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Japan:

40,000 march against nuclear power in Tokyo

- IV Online magazine - 2013 - IV465 - October 2013 -

Publication date: Saturday 19 October 2013

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Right-wing nationalist Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe claims radiation from Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear reactor is perfectly under control at his presentation speech to the International Olympic Committee general assembly in Buenos Aires on September 7.

This shameless assertion by Abe is completely false. Highly radiation-contaminated water is massively leaking into the soil and sea everyday, and both TEPCO and the government could nothing to control Fukushima nuclear disaster.

150,000 residents who have had to evacuate from the nuclear disaster are have not been able to return to their hometown. Their life conditions are very bad and government policies to support those affected are totally insufficient.

In this situation, the LDP-led ultra-right nationalist and neo-liberal Abe government has been very eager to reactivate nuclear reactors – all 50 of Japan's nuclear reactors are now stopped – and to accelerate export projects of nuclear plants. The Abe government, supported by big capitalists, believes that without nuclear power Japanese capitalism will not survive under the very critical situation global capitalism finds itself in currently.

On Sunday October 13th , 40 000 protesters marched in Tokyo, denouncing the ruling class's nuclear policies and demanding a nuclear-free society. The protest drew together many forces from Japan's workers' movement and social movements, including the Communist Party-led trade union federation Zenroren(National confederation of trade unions), pro-Social Democratic Party trade unionists, and independent radical activists. We gathered together in Hibiya Park, at the centre of the Tokyo metropolitan area. In the mass meeting before the demonstration, Nobel-prize winning novelist Kenzaburo Oe and residents of Fukushima gave speeches, all strongly criticizing the Abe government's nuclear-depending policies.

After the demonstration many participants encircled the Diet building and made speeches and chants calling on the government to stop the reactivation of nuclear plants and to defend basic rights those evacuated and affected.

Japan is facing a prolonged economic crisis. Appealing to insecurity and fear, the LDP has managed to appeal to many voters in these circumstances: in the last elections many people voted for the right wing nationalist LDP. But according to opinion polls nearly 60% of voters still support nuclear free projects.

Rallies and street demonstration show the possibilities for protest against the LDP government. The anti-nuclear movement is massive, and continues to be a force in Japanese political life.

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