



# BURAKU LIBERATION NEWS NO 6

BURAKU LIBERATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
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## DOWA PROJECTS REVISION CREATES TURMOIL IN LDP

"NEW LAW ON SPECIAL MEASURES FOR DOWA PROJECTS IS NEEDED"  
STATES INTERIM REPORT FOR THE ABOLITION OF DISCRIMINATION  
AGAINST BURAKU

The 95th extraordinary session of the Diet closed 28 November 1981. During this session, called the session for Administrative Reform, there were severe confrontations within the Cabinet about this issue. Prime Minister Suzuki ran the risk of his political career by pushing for this special legislation concerning Administrative Reform.

Opposition was not limited to the Cabinet alone. Public service employees staged daily demonstrations around the Diet building, insisting on an arbitration award and strict adherence to the advice of the National Personnel Authority (the body responsible for setting wages for public servants). We also struggled for the strengthening and revision of the Special Measures to take place during this session. These two movements became quite an obstacle in the LDP's path.

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which won an overwhelming majority in the last double election of both representatives and councilors, has been taking advantage of its numerical superiority and pushing hard for the Administrative Reform program. The LDP has been greatly influenced by the anti-Soviet, Cold War stance of the Reagan Administration. The real meaning of the Suzuki Cabinet's Administrative Reform has become known through our struggles. The people are aware that it is not a genuine reform effort, but rather a deceptive tactic for expanding the military budget. It is now evident that the reform will affect the welfare of the nation, with increased taxes and other hardships in the people's lives, which are the harbingers of an oppressive trend. Consequently, even some members of the LDP have begun protesting the terms of specific projects within the proposed Administrative Reform.

The government had intended to stall on deciding any further details of Dowa Projects revision, as they did at the last session, thinking that it could be settled in the next ordinary Diet session. They also originally had intentions to cut the measures, a plan we attacked with a centrally-organized, three wave movement from September to November. On 13 November, we successfully gathered 40,000 people for a protest and put great pressure on the government and the LDP. On 9 November,



Mr. Morishita of the House of Councilors and the Osaka Secretary General of the LDP signed his name to our petition calling for action on the Special Measures. This was a welcome indication that the LDP in Osaka is gradually changing its line. Following this, we got twenty-five more signatures from LDP Diet members, a sign of a major shift within the party.

Discrimination cases continue to occur. With the unchanged seriousness of this discrimination, many projects for the betterment of this situation remain unfinished. Faced with this reality, we cannot allow the Law on Special Measures for Dōwa Projects to die an untimely death. There is a growing people's support movement encompassing representatives from business and religion in a broad-based attack on the government's stand. We have had a petition of support from all opposition parties in the Diet (except the Communist Party) and have received excellent support from the press.

This must have caused the LDP a great deal of anguish. If they suspended the Law on Special Measures, they would be branded an enemy of the people for their refusal to support efforts to liberate Burakumin from discrimination. There are more than a few LDP supporters even among Burakumin, and the impact of their alienation on an election is something the LDP must seriously consider.

The LDP has its own General Assembly every three years, and it is impossible for them to support either the continuation or ending of the Law on Special Measures without the decision of this meeting. However, they have already begun to consider that they make "another law"-- after cutting the present measures at this time.

In this prolonged Diet session which began 17 November, the last crammed sessions centered on the problems of the National Personnel Authority, with a great deal of political negotiations behind the scenes. The proposal of the Integration Policy Deliberation Committee, which was to be the key to our success, was never presented. This inevitably happened due to interruptions by government committees. Beginning on 24 November, we launched an all-out effort, and four days later we finally had the agreement of both the major and opposition parties to the fact that "the new Law on Special Measures is necessary."

At last the LDP officially gave up stopping the needed legislation. They are officially committed to drafting new Laws on Special Measures in the coming ordinary session of the Diet. Their first attempt to cut the Dōwa Projects at any cost was thwarted.



Of course, we cannot let down our guard. We have no idea of what the contents of the new legislation will be like, though we do realize that we can never expect the contents to match our desires. If they have not passed new legislation by the end of March 1982--when the current Special Measures expire--they have effectively cut the Dōwa Projects. Everything now rests on the next ordinary Diet session, to be held in January 1982.

