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Study on History of Soviet Education in Japan before World War II

By Masanao TAKEDA

The danger of a new fascism threatens Japan today. Some believe that the current situation has a striking similarity to that of the 1930s which preceded World War II.

(1) The Incomplete Bourgeois Revolution and Militaristic Education.

In 1868 there was a drastic increase in the number of farmers' riots and city disturbances against the Tokugawa feudal system (71 cases of the former and 28 cases of the latter). Backed by a general national discontent and with the help of British capital, the elements of Satsuma and Choshu provinces overthrew by force the Tokugawa Government in 1868, and established a centralized nation under the Tenno system. This Meiji Restoration turned out to be an incomplete bourgeois democratic revolution which had as its aim to develop capitalism on the base of the semi-feudalistic system of parasitic landholders. The nature of this Restoration was well reflected in the educational reform.

In 1871 the Ministry of Education was set up and in March 1872 the Fundamental Code of Education (Gakusei) was issued. This educational code was one of the three major reforms which were introduced simultaneously by the Meiji Restoration Government; the other two being the Conscription Ordinance and the Land-Tax Reform. The basic ideology of the Fundamental Code of Education was that education was the 'key to success' in the world; educational opportunities were to be equally open to everybody, but the cost was to be defrayed by parents. This educational system established, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, eight university school districts (8 universities), thirty-two middle school districts (256 five-year academic secondary schools) under the supervision of the former, and finally two hundred and ten grade school districts (53,760 elementary schools). Elementary school was compulsory. In the lower three grades (ages 6 to 9), students were taught spelling, calligraphy, words, conversation, reading, morals, the Constitution, writing, grammar, arithmetic, health hygiene, geography, natural science, physical education, and music. During the following three years (ages 10 to 13), in addition to the above-mentioned subjects, students were taught history, geometry, trade arts, natural history, basic chemistry, a foreign language, biology, bookkeeping, painting, and government.

The basis of the education system was adapted from the French system, and educational details were borrowed from America. The contents of almost all the textbooks in the early days were translations of American texts.

Protesting against the high cost of tuition (10 to 90 kilograms of rice per elementary

student per annum) and against educational subjects which were divorced from real life, as well as against the compulsory character of schooling, people burned down school houses in various parts of the country during the period from 1873 to 1876. These school burning incidents were soon linked with the Anti-Land Tax Reform movement led by the wealthy farmers, and with the 'peoples' rights movement of that time.

The government, for once, yielded to the pressure of the movement by issuing a new Educational Ordinance on September 29, 1879, which defined compulsory education as four years, and authorized the establishment in the districts of self-governing bodies in charge of tuition and private institutions. However, on December 28, 1880, the Educational Ordinance saw another revision, in which compulsory schooling was reinforced, moral training was stressed, and publication of textbooks was placed directly under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. By 1882, the number of grade school children climbed to 3,004, 137 (48.5 percent of school age children, among which girl students numbered 33%). Within the same year the Ministry of Education issued the Memorandum for Elementary School Teachers and the Code of Moral Behavior for School Teachers, which literally prohibited any political discussion among teachers. Besides, teachers were subjected to a graded scale of five ranks ranging from an assistant to a full teacher, and placed in different wage categories within each rank totalling 16 steps. The minimum monthly salary of ¥0.25 for an assistant was 100 times smaller than that of the maximum ¥30 for the highest rank teacher. In 1886, Arinori Mori, the Minister of Education since 1885, promulgated the Imperial University Decree, the Normal School Decree, the Elementary school Decree, and the Middle School Decree, with the aim of producing educated citizens capable of meeting foreign competition. Training of teachers was done at government expense and a boarding system was applied to all student teachers with all conduct being carried on in a military manner.

The Imperial Government of the Tenno System promulgated the Imperial Constitution on February 12, 1889, and the Emperor assumed the sovereignty, the power to appoint and dismiss ministers, the right of supreme command of military forces, and the power to call and dissolve the Diet. On October 30, 1890, the Emperor issued the Imperial Rescript on Education and thus established control of the spiritual life of the nation by applying nationalistic and militaristic moral standards which were infused with feudalistic, hierarchic and capitalistic moral code. The Constitution was modeled after the Prussian Constitution.

