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Destroy Capitalism Before It Destroys the Earth! Shut Down All Nuclear Power

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The ongoing Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster in Japan is *not* the product of a natural disaster. It is a man-made disaster.

Nuclear power is promoted by the industry as a great source of “clean and safe energy.” The Obama administration has now embraced it with enthusiasm. New nuclear power plants are on the drawing board in the United States for the first time since the Three Mile Island major nuclear accident in Pennsylvania decades ago.

Nuclear energy, whether run by private or public utilities in a world dominated by global capitalism, is dirty and dangerous from start to finish. There is no safe way to deal with the millions of tons of highly dangerous radioactive left-over waste. Major accidents, such as at Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and now Fukushima, have been catastrophic. Their deadly consequences include increased cancer and other human health problems and environmental destruction to the air, soil, water, plant and animal life.

The nuclear power plant complex in Japan was manufactured by none other than General Electric, the largest U.S. company, and a major producer of nuclear power reactors.* It was built on an earthquake fault, had many safety problems covered up over the years, and faced lax government enforcement, featuring a cozy relationship between Tokyo Electric Power Company (Tepco) corporate management and the Japanese government nuclear regulatory agencies.

When the massive earthquake and Tsunami hit with its terrible death and destruction, the nuclear power plant was severely damaged. *The Wall Street Journal* admitted, “Crucial efforts to tame

Japan's crippled plant were delayed by concerns over damaging valuable power assets and by initial passivity on the part of the government. ... Tepco was reluctant to use seawater because it worried about hurting its long term investment in the complex ... Seawater, which can render a nuclear reactor permanently inoperable, now is at the center of efforts to keep the plant under control." ("Bid to 'Protect Assets' Slowed Reactor Fight," *Wall Street Journal*, 3/19/11)* In other words, instead of immediately shutting down the plant and pouring in salt water to avoid a meltdown of the reactors, *the owners chose to protect their private assets, their profits.*

*NOTE: [This subordination of the Japanese government to its corporate masters is reminiscent of the subordination of the U.S. government to British Petroleum in the midst of the BP oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico last year. At that time, the Obama regime left BP in charge of the stopping of the oil spill, establishing the extent of the spill and leading the effort to clean it up.]

What followed were explosions, meltdown of reactors and the massive release of radioactive poisons. Hundreds of square miles have become uninhabitable, food from the land and sea uneatable, water, the sustenance of life, toxic. The people of Japan and around the globe have been systematically lied to about the extent of the damage to the nuclear plant and of radiation poisoning. Nuclear accidents know no borders. Chernobyl (built and run long after socialism had been overthrown in the former Soviet Union) poisoned large parts of Europe. Radiation increases from the current nuclear accident in Japan have found their way into milk and water in the United States, on the other side of the world. Damage to human health is long term.

The United States produces more nuclear power than any other country. The USA is responsible for some 30% of all nuclear power in the world with 104 reactors in service at 64 sites. A number of them sit on major earthquake faults. Some are close to major metropolitan areas with millions of inhabitants. (For example, the Indian Point Nuclear power plant is 38 miles from New York City and according to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has the highest risk of earthquake damage of any nuclear power plant in the country!) Many have had unreported serious accidents over the years. Worldwide there are 442 nuclear plants, with 65 new reactors under construction and 344 more in the planning stages. All are catastrophic accidents waiting to happen.

Let's shut them all down! Let's protect life and protect the environment. Let's fight for clean and renewable energy. Most importantly, let's fight for workers' power and socialism, the only system that can and will *put people before profit!*