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INTERNATIONAL PETITIONS FOR SPECIAL MEASURES REVISION GIVEN TO PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Letters and petitions requesting the strengthening and revision of the Law on Special Measures for Dōwa Projects from abroad have been delivered to Prime Minister Suzuki's office. These came in response to our appeal in an earlier issue of this newsletter.

Letters and petitions were received from the Indian Buddhist Association, now struggling for liberation from the caste system, representatives of the Asian Christian Council (13 countries), professors of Vienna University and participants of the Asian-African-Latin American Literature Conference. Over two hundred letters have been received and we presented them to the Chief of Staff of the Prime Minister's Office on 11 November.

This international display of support received a great deal of coverage in our newspaper. Here we'd like to express our hearty thanks for your support and ask for your further support in the future.

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GOVERNMENT CLOSES ITS EYES TO REALITY -- HUMAN RIGHTS GIVEN "SUFFICIENT GUARANTEE" UNDER CURRENT LEGISLATION

Two years have passed since Japan ratified the International Covenants on Human Rights (ICHR), which possess the binding legal force of the United Nations Charter, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The government recently submitted a report on the current human rights situation in Japan to the UN. Based on such reports by over 50 signees of the ICHR, a review commission of the ICHR was held in Bonn, West Germany, from 20 to 22 October.

Although the review commission's findings have not yet been made public, the BLRI held a public critique of the report submitted by the government recently. The BLRI, directed by Tomohiko Harada, has been a



driving force behind the ratification of these UN covenants by Japan. The Osaka meeting was a refutation of the government's report. Speakers claimed that the report conceals the real situation, one in which human rights violations and discrimination are still present.

Sueo Murakoshi, an Osaka University professor, BLRI Secretary General and the critique's featured speaker, quoted from the government's report: "The rights stipulated in the covenants have been given sufficient guarantee under the Constitution and special laws, and the administrative guarantee measures based on these laws are working quite properly in Japan." He attacked the government's stance, for it gives the false impression that there are no human rights problems in Japan. He continued, "If this report were correct, then our struggles to protect human rights and overcome discrimination would all have been tilting at windmills."

Experts in various fields illustrated the gap between the utopian conditions set forth in the government's report and the hard realities of current discrimination. Tsugujiro Nakatsukasa, Civil Liberties Commissioner of the Osaka Lawyers' Council, analyzed the legal situation, pointing out false charges, frame-ups, unfair convictions and sentencings as evidence of disobeyed covenants. One of the major causes of this miscarriage of justice, according to an investigation by the Japanese Bar Association, is that criminal investigations based on prejudice against a certain segment of the population are undertaken, and false confessions are forced from arbitrarily arrested persons. Mr. Nakatsukasa stated, "The [police] temporary detention cells have a great deal to do with this problem. Although such action is clearly prohibited [ICHR, Civil and Political Rights, Article 9], the Japanese government ignores this." He also mentioned violation of Article 14, for in Japan the accused is rarely assumed innocent until proven guilty.

Kim Dong Hon, a professor of Osaka University of Economics and Law, examined the rights of foreign residents of Japan. "If, as the government's report asserts, the rights of foreigners are guaranteed, then why has no foreigner ever been allowed to serve on the Civil Liberties Commission?" He outlined how harsh the situation is for North and South Korean residents, who suffer daily deprivation of their educational, economic, political and cultural rights. He criticized, "How dare we say that the International Covenants are being upheld in the presence of this discrimination against Korean residents?"



Kenzo Tomonaga, BLRI Vice-Secretary General, cited current discrimination against Burakumin. Quoting Article 20, which prohibits advocating or inciting any hatred that will lead to discrimination or violence, he mentioned the case of anti-Burakumin graffiti on public buildings that the government has not removed.

The issues of difficulties in obtaining Japanese nationality, the family register system as a cause of continued discrimination against Burakumin in marriage and employment, and other problems were also shown to be in direct contradiction of the government's report. The meeting closed with an appeal that we unemotionally grasp the objective fact that discrimination and violations of human rights do exist, so that we can act effectively to overcome discrimination and protect human rights.

