



BURAKU LIBERATION NEWS NO. 11

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REVISING HISTORY

TEXTBOOK REVISIONS HERALD REVIVAL OF JAPANESE MILITARISM, MANY FEAR

Textbooks used in Japan are written and published by independent publishing houses, but must pass review by the Ministry of Education's screening council before being approved for classroom use. At the screening council sessions held in July of this year, authors and publishers of history textbooks at the high school level were told to revise wording or delete certain passages describing Japanese military conduct in China, Korea, Okinawa and other areas during World War Two. Without these revisions, the textbooks would not be approved for school use. Some authors and publishers offered alternative wordings, but these, too, were rejected. The "suggested" rewordings and deletions were the only descriptions the screening council deemed appropriate.

Some of the controversial changes and deletions are:

1. Japan's military actions in China have been changed from "invasions" to the more neutral "advances;"
2. The number of victims of the Japanese army massacre known as the 1937 Rape of Nanking (Nanjing), estimated at 200,000, has been cut; the atrocity has been attributed to provocation by Chinese resistance fighters;
3. The 1 March 1919 Korean movement for independence from Japanese colonial control has been termed "rioting;"
4. Descriptions of Koreans forced into working or serving in the Japanese army have been changed to "implementation of Japan's national mobilization;"
5. Forcing Koreans to take Japanese names, prohibiting the use of Korean and forcing the use of only Japanese from 1940 is described as "making Japanese the common language;"
6. An account of the Japanese army's wanton killing of 800 Okinawans toward the close of WWII on the grounds that they were a military hindrance has been deleted.

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Such alterations of history have drawn vehement criticism from the governments and citizens of China, Korea and other victims of Japanese aggression during WWII. Outraged Japanese citizens are also mounting protests against the screening council's decisions. The Chinese and Korean governments have lodged formal protests with the Japanese government, calling for the immediate correction of the controversial passages.

In response to the massive outburst of criticism both at home and abroad, Prime Minister Suzuki, Chief Cabinet Secretary Miyazawa, Education Minister Ogawa and Foreign Minister Sakurauchi held a conference on August 26 at which the official government position was revealed. The statements, however, did not clearly acknowledge the mistakes of the textbook council's screening procedure. The government representatives only promised to correct the current revisions held in dispute in 1985. As the screening council normally reviews textbooks every three years, this is one year sooner than usual, but means that the revisions in question will appear in the textbooks used until that time.

These revisions are an indication of Japan's move from economic power to military power. This revival of militarism is a threat to human rights movements, such as the BLL's struggle to eliminate discrimination. In this respect, the textbook revisions are a dangerous signal of the road that may lie ahead.

We must understand the truth about Japan's military past, and convey the facts to the next generation in order to prevent such mistakes from occurring again. To protect human rights and secure peace, we must demand that the government correct the revisions of history now in high school textbooks. We must keep Japan from the path of militarism.

An exhibition called "Invasion" was held in Osaka in September, and is now being shown throughout Japan. The exhibition features over two hundred large panel photographs of such atrocities as the Rape of Nanking, the invasion of Korea, public beheadings of Chinese, mass executions of Koreans, the Japanese army massacre of Okinawans and other brutalities. Many of these photos came from the scrapbooks of the families of soldiers who were part of the Japanese army's campaigns. The history surrounding each incident is explained. Other panels explain the textbook screening process, and newspapers showing the criticisms of many Asian countries are also displayed. The exhibition, along with several other activities such as speakers and video presentations, will continue to tour Japan through the rest of this year in an attempt to educate as many people as possible.



This photograph, taken from the exhibition "Invasion," was shot in Manchuria. The man being publicly beheaded was labeled an "anti-Japanese guerilla." He is being executed by a fellow Manchurian in the pay of the Japanese army.

LEST WE FORGET: OSAKA HUMAN RIGHTS MUSEUM PLANNED FOR 1984

A group of concerned citizens met on 30 August to establish a foundation to create an Osaka Human Rights Historical Museum. This memorial project will be undertaken in honor of the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the Osaka Prefectural Levelers Association (Suiheisha) in 1924. Representatives of various groups promoting the project are: Mr. Takumi Ueda, chairman of the Osaka Prefectural Federation of BLL; Mr. Tadao Umesao, curator of the National Museum of Ethnology; Mr. Tomohiko Harada, director of the BLRI; renowned author Tsutomu Mizukami and Mr. Iwakichi Wajima, former president of the Japan Lawyers' Council. "This museum will be unique, presenting a viewpoint on human rights through the perspective of the history of oppressed people," said a spokesman.