Japanese acquaintance with the conditions of Russian education began when Japanese translation of Perov's book, Russian Educational Law, was first published by Harusuke Takasu in Tokyo in 1891. The first Russian dictionary, printed in Japan, was the Russian-Japanese Dictionary edited and published by the Publications Office of the Ministry of Education in 1887. Many other Russian dictionaries followed. Japan's increased interest in Russia at this time had a natural link with the colonization of Korea and China by Japan's capitalism which made a rapid expansion backed by the government and helped by the In-

dustrial Revolution. Japan's capitalism, which acquired the Korean market resources after victory in the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 and made capital investments in China, became monopolistic by taking advantage of the wartime financial panic and a serious crop failure from 1900 to 1903. These incidents contributed directly to the development of Imperialism which led to the Russo-Japanese War in 1904. In 1907 the Imperial Defense Policy mentioned Russia, America and France as hypothetical enemies and set forth a plan to reinforce thirteen army divisions with twenty-five in the time peace and fifty in time of war.

As a result, national education was subjected to great militaristic influence. Starting from 1889 all students of the Normal Schools had to serve for six weeks of compulsory military service. Elementary school textbooks became state textbooks with the Ministry of Education holding the copyright. The emphasis in education was put on fostering loyalty and patriotism, a heed for military service and taxation, and it inspired students for emigration to foreign countries and also emphasized military knowledge and physical education. "Hail to the Emperor" was newly added to the content of first graders' readers. Physical education took the form of military exercises (from 1886). School attendance at compulsory elementary schools grew from 52 percent in 1896 to 86.9 percent by the year 1905, and compulsory education was extended to six years. Rapid progress was also made in the field of higher education, and the Departments of Armory and of Explosives were newly created at the Institute of Technology at Tokyo Imperial University. Korea was annexed to Japan in 1910, and the Japanese government issued the Educational Ordinance in Korea (1911) which prohibited the Koreans from using their mother-tongue and from teaching their national history.

In 1917, the government called a special session on education and introduced new reforms in the spirit of imperialism in elementary schools and normal schools, as well as in vocational schools and universities; the assignment of active commissioned officers to each school became effective and teachers' compulsory military service was set at five months. There was a trend for a new education, which passed under the name of 'activism' and 'self-learning', whose objective was to bring up 'creative' human beings who could cope with the 'new' age. However, the basic philosophy of this new trend in education was synonymous to the fostering of 'creative human beings' for foreign emigration and the increase of productivity in the imperialistic world, and was just another means of reinforcing the militaristic educational subject matter more effectively and assertively.

It should be noted that there were some teachers who struggled for the respect of children's individuality. Therefore they inevitably came to criticize the imperialistic and fascistic character of militaristic education under the Tenno system, which was contrary to their belief of what a true education was all about.

(2) Establishment of the Teachers Labor Union and the New Education Research Center

The labor force grew greatly in number due to the rapid development of Japan's cap-

italism at the end of the nineteenth century (300,000 laborers in 1892 worked at plants having more than ten workers; in 1897, there were 460,000). Strikes occurred frequently. On July 5, 1897, a group led by Sen Katayama organized the League of Labor Unions, and on May 20, 1901, they formed the Social Democratic Party which aimed at the implementation of Socialism and Democracy. But the government was quick to ban it. Protesting against the Russo-Japanese War, socialist Shūsui Kotoku and his group appealed to the Russian Social Democratic Party in the Heimin Shinbun (4,000 copies weekly) saying that 'governments of both Russia and Japan entered the war in order to attain their imperialistic goal, but you and we are comrades. . . . Laborers in the whole world, unite!'

The Socialist Revolution in Russia of October 25, 1917, had a great impact on the Japanese people. One laborer, who heard of the Russian Revolution, wrote, "I held a child in my arms and shouted, 'Hey, little one, don't worry. Even you could rule the country. Even you could be a prime minister', in other words the Russian Revolution gave us a hope for life." During 1917 the number of strikes increased four times (398 incidents) and the number of participants seven times (57,000). The number of Labor Unions increased tremendously from eleven unions in 1918 to 711 by 1919. The Rice Riot in August 1918 had 610,000 participants. Japan's Farmers' Union was formed in April 1922. In Tokyo on July 15, 1922, Sanzo Nozaka and his group formed the Japan Communist Party as an unofficial organization which joined the Comintern. Under these circumstances, Japan's first democratic teachers' group was formed in Tokyo by Yasaburo Shimonaka under the name of 'Keimei-kai'. It participated in the first May Day rally of 1920, proposing (1) an immediate withdrawal of troops from Siberia, (2) an abolition of suppression of free speech, and (3) education at public expense. Later the Keimei-kai struggled in vain to become a Teachers Union, but turned into a propaganda group which became defunct about 1927. Among teachers who participated in the movement of the Keimei-Kai there were the Anarchist faction which endeavored to enlighten farmers, and the Bolshevik faction which worked toward the establishment of a teachers labor union. In their dispute the former maintained a superior position over the latter.

