

Abstracts

Negotiations and Agreements of Labor Unions and Employers in the Industrial Sector in Japan

Miki Kawaguchi (Kansai University)

Negotiations and agreements between labor unions and employers in the industrial sector play an important role to decide working conditions and to realize fair competition among employers. Nittobo Union and other Unions which are affiliated with the Japanese Federation of Textile, Chemical, Food, Commercial, Service and General Workers' Unions negotiate jointly with textile enterprises and their agreements regulate the labor contracts of the members of those unions. The agreements between the Musicians Union of Japan and NHK, broadcasting companies, and the Recording Industry Association of Japan decide the minimum pay scale for the performances of all musicians. The agreements between the National Federation of Dockworkers Unions of Japan and the Japan Harbor Transportation Association regulate the working conditions of all dockworkers. The All Japan Seamen's Union concludes collective agreements including the union shop clauses with associations of ship owners, and those collective agreements regulate the labor contracts of almost all seamen of the member companies.

"Globalizing" Labor Relations and the Responses of Japanese Trade Union: Taking an Indonesian Cases

Ikuro Yamamoto (Kinjo Gakuin University)

This article aims to make clear the causes of labor disputes that have increased at Japanese affiliated/joint companies in Asian countries from both viewpoints of "local" and "global" contexts taking up Indonesian cases. The "local" contexts mainly mean structures of industrial relations. Trade unions are usually organized by industry-based in Indonesia but the labor-management council at a company level is assigned a crucial role under the "Bipartit" council system. Such structural imbalance of the industrial relations appears to be one of main factors to cause labor disputes frequently. On the other hand the "global contexts" mean a gradual formation of a kind of "norm" for the business behaviors of multi-national companies (MNCs) including the affiliated companies and suppliers as to take appropriate steps for following the fundamental labor standards by the ILO. This can be called "globalizing labor relations." However, Japanese MNCs cannot easily cope with such global changes because the in-house unions that are extremely autonomous and closed are less-interested in the global transition. By contrast the IMF-JC as a federation of industrial unions that bears the front line of the international trade union movement has only a little power for decision making and taking action following the globalization.

International Comparison of the Industrial Labor Agreement System: Germany and France

Yota Yamamoto (The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training)

The purpose of this paper is to study the labor agreement system in present-day Germany and France. According to the research findings in this paper, in Germany, a fundamental structure of the traditional labor agreement system is maintained even now. However, since the ratio of organized labor in labor unions is falling, the application rate of labor agreements is falling every year. Therefore, in Germany, national intervention is gaining strength for strengthening of the "Tarifautonomie." On the other hand, the labor agreement system in France has been traditionally maintained by strong national intervention. Thereby, in France, although the ratio of organized labor in labor unions is low, the application rate of labor agreements is very high. In Japan also, in order to maintain and strengthen the function of a labor agreement system, it is necessary to consider the problem what the state should do.

The AFL-CIO Looks to an Activist Past to Secure the Future for Workers

Charles Weathers (Osaka City University)

Industrial unions have played a major role in advanced economic democracies, contributing to the development of democracy, and helping millions of unskilled or semi-skilled workers to improve their quality of life and their social status. In the US, the industrial unions of the Congress of Industrial Unions (CIO) played a crucial role in launching the great union organizing drive of the late 1930s. CIO unions also played important but under-appreciated roles in promoting civic participation [political participation] and advancing civil rights. Nevertheless, industrial unionism never took strong root in the manner of the strong industrial union-based labor movements of European countries like Germany and Sweden. Instead, differences between industrial unions and occupational unions became blurred, while the increasingly hard-core anti-union strategies of managers and the policies of conservative politicians made it increasingly difficult to establish new unions or to engage in collective bargaining. Today, AFL-CIO unions, seeking new and more effective means of organizing workers and maintaining influence, are steadily deepening engagement with a widening array of worker centers and community-based organizations. At the same time, unions are looking to their own past, when labor activists frequently allied with communities to gain support against hostile companies and the police, and often used confrontational strategies to mobilize workplaces and organize workers in the teeth of management resistance. Furthermore, many unionists and supporters believe that the union movement needs to deepen internal democracy. To cope with an increasingly difficult social economic environment, the union movement must have a membership that is mobilized not only to stand up to managers, but prepared to challenge, and periodically change, its own leaders as well. This article discusses the contributions and ongoing strategic shifts of the AFL-CIO, emphasizing the important legacy of industrial unionism, and the sometimes bitter lessons of recent campaigns and activism. It then considers the implications for Japan's major unions, suggesting the need to bolster unity across organizations, and strengthen representation for some of Japan's most exploited workers.