The plan calls for utilizing the old Sakae elementary school in Osaka's Naniwa ward. The original structure will be maintained as far as possible, with renovations and repairs in ferroconcrete, to create a two-story, gallery-style building. It will house permanent and temporary exhibit space, audio-visual facilities and a multi-purpose hall.

Use of the old Sakae school for a human rights museum is very appropriate. The building was constructed in 1928, just as the Buraku liberation movement became active, and financed by donations from the Buraku residents.

Old documents, maps and other papers that various Buraku in Osaka have preserved will be exhibited and stored in the museum. Household utensils and production implements used in traditional Buraku industries will also be gathered. Songs and dances that have been handed down in the Buraku will be recorded and kept as intangible cultural treasures.

JUSTICE PREVAILS AFTER NINE YEARS

--IKEDA AND TAKEHATA RULED INNOCENT IN PARKLANE CASE--

On the night of 10 November 1971, an armed robber broke into the Parklane bowling alley in Matsubara, stabbed the assistant manager, Mr. Hayakawa, in the abdomen with a knife and escaped with approximately 1.2 million yen. The police investigating the case decided that the weapon used for the assault was a meat knife, and that the assailant was operating with assistants.

Near the bowling alley is the Buraku , where many inhabitants work in the meat industry. Regarding the theorized meat cleaver as a solid clue, the police looked here for possible suspects.

After two years, the police had still not located any suspects in the Parklane case. At that time, a young man, Mr. Ikeda, was arrested in an unrelated case. He happened to be from , the Buraku near Parklane. The police forced him to confess that he was the assailant and thief in the unsolved Parklane case, and that his friend Mr. Takehata had acted as his accomplice. The police held no evidence for either of these charges, save this extorted confession.

From that time, in accordance with Japanese law, the two men were held at a pretrial detention center, where they steadfastly asserted their innocence. On 29 July 1982, they finally came to court, facing trial at the Osaka District Court. The judge, Takao Yamanaka, ruled that they were innocent, stating: the written depositions of the case are not believable. Some parts of the depositions appear to have been gained through force, coercion or leading questions. The prosecutor filed no protest or retrial motion, so their innocence is securely recognized.



After a nine-year struggle, the two men won legal recognition of their innocence. They are angry about the discriminatory nature of the police investigation which lead to them standing trial for a crime they did not commit, and they are angry with the prosecutor for allowing such an investigation to come to court.

Following the trial, Mr. Ikeda (left) and Mr. Takehata (right) discuss their feelings on the case.



We're pleased with the court's recognition of Mr. Ikeda and Mr. Takehata's innocence, as well as the judge's realization that the confession was obviously a fabricated document. The BLL and its friends are fighting for the freedom and recognition of innocence of another young man in a very similar discriminatory case -- Mr. Kazuo Ishikawa in the Sayama case. The successful conclusion of the Parklane case trial will have strong moral and legal effects on the Sayama case retrial.

BURAKU FORBIDDEN TERRITORY FOR

MAWATA SALESMEN

It has been recently found that salesmen of the Mawata Company, a bedclothes and textile goods firm, have been using lists that point out the various Buraku districts and their outskirts as forbidden areas when making their sales rounds.

The BLL Central Headquarters requested that the president of the firm, , and other responsible persons appear at an investigation meeting pertaining to the use of these lists. At the 22 July question and answer session, a new fact came to light. The company has also written up a set of 32 rules that restrain sales of goods to such people as foreigners in Japan -- mainly aimed at Korean and Chinese residents -- the mentally handicapped, fatherless families, families on livelihood protection and "special workers," such as day laborers.

Mawata possesses six different versions of its no-sales districts lists, with the earliest one compiled in 1978. Forbidden sales territories are listed for the Kinki region's six prefectures and Tokushima prefecture on Shikoku island. The company's spokesman said, "Our research section gradually added the names of special districts and houses to the lists on the basis of our businessmen's reports."

The BLL Central Headquarters is treating this case very seriously, because it appears that Mawata is not the only door-to-door sales company that is operating with such lists.





TWO AUSTRIAN TRADE PAPERS CARRY ARTICLES LIBELING BURAKUMIN

In the face of rather strained import and export quota negotiations between Japan and the EC countries on such products as leather goods, two Austrian trade newspapers have resorted to libelous, discriminatory attacks on Burakumin as the source of the trade friction.

The Austrian paper International Trade World, in its 15 May 1981 issue, carried a slanderous article written by Franz Heurnter (phonetic), a member of the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The article claimed that the Meiji emperor ordered a group of farmers to raise cattle, and in exchange for this duty, gave them the exclusive right to tan the skins. These farmers, the article asserts, developed into the modern, unassailable pressure group known as the "Etta." [ed. note: Eta was a legal designation for the lowest class under the Tokugawa regime; both the class and the term were abolished in the 1871 Emancipation Edict; the term, however, continues to be used illegally as a pejorative for Burakumin.]