The Great World Depression which started in 1929 made many Japanese children unable to bring lunch to school because of poverty. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 6,550 girl children were sold as Geishas and waitresses in 1931. Wages of elementary school teachers dropped each year, and by May, 1931, non-payment of wages affected 8,782 teachers of 687 cities and villages, which amounted to ¥648,442. Out of a total number of 300,000 teachers, 15,000 lost their jobs. Under these circumstances, progressive teachers continued their struggle for the organization of a Teachers Labor Union by lawful means. However, the Labor Union movement became illegal as a result of: (1) the suppression of the Communist Party on March 15, 1928, (2) the changes resulting from the Ordinance for the Maintenance of Peace and Order, and (3) the assignment of special police forces to all prefectures. It was an impossibility to organize lawfully

a Teachers Labor Union. On August 1930, a Preparatory Committee for Japan's Educational Laborers Union was illegally formed by members like Mutsuo Honjō, Yuzuru Masubuchi, and Kinji Yamaguchi. This committee decided to organize a legitimate facility for its lawful activities, and the 'New Educational Research Center' (Shinkyo='Ploleta Institute Pedagoga') was established on August 19, 1930, by Tokuji Yamashita, Kenshin Asano, Taneo Ikeda, Tadao Ueda, Tokumitsu Yagawa, Seiichi Miyahara, and others. The Center published a monthly magazine Shinkō-kyōiku (New Education) and the Declaration of the Establishment of the Center was printed in the first issue (4,000 copies). The Declaration defined the relation between the Center and its magazine as follows: "The Educational Laborers Union is our citadel and Shinkō-kyōiku is our weapon." (Shinkō-kyōiku, the first issue, published in September, 1930, p.3.) The organizational meeting of the Japan Educational Laborers Union was held in November 1930, with twenty representatives from Tokyo, Kanagawa, Saitama, etc. The movements policy, which was drawn up by members like Yamaguchi, Yamashita, Miyahara, Masubuchi, Kan'ichi Masuda, and Raisuke Kurotaki, was printed in the November, 1930 issue of Shinkō-kyōiku. (Yuzuru Masubuchi, Short History of Japan Educational Laborers Union Movement, Shinjū Publishers, Tokyo, 1972, pp.84-85). Since the Teachers Labor Union was an illegal organization, this policy was submitted as an article entitled 'An Insight into the Educational Laborers Union Movement in Japan', under the pseudonym of Yoshio Watanabe. Nevertheless, the November issue of Shinkō-kyōiku, in which this thesis appeared, was placed under a ban.

The Teachers Labor Union movement policy opened with the phrase: "Teachers went on strike and started sabotage right after Russia's October XXXXX (Revolution)* in order to overthrow the Bolshevik Government and openly played a reactionary part". They asked, "Can teachers be allied forces of the proletariat?" The answer to this question is as follows:

"The powerful struggle against Imperialism and Religion by the British Educational Laborers Unions, the anti-religion French alliance for educational laborers, and by the Educational Laborers Unions of Italy, Luxemburg, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Uruguay, Belgium, and China, and now the brilliant achievements in construction of the Alliance of Educational Laborers in accordance with the Socialist code by the Soviet Union who now can be a great collaborator of the proletariat! Each organization mentioned above is affiliated with Edukintern: the only internationally unified body of educational laborers unions that strictly observes a hierarchic stand, and under its unified flag forms a dependable ally of the international proletariat!" (Shinkō-kyōiku, November 1930, pp.65-66)

In the next section the policy document stated the social grounds for the teachers' awakening as part of the proletariat, and went on to point out as goals of the Educational Laborers Union: (1) the betterment of living standards and the liberation of educational workers; (2) the establishment of proletarian education (by eradicating the capitalistic

* XXXXX indicates here and below deletion by censorship. The word probably deleted has been added in brackets by this author (Masanao Takeda).

educational system), which preserves children's life and is beneficial for the betterment of school life; (3) solidarity with the Labor Unions and Farmers' Unions; and (4) the unification of labor unions at national and international level.

