

The 60 years history of Japan AALA

Japan Asia Africa Latin America Solidarity Committee (Japan AALA) is working towards a just and peaceful world without nuclear weapons, and renewed Japan of non-nuclear, non-aligned and neutral. It is affiliated with the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) which is qualified as an observer of the Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement. The following is its 60 years history of Japan AALA.

1. Movement launched for solidarity in Asia

During the east-west cold war period, people around the world were concerned about confrontation of major nuclear powers. Inspired by the massive movement protesting against Bikini nuclear test in 1954, World Peace Conference was held in Stockholm aiming at relaxation of tensions and suspension of nuclear tests. Participants from Asian nations consulted together and decided to hold a representative meeting of the peoples in the region.

2. Establishment of the Asian Solidarity Committee

The People's Conference of Asian Nations was held in New Delhi in August 1955. The conference made an appeal to the people in each country to participate in the first World Conference against A & H Bombs to be held in Hiroshima, and decided to establish an Asia Solidarity Committee in each country to promote solidarity among peoples in Asian countries, based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Just after the event, the first Afro-Asia Conference (Bandung Conference) was held in Indonesia and adopted the Ten Principles of Bandung to promote global peace and cooperation. Encouraged by the development and in accordance with the appeal made at New Delhi, Japan Asia Solidarity Committee was founded in October 1955.

3. Spread from Asia to Africa

The solidarity movement even spread to the African continent where people's fight for national liberation was flaring. The first People's Conference of the Afro-Asian Countries was held in 1958 in Cairo, with 306 participants from 25 nations in Asia and 207 from 19 nations in Africa. They adopted various resolutions including fight against imperialism, colonialism racism and nuclear arms race. Standing on the noble common cause, they decided to establish AAPSO to promote the solidarity of the peoples of AA nations. The Japan Asia Solidarity Committee was appointed as a member of its

permanent secretariat office with other ten nation's organizations. Shortly thereafter, in 1961, the Non-Aligned Movement started at the first Summit Meeting of NAM in Belgrade. At the meeting, AAPSO was designated as an observer organization of the Summit Meeting.

4. Struggle of Okinawa People tied to International Solidarity

In Okinawa, the southern island of Japan, people were fighting for returning to Japan. Okinawa was separated from Japan by the San Francisco Peace Treaty and people were groaned under the rule of the US military occupation. They were inspired by the Asian and African people fighting for their independence, and founded the Okinawa Asian Africa Solidarity Committee. At the third AA People's Conference held in Moshi, Tanzania in 1963, Okinawa AA and Japan AA jointly proposed an international joint action to promote Okinawa's return to Japan and gained unanimous support. Encouraged by the support, various activities to deepen solidarity with the people of Okinawa were carried out in both the mainland Japan and Okinawa. Among them, the epoch-making event was taken place on April 28, 1963 when people aboard ships from both the mainland and Okinawa joined at the boundary. On the same day, to support people of Okinawa, international solidarity rallies were held in Beijing, Hanoi and Pyongyang. These international solidarity actions were repeated every year until Okinawa was returned to Japan in 1972.

5, Solidarity with AA's National Liberation Movement

The Japan AA Solidarity Committee has been engaged in various campaigns for solidarity with AA's national liberation movements. In the early 60's, it focused to support Algerian people's struggle for their independence from France, inviting a representative of the Algerian Liberation Organization to Japan to establish their Far East office in Tokyo and support their fundraising. During the Indochina War which became more fierce in the 1960s, Japan AA deeply engaged in the support to the people of three Indochinese nations fighting against invasion by the United States. Large-scale rallies at US military bases in Japan were repeated to protest against the use of Japanese territory to invade Vietnam. Support vessels loaded with relief goods were sent to Vietnam several times. The liberation of Vietnam in 1975 boosted people of Japan and the world who were seeking true independence and peace. Japan AALA sent visiting teams to deepen a friendship with the people who fought for their liberation and won the victory.

6. Support to Africa, oppose to apartheid

A serious famine hit Africa in the 1980s. Japan AA conducted large-scale fundraising campaign nationwide and delivered tens of millions of yen to affected areas. At that time, in South Africa, the fight against apartheid was intensifying. Japan AA was actively involved in the international campaign to eradicate apartheid. It strongly demanded the Japanese government and businesses to stop trades with South Africa which was the largest amount in the world at that time. Japan AA also invited representatives of the African National Congress (ANC) to Tokyo and supported opening of their Tokyo office. In addition, it hosted the performance of “Amandla”, the national folk dancing group of South Africa at seven local cities in Japan with great success. These activities were appreciated by the South African Government and the Oliver Tambo Prize was awarded to Toshio Akiniwa, then Council Representative of Japan AALA. (2012).

