

Japan: Update on fund raising and solidarity

Friday 22 April 2011, by [ESSE](#), [ROUSSET Pierre](#), [SABAI Danielle](#) (Date first published: 21 April 2011).

The funds collected by ESSF are sent to the North-East region of the National Trade Union Council (NTUC). For reasons of effectiveness, we have for the time being chosen to concentrate our efforts in its direction, because it operates directly within the disaster area and can take into account all dimensions of solidarity (emergency aid, defence of social rights, antinuclear mobilization...). But many movements in Japan are mobilized since the catastrophe of March 11th, in various fields.

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Emergency aid (basic material needs, canteens, clearing up...) is provided by various trade unions (in particular members of the NTUC), Peace Boat, Greenpeace, citizens' groups, etc

Various groups and researchers are trying to collect independent information on the state of the Fukushima catastrophe such as the Tokyo Citizens' Nuclear Information Center, Tanpoposya No Nuke Plaza Tokyo... There have been repeated gatherings in front of the head office of the TEPCO (generally bringing together young people not belonging to organizations). Demonstrations for "for an immediate stop nuclear power" have taken place in the Tokyo urban area on March 27th (1200 people), April 10th (2500 to Minato and 15000 in Musashino). A national mobilization will take place on April 24th, birthday of Tchernobyl.

Activities on the Fukushima disaster are gradually being coordinated. They include, in addition to specialized antinuclear associations, movements like People's Plan Study Group or Rodo-Joho (Labor Information), groups of consumers, citizens, defenders of human rights, women, alternative media, NGOs...

Balance sheet of solidarity fund today

As of April 21, 2011, 12,159.54 euros had been collected as part of the initiative launched for financial solidarity by Europe solidaire sans frontières (Europe in solidarity without borders, ESSF). [1] Of this amount, 11,745 euros had already been transferred to Japan.

Source of funds:

Germany: 1000 € (individual donation from a member of ISL)

Congo: 20 € (individual donation)

France: 5590 €

NPA: 1500 euros

individual donations: 4090 €

Great Britain: € 1658.54

individual donations: € 578.54

donations from members of Socialist Resistance: 1080 €

Hong Kong: 2820 €

Pioneer Group: 2320 €

October Review : 500 €

Pakistan: 35 € (LPP)

Philippines: 110 € (RPM-M)

Quebec: 141 (individual donation)

Sri Lanka: 50 € (NSSP)

Taiwan: 745 € (individual donations)

(The funds collected in Taiwan were sent directly to Japan without going through the account of ESSF.)

This at present means 10 countries have been involved, including one in North America, 1 from Africa, 3 from Europe and 5 in Asia.

The biggest “regional block” of countries comes from East Asia. This expresses the solidarity of “proximity” between movements that have formed regional connections and who, moreover, have all experienced humanitarian disasters.

Among the individual donors are those who regularly respond to calls for solidarity initiated by ESSF.

A network of political organizations has also (albeit unevenly) responded to the appeal from Japan by JRCL and NCIW, two groups who have links with the Fourth International, and who called for support for the initiative of the ESSF. [2]

The funds collected by ESSF are being sent to a trade union network operating in the affected region - the Northeastern branch of the National Council of Trade Union (NTUC) [3] -, contacts were established by ESSF with organizations such as, in France, the Trade Union centre “Solidaires” and Attac, and the appeal has been circulated through email networks such as the European Social Forum (ESF). Solidaires has circulated within its ranks a document by the NTUC that ESSF translated and posted on its own website [4].

We are sending the money to the Northeastern branch of NTUC, not only to ensure that our material aid will go directly to the popular sectors (and at lesser expense), but also to strengthen the capacity of action by social movements so that the cost of the crisis does not fall back again on the poor.

However, it is clear that apart from the Via Campesina, which has also issued an appeal for financial solidarity (for its sister peasant organization Noumiren) and Friends of the Earth (in support to Peace Boat and the Japan Chernobyl Foundation), most unions, “radical” social movements and anti-globalization currents seem, according to the information in our possession, to be reacting slowly to the Japanese disaster of March 11, 2011.

This seems to be the case as well for the antinuclear network in France, while the independent associations in Japan need equipment, especially for measuring levels of radioactivity and to analyze the magnitude and nature of contamination to air, marine, land and food products. This is not just about money: the dosimeters had become unavailable in the Archipelago! It takes know-how, equipment and computers with sophisticated analysis programs.

Thanks to the help of our contacts in Japan (and France), we have had translations of articles and documents from the social and antinuclear movements in the Archipelago - posted on our website and on many others. Information is part of solidarity. We contribute the same, within our means, the mobilization for the end of nuclear energy.

Of course, there are certainly surely initiatives we do not know of, and we will try to make a fuller assessment of the solidarity (including financial) later. But it seems that overall, the issue of relief in times of humanitarian crisis has not yet been integrated as a major field of political action, while it should be an essential component of internationalism. A tradition has been lost. However, the experience of ESSF (and a few others like the Via Campesina), from the Indian Ocean tsunami or the earthquake in Pakistan on, confirms how urgent it is to deploy a “progressive policy of aid”. It also shows that significant results were obtained even with very modest means. What would happen if the networks of social movements (and also in this case antinuclear) mobilized their forces together?

Pierre Rousset, Danielle Sabai

Donations

You can send donations via Europe solidaire sans frontières (ESSF)

Cheques

cheques to ESSF in euros only to be sent to:

ESSF

2, rue Richard-Lenoir

93100 Montreuil

France

Bank Account:

Crédit lyonnais

Agence de la Croix-de-Chavaux (00525)

10 boulevard Chanzy

93100 Montreuil

France

ESSF, account number 445757C

International bank account details :

IBAN : FR85 3000 2005 2500 0044 5757 C12

BIC / SWIFT : CRLYFRPP

Account holder : ESSF

P.S.

* Translation International Viewpoint.

Footnotes

[1] See the initial appeal: [Japan : an urgent appeal at financial solidarity](#), ESS (article 20667).

[2] See [-