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Socialism and the Environment

SOCIALISM CORRECTS the basic flaw of capitalism. It sets human society on a new path. The means of production, factories, mines and mills become the property of the people. They operate and produce *only* to fulfill human needs. They are not motivated by private profits. This is the foundation for a new set of priorities—for new values. This then is the framework in which all questions are determined. If a process does not serve the common good, it does not take place. A clean environment is for the common good. It is therefore pursued.

Under capitalism there is a contradiction between the drive for profits and cleaning the environment. Under socialism this contradiction is eliminated. Saving the environment becomes a social necessity. Under capitalism, the main pressure on the production processes is maximum private profit. Capitalism cannot function any other way. The environment is a casualty of these pressures. Under socialism this pressure is totally eliminated. It is replaced by a pressure to do only that which is in the best interests of all in society. This pressure guarantees that no process will take place that endangers a continuation of life on this planet.

however, is that the knowledge of the point of no return gives this struggle an unusual urgency.

Masses are not going to wait and see if it works. Those of us who know that capitalism cannot basically be reformed, must work with and for people who have not yet come to that conclusion. We must be the organizers, the leaders of these movements. We must give these struggles the benefit of our deeper understanding.

The immediate goals of the struggle must be a demand for federal laws—without the Nixon clauses that make them meaningless.

The demand must be for laws with provisions through which the people, workers, the people in the ghettos, trade unionists, can be the enforcers.

The demand must be for the nationalization of industry that violate anti-pollution laws.

The demand must be for laws that guarantee that the cost of all anti-pollution measures comes from corporate profits.

The power of environmental control must be with the people.

Some say: "But the capitalist class breathes the same polluted air. They are in the same boat." This is true. But the obstacle is not in individuals. It is in the system of things. The executives of Bethlehem Steel do not think in terms of spending money on cleaning the environment. Their sense of values does not include

concern for human beings, either now, or whether they will exist in the future.

When we deal with the problems rooted in capitalism we are not dealing with the evil intent of individuals. We are dealing with the evils of a social and economic system. All social and economic systems are propelled by inner laws. Because of the cause and effect factors of these laws it is possible to foresee the general direction of development. It is these inner laws of development that mold the structure of society. They dictate the order of priority and the values. The capitalist class is both the product and the perpetrator of the system that rests on these laws. They will continue as long as capitalism continues. Based on our understanding of these inner laws of capitalist development, as well as our study of past experiences we are forced to conclude that capitalism as a social and economic system will be increasingly in sharper contradiction with the needs of society as they are measured by the explosive potential that is present in the new level of science and technology. The struggle to save the environment cannot be separated from this overall challenge that a decaying, outdated system presents to the human race.

One hundred years ago there was much talk about how to solve the question of housing.

Technically it was a "solvable" question. For capitalism it was not a question that needed solution. When others were producing abstract

Soviet Union is the first industrial country that has now solved the crisis of housing.

If the question of housing in a basic sense has been unsolvable under capitalism, the crisis of the environment is a thousand times more so. Like in housing, mass militant struggle can result in victories to safeguard the environment, but basically it will be resolved only in socialism.

The human race moves up the ladder of progress by finding solutions to problems and contradictions that appear on its path. As problems to which solutions have not been found pile up, the climb slows down and even comes to a halt. The inability to find a basic solution to problems arising from the destruction of the environment is now being added to the growing list of problems to which there is no basic solution as long as capitalism is the social and economic system. This list includes chronic unemployment, hunger for hundreds of millions, wars of aggression, imperialist colonial oppression, racism, the housing crisis, health care. There is no basic solution because the cause of these problems is the capitalist system itself.

Capitalism is in its very essence a system through which a small minority class exploits the majority to further enrich itself from the profits that come from exploitation.

The basic solution is to put an end to a system that perpetuates exploitation for private profits. The basic solution is to destroy capitalism and

build in its place a system that does not permit exploitation for private profit—socialism.

If you are convinced of the need for mass action, for struggle—to cut back, to hold back, and to do away with a social system that breathes and lives on the destruction of its environment, including the human race—join in removing it from the scene. Join in replacing it with a social structure that exists only to serve all human-kind—socialism.

The social forces that carry out a revolutionary transition never arrive on the scene from the blue. They are never hatched in some isolated hot house. They mature, they become conscious of their historic mission and their collective power, in the struggles around the immediate grievance they face in their daily lives. The tens of millions who are in the struggle against pollution are not yet ready to save the environment by fighting for socialism. This they will learn through the experiences of struggle against specific acts of pollution. But even this does not take place spontaneously. Experiences of struggle open up the mind to ideas, to concepts. Marxism-Leninism is a social science. It is the science of the revolutionary transition. It embodies the basic essence, the wisdom, the might that comes from all of human revolutionary experience.

Marxism-Leninism is the theory of the historic transition.

The experience that comes from the struggle

around the daily needs and grievances, combined with a study of the nature of the social and economic system, and its class forces, transforms the fighters for reforms into fighters for the revolutionary transition to socialism. Thus the forces of transition are hatched and matured in the struggles for immediate needs. With the help of a science, Marxism-Leninism, the processes can be greatly speeded up.

It is hoped that this booklet will be a factor in helping the millions who are getting the experiences of struggle in the movements against pollution to become a new force in the transition from capitalism to socialism.

