

SHISO-UNDO NEWS

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At the gate of Camp Schwab, Henoko, Okinawa, US soldiers are checking the body temperature of the driver and passengers. The shuttle bus named Green Line carries US soldiers and others from/to all US military bases in Okinawa, including Camp Schwab. On August 25 it was announced that two persons were infected by Covid-19 at Camp Schwab for the first time. (Henoko on July 15, 2020. Photo by TOYOSATO Tomoyuki)

Report From work place -- Hotel

Only if we can connect with each other

At present, the Japanese epidemic of coronavirus seems to be in a lull.

Looking back, it was April when the tension was the highest. Late April, I was struck by deep fatigue and fever.

The symptom lasted about 10 days, but to its end I could not receive proper medical test, examination, or treatment. I was obliged to rest at home without knowing the cause of my poor physical condition. I had to

ITO Tatsuya, Hotel worker in Tokyo

take an absence from the hotel for more than two weeks. It was treated as personal sickness.

At that time, it was widely reported that the number of PCR tests being

conducted in Japan was extremely small compared to other countries. It was justified in terms of preventing medical breakdown, and it was deemed a rational decision to “squeeze” the number of tests. However, the “human element” was beautifully lacking in its rationality. The anxiety resulting from the sick person’s inability to objectively understand his or her health was not worth considering for the authority. I want to take note of this. This is because, in the early stages of the epidemic, the fact that “human factors” were disregarded markedly was a “threat” that would remain even after the therapeutic drugs and vaccines would be developed and the tests would be simplified.

In the first page of the April issue of Shiso-Undo monthly, in line with the response to the cruise ship “Diamond Princess”, “human factors” (= human rights) were pointed out accurately. Japanese authority’s response at that time was, “A lot of criticism was directed to the measures ignor-

ing human rights of the passengers and the crew members such as lack of explanation of the quarantine policy, lack of psychological support for onboard infection and for the long-term detention. In response to the criticism of “unprotected human rights,” Minister of Health, Welfare and Labor said, “The government is quarantining to prevent domestic invasion by COVID-19. What is wrong with not doing medical treatment on board?” His words symbolized the government's attitude.

It is not a new phase brought by the coronavirus that threatens “human factors” in Japan. For example, it was only a few years before the problem of waiting-list children for nursery came to attention. At that time, I learned that in order to raise a child with peaceful mind, the rights of workers who work in childcare must be protected. It applies equally to the relationship between receiving medical care and the status of rights of medical workers.

Therefore, when I returned to work, the first thing I should do was to demand sick leave during this period to be eligible for leave compensation. My request has been accepted. The next thing I should do without delay was to share with other employees about the treatment for me, that is, if one is sick in the current situation (the PCR test cannot be easily taken), he or she can immediately apply for compensation. This request was also met and it was later announced in writing.

After finishing the interview with the manager, I was relieved that I was able to get my opinion without any hesitation. I learned about SUDA Mitsuteru’s notion in the April issue of the Shiso-Undo monthly, “The worker themselves have been bearing the consciousness to accept such an unfair statement, ‘Oh, you are claiming your own rights in such a pandemic situation as this.’” His comment encouraged me to assert my right, despite my timidity.

(“Shiso-Undo” No. 1054, July 1, 2020)

Covid-19 Resurgence

Failure in Controlling the First Wave of Covid-19 Prioritize Life and Livelihood! Workers and Citizens, Let’s Stand up and Fight!

Covid-19 Infection Entered a New Stage

The domestic Covid-19 cases exceeded 28,000 and the death toll reached over 1,000 on July 23. Seemingly Covid-19 cases have been gradually decreasing due to the voluntary curfew which was not “ordered”. Staying home, business closing down and unemployment impoverished the lives of workers and citizens but the gov-

ernment did not get down to compensating them seriously. Its policy was inconsistent and irresponsible. It is clear that both “impoverishment” and “economic turmoil” are the results of the government’s inaction.