It also made the following demands for Educational Reform in Japan: Opposition to reactionary education; opposition to XXXX (state textbooks); freedom of choice of subjects and textbooks by teachers; struggle against XXXX (imperialistic education); struggle against religious education; abolition of meetings called by headmasters; establishment of classes with forty children as maximum; decision-making on teachers' duties by a teachers' conference; absolute freedom of classroom management by teachers; opposition to forced attendance at meetings, etc.; choice of principal by teachers' votes; abolition of school board members; acquisition of school administrative rights by teachers; betterment of the Normal School system; establishment of institutions for the proletariat and poor youth at farms; abolition of government-organized youth groups; establishment of voluntary sports groups; thorough struggle against mobilization education of by capitalist landowners; and opposition to imperialistic education in colonized territories, etc.

The following demands were made for educational innovations for children: removal of tuition fees; provision of schooling necessities such as raincoats, umbrellas, and shoes; and school materials and lunches to children of the proletariat at national expense; protection of mentally and physically handicapped children; establishment of special classrooms and schools for the handicapped; thorough medical care for children of the proletariat at national expense; extension of compulsory education; opposition to physical punishment of any kind; establishment of voluntary children's committees; establishment of parents committees for the proletariat and poor peasantry; school administration and management checked by parents' committees; protection of pre-school children of the proletariat; and establishment of farm boy scouts, etc.

As to the financial demands of teachers, the following were listed: opposition to lay-offs of teachers; opposition to transfers not agreeable to teachers; opposition to the reduction of wages and other allowances; opposition to sex discrimination; opposition to forced school attendance on holidays; five days of menstruation leave and twelve weeks of maternity leave for women teachers; freedom of residence, travel, dress, love, marriage and entertainment; abolition of the disciplinary system; establishment of teachers housing at national expense; and the payment of all the educational expenses by capitalist landowners.

In the political field : freedom of organization for educational laborers unions and their activity; freedom of teachers' participation in the political party of their choice and in all political activities; teachers' right to strike; freedom of speech, of meeting, and of association; abolition of suppression ordinances; solidarity between Labor Unions and Farmers' Unions; formation of a united front for domestic and international unions for educational laborers; protest against the danger of imperialistic XXX (war); XXXX (support) for the Soviet Union; non-intervention in China; and XXXX (support) for the XXXX

XXXX (liberation movement) of colonies, etc. (Shinkō-kyōiku, November 1930, Tokyo, pp. 65-77.) The Teachers Labor Union steadily increased its members among the readers of Shinkō-kyōiku, and expanded to open branches in Tokyo, Kanagawa, Saitama, and even in Niigata, Hokkaido, Iwate, Okinawa, and Akita.

(3) The Opening of the Study of Soviet Educational History

Our survey shows one hundred and thirty-one publications and articles on Soviet Educational Studies before the Japanese defeat in World War II. Thirty of them were done before 1930, the year of the establishment of the Teachers Labor Union and the New Educational Research Center. During the Nagano Prefecture incident of February through April 1933, when the Teachers Labor Union and the New Educational Research Center suffered destructive pressure, one hundred and thirty-six teachers were arrested, six hundred were investigated, and six hundred and fifty were suspended, resigned, or lost their jobs. In relation to this incident, there were more than 4,200 cases of suspension, resignation, and discharge; and replacements reached more than 25,000 cases. In 1933, the Teachers Labor Union was practically destroyed in its entire structure, and although in 1934 some local movements took part in the reconstruction, they never reached nationwide scale. (Kyōiku-shuhō (Educational Weekly Reports), April 8, 1933.) The Teachers Labor Union and the New Educational Research Center became extinct in 1934 due to the repeated severe pressure by the Government. However, during the five years of 1930 through 1934, when the Teachers Labor Union and the New Educational Research Center were still in existence, 99 studies on Russian and Soviet educational systems were carried out and this represented an amazing 75 percent of all the 131 studies from the years 1891 through 1945. Needless to say, almost all these studies were produced by members of the Teachers Labor Union and the New Educational Research Center. Among them, books and articles by Tokuji Yamashita, Kenshin Asano, and Tokumitsu Yagawa are outstanding. Especially Tokumitsu Yagawa (presently, the chairman of the Committee for Soviet Educational Study in Japan) is noted as the first real scholar in the field of Soviet Educational History Studies. He read and studied in English, Esperanto, and finally taught himself Russian. At the time, Yagawa published his articles under many pseudonyms because he was unable to use his real name due to his professorial position at Nippon University. The articles on Soviet education published in Shinkō-kyōiku (September 1930 through June 1933) were as follows:

'Basic Problem of Soviet Educational Studies' (Sep. 1930), 'Intensive Farming and Socialistic Education of Children' (Oct. 1930), 'Opposition to Intervention in the Soviet Union and War—An Appeal to Educational Laborers of the World' (Oct. 1930), 'Complex Teaching Program of October XXXXX (Revolution)' (Nov. 1930), 'Impression from Soviet Russia' (Nov. 1930), 'XXXX (Revolution) and Education' (Nov. 1930), 'Life of Soviet Educational Laborers' (Dec. 1930), 'From Soviet Comrades to Shinkō-kyōiku' (Dec. 1930), 'Teaching Plan for the Soviet Union and the Establishment of Socialism' (Jan. 1931), 'Little

Pioneers' (Jan.1931), 'News from Soviet Russia' (Jan.1931), 'Basic Problems of Proletarian Education' (Feb.1931), 'SHUKIDD—A Republic of the Juvenile' (Feb.1931), 'From Children in Russia' (Feb.1931), 'Cultural Revolution in the Soviet Union' (Feb.1931), 'On the Women's Movement in Soviet Russia' (Mar.1931), 'Bourgeois Education and Soviet Education' (April-May,1931), 'An Insight into Educational Goals' (June 1931), 'A Story of Anti-Soviet Campaigns' (June 1931), 'Pledge of Pioneers' (July 1931), 'Short History of Pioneer Movement in the Soviet Union' (July 1931), 'Who Are the October Children?' (July 1931), 'Lenin and Pioneers' (July 1931), 'Class Struggle and Educational Laborers' (July 1931), 'On the Five Year Cultural Plan in the Soviet Union' (Sept.-Oct. 1931), 'Education for the New Mankind—On the Fourteenth Anniversary of the Russian Revolution' (Nov.1931), 'How Women and Children are Liberated in the Soviet Union' (Nov.1931), 'Technological Institutes Founded on Marxism-Leninism' (Nov.1931), 'Short Biographies of Revolutionary Educators, Krupskaya, Pistorak, Shatskyi, Blonskyi' (Nov. 1931), 'Education in Soviet Schools' (Nov.1931), 'From Women Teachers of the Soviet Union' (Nov.1931), 'The Five-Year Plan and Education' (Nov.1931), 'Individual Labor Schools in the Soviet Union' (Nov.1931), 'A Country with Non-payment of Salaries and a Country with Increase of Salaries'(Nov.1931), 'The Liberated Conditions of Soviet Women' (Mar.1932), 'Notes on a Visit to Soviet Manufacturing Schools' (Mar.1932), 'Letters from Soviet Schools' (Mar.1932), 'Life in Soviet Manufacturing Schools' (Nov.—Dec. 1931), 'Toward the Second Five-Year Plan and Ten-Year Compulsory Education System' (June 1933).

It is possible to draw conclusions, from the various articles mentioned above, and to decide tasks for the future in the field of Soviet Educational History Studies in Japan.

First, the nature of educational reforms during the October Socialist Revolution and the initial Five-Year Plan was clarified, and superior aspects of Socialistic Educational Reform were presented. As for tasks, which are entrusted to us today, the studies of educational reform in the Soviet Union during 1917 through 1945 has to be raised to a more thorough level. It is also necessary to expand the periods of studies; in other words, the study of educational reform history after World War II and that of the period from mid nineteenth century through 1917. It goes without saying that the task of educational reform in Japan today has to be viewed in the light of these studies.

Second, in order to improve working conditions for teachers and their labor union in Japan, a clarification of sources of Soviet teachers' enthusiasm toward betterment of material conditions and educational opportunities was made, and lessons from the anti-reform movement of the All-Russian Teachers Union (V. U. S.) during the October Revolution were pointed out. Like this example, 1930 gave a lot of theoretical help to the Japanese teachers' keen interest in the problem of non-payment of salaries and for the establishment of the Teachers Labor Union. As to this point, we have a duty to resolve the problem of relations between the Teachers Labor Union and political parties; in other words, "A

unified support for the Socialist Party" or "Freedom of any party support", which is the most vital issue in the Teachers Labor Union in Japan today, in concert with which the study of V. U. S. history between 1905 till 1917 has even more importance.

