

ANTI★CAPITALIST RESISTANCE

We need ecosocialism

CAPITALISM is driving us towards serious environmental disaster. Every day, the news seems to get worse. It is not just global warming, but deforestation, ‘forever chemicals’, plastics in our blood, acidification of the oceans and biodiversity loss.

It is clear that the continued existence of capitalism is incompatible with sustaining life on Earth. Capitalism is ‘developing’ our global economy but at a huge cost to the environment and indigenous communities. The ideology of growth no matter the cost would be the ideology of a cancer cell.

Ecosocialism is a response to this. It starts from the way that capital exploits both people and planet, how it extracts value from us and resources from the earth in ways that are unsustainable.

Ecosocialism is a new way of thinking because it is a criticism of previously ‘productivist’ socialist economics. Productivism is production for the sake of capital accumulation and wealth—as ends in themselves. Post-capitalist societies like the Soviet Union prioritised expanding production without regard to the environmental consequences. This had devastating results of which Chernobyl and the destruction of the Aral Sea are the most obvious.

Social Democratic parties also adopted the productivist approach, often alongside post-colonial exploitation of the global south’s resources. Labour’s environmental policy has always been subservient to the interests of capital. The recent U-turn by Starmer’s Labour over the £28bn green investment is an example of how these parties cannot even con-

sistently advocate for a ‘greener capitalism’ (if such a thing is even possible).

Ecosocialism challenges the Promethean thinking of some on the left. This is the idea that humanity should conquer nature, ‘master it’. In this view, nature is just an object for our manipulation and we have seen how such attitudes lead to the precipice of disaster

There are debates about on how to tackle the environmental crisis. Some people advocate replacing fossil fuels with renewables to maintain the consumption habits of many people in the West, others argue for a ‘degrowth’ strategy, reducing economic activity to keep within planetary boundaries. These discussions are important and raise both issues about what a the sort of society we want might look like and how to get there (our strategy), A whole session at the recent Ecosocialism Conference was dedicated to them.

Our strategy

An ecosocialist strategy has to involve a fight in the workers’ movement to win our trade unions to the idea of a green transition away from extractivist and armaments work. It focuses on campaigns that expand public services and the social wage to shift away from individual consumption towards more collective provision. This doesn’t mean finger wagging at individual workers for buying things but focusing on a relentless criticism of the consumption habits of the very wealthy, the environmental destruction of multi nationals, the sicken-

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ing waste of the imperialist war machines. Free public transport campaigns are an example of expanding universal services.

We fight to build an economy based on democratic participatory planning which aims to bring human economic activity into alignment with a sustainable relationship to nature. That planning will involve not only those involved in different types of production but the citizens and communities who need what is produced.

This means producing things because they are useful rather than because they can be sold for profit (abandoning exchange value for use value, to use Marxist terminology). That means more emphasis on things like housing, health, child care, libraries, artistic and recreational activity and education. The environmental impact of everything we produce will be a crucial consideration.

We will plan to make things that last – ending the built on obsolescence of modern consumerism. The conditions of those involved in the production will be a vital factor as will the idea of everyone working far fewer hours (and weeks and years) so that people have time to devote to other things – not just being really involved in the democratic decisions over the economy but fully living and enjoying our humanity.

An ecosocialist movement in Britain must also build international ties across borders to fight for a revolutionary change which abolishes the distinction between the poorer countries and imperialist countries. The north can't keep the global south in the economic chains of subordination, seeing their resources as 'ours' to plunder. Likewise the climate crisis cannot be solved in one country.

Building a revolutionary ecosocialist movement means a relentless fight against the growing conspiracy theories that climate change is a 'woke issue'. These arguments present themselves as radical anti-establishment positions, but they are in fact just supporters for the polluters threatening our future. We reject eco-fascism which recognises an environmental crisis but seeks to divide us by nationality and militarise borders to keep out refugees or even advocates mass population culls as if humans are vermin to be exterminated.

Any chance at achieving this kind of future requires mass action by millions of people and a fight for political power - this cannot be done by social movements alone. Only removing the capitalist class and their allies from power can offer any serious hope at making the radical changes we need.

Ecosocialism Conference 2024

ANTICAPITALIST Resistance has been involved in helping to build a new ecosocialist alliance. We helped organise a conference in December 2023 with around 150 people at it to talk about ecosocialist strategy. This new initiative is planning on launching an ecosocialist journal, hosting regular educational events and another conference later in the year.

Whilst socialists are talking more about the environment, the social movement around climate politics in Britain is still a million miles away from where we need to be. Some environmental activists are focussing on small-scale direct action to raise awareness. Whilst these people are very brave, risking assault and prison, such actions by themselves cannot build a mass movement that can solve



the real problem – overthrowing capitalism.

The aim of the ecosocialist conference is to “aim to launch an ecosocialist movement that is rooted in the trade unions, the communities, social movement and our workplaces. Such a movement has to tackle the big issues; expropriation of business and private wealth, socialising housing and land, ending the market economy, dismantling imperialism, fighting for abolition of borders, militarism and policing, social transformation of the economy from the ground up.”

If you would like to be involved in organising around this please contact the campaign at info@ecosocialism-conference.org and visit the website at ecosocialism-conference.org