Ignoring the opposition, on May 25, the government lifted the nationwide state of emergency to revive “economic activity” upon the request of the business community. On June 19th,

OKAMOTO Shigeki, Medical Doctor

it totally lifted the travel restraint on travel across the prefectural borders.

Now the government is going ahead with another government-subsidized policy for travel promotion named “Go to Travel Campaign” from July 22 despite the objections of many. As a result, Covid-19 cases has dramatically resurged since late June and are now increasing faster than the first wave and are forming a second

wave. Both the government and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government have almost completely abandoned their duties to prevent the spread of infections and have begun to pass on the responsibility of preventing its spread to individuals by imposing a "New Way of Life" on the people.

The government is throwing people into the crucible of Covid-19 under the catchphrase of "With Corona" to cover up their failure. This is the new stage of Covid-19.

Hardship on the people

Amidst a nationwide self-restraint of social activities, many workers were forced to refrain from work without pay. Many more part-time workers have been dismissed, forced to be displaced from the company houses and left on the streets. According to "Consumer Reports" (No.1635), the situation is so serious for single-mothers, the elderly, and foreign technical interns and their families. One single mother has had no income since April and there are days when she eats nothing all day long to feed her children. The invisible hunger is spreading among the people. Seven female Vietnamese technical interns who had been working in one prefecture said "Our workplaces had been closed. We had run out of money and were surviving by growing vegetables in the fields and catching fish in the rivers and seas." According to a survey by the Japan Federation of Medical Workers' Associations, 115 of the nation's 338 medical institutions, which is about 30 percent of them, reduced lump-sum summer payments for nurses and other employees year-over-year, citing a downturn in business due to the effects of Covid-19. It was said that at Tokyo Woman's Medical University Hospital, more than 400 nurses wanted to resign after the hospital's

management announced the total cut of the lump-sum summer payments for all the staff members. During the labor-management negotiations, the hospital's management responded that even if 400 nurses retired, it can still cope with the treatment because the number of patients is declining and that it can recruit nurses if necessary. It is definitely the same as a vicious company that treats its workers as disposable. In addition, the workers of several nursery schools in the Tokyo metropolitan area have been on strike over non-payment of compensation for absence from work during the period when the schools were closed and when they were forced to refrain from attending. Reportedly workers are carrying on similar struggles in rural areas as well. The government is doing nothing. Workers have no choice but to stand up for themselves.

Two Medical System Breakdowns

During the first wave of Covid-19, most of infected patients were elderly, and the medical institutions were busy securing beds for them. The medical treatment for critically ill patients such as oxygenation and artificial respiration as well as the extra-corporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) requires sophisticated medical equipment and many medical specialists, and so they postponed the treatment for non-Covid-19 hospitalized patients. Many medical institutions had no choice but to suspend non-emergency surgeries, checkups and hospitalizations. In addition, many infected patients were incompletely "quarantined" in non-medical institutions, such as home and hotels because the government failed in securing medical institutions for mild ill patients. But some of them have deteriorated and died while staying in-home isolation. Because of the risk of

nosocomial infection due to the influx of Covid-19 patients and the shortage of infection prevention equipment, as well as the exhaustion of doctors and other medical personnel, Japan's medical system for Covid-19 infections broke down or was on the verge of breakdown. This was the first breakdown of medical care in Japan.

The second medical system breakdown was exposed when the first wave calmed down. The income of most medical institutions dropped between March and May because the number of infections decreased as a result of people's refraining from social activities and of their limiting the acceptance of patients to prevent infections. Some medical institutions which accepted Covid-19 patients were marked with record deficits between several hundred million and several billion yen. Their deficits were so large that they could not finance them by the government-supported projects. According to a survey taken by the National Federation of Health Insurance Doctors' Associations, being asked about the number of the medical examination result of outpatient in April year-on-year basis, 87.4% of medical doctors and 87.5% of dentists answered "It decreased." About 30% of those medical institutions showed its decline of over 30%. Their medical income showed almost the same percentage of decline and more declines are anticipated in May. Moreover this decline sets to continue for more than a year. The financial crisis is the second medical system breakdown.