7, Advocate ethnic self-determination rights

After AA people won political independence and most colonies disappeared, Japan AALA, standing on its firm position to defend sovereignty and self-determination rights of all nations, kept opposing to any form of foreign interference or invasion. Its support to struggling Palestinian people under Israeli’s illegal military occupation continues. Besides opposing interference and invasion by major powers of the West, Japan AA severely criticized and protested against interference by other powerful nations, chauvinistic policies and hegemonic behaviors. Japan AA opposed to and fought against the invasion of the Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union and the “export of revolution” by Mao Zedong of Communist China. Such consistent attitude as an international solidarity organization was the source of energy to promote the international solidarity movement in Japan.

8, Solidarity with Latin America to protect independence and sovereignty

Since the revolution in 1959, people of Cuba suffered from violent aggressions by the United States. We extended solidarity with them and firmly defended their right to self-determination of their nation. During 1970’s, one of our major activities was the support to Chilean people fighting against the Pinochet dictatorship. In the 1980s, the Reagan Administration of the United States intensified interference to Central America. Japan AA considered the fight of Nicaraguan people against US aggression as a stronghold of the front line defending the right to self-determination of peoples in the whole world. A massive campaign was carried out for sending medical instruments and 1000 bicycles to Nicaragua. At the occasion, the name of the organization was changed to Japan AALA

to include Latin America.

As the result of the electoral victory of president Chaves in Venezuela in 1998, people's fight spread throughout Central and South America, seeking to be more independent from the domination of the United States and withdraw from neo-liberalism. Left and center-left governments were born in most of the major countries. They formed Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and declared the abolition of nuclear weapons and the Peace Zone in the region. Japan AALA, wishing to learn these movements in Central and South America, sent several visiting teams and invited leaders of political parties and labor unions to Japan. In the beginning of the 2010s, the United States reinforced its interventionist policies once again, consequently, Left-Wing and the Centre-Left governments in major countries were overturned by means of soft coup and other ways. Japan AALA is opposed to such interferences by the United States and its allies, and is firmly committed to strengthen solidarity with the people fighting to defend their sovereignty.

9, Collaboration with non-aligned movement

Non-Aligned Movements which inherited the Bandung spirit and aimed at the abolition of nuclear weapons, fairness and the international order of democracy are consistent with the direction of Japan AALA that aims for non-nuclear, non-alliance, and neutral Japan. For this reason, Japan AALA, placing importance of solidarity with NAM, sent a delegation to participate in the Summit Meetings as an observer since the 11th through the 17th (2016). At these meetings, the delegates appealed for nuclear abolition and their support to remove US military bases in Japan. In order to disseminate understanding of non-aligned movement among Japanese citizens, it held lecture meetings at various locations in the country; organized exchange meetings with ambassadors and scholars invited from non-allied countries, and sponsored the "International Symposium on the Development of Non-Alliance Movement" in Tokyo in 2001. On the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the Bandung Conference in 2010, the same event was celebrated to confirm that AALA countries and NAM have been playing more important role in the world economy as well as politics, replacing major powers and becoming the mainstream which gives a fine prospect that Japan will join them in the future.

10, Movement toward East Asia's Peace Community

In Asia, nervous situation continued in North East Asia including the nuclear issue of North Korea, while South East Asian nations have overcome enmity in the era of the

Indochina war, developed cooperation and amity by the medium of ASEAN (the Southeast Asian Nations Association). They successfully formed ASEAN Community in 2010 and took the lead to create different forms of dialogue whole in East Asia in which all major powers including the US participate. Recognizing importance of these developments, Japan AALA dispatched visiting teams to the ASEAN headquarter and hosting countries of East Asia Summit several times to study the reality of ASEAN diplomacy. It invited ambassadors from ASEAN countries to participate in lecture meetings held at various locations. In Japan In 2015, commemorating the 60th anniversary of Bandung Conference, Japan AALA sponsored an International Symposium in Tokyo to discuss the prospect of creating a Community of Peace, Prosperity and Cooperation in East Asia. In 2015, a nationwide signature collecting campaign was launched for a petition to leaders of East Asian Summit to create a Community of Peace in East Asia. Every year a delegation visited the host nation of the summit to deliver the petition to leaders of the Summit Meeting.

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