In a separate case, Eric Horne (phonetic), vice-chief of the economic section for the Austrian paper The Press, wrote a piece for the monthly magazine Overseas Markets, which is published by JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization). Horne came to Japan on JETRO's invitation, and gathered the purported "information" used in the article during his stay. Horne's article states that "the Burakumin are the descendants of those workers employed in such dirty occupations as tanning and butchering."

The publication of two such articles, one authored by a guest of JETRO, is alarming. The BLL Central Headquarters in Tokyo hosted a meeting with representatives of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and JETRO in order to fully examine the contents of these articles.

Citing these articles as a stimulus, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it has decided to establish a section to deal with the issues and information concerning the Buraku problem. Although this is a promising step, neither the ministries present nor JETRO answered questions concerning these two Austrian newspaper articles in a straightforward manner. The BLL feels that these incidents may forewarn a intention to allow the Burakumin to be used as scapegoats in this trade battle, and therefore requested that the two ministries and JETRO be prepared to answer further questions at a later date.



FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE PREVAILS AT HIGH SCHOOLERS' CONFAB

The Fourteenth National Buraku Liberation High School Students' Meeting was held on 11 and 12 August in Kumamoto prefecture. Over 1,238 students gathered to report on their recent activities and participate in formulating plans for the future. When a person called upon to speak for the first time took the stage, other participants cheered him or her on until nervousness was overcome. In this friendly and supportive atmosphere, students exchanged research, study and experiences, deepening communication among themselves and strengthening their understanding of themselves as part of the Buraku liberation movement.

One of the major topics under discussion was the Education Ministry's decision this April to suspend government-sponsored interest-free loans to Buraku college students. This system, with its repayment waiver if the student becomes a teacher or enters certain other public service fields, was changed to a flat loan system, with these educational loans repayable at 6 to 8 percent interest. It is feared that equal educational opportunity is threatened by this change. Anticipating the possible suspension of the present scholarship fund earmarked for Buraku high school students, all participants reaffirmed their commitment to the liberation movement and decided to strengthen their activities.

BLRI PUBLISHES INTRODUCTORY BOOKLET ON THE BURAKU PROBLEM

The Buraku Liberation Research Institute has recently completed a new booklet, in English, which briefly introduces the history of discrimination against the Buraku, the evolution of the Buraku liberation movement and the current manifestations of discrimination facing Burakumin and the activities being undertaken by the BLL to overcome them. The booklet contains illustrations, charts (such as wage gap between Buraku and non-Buraku workers, unemployment rate differences), cartoons and a chronology of the Buraku liberation movement. The B5-size (approx. 7 by 10 inches), 20-page booklet is priced at 150 yen, and is well-suited for group or classroom use. Single copies, including air mail postage, may be obtained for US\$2.00. On orders of 10 or more copies, deduct 10 percent. Order from:

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YOUTH RALLIES UNDER THE CRY "UNITE AND COOPERATE IN THE STRUGGLE."

The Twenty-sixth National Buraku Liberation Youth Meeting was held in Nara prefecture from 1 to 3 August. Nearly two thousand people gathered at the birthplace of the Levelers movement to participate in the annual forum. All participants felt the sense of history inherent in meeting in Nara on the sixtieth anniversary of the Suiheisha (Levelers Association), and it was echoed in their resolve: "We must learn the passion and dedication of those active young leaders who struggled against all odds to found the National Suiheisha. We youths, too, should lead the current liberation movement forward."

The meeting gathered youth from throughout the country to report on their activities and learn what their fellow liberationists had done over the past year. They promised to compile a full report on these activities and present it to the next national BLL meeting, scheduled to be held in Tottori prefecture. The meeting was concluded on note of strengthened resolve.



RESEARCH MEETING DISCUSSES IMPACT OF NEW LEGISLATION ON THE MOVEMENT

The new Law on Special Measures for Regional Improvement Projects, which replaced the previous Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects, has aroused various arguments as to the actual effects this legislation will have on Buraku liberation. This topic dominated discussion at the Sixteenth Buraku Liberation Research Meeting, held from 14 to 16 September in Fukuoka prefecture. Some 13,000 liberation activists, including government officials, educators, labor movement members, clergy, business and industry representatives and BLL members, participated in the various discussions and meetings held.

The scholarly meet was divided into four sections: Buraku history; the liberation movement; government administration and Buraku liberation; education and culture and Buraku liberation. These four sections divided into seventeen more focused discussion groups. Heated debate on how the new Law on Special Measures for Regional Improvement Projects will make its impact felt on the Buraku liberation movement transpired, along with an analysis of how the role of Buraku research will change under this new legislation.