

Is New Green Technology the Solution for the Environmental Crisis, or Just More of the Same?

When American President Joe Biden was on the campaign trail in 2020, he said, “Climate change is the existential threat to humanity. Unchecked, it is going to actually bake this planet. This is not hyperbole. It’s real. And we have a moral obligation.” After being elected, he has continued to push the idea of expanding the use of green technology by endorsing his Build Back Better Act, a \$2 trillion plan that invests in clean energy in the transportation, electricity and building industry, cuts fossil fuel emissions and improves infrastructure.

After decades of being promised that the governments of the first world will work together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create cleaner energy, cleaner water, etc., will it be as Greta Thunberg recently stated, more, “Blah, blah, blah,” coming from powerful world leaders? The truth of the matter is that the current world system is based upon Capitalism and the capitalist system is not designed to work for the greater good of human life, let alone work to protect the environment. Capitalism looks not at what is beneficial to humanity and the environment, but what provides the most financial benefit to governments, companies and to the CEO’s and the politicians who are paid to make laws that are in their best interests.

Capitalism’s environmental policies have created a striking imbalance in the world; on one side there is overconsumption and waste and on the other side there is deprivation and exploitation. The overconsumption is fueled by producing low priced goods underpinned by the exploitation of natural resources and cheap labor in the developing world. Exploitation which lives off subjugating the developing world to the vicious cycle of conflict and chaos. Man-made famines, poverty, displacement, destruction of life and property in the developing world is the dark underbelly of the Capitalist system. It steals resources from the lands, including, of course, the Muslim world. It leaves people in abject poverty with not so much as a grain of rice to eat, a private toilet to use, clean water to drink, sends endless amounts of old clothing and textiles as, “charity” undercutting their own textile industries because of the lower cost, but also creates tons of waste and pollution.

The reality on the ground does not match all the promises made by Western politicians no matter what laws and acts they have passed in the past, or plan to pass in the future because they do not fit in with the fundamental feature of Capitalism; to make a profit for a few at the expense of the many. There is no incentive for Western governments to tackle this global problem and it is evident because they cannot even address it domestically except introducing a patchwork solution. A patchwork solution that mostly involves placing the burden on the individual. For example, in the United States, they raise the cost of utilities in order to fund the infrastructure changes the private company’s need to make, raise taxes, encourage purchasing high-cost solar panels, buying an electric car, buying energy efficient appliances, or taking public transportation, which is really disingenuous since the public transportation infrastructure is lackluster aside from a few major cities. Now, if these changes cannot happen without placing it on the shoulders of the people in the West, how would it work for those living in the developing world? What good are solar panels, wind turbines, and electric cars to people who do not have their basic needs met and have no security? What good will it do for our sisters across the world who cannot feed their children, or send them to school? What good will they do for their children who become ill with preventable diseases because of the sewage that seeps into the waterways, or die of starvation?

The environmental crisis can only be solved through the implementation of the Islamic system. A system that solves problems in consideration of the spiritual, humanitarian, moral, and material values. Therefore, the material principle is not prioritized over the other values and none are ignored in favor of another. It is a system that is based on the laws given by the Creator of the heavens and earth. A system that will ensure that all needs are being met without placing the financial burden on the shoulders of the people, or causing damage to the environment. ﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾ “We sent you, only as a mercy for all creatures.” [Al-Anbiyaa’: 107]

#EnvironmentalCrisis #أزمة_البيئة

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Sarah Mohammed – America