

## No.2 Report

# On Hosei University Struggle and Japanese Student Movement 2009 --- Problems and Tasks

March 4, 2010

## Preface

We are very happy to be with you, fighting sisters and brothers in the US, in a common struggle to change university as well as the whole structure of the society in an international solidarity. Let's crush neo-liberal offensive by the united power of student and workers of the entire world.

In 2009, we have succeeded in achieving a historical advance in our struggle at Hosei University. Crushing the political repression resorting to the notorious Law Concerning Punishment of Violent Activities and Others legislated under Emperor-Military dictatorship, we have got all of arrested 8 students released by the end of the year after unlawful prolonged detention. This victory demonstrates that every student has power to win confronting courageously all intimidating measures of the ruling class by punishment and arrest.

Massive unemployment increased under the current global economic crisis is violently hitting workers and students as well. While major corporations were encouraged by the government to shed jobs of a large number of workers for their survival, capitalist managements of universities are shamelessly victimizing students, saying, "You must assume self-responsibility for your job hunting in a scarce opportunity"

Neo-liberalism has turned every sphere of human life into tools of profit making and ended up with destroying the whole structure of this society, including employment, education, medical care and social security and welfare. Capitalist society is no longer compatible with us, workers and students.

Students are deprived of pride and friends as long as they live under capitalism, being reduced into commodity, labor power commodity. When, however, they are aware of this absurd and upset reality of the capitalist society and rise up with anger for struggle, they can take back human pride and life and unity with neighboring friends. Every student has such potential and power. Only people's unity is the driving power of the history.

Our present task is to develop our movement that we started at Hosei University with the slogan, "Crush privatization of education" and continued in unity to a broader movement comprising 30,000 Hosei University students and 3 million students across Japan.

## **(1) Hosei exposes the real situation of Japanese education under privatization offensive**

On March 14, 2006, the administration of Hosei University suddenly announced quite one-sidedly that distribution of flyers and putting up of signboard were to be put under the regulation of university administration and began forcefully removing all signboards on campus. The university administration had invited beforehand a troop of 200 security policemen and they arrested 29 students who protested this on the spot. Five of the arrested students were suspended or expelled from the university. It was a beginning of continued repression on students on Hosei campus, conducted by intensified cooperation of university administration with the police. Dissident students were arrested one after another by the police and were punished and expelled by the university administration for the reason of arrest. In the past four years, arrested and indicted students amounted in total to 118 and 33 respectively; 11 students were punished by the university.

Hosei University authorities have gone so far as to claim “business interest” or “the right of business” on campus and to justify profiteering. Entrance examination fee is now ¥35,000 (\$350), total annual tuition amounts to ¥1.244 million to ¥2.083 million (for the freshmen of school year 2009). Thus students and their families are suffering financial burden and more and more dependent on scholarship, which is now a tool of business, a financial commodity.

3) Huge amount of fees, robbed from people, are transformed into 150 surveillance cameras, barbed wires, hired thugs, special university staffs with video cameras on Hosei campus. Moreover, one third of the total assets of Hosei University was put into money gamble, or financial speculation for the self-serving of the university board and ¥2.8 billion were lost only in last year, while students who are unable to pay fee are mercilessly expelled from the university. Many of their names are published on the notice boards on every University gate. There is no more “human rights” no more future of students on the campus, which is transformed into a playground of “business”.

Hosei University authorities asked the court for provisional injunction quite frankly in the name of defense of the “right of business” to forbid distribution of flyers and other activities to call on newcomers during the time of entrance exam. According to the court order, distribution of flyers on campus is a violation of the “right of business”.

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What is happening at Hosei is an attempt of privatization of education by capital and

is playing a role of spearheading the offensive of introducing the *Doshusei* (Wider Area Local Government System), which aims at over-all privatization of the whole society and at destruction of unity of workers. Privatization means that the whole Japanese society is transformed into Hosei University today. Therefore, the power relation is decided by the victory of the struggle at Hosei University. We are well aware that Hosei struggle confronting neo-liberalism is closely united with the struggle of brothers and sisters against privatization the world over.

## **(2) Students can achieve unity when they keep fighting in absolute opposition**

5) In line with these attacks, the university administration began a new attempt of disbanding students' independent organizations on campus. In spring 2008, Hosei University authorities quite one-sidedly decided to abolish "Fraternal Association of Students", to which all Hosei students affiliated and of which activities were run by students themselves. It was also announced that the "Federation of Cultural Clubs" and other two bodies were to be unauthorized. To achieve this goal, the university authorities made every effort to bring in split and division among students through threatening of cutting subsidy to the clubs, which didn't dissociate from the "Federation of Cultural Clubs". The leaders of the organizations who could not maintain a position of absolute opposition to administration's intimidation agreed to sit at the table of negotiation over conditions of compromise with the university authorities and were finally bribed by them throwing away students' pride. They confessed, "It is no use fighting a losing battle" "We have to obey the rule decided by the university administration" and so on.

6) But it was not the whole story. Those students who were furious with the betrayal of the leaders of the "Federation of Cultural Clubs", stood up with a slogan, "We absolutely oppose to the abolishment of the Federation of Cultural Clubs", calling upon other students, "Let's refuse slavery!" "Not money and goods, but unity and solidarity!" They now represent. What motivated their radical rising with human pride and dignity was their sense of imminent danger that their lives as students were going to be destroyed when they remain inactive. They succeeded in passing a resolution to maintain the existence of the Federation of Cultural Clubs on its meeting and replaced old leadership with a new one.

