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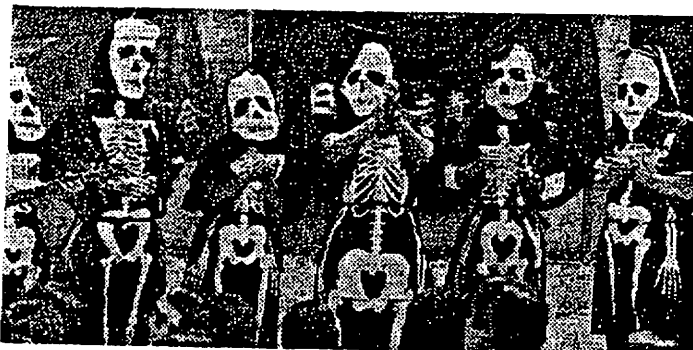
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TOKYO ANTI-NUKE RALLY DRAWS 400,000 AIMED AT SECOND UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON DISARMAMENT

An estimated 400,000 gathered in Tokyo on 23 May to participate in rallies and other activities protesting nuclear weapons and vigorously calling for peace. The Tokyo rallies were held as a part of a massive nationwide campaign calling for total nuclear disarmament. The campaign has collected over 30 million signatures on a petition to be presented to the UN General Assembly this June.

Japan is the only country in the world to have suffered the full horrors of the atomic bomb. During the war leading up to this incomprehensible event, Japan pursued a fascist policy. The government and the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) seem to have forgotten the grim message of the past, and are chomping at the bit to enter the current arms race.

In vocal opposition to this dangerous trend, the BLL participated in the Tokyo rallies after a denunciation meeting against the Sayama case (see page) held earlier that day. The BLL also plans to send a delegation to the second UN General Assembly on Disarmament this June to appeal to the UN delegates on the importance of preserving peace for the protection of human rights.



A group of protesters against nuclear weapons at a Tokyo rally on 23 May. (photo: Mainichi Daily News, 24 May 82)

IN THIS ISSUE:

Tokyo Anti-Nuke Rally.....1	Takaoka Claims no Buraku..... 4
Matsumoto Memorial Hall.....2	<u>Suiheisha</u> : Founding..... 5
Denunciation of Sayama Case.....3	The Suikoku Struggle(1923). 7
Campaigns against Emperor System.3	Poem: Dis · krim · ə · néi · Jun . 8



MATSUMOTO JIICHIRO MEMORIAL HALL DEDICATED - TOKYO'S BURAKU
LIBERATION CENTER REACHES COMPLETION

The newly-completed Buraku Liberation Center located in Tokyo's Roppongi district has been named in the honor of the Buraku Liberation League's late chairman Matsumoto Jiichiro. Completion of the hall was one of Mr. Matsumoto's greatest wishes, and dedication of this liberation base in his honor is a most fitting tribute to this stalwart defender of human rights. As Mr. Matsumoto had urged, the funds for constructing this center were raised by the Burakumin themselves. In this respect, the hall has a special significance, for the Burakumin have quite literally built the base on which to raise liberation through their own efforts.

It is hoped that the center will provide a convenient Tokyo base not only for the Buraku liberation movement, but also for the liberation and human rights activities of other oppressed peoples throughout Japan, Asia and the world.

On 9 April, dedication ceremonies and a commemorative reception were held for the Matsumoto Jiichiro Memorial Hall.



Matsumoto Jiichiro Memorial Hall, Tokyo

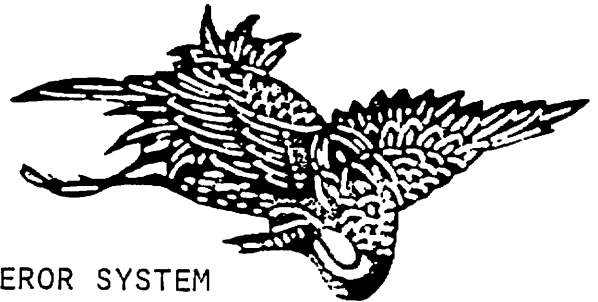


TOKYO RALLY APPEALS FOR RETRIAL OF SAYAMA CASE
19 YEAR DENUNCIATION AGAINST ISHIKAWA'S UNFAIR ARREST AND VERDICT

Nineteen years have passed since Ishikawa Kazuo was wrongfully arrested and convicted for the rape and murder of a high school girl. Calling for a retrial of the Sayama case, some 40,000 people from all over Japan gathered in Tokyo for a central rally in support of Ishikawa's innocence.