Low Health Care Cost Policies at the Root

At the root of these two health care breakdowns is the government's longstanding "low-cost" policy that considers health care costs to be nothing more than a social loss. It

is the policy of reducing the ratio of government spending in national health care costs. By this policy, co-payments have been increasing, hospitals and hospital beds have been closed, and the number of doctors has been curbed in order to suppress growing health care costs as population ages. Japan is currently one of the countries with the fewest number of doctors among so-called advanced nations. In addition, it has rendered the universal health care system obsolete, and over the past 30 years, through neo-liberalism, it has drastically cut back on public health care, consolidating and abolishing public health centers, which are responsible for community health and public sanitation, and reducing their size to about half. Japan's medical care and health care system have been reduced to the level where they can no longer be downsized. Under such a condition, the global epidemic of Covid-19 occurred. Japan's medical system has already lost the capacity to deal with the current epidemic. Therefore in Japan since February, firstly those who became feverish have not received medical examination or medical checkups, secondly nosocomial infections and intra-institutional infections have occurred one after another, resulting in the closure of hospitals and clinics, and the restriction of medical care. Thirdly the emergency medical system has been seriously compromised and finally the crisis of the management of medical institutions has arisen. This is the very result of capitalism and neo-liberalism that have placed a high priority on the profits and economic interests of large corporations and capital, and that have disregarded the lives and livelihoods of workers and citizens.

Life or Economy

Now the government says that it will

take the measures against Covid-19 whose basis should be “to strike a balance between infection prevention and economic activity.” However, this is a complete lie. It was clearly disproved by the fact that on July 3rd the government abolished the Council of Experts on Measures for Novel Corona Infections, which had been mainly composed of medics and medical personnel, and that it set up “a subcommittee” with economic experts in charge. The government has played down preventing infections and protecting people's lives and health, and has given priority to economic activities by lifting the voluntary staying home and doing business.

We Can't Stand Up by Capitalism

Did the government have no choice but to take the present measures? It had many options. It could have taken many other measures such as prioritizing infection control, supporting the lives and livelihoods of workers and citizens with the necessary financial resources by collecting them from the enormous retained earnings of large corporations, correcting corporate tax system and improving progressive taxation that favors large corporations and high earners, introducing minimum income compensation, making better welfare systems, refurbishing housing policies and so on. But the government never takes those measures because it is the politics of capitalism.

We Can't Fight a Pandemic with Capitalism!

The Government Must Prioritize Lives and Livelihoods!

Workers and Citizens, Stand up!

It is socialist countries such as China, Vietnam, Cuba, and Korea that have been able to strike between

infection control and economy. Those countries had to deal with difficulties as well, but they did not have to prioritize corporate profits because they take socialism system. We no longer have any expectation of the Japanese government. The workers and citizens must specify their demands and confront both the government and the business community.

Free PCR testing and other measures to combat the spread of Covid-19 infections be a top priority!

Protect the lives and health of people!

Stop layoffs and guarantee jobs, wages, food, shelter and public health care for all people!

July 23, 2020

(SHISO-UNDO No.1055, August 1, 2020)

Sharply expanding COVID-19 infection at the U.S. military bases in Okinawa

The US Military and the Japanese government making light of the residents

YONEKURA Gaisho, Journalist, Member of the Japan Congress of Journalists Okinawa

New Threats to the Residents

A new threat of US military bases has emerged in Okinawa, which has been suffering from the heavy burden of US military bases. It is the COVID-19 outbreak.

It was known from the end of March that there were infected personnel at the bases, but it appeared that the recent rapid expansion was due to the global personnel exchanges of the US military. US military personnel come from the United States, the world's largest infected country, to Okinawa, Japan without examination for immigration or quarantine. The Japanese side could not and cannot regulate the entrance and exit from the gates.

When it was revealed on July 11 that the cumulative number of infected people in the US bases reached 61, I predicted that it would overtake that of citizens in the prefecture soon. On July 24 it became a reality. Compared with the cumulative total of 172 citizens of the prefecture, the U.S. military announced a total of 42 new infections, resulting in 205 cumulative.

