

Declaration of Struggle

February 1, 2010,
Doro-Chiba (National Railway Motive power Union of Chiba)

Today we are launching a new struggle. This is a struggle against the second version of Division and Privatization of National Railways. The time has come once again to fight back with all of our power against the current enemy offensive. A single or a few strikes won't suffice to win the battle. It'll be a big fight for several years.

The future of workers and labor movement depend upon the victory of this struggle like the struggle 23 years ago against the Division and Privatization of National Railways. We've come out of this severe struggle with forged unity through carrying out a resolute fight against the privatization offensive, risking dismissal of union members. We've thus reached a new horizon of labor unity.

When we fought 23 years ago against the Privatization of National Railway, we actually confronted the neo-liberal offensive that had just started. Now our fresh struggle is going to be fought in the midst of the total bankruptcy and overall exposure of the inherent contradictions of the neo-liberal offensive. The success of our new struggle would no doubt trigger an outburst of anger of numerous workers who are deprived of the way of uniting each other. A great uprising of workers who have been "gentle" would start. With this conviction and perspective, we stand up now for a struggle.

The attempt of outsourcing is an ultimate rationalization offensive. It aims at breaking up JR companies into several hundred of subcontractors and sub-subcontractors and drives numerous workers into irregular employment. Its inevitable outcome is another Amagasaki rail accident.

Look at what is happening now in Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTT) and Japan Air Lines (JAL), which are violently carrying out mass discharge and irregularization of employment. Thus a lot of workers have been driven into the bottom in the past 20 years. Enough is enough with "working poor", "slashing dispatched workers", "poverty" and so on. Never forgive those who have destroyed every human bondage, dismantled social systems of employment, education, medical care, pension and social security etc. through putting them all in a market principle of merciless competition, and devastated the way of living of working people. Now the time we fight back against them, who have driven workers to despair and deprived them of future.

It should be noted, at the same time, that our fresh struggle has a task of reviving labor union. Nothing changes without an overall change of the present situation of labor movement. This is the core question of today. The miserable and severe situation of working people is not a natural or inevitable outcome of social development. Labor unions that gave in to the privatization and deregulation offensive and have degenerated into tools of the capitalist offensive against workers have responsibility for bringing about this situation. It can be called crimes of labor unions. We are determined to stop this reactionary trend.

Capitalism in death agony is bringing more and more disaster to workers. In face of this situation, all forces and organizations in labor movement are now brought back to the original point of labor

struggle today, namely the issue of the Division and Privatization of National Railway. The Democratic Party and Rengo (Japanese Trade Union Confederation) administration is now moving for a “solution within this fiscal year” of the issue of 1047 dismissed national railway workers (the struggle for reinstatement). It reveals the fear and irritation of the ruling class of the mounting anger of these dismissed 1047 workers and other supporting workers. Without destroying the tenacious struggle of 1047 workers for 23 years, it is impossible to launch mass discharge of 3.6 million public service workers to implement the government’s plan of the *Doshu-sei* (Wider Area Local Government System). These developments remind us that the failure of settling the issue of the Division and Privatization of National Railways, in other words, the failure of this ruling class offensive to destroy national railway workers’ movement and labor movement, has produced a grave consequence to the political situation today.

The struggle of national railway workers, still being continued in the privatized Japan Railway Companies (JRs), has exposed the concealed core of conflicting issues of labor movement in every field and every age: Rationalization inevitably brings about collapse of safety and frequent accidents; the management always shifts responsibility on workers on the spot; workers get angry at the unjust attack and begin to fight; corrupt labor union leaders give in to the management to suppress workers’ revolt: and conflict develops. That was the real history.

It concerns not only national railways. In every industrial branch and field of labor movement, the prevailing idea was that it was impossible to carry out uncompromisingly the struggle against rationalization because this struggle from the nature inevitably leads to the square confrontation with capital. Therefore, instead of fighting, a defeatist policy of surrendering to capital attack was taken. Every time rationalization offensive took place, labor unity was destroyed through wedges driven into workers and labor unions were degenerated step by step.

It was the struggle of Doro-Chiba against rationalization for rail safety that broke with the miserable tradition of Japanese labor movement with its defeatist policy in face of rationalization. The Funabashi accident in 1972 gave a start to this struggle, whose key word was “Workers are not to blame for accidents. The management is responsible for all”. Doro-Chiba today owes its birth to this struggle in 1972 and has been developing its labor unity thereafter through the struggle to stop jet fuel transportation to Narita Airport (jointly struggling with Sanrizuka farmers), separation and independence from the Doro National, the struggle against Division and Privatization of National Railways and the struggle in privatized JR companies. We are now launching a new struggle through which the validity of the struggle against rationalization for rail safety is tested and the legacy of the struggle of national railway workers since the deadly rail accidents of Mikawashima (1962) and Tsurumi (1963), both in the metropolitan commuter area, is reexamined.

It should be remembered that the national railway workers’ struggle has always occupied a vital position in Japanese class struggle: Niigata struggle of national railway workers against mass discharge in 1957 prepared the explosion of the great Ampo Struggle (against Japan-US Security Treaty) in 1960; 1970 Struggle on Ampo and Okinawa issues burst out when the anger of students

and Okinawa people joined the struggle of national railway workers who fought against rationalization plan of dismissing 50,000 railway workers in 1967 and against “productivity campaign” of the JNR management. We are rising up with pride in our militant history. The whole society is full of anger. But widespread anger is not yet joined in unity. Our new struggle must gather all anger in a stream. We are seeking a showdown with 25 years’ struggle over Division and Privatization of National Railways.

Withdraw the dismissal of 1047 national railway workers!

We absolutely oppose the outsourcing of inspection and repair work as well as yard operation!

Abolish the “life-cycle system*”! (*transfer of drivers to station jobs)

Stop unjust job transfer of brothers Taki and Ozawa!

Never again Amagasaki rail accident!

Against rationalization! For rail safety!

Let’s make an appearance of militant labor unions at the forefront of the time!