Recently, new evidence which conclusively proves Ishikawa's innocence has been uncovered. In spite of this evidence, the supreme court still expresses no intentions of initiating his retrial.

On 23 May, members of the BLL and Ishikawa's defense counsel joined together with members of labor unions and other concerned citizens to demonstrate against the supreme court's attitude, calling on it not to look away from the truth but to serve justice by trying Ishikawa again -- fairly.



CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE EMPEROR SYSTEM

April 29 is the birthday of the Showa emperor. In celebration of this, the day is observed as a legal national holiday in Japan. When we examine history, however, we can say that the role played by the emperor system is certainly no cause for celebration. Under the emperor system, Japan has repeatedly pursued a policy of invasion and aggressive war -- the Sino-Japanese War, World War I, World War II, the Russo-Japanese War -- persecuting and injuring people throughout China, Korea and Southeast Asia. Within the country, the government utilized the emperor system to strengthen discrimination against Burakumin and Korean and Taiwanese residents. The rights of the laborers and farmers were also oppressed, condemning them all to poverty's bitter lot.

These instances are not merely the unfortunate events of the past. Currently, systematic attempts and advocacies to reform the Constitution and change the role of the emperor from symbol of the state to sovereign exist in the LDP and other political groups. They long for the revival of the emperor system -- with its oppression of people living both in Japan and other countries.

In order to counter these voices calling for a return to the dark past, and to fully promote the complete elimination of discrimination, on 29 April the BLL joined with other democratic groups to initiate a campaign for the complete abolition of the emperor system and support of the Constitution.



'WE HAVE NO BURAKU,' CLAIMS TAKAOKA CITY, TOYAMA PREFECTURE

"A List of Buraku," "Japanese Tokushu Buraku" and "Jinshin Koseki" (discriminatory family registers), all favorite information sources for those seeking to discriminate against Burakumin in employment or marriage, were put in a reading room of the Ishigami Prefectural Public Library, according to a recent Asahi News article. Free access to these publications was allowed.

In response to this unwelcome news, the central headquarters of the BLL inquired of the Toyama District Justice Bureau and the Takaoka City officials about the facts of this and other discriminatory incidents. The response of the prefectural officials to the League's questions regarding the library issue was: first, the books of lists of Buraku possessed by the library should be treated prudently, and therefore they have been removed from circulation for the present; second, they were very sorry that the public library owned a copy of the "Jinshin Koseki" and had been allowing the public to copy it.

In a book entitled Shin Shu Okoku (Land of the Shingon Sect), published by Kogen Publishers in Toyama in November 1974, the discriminatory statement that "only through the marriage[blood-mixing] of Burakumin and non-Burakumin can the Buraku problem be solved." Even after this was exposed, sales of the book continued. The BLL Central Headquarters also inquired into this matter. Toyama prefectural officials stated that they were very sorry about that incident, too, and were investigating it. As for the discrimination case which occurred at a Fukuoka junior high school and the reported cases of discrimination associated with marriage, the officials, having attempted no positive investigation, responded evasively to our queries.

According to the 1935 research of the Central Association for Reconciliation Measures (Yūwa), there were over 200 Buraku located in Toyama prefecture. In spite of these findings, the prefecture continued to reports claiming there were no Buraku to the researchers of the Prime Minister's office. When asked to present any evidence supporting their claims, a prefectural representative replied that they had no past data about it and didn't know the details. After that, Toyama City officials persisted in claiming that there were no Buraku in Toyama City, either.

The Toyama District Justice Bureau presented a different picture, however. "There exist discriminatory terms referring to the Burakumin. We have some doubts about the attitude of Toyama City and Toyama prefecture in their insistence that there are no Buraku," they stated, partially conceding that Buraku do indeed exist in the area.



("We have no Buraku," con't)

Takaoka City, in spite of the presence of representatives from the local Buraku at the meeting, not only continued to insist that there were no Buraku, but carried their assertion one step further in claiming that "even from a strictly historical point of view, Buraku have never existed in this city." The BLL representatives present were not satisfied with the evasive and insincere answers of the Takaoka City representatives, and therefore made the representatives promise to investigate these matters thoroughly and then meet again. On that note, the rather unproductive session was ended.

THE SUIHEISHA: A SIXTY YEAR PICTORIAL HISTORY -- TWO EXCERPTS

In honor of the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the National Suiheisha, the BLRI has published a large-format album history of many of the most celebrated -- and unfortunate -- incidents that have occurred during its history. We are currently at work on an English companion-volume, which will be available in August. The following two articles are taken from this.