On July 16 a taxi driver in and out of the base was confirmed infected, and on July 23 a base employee was infected for the first time. Both are likely to be due to contact with US military personnel. It is also known that many US military personnel live outside the base, at least one of them was reportedly infected.

According to a July 25 report in

"Ryukyu Shimpo," the percentage of infected people was 0.01% for the citizens of the prefecture, while 0.43% for the US military in Okinawa. It is 43 times more. However, the actual number may be higher, as the number of US military personnel is of 2011 report and it has not been revised since.

There are many reasons why outbreaks in the bases are a threat. (1) Insufficient information disclosed by the US military, (2) There are 9,000 base employees, (3) There are many U.S. military personnel living outside the base, and the local community cannot grasp its numbers, and (4) In and out of U.S. military personnel bases cannot be grasped or regulated by the Japanese side.

In addition, (5) US military personnel will not go outside the base, resulting in a decrease in revenues of restaurants, bars etc. in the area, and (6) A decrease in visitors and tourists to the area. These are affecting the regional economy largely.

Initially, the U.S. military said it would not reveal the number of infected persons by base. However, due to strong demand from Governor TAMAKI Denny of Okinawa, they began to make announcements by base. The numbers for each base nationwide have also been made public on the website, but there are problems such as the timing being late and the recovered persons being excluded. According to the data on the morning of July 24, there were

189 infected persons at 11 bases, and the five Okinawa bases had 166 people, accounting for 90% of the total.

On July 24, Foreign Affairs Director of the U.S. Marine Corps Base said, "We conducted thorough inspections and contact tracking, and closed many facilities at the bases. We are working rigorously." This interview was conducted only by Kyodo News and NHK. Perhaps it excluded the local media who have a clear attitude being critical to the US military. The number of infected people at bases in the prefecture is also announced irregularly on Facebook etc. There is no proactive attitude to disclose information to the local community.

Total Closure of the Bases

Base employees have serious concerns. On July 7, when it became clear that five people had been infected at the Futenma airfield, they were ordered to wait in the station without explanation, and were held for several hours. Even outside the base, there are cases where children are asked by the school to refrain from attending school and are told not to come to the hospital.

The Okinawa Regional Headquarters of All Japan Garrison Forces Labor Union (*Zenchuro*) reported to the Director of the Okinawa Defense Bureau on July 14 about the request from the union regarding the closure of workplaces for about two weeks, implementation of PCR tests by the Japanese state, and measures against

rumors. It also sought to provide information on the contact between infected staff and Japanese employees, to enforce discipline on the U.S. Army staff, and to thoroughly implement infection control measures. The "Okinawa Times" reported on July 24, the voice of anxiety of a base employee who has been ordered to carry food, with insufficient protective equipment, to quarantined persons.

On July 25 and 26, the prefectural government conducted PCR tests on more than 1,000 base employees. It

has not been decided yet how much the Japanese government would bear the cost of the test for base employees. I think both the labor union and Okinawa prefecture should take a stronger stance on the Japanese government and the US military.

In the first place, it is absurd that the bases under the extraterritorial law exist in the middle of the local community. The COVID-19 outbreak makes the absurdity more vivid and shakes the Okinawan society as a real threat.

First, the bases with the outbreak should be completely blocked. And it is the responsibility of the government to carry out PCR tests for all base employees and all applicants in the surrounding area. Based on that, the government should proceed with the review of the immediate operation of the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement, and further conduct radical reviews. And, I want to face the fact that masks are more important than missiles and fighters for national security.

