

<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article2516>



Japan

One Year after Fukushima Nuclear Disaster

- IV Online magazine - 2012 - IV446 - March 2012 -

Publication date: Wednesday 7 March 2012

Copyright © International Viewpoint - online socialist magazine - All rights reserved

One year has passed since tremendous scale of earthquake and tsunami catastrophe which severely attacked and destroyed towns and villages in North-East coastal region of Japan. Nearly 20,000 people were killed and missing, 341,000 have been evacuated, and many people lived in affected zones lost their fundamental basis of daily existences, such as houses, public transport, health care, jobs, and their communities.

Furthermore, the worst nuclear accident of Fukushima Dai-ichi(No1) has caused increasingly devastating situations among the population in Fukushima prefecture. The number of evacuees from towns and villages near the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant has reached 100,000. They will be not able to return their hometown for several decades, in fact for an indefinite period, because of radioactive contamination of land, river, sea and air.

The Fukushima nuclear disaster has not ended. The radioactive fallout caused by the explosion of the nuclear plant is continuously diffusing radioactive material to the surrounding area which will bring about fatal effects, particularly on the health of pregnant women and children.

Nevertheless, prime minister Yoshihiko Noda of DPJ (Democratic Party of Japan) declared December last year that 'cold shutdown of the melt-downed Fukushima Dai-ichi reactors' was achieved. However, many experts fear that the government declared 'safety' only to appease growing anger among the people over the accident at the nuclear plant so that it may deflect attention from the remaining threats to the reactor's safety.

Now 52 reactors out of a total of 54 across Japan are stopping due to mainly periodic overhaul and safety checks of the reactors. The remaining 2 reactors will also stop their operation after the end of April this year. To avoid such a situation, the government and capitalist class are desperately campaigning over the crisis of 'shortage of electric supply' and stirring up popular anxieties that this would be damaging to economic recovery and worsen unemployment etc.

To survive nuclear plants, the DPJ government and capitalists are very eager to resume reactivation of many reactors and declare 'safety' of nuclear plants through the 'check' of co-opted 'specialist' committee. Under strong pressure from nuclear-related industries, the government also pledged to maintain nuclear-export policies.

Soon after the Fukushima disaster, Japanese people become aware of the lies about 'safety and clean' campaign about nuclear energy. Young people and mothers who never had been involved in demonstration before the accident have been more and more mobilized like a snowball.

Those who have mobilized themselves for the first time in social activities have strong feeling that 'we are deceived by mainstream media' and join demonstrations through new social networks such as twitter or facebook. And anti-nuclear sit-in action at the tent set up in front of the building of the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry from September last year continued for six months attracted people particularly 'Women of Fukushima against nuclear plant. The anti-nuclear tent in the government center of Tokyo thus became one of the symbols of the people's anger against the government and ruling class. These new phenomena represent common context with 'Occupy Movements' all over the world in its very autonomous form.

The demonstration against nuclear plants held on September 11, after six months from the disaster mobilized 60.000 in Tokyo. On March 11 this year, trade unionists, peace activists, civic groups, peasant and fishery organizations in

One Year after Fukushima Nuclear Disaster

Fukushima are calling a big rally against nuclear plants. They demand to compensate for all the affected people, to shut down nuclear plants etc. There will be many rallies and demonstrations all over the country on same day.

We expect that social movement in Japan, in solidarity with those affected by the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster, would begin to change the relationship of forces through developing anti-nuclear movements.