## **(3) Hosei Struggle turned repression into unity building**

7) In the course of these developments, the university authorities took a severe disciplinary measure on one of the dissident students with an aim of intimidating other student. The students rallying around the Federation of Cultural Clubs immediately rose up to fight back. They declared, "We don't let any of our friends alone. We never allow the university administration to take further outrageous repressive measures on us". On May 20<sup>th</sup>, all members of the fighting Federation of Cultural Clubs appeared on campus and took microphones to call on Hosei students for a protest action in defiance of the regulation forced upon us by the university administration. They were all prepared for disciplinary measures.

8) The university authorities, totally scared by the strong unity of students, turned to an outrageous retaliation. On May 29<sup>th</sup>, they asked the security police to arrest 33 students on campus, 14 of whom were later indicted. All the students on Hosei campus confronted the violent assault of the security police with linked arms and didn't retreat till the last arrest took place.

As we often remark, "Repression promotes unity", the Hosei struggle has been strengthened through turning repression into forging unity of students. If we accept the reality of capitalist society and are ready to live there, political repression will effectively work on us. But all repression by the state power will be powerless when we are determined to change the society together with our friends and colleagues with conviction. Brutal state power repression seems to destroy us all, but it never succeeds in depriving us of our desire to defend our friend and our aspiration to live a human life. The courageous struggle of May 29<sup>th</sup> clearly proved this by its self-liberating spirit.

#### **(4) Unity of students can crush all obstacles.**

9) Prior to this struggle, on April 24, 2009, more than 1000 Hosei students joined in a rally on campus breaking through the "picket line" of university staffs. The rally was organized by the Federation of Cultural Clubs with slogans: "Withdraw unjust punishments" "Crush a prison university!" and sparked an explosion of Hosei students anger against the university administration. The arrest of 5 students on campus on that day fueled the indignation of students and the rally ended with 1500 participants.

The rally on April 24 clearly demonstrated that the violent rule and "privatization" of Hosei University has such a fragile structure that it collapses the instant students raise their voice No to the university. It was made clear also that the united power of students can crush any kind of repression to all Hosei students. We have succeeded to take back the control over the campus from the hands of capitalists to the hands of students.

10) Ultimate reprisal of the university authorities and the state power against us was the application of the Law Concerning Punishment of Physical Violence and Others, which aims at destroying unity of people as crime. All the arrested students kept complete silence at forceful interrogation of the police and fought back intimidation, categorically refusing to convert to the enemy side during detention for months. Through this uncompromising struggle against the state power, they have built up invincible unity.

Unity is all. Unity is our only weapon. All of Hosei struggle consists in unity, solidarity and friendship. Our fundamental principle is to judge every result of the struggle from the viewpoint of building up unity, even if there is no immediate, visible gain. Sticking to this fundamental position, we have succeeded in turning intensified enemy's attack on us into its grave.

#### **(5) Let's rise up for the social change together with workers!**

11) "University is an institution where high-school boys and girls are purchased as raw material, processed, finished and sent forth to enterprises with a diploma"--- this is a statement of Takahashi Hiroshi, director general of Tokyo Metropolitan University. Since the beginning of 1990's, Japanese universities have gradually been transformed,

or degenerated into factories of producing docile labor power commodity or institutions of moneymaking under the name of “education”, private instruments for capitalist profit. To complete this transformation, a series of attacks raged over students’ autonomous bodies and student-run dormitories to abolish them,

Fierce competition among universities, higher fees for entrance exam, expensive tuition fees, severe job hunting, etc.--- all of these are weighing heavily on students. (As of December 2009, the rate of informal notice of employment for graduating students is 73% (for Hosei 60%), the lowest figure ever).

12) Neo-liberalism has degraded even education, which is essentially for rich human development and social progress, into a tool of competition for survival among students and means of mere subsistence. University is by nature supposed to be a social institution where freedom and liberty are most enjoyed, but in reality, it has been turned into a prison where students are victimized for capitalist profit and chained to the slavery. However, students are not such trivial und humiliating creatures. Students are the masters of campus and have duty to create a new history through audacious destruction of traditional and conventional value and mindset. And students are each other the most valuable friends and colleagues to fight together.

On June 15, 2009, a Joint Rally of Workers and Students was held at Hosei University with 1200 participants, including a large number of workers from across the country and raised an angry voice against the present situation of Hosei University. We confirmed once again that the bright future of students depends upon the unity of students with working class, who is actually running the whole society, in the struggle to take back everything that has been taken away from us by capitalist class.

The true champions of the history are we, students and workers. Time has come we rise up to fight back neo-liberal offensive, gathering all the angry voices of working people against intensifying global economic crisis. Now is the time to overthrow capitalist society. Let’s stand up for struggle.

We pledge you to carry out nationwide strike of students in Japan this year to take back education and future to us, learning intensively from your marvelous struggle in the US.

April 23rd Rally on Hosei University campus is a kick-off for this struggle. We expect your messages of solidarity to this rally.

United power of students is limitless. Let’s crush neo-liberalism by the power of international solidarity and open up our future by our own hands!