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ESSAY

History is being written today, too

TOMIYAMA Eiko
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The Japanese government attempted to register an island coal mine ruin in Hashima, off Nagasaki City (the Gunkan-jima Island, so-called due to resemblance to the silhouette of a battleship), as a heritage site of the industrial revolution of Japan's Meiji Era to the World Heritage Site of UNESCO, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Korea (ROK) opposed the move. Under the circumstances the government of Japan officially pledged to express that the coal mine has a history of forced labor of Korean workers prior to and during the WWII. The UNESCO office has approved nomination on a ground to honor the Korean victims and an information center is completed lately in the Shinjuku-Ward, Tokyo. It is named the Industrial Heritage Information Center, which the Ministry of Interior Affairs and Communications

is in charge of. After the designation by the international institution, however, the Japanese government presented a report to the UNESCO, removing clauses stipulating measures to admit the fact that Korean civilians were conscripted to work there and to mourn the dead. Last December a spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of ROK pointed out: 'although the UNESCO's committee advised to have bilateral talks of the two countries, the Japanese government did not respond at all to the ROK's consistent request to have dialogues, as ROK is the very party inflicted by the cruelty. It unilaterally compiled the report to the UNESCO, which is an appalling act that cannot be overlooked'. Amid the epidemic a public display opened on June 15 at the center in Tokyo (reservation is needed due to the new coronavirus

infection). The Sankei Shimbun, a rightist newspaper, says 'Exhibition Rejected ROK's Claim'. On the same day the ROK's ministry's official summoned Ambassador of Japan in Seoul, TOMITA Koji, to protest the attitude of Japanese government.

Last June in the Belgium city of Antwerp a statue of Leopold II, who brutalized Congo during the colonial era, was vandalized by protesters and then removed from a public square. Likewise in England, in the city of Bristol, a bronze statue of Edward Colston, a slave trader, was toppled down by angry demonstrators and thrown into the water. His company, Royal African Company, branded the slaves trafficked with its initials RAC on their chests. Meanwhile, in the United States, in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, a statue of Christopher Columbus was fallen down to be heaved into the sea on July 4, the Independence Day of the nation. Strong indignation lies in the background over a historic viewpoint of 'discovery of a new continent', which has justified genocides of indigenous people and pillage of their lands.

As for New Zealand, the city of Ham-

ilton, a home for native people, used to be named Kirikiriroa in the Maori language. In June the city council hauled away a statue of Hamilton, explaining that the figure was offensive. The country is currently called New Zealand, but it was Aotearoa. Australia, too, has had a similar history, according to which it was discovered by Britons. Prisoners were sent from the British Empire and the native people, called Aborigines, were slaughtered, stripped of their lands and forced to be assimilated.

Today's capitalism cannot exist without colonial rules. The so-called advanced nations today, all of them, have historically accumulated colossal amount of wealth from the colonized peoples. Therefore, the problem must be analyzed from a position of beginning and development of capitalism rather than of racism. That is, global moves of merchandise and people. Spices of Southeast Asia, cotton textiles of India and silk and

pottery of China – they were so attractive to Portuguese and Spaniards of those days. But European goods and precious metals were insufficient to get these items, thus they procured a massive volume of silver from the New Continent. Later, Britons, Netherlanders and Frenchmen, using canons and guns, set up, one after another, East India Companies that carried own armed fleets. Privateers, who were funded by kings and aristocrats, joined colonial competitions of looting. Merchandise, including sugarcane, tea, indigo and cotton were produced in the plantations which depended on slavery. The Triangular Atlantic Trade of Europe and the African and American continents, hegemony over the Indian Ocean and the Pacific and colonization of India and China – these events cannot be separated from the capitalist development in Europe.

We live in the 21st century, leading a life filled with values created dur-

ing over these 500 years of history. Maybe we live with the older memories. Recently the Turkish government decided to change a museum to be a mosque (July 10, 2020). The building in question was built in the year 537 during the era of the Eastern Roman Empire as a Greek orthodox cathedral. Reportedly, the NATO is in dismay.

We can learn our contemporary task from the history on the daily basis: the American Independence War and the French Revolution which prompted capitalist development, struggles of peoples of the Third World who have kept fighting against colonialism, the two world wars and the international relations after WWII.

History is being written today and it will be written tomorrow, too.

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Situation Labor 2020

Class contradiction becomes apparent in all scenes Labor policy in line with the will of capital accelerating in the Corona pandemic

KIRA Hiroshi, Local government worker

Deteriorating employment burdens on the weak

The Depression by COVID-19 is directly threatening the employment and livelihood of workers around the world. The OECD estimates that the overall OECD unemployment rate would reach 9.4% in the 4th quarter of 2020, even in the most optimistic scenario of the pandemic.

