, deprived rights and disposable. The working class as a whole, regardless of the organized or the un-organized, has been split into pieces in the barbaric situation reminding us of the 19th century.

Current urgent need is to unite labor union activists who have been diverged and isolated, and to organize their cooperation. The post-War baby-boomers are massively retiring now, and the succession of the history of labor movement and fostering the young and new activists is a question in the limited time.

From the struggles against the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty of 1960 and through dismantlement of *Sohyo* and victory of *Rengo* up until today, the citizens’ movements emerged in various manners, and they are being reproduced. We support the struggles against the appeared contradictions of capitalism, and positively join their movements. The street movements of anti-war and for peace are important. It is also important to join the movements tackling the specific issues like denuclearization of power generation. The way which results in fundamental solution of individual subjects must have the view of struggles for social change, connected to the working class. When labor movement becomes weak as the whole, or even dismantled, the power of civic movements will also be weakened. Today’s situation shows it vividly.

Also in order to make our struggles against amendment to the Constitution, which is facing the crucial moment, truly effective, we would not give up the basic ideas noted above but would endeavor for social change by the working class as its key mover.

Importance of struggles in culture and ideology, and criticizing mass media

Also, we have focused our efforts on struggles in culture and ideology and on criticizing mass media.

While Marxism sets the three areas of class struggles i.e. political struggles, economic struggles and cultural struggles, the struggles on culture and ideology tend to be regarded light. Since the formation of the Group we have believed that the cultural and ideological struggles are indispensable for regenerating class consciousness of the working class and we have practiced it. This activity will enrich the reality of socialism which we aim at, and politics take wrong directions, it will form the subject bodies which take over the active role to correct the error.

Overcoming nationalism and reinstating internationalism are urgent problems. We have severely criticized nationalism with progressive appearance but one sided as ignoring the “extremes” and accepting “things in health,” as well as chauvinistic and nationalistic statements. In the process of deepening crisis of capitalism and the bourgeois ruling class’ assaults to convert the crisis onto the working class and the people, surrounding us are the reactionary trends inciting chauvinism for them to pulling the mass people’s consciousness to defend the established system.

Nationalism is the last fort of the bourgeois rule. The bourgeois ruling classes and

right-wing forces have concealed the war crimes of the Japanese imperialism against the people in the world including Asia, distorted the history, and become so arrogant as to try destroying the post-War system based on the Potsdam Declaration won by the anti-fascist forces of the world, and the Constitution of Japan itself.

It is the ideological attack by mass media of the huge capital such as TV broadcasting, newspaper and magazines that is leading the reactionary trend of the Japanese society. The mass people do not have working class consciousness and left defenseless, to be swung around by the mass media. It is our urgent problem to get over populism by enforcing activities to build up the class-conscious way of viewing and thinking, through deploying ideological struggles in close tie with the mass people's struggles.

For formation of the united front to defend the Constitution

The national referendum act, which stipulates the procedure for amendment to the Constitution based on its Article 96, was established in May 2007. The act was enacted three years later in May 2010, and the Deliberative Council on the Constitution was established in each of the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors to start practical examinations in 2011. In the general election in December, 2012, the Liberal Democratic Party exceeded the independent majority in the House of Representatives and together with New Komeito and Japan Restoration Party, it satisfies two-thirds of the seats meeting requirements for initiative of amendment to the Constitution specified by Article 96. Furthermore, the LDP and others have formed the strategy to relax the initiative for amendment to the Constitution by an advanced amendment to Article 96. Ishihara Shintaro, joint representative of Japan Restoration Party and former governor of Tokyo, despite of his obligation to respect the Constitution, advocates abolishing the Constitution and establish a new constitution, which is equating to a coup.

The Constitution of Japan is under a serious crisis. The amendment by interpretation of Article 9, renouncing war and armament, has been expanded, as can be seen in hostile attitude to the DPRK, inciting "threat" by China, making the U.S. military bases in Okinawa permanent, overseas dispatch of the Self Defense Forces, enforcing the collective defense right, and materializing the joint military operation with the U. S., Republic of Korea and Australia.

We are aiming at formation of the united front to stop amendment to the Constitution, as our current and urgent task. It is also to construct the front and the movement by the workers and the labor unions as its axis and standing at the frontline, and to strengthen/develop them. That is why we are cooperating with the people with the same aspiration to undertake the movement against the national referendum act.

As the crisis of capitalism is deepening, the assaults by the monopoly capital are getting vigorous. The scheme for amendment to the Constitution is a part of it. It is nothing but making bet for the ruling class to make a breakthrough in crisis that it would overthrow the principles of the current Constitution. Contrary to the constitution by which the people bind the hand of the power, the power is now trying to build up a constitutional order under the state power which controls the will and actions of the people. Through the struggles against amendment to the Constitution, we would aim at establishing the sovereign power led by the working class and at

forming the body to explore the future of socialism.

Socialism or barbarism, the path is only one

Due to the dismantlement of the world socialism system during end 1980s and early 1990s we were obliged to experience a setback. However, the age's basic character that "the contemporary world is in the age of general transition from capitalism to socialism," has not been changed. After the dismantlement of the world socialism system, the capitalism world got drunk with victory. Soon after that it became clear that its basic contradictions cannot be solved.

On one hand the monopoly capital is accumulating the unprecedented excessive surplus in capital, on the other hand the workers and people's hardships of poverty is deepening. The basic contradiction in capitalism between the huge social production power and the private ownership of prosperity is getting to an extreme. The contradictions are clear to anyone. It is that the impoverishment of workers and the people is the only condition of existence of capitalism, and, the confrontation (collision) between wage labor (wages) and capital (profits). However, capitalism does not collapse automatically. The capitalist class would never step down from the stage of history without compulsion by the working class. There is already no room "improving" capitalism within the framework of the system. While rebuilding and strengthening the struggles which press capital for concession, it is to get over the capitalism modern and to form the body to aim at socialism---we gaze at this subject in front of us, and are trying to stand against the difficulties.

We hold fast the view on capitalism "Imperialism: the highest (last) stage of capitalism," by V. I. Lenin. Because we stand on the basic position, we have stood on a consistent position, learning about and trying to stand in the row of rebuilding the international communist movement, which has developed the international meetings of communist and workers' parties since 1999, with the initiative by the Communist Party of Greece. We continue insisting, "Another world is possible. It cannot be, however, anything but socialism."

We call for cooperation and participation to our activities to people who want to share the tasks in order to resist against the assaults by the bourgeois ruling class and to exploit the future for the working class and the people.

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