

Trotskyist in Japan murdered by police

By Kawasaki Mutsugoro

TOKYO — It is with deep sadness and shock that we have to report the unexpected death of Comrade Niiyama Yukio, a militant of the Revolutionary Communist League (JRCL), Japanese section of the Fourth International. He died from the severe injuries he received as a result of being burned and then beaten up by riot police at Narita airport on March 26.

The 12-year struggle against the Narita airport is among the most important social movements in Japanese history.

The fight is part of a mass struggle against growing dangers to the human environment that have been created by capitalism. Niiyama Yukio was deeply involved in that struggle.

From his hospital bed, Niiyama had expressed his determination to resume his activities as soon as possible. His death is a profound loss not only to his family, friends, and comrades but to the international workers' movement as well.

Comrade Niiyama Yukio was only 24 years old when he died, but in that short life he had shown his commitment to the class struggle.

Throughout 1977 Niiyama was a member of the volunteer force that constructed the four-storey, steel-reinforced concrete tower used to decoy police from the Narita airport. It was during a March 26 assault against the airport control tower that Niiyama was critically injured.

Using a specially armored truck, a group of several hundred militants had broken through a barricade and were surging forward to the control tower. Niiyama and others aboard the truck were engulfed in flames when it caught fire. Eyewitnesses report that the militants, their clothes still in flames, were pounced on by riot police, kicked, batoned, and pounded with the edges of heavy metal riot shields until they were obviously unconscious.

They were then handcuffed and

kept in a room in the control tower, despite repeated protests and demands for a doctor to treat the burned comrades. Finally, the police reluctantly agreed to release them for treatment.

By the time Niiyama was admitted to a hospital intensive-care unit more than six hours had passed. He lived for 80 days. It is believed here that he would not have died at all if he had received prompt medical treatment at the time of his arrest.

He fought for his life with the same determination he showed in the struggle.

Even at his funeral, the police made their presence felt by mobilizing 500 riot cops in full uniform to surround the ceremony in an attempt to intimidate the participants.

We denounce this callousness, as we denounce the brutality and sadism of the police, which denies medical treatment to the injured and dying. In the same breath we denounce the Fukuda government, with its policy of forcing the airport open with tear gas, batons, special laws, and all the other paraphernalia of state terror.

Niiyama Yukio is not the only

victim of this airport project. In the course of its construction, another young life was snuffed out and thousands have been injured and arrested.

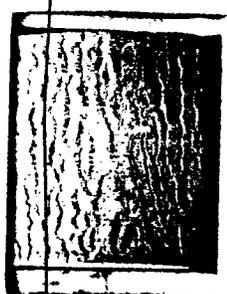
- We are determined that all this suffering and especially the death of this heroic young militant, will not have been in vain. We are determined to carry on the fight against Narita Airport, to struggle until it is closed down, dismantled, and removed without trace from the fertile land of Sanrizuka. This is the only way to carry on his last wish, the only way to respond to the tragedy of his death. We call on all workers, farmers, and students to join the Sanrizuka struggle.

We pledge to Comrade Niiyama, we will struggle for the establishment of the World United Socialist States.

The Revolutionary Workers League sent a message to a July 1 funeral rally for Niiyama expressing its profound grief at his death and its militant solidarity with the Opposition League and the JRCL in their determination to continue his struggle.



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press release
from JRCL

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