According to the Monthly Labor Survey by Ministry of Health, Labor

and Welfare, the number of regular working hours and overtime working hours since February have decreased from the respective same month of 2019. Especially, overtime work hours in April decreased by 18.9%.

According to the results of the Labor Force Survey by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications for January to May 2020, the number of employees increased until March, but it decreased in April when the

emergency declaration was issued in April. (66.28 million, a decrease of 0.8 million from the same month of 2019, and 66.56 million a decrease of 0.76 million the same in May. In the survey workers consist of employees and those who are on leave (those who did not work at all). The number of employees on leave was 1.96 million in February, while 2.49 million in March and 5.97 million in April (4.2 million more than the same in April 2019). In May it raised to 4.23 million (up by 2.74 million from the

same in May 2019). The increase was the result of COVID-19 pandemic. "According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, only about 40% of those who were on leave in late April returned to work by the end of May. About 50% were still on leave, and 7% lost or left their jobs. Some became newly on leave." (Asahi Shimbun Digital, July 1).

The number of non-regular workers, including part-timers or side-jobbers in April decreased by 0.97 million from the same month 2019. In addition, more than half of those on leave in April were non-regular workers. Many non-regular workers were forced to leave their jobs as of April.

What about regular employees? In the April survey, 1.93 million out of 5.97 million people who were on leave were permanently employed. Also in the May survey, the number of regular employees among the employed workers turned negative compared with May 2019. The unemployment rate in May increased to 2.9% which was up by 0.4 points from March, although it was lower than those in other OECD countries.

Furthermore, according to a survey conducted by the Japan Institute for Labor Policy Research and Training (JILPT), the ratio of female employees on leave is more than three times of that of men, and women in mother-child households on leave was five times more than that of men.

Employment adjustments are progressing due to shorter working hours, suspension of new job recruitments, temporary suspension of work, and suspension and termination of employment. It is clear that women and non-regular workers are being sacrificed as employment adjustments.

Behind these statistical facts, as reported by SUDA Mitsuteru under the title of "Shadow on workers with COVID-19 infection seen from intensive labor consultation" (April 1 issue of Shiso-Undo), and by IBUSUKI Shoichi "Foreign workers who lose their jobs due to COVID-19 disaster" (May 1 issue of Shiso Undo) and others, human rights violations such as unilateral home waiting orders, refusal of wage compensation during days on leave, unilateral suspension of technical internships, and cutoffs from the promise of employment are widespread.

Review of the Japanese-style employment system

Telework and telecommuting are in the limelight due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fujitsu announced that it would continue working from home in principle even after the declaration of emergency has been lifted, keeping the attendance rate within 25% and eliminating commuting allowance. NTT's major group companies have also indicated a policy of working at home by 50% or more in June 2020 onwards. Hitachi announced it will gradually expand job-type personnel management, which has already been introduced for managers, to general employees, and from April 2021, 70% of the total of 33,000 employees will work from home for 2-3 days a week.

There are quite a few companies that returned to office work because of difficulties in personnel evaluation, but why are these companies trying to continue or expand teleworking?

Keidanren or Japan Business Federation reported in January 2020 on a report on the Special Committee on Management and Labor Policy, a proposal to review the Japanese-style employment system suggesting that the management would "Consider

the best combination of membership-type and job-type employment for the company's management strategy, or establishment of 'Own-style' employment system combining the job-type employment on an appropriate form." This is to facilitate the acquisition of "excellent advanced human resources and overseas human resources", as well as to guide and train employees to resources who would improve their own skills and increase their engagement with the company. At the same time, it said, "Since the discretionary labor system and highly professional system are suitable for job-type employment, we will consider introducing and utilizing job-type employment together with these systems."