PEOPLE MUST BE RESPECTED

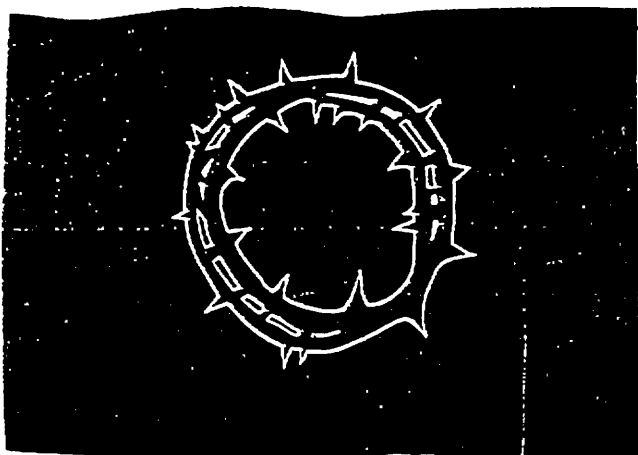
On 3 March 1922, the National Levelers' Association (Zenkoku Suiheisha) was founded at Okazaki Kokaido in Kyoto. 3,000 people gathered from throughout the country to participate in this meeting. The movement, which had been heavily reliant on the sympathy and pity of others up until this time, began to rapidly evolve into a movement seeking "to attain the complete emancipation of Burakumin through their own actions."

In April of the same year, the Japanese Farmers' Union (Nihon Nōmin Kumiai) was founded, and the official formation of the Japanese Communist Party followed in July. 1922 was a memorable year for not only the Burakumin but also poor and tenant farmers and laborers, all victims of long-term deprivation of fundamental human rights and living conditions. In the span of but a few months they all rose up against their oppression and demanded their rights.

The Suiheisha initiated a policy of tetteiteki kyūdan (thorough denunciation). Many denunciation campaigns were conducted throughout Japan. The case of the elementary school was a particularly heartening early victory: at the Nara-based school, a denunciation campaign against the particularly harsh conditions imposed on only Buraku students took place in May of 1922. These denunciation campaigns, in which discriminators were made to realize their wrong acts and were urged to reform their misconceptions,

spread rapidly, as the Burakumin channelled their energies which had formerly been used in bearing the burdens of injustice into the struggle for liberation. The number of denunciation campaigns continued to increase: in 1923, 854 cases; in 1924, 1,052 cases; and in 1925, 1,025 cases. The Suiheisha had already formed over sixty local associations. Their number continued to increase from the inaugural year: in 1923, about 300 associations in 24 prefectures; in 1924, 527 associations; in 1925, 703 associations.

Those who took part in the Suiheisha were Buraku people with the unified goal of liberation from discrimination. Men, women and children all struggled together for this aim. Many Buraku people, encompassing a wide range of thought and belief, joined as one under the banner of the Suiheisha and rose up together in their struggle. The creation of the Suiheisha received wide support from concerned non-Burakumin and activists in the labor and farmers movements. The Black Robe League was established by young priests of Buddhist temples working for the abolition of status differentiation against Buraku temples and Burakumin practiced by many Buddhist sects.



THE KEIKAN-KI

The official flag of the National Suiheisha was designed by Mankichi Saijō. A blood-red crown of thorns, the symbol of the suffering and ordeals of the Buraku people, rests against a stark black ground. The original flag was raised on a green bamboo spear, a symbol of the militancy of traditional peasant uprisings against iniquity.



THE SUIKOKU STRUGGLE INCIDENT



Members of the Kokusui Kai armed to do battle with the Suiheisha

Immediately after the second meeting of the Suiheisha in March 1923, the Nara Suiheisha denounced a discriminatory case which occurred. The Kokusui Kai, an ultra-nationalist, right-wing group, supported the discriminator and obstructed the peaceful implementation of the impeachment action. The Kokusui Kai armed themselves with firearms, long firehooks and bamboo spears and attacked the Suiheisha. The incident had just begun.

The Suikoku struggle received a great deal of newspaper coverage. Burakumin from within and without Nara prefecture came to the aid of their brothers, and the situation threatened to escalate into massive violence. Police intervention, however, resolved the crisis on one level: in the presence of a police mediator, the original offender wrote an apology to the Suiheisha for his discriminatory behavior. On another level, however, the discrimination against the Burakumin had just begun: in the ensuing arrests and convictions, 35 members of the Suiheisha were sentenced to hard labor and fined for their participation in the incident. Only 11 members of the Kokusui Kai were similarly judged -- and the longest sentence awarded them was the shortest sentence given a member of the Suiheisha.

With police arbitrators present, the Suiheisha and Kokusui Kai reach a compromise and the discriminator writes his apology

