

On the Upcoming by-election of Korea

The <Anarchist Solidarity>'s Standpoint

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1. In Korea, the by-election for local governmental heads and local assembly is being held in 10 days from today, and we do not care what is going on during the run-up period.
2. We reject the concept of social transformation through election. Moreover, we do not even believe that changing ruler's name by voting has any chance of gradually (and surely not radically) improving the society. We believe that the only way to radically transform, or to gradually improve the society is nothing else but direct action of popular masses, who are organize and fight for themselves according to their interest and need.
3. But this Korean by-election does not even deserve to be opposed logically, or ideologically, for no candidate in this election is talking about improving the society. They do not even bother to tell the popular mass that "We good. The other party bad". They do not bother to pretend that they have the "vision for the better society." They constantly say "judging the government" or "cleaning up the old evils". They are now openly declaring that "We are lesser evil, so vote for lesser evil."
4. So, Here we ask, what is "evil", basically? We <Anarchist Solidarity> believe that the system itself is evil. It is the system where people are masters of everything just a day within a few years, when they are being begged for a vote, conversely they are degenerated to slaves for rest hundreds days. It is the system where the strike of working mass is suppressed by the police when liberals are in the office, while the strike is suppressed by the riot police when conservatives are in the office. It is the system where whoever is in office, the state violence tramp the popular struggle, while the capitalists travel with helicopters to save them from even glaring at it. The system is "evil" by itself.
5. Therefore, the problem of "worst evil" or "lesser evil" does not mean the problem of relative evilness for us. We see it as nothing but narrow difference in the way of maintaining the evil system. We do not care whether conservative parties maintain the system in a trivial way, or the "National Revolutionary Party"¹ maintains it somewhat "creatively". It does not make any difference.

¹ Far-right party of Korea, led by a pseudo-religious leader.

6. Should we vote for the “progressive” candidates, or “working class parties”, then? Let us put aside the question of “Are those “progressive parties”, which were trying to be parasites to the conservative party or were even denied by the conservatives from doing that, really “progressive”?”² Let us just concern with whether it is possible to ignite social transformation, or at least social improvement.
1. First off, let us just imagine the day when those progressive parties can be elected by voting counts. The day will be revolutionary(for it is not possible for those parties to be elected if the day is not revolutionary) when popular masses recognize the need of transforming the society, and it will be the day when the stubborn will of people shows through voting counts... Voting counts? Why should we limit the ability of the people to votes, instead of organizing people’s struggling through direct action when the time is so revolutionary? Such attempt to limit people’s ability is nothing but underestimating it. For it is the belief that someone has to “represent” people in terms of transforming the society, for it is nearly impossible to do it by the people themselves.
 2. Otherwise, what if the day’s tough and progressive parties have no chance to be elected? What can the votes for them mean in this world of “representative democracy”, where the majority rules and political collusion becomes the base of political decision-making? Those “progressive”, “working class” political parties may have started off wishing to transform the system, but as the system of majority-rule automatically end as the system of median-rule, there can be only two possible future for those “progressives”. First off, they shift their stance rightward, or, be downsized to the point where their existence cannot mean anything. Let’s recall the history. Korean Democratic Labor Party(XXXXX), New Progressive Party(XXXX), The Unified Progressive Party(XXXXX), Justice Party(XXX), The Labor Party(XXX). They all ended same way. For what reason can we believe them saying “It will be different this time”, when the system is still same?
 3. What about those self-proclaimed “radicals”, who say they do not expect to be elected, but are just using the election for propaganda and organizing? Disregarding the fact that there is no reason to vote for them, for voting count does not affect their ostensible reason of being candidates, we find it essentially contradictable. Why can’t they use the expense, the time, the ability of their party to organize popular mass and its direct action, instead of running for office? Can’t they construct workers’ organization just for organizing working class struggle, not for recruiting the campaigners for the election?
7. The most important thing is, as stated above, we do not consider specific political party, candidate, or ideological group “evil”. It is the system they are based on which is

² At the time of last national assembly election, mixed-member proportional representative system was introduced into Korean election system. And those “progressive parties” of Korea, which desperately believed that it is their chance to be in the National Assembly, put their candidates’ name on a conservative(so-called liberal) party’s party-list. The most hilarious part of this political comedy was that the conservatives ‘unexpectedly’ turned their back on those “progressives” for the reason of “being followers of the North Korean regime” or “registering transgender candidate”.

“evil”. Therefore, we should always indispensably find and apply the tactic which can strike the “system” effectively, in its essence.

8. The right to vote for our own representatives, or the universal suffrage surely is the institution built on the bloody struggle of popular mass, and it is our precious political right, too. But at the same time, it is an institution that maintains this system. For us, the essence of universal suffrage is simple; creating the fantasy of “that bastard might have become right-wing fascist, but he is still the bastard we voted for”; creating the expectation of “we might have lost this election, but maybe next time we may win”; and soaking the people into that false fantasy and expectation in order to make people wait for next election to transform the society, rather than act directly.
9. Therefore, we at <Anarchist Solidarity>, using our precious right to vote, actively and openly choose to refuse voting. As for the question of “Who do you prefer to be your chief?”, we have decided our answer: NOBODY. We do not care which one is “evil” and which one is “lesser evil”. We refuse to establish “evil” as whole. It does not mean that we will be submitting invalid votes, for we believe that even the increase of voter turnout could mean that we are still interested in the means of “elections”. It does not mean that we are abstaining from the vote. We are intentionally rejecting the deceptive mean of elections. We are proudly declaring that the transformation and improvement of a society can only be done by direct actions of the masses, not by a scrap of paper called the ballot.
10. This is an appeal to the members of the <Anarchist Solidarity>, to our supporters, to the Korean anarchist comrades. Let us reject voting; Actively organize this rejection; openly declare the will of this rejection. Let us show those ruling class above, who believe that the fantasy and expectation provided by the election can stop the popular struggle, that “IT DOES NOT WORK FOR US ANYMORE.”
11. Social revolution cannot be done by revolutionary political party that takes the office. We believe that when we systematically and concretely reject the deceptive universal suffrage, it will be the beginning of transforming the society based on it.

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