What they call "job-type" is not the job-type, which is typical of the production sites in Europe and the United States, which specifies the duties, places of work, working hours, wages, etc. clearly in the collective agreement and the job description on the industrial scale. What Japanese management calls "job-type" is a specialized business type that is convenient for capital or a highly specialized ability utilization type ("Japanese management" of "the New-era") that can omit skill training within the company and is easy to evaluate the results without being restricted by working hour management. It is a way of working, which is, so to speak, a "pseudo job type". (That is, the "equal pay for equal work" introduced in the bills related to the "work style reform" is not the same as the original equal pay for equal work across companies that is tied to the jobs. This "equal pay for equal work" is in parallel with the fact that it was a "quasi-equal pay" in which regular workers' and non-regular workers' wage disparities and working condition disparities within companies were accountable only, and the dis-

parities were partially reduced but legally fixed.

At the 37th Future Investment Conference of the Cabinet Office on April 3, TAKENAKA Heizo said, "It is true that working from home is progressing, but it will not last long. This is because labor compensation can only be measured by time. There is no such thing to be managed. So, if you do so, you will have to change it to something that will be measured by achievement."

In addition, the "Opinion for Promoting Side Jobs" announced by Keizai *Doyukai* (Japan Association of Corporate Executives) on May 19 states that "the spread of side jobs will increase the liquidity of employment, and a shift to a hybrid employment of membership-type and job-type employments is promoted. This will enable smooth labor transition in response to changes in the industrial structure, and will also improve productivity." It urges to the government, "Regarding part-time work/side job which are mainly aimed at individual self-actualization and social contribution, although some consideration must be given to health management, it should basically be done at the worker's own risk. It is desirable not to count the total working hours among multiple businesses." No explanation may be necessary. Both teleworking and part-time jobs are closely linked to each other for establishing a "self-employed" employment system (expansion of the pseudo-job type) that monopoly is trying to proceed, and changing the conventional Japanese-style employment system.

"Bold Policy" 2020 to cater for monopoly

The "Basic Policy for Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform (so-

called Bold Policy) 2020", which was approved by the Cabinet on July 17, listed up the problems/risks highlighted by the spread of COVID-19, such as deterrence of digitalization and on-line system (particularly at the government administrative field), risks of urban overcrowding and overconcentration, lack of human resources who can utilize new technologies, plight of non-regular employees, freelancers, small and medium-sized businesses, and weakness in global supply chain. To achieve "new ordinary life" in the post-COVID-19 era, it "must immediately promote and materialize the reform which may take a decade." Concentrated investment for that purpose will be called Digital New Deal, and it lists up (1) strong promotion of a next-generation administrative services, (2) promotion of "digital transformation", (3) new ways of working and living, and (4) change of systems and practices to accelerate changes.

In (3), as work style reform, listed were:

- "Promotion of side jobs through the development of rules for the management method of working hours",
- "Development of working rules based on the actual situation, such as clarifying the content of notification regarding the requirements for applying the deemed work hours system outside the workplace, and review of related guidelines,"
- "Clarification and support of employment rules for further dissemination and promotion of job-type regular employees,"
- "Study of the discretionary labor system so that flexible and effective management of working hours and treatment can be made 'based on achievement', after conducting an investigation on status quo,"
- and "To establish an environment where workers can work as freelancers with peace of mind, the govern-

ment will work together to develop protection rules."

In addition, on-line education and medical care etc. and reform of the civil servant system were mentioned. In (4), "Breaking away from documentation and seal print and face-to-face business style," and "Promoting regulatory reform for the digital age" were included.

Regarding the development of the freelance environment, the "Growth Strategy Execution Plan," which was approved by the Cabinet also on July 17, said, "Together with the protection measures using the doctrine of abuse of the predominant position of the Antimonopoly Act the effective guidelines would be established, and "It will be clarified that the labor-related laws and regulations will be applied in the case of "employment" under the current law." In general, it is clear that in line with the policies and opinions of *Keidanren* and the *Doyukai* mentioned above, the government is trying to relax the management of working hours (regulations) and lead to an expansion of "job-type" employment and freelance.