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NEW EVIDENCE OF ISHIKAWA'S INNOCENCE

Newly revealed evidence further supports the innocence of Kazuo Ishikawa and the contention that he was forced into a false confession. According to the new information, there was a person spreading weed-killer in a mulberry field just 15 meters away from the "copse of four cedars" where Yoshie was allegedly murdered. This person was working there from shortly before one o'clock until four-thirty on 1 May. He has testified that he didn't catch even a glimpse of a person on that day, in spite of the fact that he frequently looked around.

Ishikawa's "confession" states that the murder was carried out at about 4:20 and the Hara and Terao judgments also concurred that it took place between 4:00 and 4:30. It seems impossible that a person working in a field just fifteen meters from the scene of a murder would not have been aware of it. In addition, Ishikawa's confession states that he had a conversation with Yoshie at this site, which certainly would have been overheard by the person working nearby.

The signed testimony of this person was presented at the second trial. On 30 July 1981, in response to our request, we met with the prosecution to examine the evidence. Examination of the map attached to the field-worker's testimony proved that he was actually working just fifteen meters from the alleged murder site.

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CENTRAL MEETING FOR SAYAMA RETRIAL REQUEST HELD ON 31 OCTOBER

On 31 October we gathered in Tokyo, and at ten that morning we split into two groups. The defense group went to the Supreme Court and presented a supplementary report detailing new evidence in the Sayama case. The other group went to the Supreme Tokyo District Prosecutor's Office and submitted signed petitions and initiated procedure to request the retrial.

In the afternoon, there were meetings and support marches bringing together BLL members, laborers from Kyoutou (a labor group in support of the BLL) and other citizens--over 30,000 persons in all. We also had a public-address van circulating the streets of Tokyo to advise people of Onagi's new testimony.

At the central meeting, the defense counsel presented the supplementary report of the new evidence and the bill requesting a new investigation of the case. Mr. Nishioka of the BLL Central Executive Committee gave the main address, with the following six appeals:

- 1) We must continue the struggle, armed with the new evidence;
- 2) We must be shown all the evidence;
- 3) Mr. Ishikawa must be released on bail;
- 4) We must make a cooperative film on the Sayama case;
- 5) We must strengthen the movement in Sayama city;
- 6) We must strengthen the struggle against false charges and fight for the revision of the retrial law.

Mr. Senkichi Ishikawa, head of the Sayama local office, read an appeal on behalf of Kazuo Ishikawa in prison. Kazuo Ishikawa's parents also appeared at the gathering, showing us that they were in good health and urging us on in the support of justice.

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WEST GERMAN H.R. GROUP EXPRESSES SOLIDARITY IN SAYAMA STRUGGLE

The Sayama case struggle received excellent coverage in "The Reality of the Fourth World--Report - Interpretation - Action," published by the Association of Discriminated Against Races in West Germany in August 1981. The report was a cooperative response to the request of the BLRI asking for international support for Mr. Kazuo Ishikawa. We requested that people petition the Tokyo High Court for the early realization of his retrial.

As a result of this, so far more than thirty letters have been sent to the Tokyo High Court. This action plays a great role in making the government aware of international opinion on this case. We greatly appreciate these expressions of support and wish to thank all of you who wrote. We also ask for your continued support until justice has been served.



*chilly cold in prison  
sunset. i watch two ravens  
hurrying on home*

*Kazuo Ishikawa, written in prison*

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BLL MOUNTS PROTEST AGAINST AUSTRIAN COMMERCE NEWSPAPER  
GROSS MISREPRESENTATION OF BURAKUMIN PUBLISHED

An extremely biased, derogatory article was published in the Austrian Commerce Newspaper (International Wirtschaft) on 15 May 1981. Written by Mr. Franz Herunter, "The failure of the present mode--the results of a trip to Osaka" presents the following as the history of the Burakumin monopoly of the leather industry:

1. In Japan, the import of leather shoes has been unconditionally prohibited for the last century.
2. The Meiji emperor forced some farmers to migrate to new areas and raise cattle. As a reward, they were granted the right to manufacture tanned leather.
3. These farmers have grown into a formidable pressure group known as the Etta Collective.
4. Showa laws were passed to protect the interests of this group and they have not yet been changed by the Diet.