Thirdly, concerning the life and moral education of children, the point was made as to the respect for children in Socialist Soviets and about the history and present condition of the Pioneer movement, and this made a great contribution to the children's movement in Japan around 1930. In Japan today, children's suicides and delinquency are growing due to social corruption, to poverty at home, to discriminative education, or to failure in scholastic achievement. The development of democratic self-governing group activities and of children's organizations is vital in order to overcome problems of this sort. Wide documentation on children's life and the youth movement in the Soviet Union and on the history of Socialist educational activities is needed for solving problems of this type.

Fourthly, concerning the curriculum: the details of unified labor schools in the Soviet Union, especially the 'complex method' and the 'project method' were introduced, and they influenced the teachers who read Shinkō-kyōiku. The teaching program of the 'October Revolution' and 'The Soviet Union and the Establishment of Socialism' were initiated by Tokumitsu Yagawa.

After police had arrested 131 teachers of the Teachers Labor Union and New Educational Research Center on February 4, 1933, the Ministry of Education made inquiries about the opinions and beliefs of children in the classes of 25 teachers, and revealed its result as follows: "They have too much information about Russia. ... There were many comments, like the country would be great if it were like Russia which was a communist country and where there existed community life, day-care centers, tractors, and no distinction between poor and rich with everyone working happily together. Besides, attention should be paid to the point that forms filled in by children under leftist influence had such points as an increased use of Kanji, clarity of style, correct syntax, and good penmanship; therefore the impression was given that those were superior children." (Material for the Proletarian Education, Student Section of the Ministry of Education, 1934, p. 675).

The introduction and studies of the 'project method' had not only a positive side but also a negative side when it adapted uncritically all foreign educational theories, the same mistake which the Soviet Union made in the 1920s. With this in mind and with the realization of the importance of having an independent attitude toward the study of Soviet Educational history, we must conduct positive and wide research on the history of educational subject matter and curriculum studies in the Soviet Union. It was in the 1933 thesis by Tokumitsu Yagawa, 'Recent Educational Controversy in the Soviet Union' (pseudonym, Misao Nagasaki, the first issue of Educational Science Study, 1933-1936, Tokyo, pp. 61-106) that the logical clarification was made about the 'complex method' and the 'project method'. Because of this study by Yagawa, progressive teachers and scholars in the educational field in Japan can immediately criticize and overcome pragmatic educational theory which was introduced

from the United States of America together with educational reform after World War II in the name of 'new education'.

The fifth point was that studies on Soviet educational history had a global view and a viewpoint of international collectivism which was anti-imperialist and anti-fascist. Kenshin Asano often wrote about activities of Edukintern in Shinkō-kyōiku. Also, in its international column of each issue were news on education and about teachers and children of different countries. It covered nations like France, Italy, England, Germany, Canada, USA, Poland, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Mexico, Algeria, and China. The June issue of Shinkō-kyōiku, 1931, printed a contribution by a teacher from Poland, entitled 'From a Comrade in Poland' (pp.77-78). The article dealt with criticism against militarism and fascism in Poland at that time, severe labor conditions of teachers (57 students to a teacher, 30 hours of work a week, and a 15 percent wage cut), and the growth of the number of progressive teachers, etc.

Studies of foreign educational history in Japan today consist mostly of that in Western European countries like England, France, Germany, and the United States, and this is followed by that of Asian countries like China, Korea, and the Soviet Union. Very little is known about the Northern European and Latin American countries, and as for the Eastern European countries and Africa there is almost no information available. Especially the study of educational history in Eastern European countries can be said to be one of the urgent subjects today for researchers in Soviet educational history.

Although most of the people who were involved in the establishment of the Japanese Educational Laborers' Union and the New Educational Research Center fifty years ago are gone now due to suppression, illness, and old age, Mr. Tokumitsu Yagawa (born November 26, 1900) is still very active today as chairman of the Society for Soviet Educational Study. He has published dozens of books and translations, and more than 500 papers concerned mainly with Soviet education.

I would like to dedicate this paper to the memory of Professor Tatsuo Midoro on his retirement from Hokkaido University.

(August 30, 1980)