On the other hand, there is no general review or measures on the vulnerable medical system that was revealed in the COVID-19 pandemic, in the Bold Policy. It was clearly revealed that the government monopolies have consistently carried out the reduction of the number of health centers and their functions since the 1990s, the privatization and commercialization of public hospitals, and the reduction of infectious disease wards by converting them to general wards, leaving shortage of doctors working for hospitals. It was brought about also by the reduction of 200,000 beds due to the government's concept of community medicine of 2015. Let us reveal class contradictions and strug-

gle!

According to a survey by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, as of July 17, there are 67,115 business establishments with a possibility of employment adjustment due to the COVID-19 infection, and 36,750 workers prospective for dismissals. In both cases, the number is more than triple that of May 25, when the counting started. The largest number of workers expected to be dismissed by industry is the lodging industry, followed by the manufacturing industries and the restaurant industry. The dismissal and temporary leave of workers, whether regular or non-regular, will begin in full scale.

On July 22, the Central Minimum Wage Council made an unfair report, saying "It is difficult to give an indication of the amount to be raised and it is appropriate to maintain the current level." Although the stage of the struggle will be shifted to the Local Minimum Wage Councils, the so-called essential workers such as medical and welfare, retailing, livelihood related services, and food service delivery are short-time workers. Their wage level (hourly wage) is often close to the minimum wage. According to the JILPT survey, the higher the income group, the earlier they moved to work from home. Their working hours fluctuated but they

were able to maintain their income. On the contrary the lower-waged suffered the influence of COVID-19 the less the working hours and their income. The disparity is being reproduced. The demand for the minimum wage of 1,000 yen/hour nationwide is a natural requirement.

In all situations, what appears is a contradiction between capital and wage labor, a class contradiction. The avant-garde units of workers and the class-oriented trade unions must take the lead in striving to meet the demands of the working people, especially those in vulnerable positions.

(SHISO-UNDO No. 1055, August 1, 2020)

●SHISO-UNDO No.1056 September 1, 2020

■From Okinawa

U.S. military bases and the rampant COVID-19 – New disasters of the war

IKEMIYAGI Toshio
Lawyer

■Let us submit "The Opinion Document" to TAMAKI Denny, Okinawa governor!

Let us stop the new military base construction at Henoko!
Editorial Office, Shiso-Undo

■Excerpt from "Okinawa Sketch - Yanbaru News" (August 22, 2020)

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What is the cause of the spread of the infection in Okinawa?
Kim Chi-Myeong
Manager of the recycling shop -- the Store of Sea of Dugong

■Please join the signature campaign demanding the universal PCR test

As a part of the struggles imposing our wills to the government

DOMATSU Katsunori
Liaison Conference "NO to breakdown of the Constitution :
Against Amendment to Article 96"

■Report against the military base from Kanagawa

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KIMOTO Shigeo
NO! at all military bases, Fight in Kanagawa

■Report against the military base from Kyoto

The outbreak of COVID-19 occurred at the U.S. military facility in Kyotango

We demand for a through countermeasure to the Coronavirus

KIHARA Ken'ichi
Member of Liaison Conference in Kyoto
against the U.S. military X-band radar base

■Report against the military base from Iwakuni

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military base for the Coronavirus response TAMURA Jungen
Representative of Atagoyama Peace Institute

■Essay

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KOKETSU Atsushi
Specially-appointed professor, Meiji University

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The class struggle under the Corona disaster
FUJIWARA Akira

(2) DVD "The Foundation of the Peace" was screened
Persons born in the Korean Peninsula were not inscribed on stone monuments
SAKAGAMI Mitsuko

(3) Lecture by MURATA Tadayoshi
History and the reality of the People's Republic of China learned again
TAKANASHI Akiyoshi

(4) Lecture by Lee Jun-Sik
Democratic People's Republic of Korea for invalidating the strategy of the U.S.
MOCHIZUKI Yoko

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TANIGUCHI Gentaro
Sports journalist

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It is the capitalist countries that have no human rights!

MURATA Tadayoshi
Professor Emeritus, Yokohama National University

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Japan Federation of National Service Employees

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International Secretary, Workers Party of Ireland

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Tokyo resident

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