The main contention of this article was that "Japanese exports to Austria are on the rise, yet Japan unreasonably limits imports from Austria, such as shoes or ski boots, placing severe customs duties and taxes on those items allowed to be imported. It is this strong lobby, the Etta Collective, that forces the Japanese government to take such protectionist measures." This article evinces blatant myth and blind ignorance of the history of the Burakumin and their involvement in Japan's leather industry. The reference to the BLL as the Etta Collective is also very disturbing.

In response to this misrepresentation of Burakumin, the BLL has mounted a protest against this article. The BLL Central Office sent the Austrian government a letter of protest on 25 September, stating that the government itself is also to blame for fostering an environment in which such a case could occur. We are also protesting to Mr. Herunter and the newspaper directly, asking them to print a correction as a step toward the proper resolution of this case. As of this date, we have not yet received any honest answer from Mr. Herunter.

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## FIFTEENTH NATIONAL MEETING OF BURAKU LIBERATION RESEARCH

### "REBUFF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM AND STRENGTHEN BURAKU LIBERATION"

"Let's rebuff the government's attempt to cut the Special Measures for Dōwa Projects and the proposed Administrative Reform which leads us down the path of increased discrimination and militarism! Let us make the future of Buraku Liberation clear!" This was the rallying cry of the fifteenth national meeting of Buraku Liberation Research, held from 3 to 5 October. This gathering, the sixth to be held in Osaka, was attended not only by BLL members, scholars and government officials, but also by leading figures from religion and business.

Greetings were extended by the Japanese Socialist Party, the Komeito, the governor of Osaka, the mayor of Osaka and the chief counselor of the Sayama case retrial lawyers' group. Other guests were also introduced and congratulatory telegrams read.

Mr. Uesugi, Chief Secretary of the BLL Central Office, gave the keynote speech, stressing that Administrative Reform steals from the people to give to the military. He emphasized that this reform not only worsens daily hardships, but also oppresses human rights--especially the right to struggle--and builds an even more discriminatory consciousness. This reform is an attack on Buraku Liberation and the battle has already begun. He stressed that we must make clear the impact that will be felt in the Buraku as a result of Administrative Reform and the cutting of the Special Measures on Dōwa Projects, adding that the struggle for the strengthening and revision of the Special Measures can spearhead the protest against Administrative Reform.

Another speaker, Mr. Isomura, president of Toyo University and head of the government's Integration Policy Deliberation Committee, stated, "Without the Law on Special Measures for Dōwa Projects, we can never realize the International Covenants on Human Rights. I wonder if our government has seriously considered this."

Held at a very black moment in the government's policy-making history, the meeting participants firmly agreed that the Law on Special Measures for Dōwa Projects must be strengthened and revised.

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EVEN THE SUN ISN'T OURS

Beginning in this issue, each month we will feature excerpts from "Even the Sun Isn't Ours," a collection of writings we published in 1980. The history of how these pieces came to be written is a story of struggle, determination and pride. While Japan boasts of her "universal literacy," there are actually many older Burakumin who, due to social and economic factors, were never able to attend school, and therefore cannot even read their kana, Japan's simple syllabary usually taught to first graders. In 1957, the BLL appealed for an institute to teach these adults the basic reading and writing skills, as they had been denied equal educational opportunity but even as adults still had a great desire to learn. In the beginning, the BLL organized volunteer teachers for adult night school classes (shikiji gakkyū). Impressed by this dedication, the local government now provides funds for the shikiji gakkyū.

This book is written by people who attended shikiji gakkyū throughout Japan. The book is a strong appeal for equal educational opportunity, for the joy the authors feel in being able to finally express themselves on paper radiates off the page. Many of the works included are written in a very simple but eloquent style, leaving the reader with a deep impression of the terrible odds overcome by the writer not solely in learning to read, but in facing discrimination in nearly all aspects of life.

This first piece is a letter written by a very old-woman, Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, to her friend \_\_\_\_\_.



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