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The National Railway Worker's Union as Described  
in the "20 Year History of the National Railway  
Worker's Union" in the *History of the General  
Council of Japanese Trade Union*

by Kanae Iida

Needless to say, any labor movement aims at the maintenance and the improvement of the working conditions of laboring class, and this economic phase is closely related to its political aspect.

It is essential, therefore, for any labor movement to have an organic relationship between these two aspects—economic and political—if it desires to attain its full development.

The most important thing for any labor movement is in how effectively it is organized. In other words, the labor movement of a nation is vitally concerned with the organizational conditions and the forms of her laboring class. At the same time, it is necessary for us to look into what ideological basis there is behind a labor movement, if we should try to index its qualitative standard.

This essay takes up the question: how the National Railway Worker's Union which played a leading and progressive role in the Japanese labor movement ever since the establishment of the General Council of Japanese Labor Unions in 1950,—the turning point in the labor movement of Japan, acted, examining its policies with reference to the relationship between the quantitative and the qualitative aspect in the labor movement of Japan, that is, as related to the economic front and the political front, which supported organizational and ideological phases.

Section I: Ideologies and Organizations in the Labor Movement of Japan, discussed the inconsistencies in the labor movement at the time of the establishment of the General Council, the concentration of the union workers' energies in the cause of excluding the communist influence and control from the Japanese labor movement, in other words, it explains emphatically how the enterprise union—a peculiarly Japanese form of trade union—was disregarded, and the organizational issue was carelessly swallowed in the ideological controversy of labor movement.

Section II: The Government and Public Workers Union and the Industrial Union, discusses theoretically the fact that the General Council at the time of its establishment was pivoted around the Government and Public Workers Union, and because of this characteristic, there followed a conflict of interest in theories and policies between the Government and Public Workers Union including the National Railway Worker's Union, which is near the Industrial Labor Union in nature, and the private enterprise unions, and the fact that the General Council failed to give consideration to this internal conflict and made no sufficient effort to overcome it.

Section III: The Significance of the "Niigata Railway Strife", explains the significance of the "Niigata Railway Strife" in the history of the National Railway Labor movement, and indicates distinctly the weakness of the Japanese labor movement as brought out in this affair.

## Policies for Further Expansion of World Trade — Evaluation of Kennedy-Round Negotiation —

*by Yoko Sazanami*

The present paper is the first in the series of studies that we are undertaking on the international economic policies for expansion of world trade and economic development. Such policies include Kennedy-round tariff cuts, primary commodity problem, international financial aid, and most favored nations treatment to manufactured exports from underdeveloped countries.

The paper takes up the problem of tariff reduction, namely, evaluation of possible outcome of Kennedy-round and its impact on expansion of world trade.

Bitter experience of the 1930's had taught economists and policy makers alike, the importance of international co-operation for promotion of expansion of world trade and economic growth. Policies carried out by GATT and IMF after the termination of the World War II was based on "the principle of expansionist approach" that is to remove trade barriers and seek advantage of international division of labor through expansion of world trade. During the 1950's and early 1960's, these policies completed an initial objective of removing direct trade and exchange control in industrial countries. The next step obviously is to remove indirect control, that is tariff.

Kennedy-round trade negotiation, after four years of hot debate finally reached an agreement among major industrial countries. Starting from 1968 they will reduce tariff rate by 50% for successive stages. The fact that total trade of countries participating in this amounts to 75% of world trade indicate their importance.

Tariff reduction of such substantial scale have never been carried out in economic history and it will undoubtedly affect both consumption and production of participating countries. They will finally alter the flow of goods in the world market. Such outcome will depend on income and price elasticity for imports, elasticity of substitution and supply of each countries. The paper first gives a thorough review of problem of tariff rate and tariff structure in industrial countries. How nominal vs. actual rate of protection will affect industrial structure. Then proceed to the problem of estimating elasticity of imports and examination of the results. Such preliminary study is useful in providing general background for further research that we are presently undertaking. The study includes the simulation of possible outcome of Kennedy-round on expansion of world trade and structure, especially impact on Japanese economy.

## The Structure and Function of Japanese Labor Unions in the Taisho Era (1912-1926) and the Early Years of Showa Era (1926-). Part I

*by Ryuji Komatsu*

The author has studied labor unions in Japan by looking into the conditions of some individual unions, especially analyzing the conditions of some enterprise-wide unions.

Making use of what has been discovered, this essay tries to clarify the structure and the function not only of enterprise-wide unions, but of the labor unions in general, as they were in prewar Japan. The following are the findings so far made:

In the first place, concerning the form of organization, we have found that labor unions were ever endeavoring to gain their influence horizontally, practically expressed, they were eager to enlarge its power industrially. Thus horizontal unions became overwhelmingly numerous as

compared with enterprise-wide unions. But from about 1921, the enterprise-wide union began to take its upward trend quantitatively, although it occupied only less than 20% of all the unions.

It should be noted in this connection that the so-called horizontal union here is not the one which performed its full horizontal function as may be generally considered. The industrial unions about this time were a kind of general union which embraced a variety of works, or a federation of unions that were formed on the basis of different factories or workshops.

Therefore, in spite of an apparent increase of horizontal, especially of industrial unions in prewar time, the actual situation was characterized by an ever increasing influence in the organization and activity effectuated on the basis of enterprise unit. So, to understand the unionism in prewar Japan, it is best to take it as a process of gradual enlargement in influence by enterprise units on the axis of increasing enterprise-wide unions and some federal industrial unions.

This trend became decisive with the establishment of the Work Committee and the Sanpo system (patriotic industrial service system) organized by each unitary workshop with the advent of Showa Era (1926—). Further, with the union activities legally secured after the War, enterprise unionism made a rapid advance.

Next, the functional aspect of union is taken up. Before the War, the labor union was not well founded as a social system, that is, it was not recognized as a bargaining party in labor market, as the right of collective bargaining was not officially admitted as a union's function. On the stage where the labor-management relationship had no such resort as the mutual talk, strike was the most useful weapon for laborers in their attempt to maintain and improve their conditions.

Such being the situation before the War, strike was an important function of labor union. On the other hand, however, collective agreements centering around the Japanese Federation of Labor made headway, and not a small number of labor unions used collective bargaining as their regular tactics in labor dispute. Many those bargaining attempts, however, were gradually deprived of their self-directive capacity, and it was only after the War that they restored their primary function of independent bargaining.

The above is a broad outline of what is presented in this essay. The part II of this work, which is to follow, will explain the characteristics of the labor movement based on the structures and the functions that have been described in this work.