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Japan/Nuclear disaster

**“If we want the world without
nuclear plants, we must
challenge the capitalist
system”**

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TEPCO had explained that ‘nuclear accidents such as Chernobyl would never happen here because Japanese nuclear technologies are excellent’ said Ryota Sono, 29 years old, a radical peace activist and member of Precarious Workers General Union. Ryota has initiated protest actions against the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) since the nuclear disaster in Fukushima caused by the huge earthquake and Tsunami on March 11. His initiatives have gained big sympathies particularly among young generation. Kenji Kunitomi interviewed Ryota Sono on April 23th in Tokyo.

Kenji Kunitomi – What is the main motivation for you to call for direct protest action to TEPCO.

Ryota Sono – Some anti-nuclear groups organized protect action in front of TEPCO building in Tokyo on next day of earthquake and tsunami, which gathered only less than 20 activists. But after that there had been no initiatives to call the action against TEPCO for a week. During that week, there have been series of big media campaign aiming for “calm down” mass anxieties and angers, as well as for stirring up nationalist sentiment such as “Japan should unite” to recover the worst damage. DPJ (Democratic Party of Japan) government and ruling class are willing to shut down any people’s voice to criticize nuclear development policies of successive Japanese governments.

I thought that we should condemn directly TEPCO for its responsibilities causing these tragedies. TEPCO had explained that ‘nuclear accidents such as Chernobyl would never happen because Japanese nuclear technologies are excellent’. I could not allow TEPCO to evade its responsibilities.

How about the people’s reaction to your call for protest action in front of TEPCO building?

For first one week after I called protest action, the number of people who gathered with me in front of TEPCO building every evening were only about 10. But people began to understand more and more that TEPCO hid inconvenient facts for the company that really occurred in the Fukushima nuclear plants. People recognized clearly that they had been deceived by TEPCO. From two weeks after the disastrous earthquake, several hundreds of peoples joined our action and actively protest to TEPCO, shouting no to nuclear plants! They have believed that without people’s action demanding to stop the operation of nuclear plants, another tragic nuclear accident would happen because there are 54 nuclear reactors all around Japan, and many of them are located in seashore site which easily damaged by earthquake and tsunami.

Many foreign media reported our action, but Japanese media didn’t. I think many of Japanese big newspapers and TV stations are controlled by big business and government.

I think your protest actions to TEPCO surely stimulated young people to join demonstrations against nuclear plants.

I joined the demonstration against nuclear power plants in Koenji, western district of Tokyo metropolis on April 10th, to which nearly 15,000 peoples, mainly youth, participated.

For many of them it was the first experience to join any kind of demonstrations. I always have insisted on young people to organize themselves to rise up against these criminal human disaster caused by big electric power capitals and governments. Many participants knew the demonstration through new social networks such as twitter.

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Now we are now planning “One million people’s action against nuclear plants’ all over Japan’ on June 11th . It’s just the day three months after the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster.

What is your main demand of the project of demonstration on June 11th.

Of course, we would like to build nationwide networks to stop nuclear plants and to demand TEPCO and government to fully compensate for those who affected by threefold “earthquake, tsunami and nuclear plants-?disasters for their responsibilities. But I think our protest should go beyond those demands.

?Even after the Fukushima, Japanese government and capitalist don’t renounce the project of nuclear plants. They are still developing export of nuclear plants. I think it is the problem of the system, capitalist system.

If we want the world without nuclear plants, we must challenge the capitalist system.