

The Left and the Environmental Crisis

Humanity today faces what may be its greatest crisis—the destruction of our environment threatening the continued existence of life on Earth. The Left began to address this issue over the last two decades, but only in the last few years has it been recognized that coming to grips with the environmental crisis must be a top priority not only of the Left but of all the peoples of the world.

The question then becomes how do we as socialists address the environmental issue and what is its relationship to our historic demand for fundamental change in politics, society, and economics to bring about a democratic socialist society?

New Politics offers here eight left analyses from different perspectives. Four of the articles had their origin in presentations at the Left Forum in June 2013, the principal theme of which was “The Left and the Environment.” The articles by Nancy Holmstrom, Jill Stein, and Christian Parenti were originally talks given at the opening plenary, while Brian Tokar’s is based on a workshop presentation. The Left Forum has come to be an important occasion for activists on the American Left to come together to discuss, debate, and strategize and we are pleased to be able to demonstrate in this issue our appreciation for the Forum in which New Politics editors, authors, and readers also regularly participate. Robin Hahnel’s article, an open letter to the environmental justice movement, is a revised version of a talk given at a conference on “The Political Economy of the Environment” held in Brooklyn, New York, in October 2013 co-sponsored by the Union of Radical Political Economy and New Politics. The articles by Michael Löwy on ecosocialism, by Natassa Romanou on the environmental crisis in Greece, and by Darryl Lorenzo Wellington on Los Alamos were all written

especially for this issue.