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AURORA



Save the Planet Destroy Capitalism!

UN Climate Conferences have been going on for 25 years. They have achieved precisely nothing. The participants at Paris in 2015 agreed to decrease production of oil, gas and coal by 6 per cent a year for the next decade. Instead, according to the UN itself, they are planning increases of 2 per cent annually, even as carbon emissions continue to mount.

It is now undeniable that the continual rise in carbon emissions threatens life on earth through the process of global warming. Governments and Greens alike talk of 'we', of 'human beings', of 'humanity', or at the very least 'primarily human activities', as being responsible for the 48% increase in "the global average concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide" over pre-industrial levels. (NASA's October 2021 Newsletter.) Now, just before the Glasgow jamboree the latest IPCC study confirms that "it is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land." Increases in greenhouse gas concentrations have been "observed since around 1750 [they] are unequivocally caused by human activities." It is true that around 250 years ago *homo sapiens*, who have been on Planet Earth for almost 300 thousand years, changed their 'activities' and began polluting the atmosphere and destroying the natural environment as never before. But this does not explain why.

The Climate Crisis is a Capitalist Crisis

Today's 'climate emergency' cannot simply be attributed to general 'human activity'. The IPCC evidence says it all: the massive increase in emissions of greenhouse gases since the 18th century coincides with the rise of capitalist industrial society, and has intensified as capitalism has become the undisputed mode of production over the entire planet.

Those who blame "human nature" point to the consumption habits of the general population. They claim that this is at least equally responsible for the

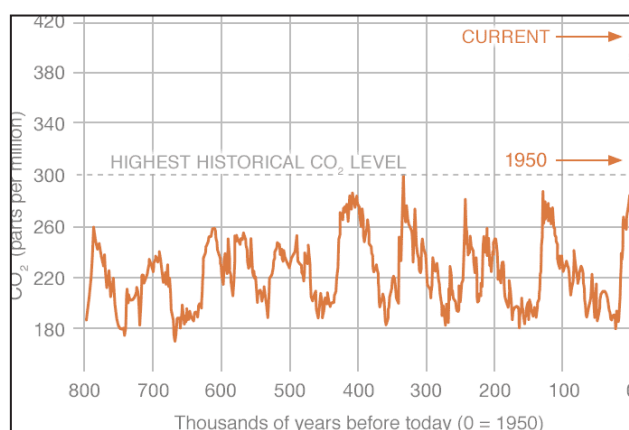
massive amounts of greenhouse gas emissions as the production processes for those very same products. Others repeat the Malthusian stance that over-population is the cause. These myths, the latter of which implicitly advocates mass genocide, both treat society as a collection of individuals, rather than a set of social relations. As such they fail to consider how class differences within capitalist society created and maintain the climate crisis.

The capitalist class owns the means of production and uses them to produce products solely for the purpose of exchange, so as to generate profit. The result for the working class is an absolute lack of alternatives. They have no means to produce the things they need themselves, and so must give their labour to an increasingly life-

protect their own (capitalist) economies, cannot stop the damaging consequences. No amount of climate summits or window dressing government pronouncements can protect the world's working class from the increasing number of catastrophes.

Who Pays the Highest Price?

States, for their part, have obscured their true intentions. In Glasgow much will be said about carbon taxes and promises of "net-zero emissions no later than 2050", as Biden promised in his presidential campaign. However, millions of acres have just been leased by the Biden administration for the exploration of oil and gas. More tellingly, a recent US federal statute set up a Climate Security Advisory Council



Global CO2 Emissions

Source: NASA Newsletter, October 2021

threatening production process in exchange for wages which they then use to buy the commodities that the process created. Anybody who chooses to produce goods through more 'ethical' means will be out-paced and out-priced by those who don't. Capitalists compete for profit. To do so they expand production, ravage the earth's 'free' natural resources and invest in machines that increase productivity. This incessant growth of capital is a means to an end that never ends. Climate change is not the result of a general human nature that can be traced back to hunter-gatherers; rather it is specific to capitalism, where profit and capital determine action. Capitalist states, which exist to

with the goal of assessing and working to counteract climate change's effects on "national security infrastructure" and "potential political violence". There is not even a token mention of attempting to mitigate climate change itself. The goal here is clear: While the working class suffers from natural disasters, famine and war, the states of the world are tooling up to protect the capitalist class from any threat to their power from the people they claim to protect. In other words, in a climate emergency capitalist states will operate in their usual manner, as protectors of capital and enforcers of private property. Climate change and its consequences are not treated

as a disastrous possibility that must be stopped at all costs, but an inevitability whose costs must be accounted for and its consequences to be prepared for.

And there will be much to prepare for since the result of global warming will be devastating and the world's poorest, including the working class, will feel the worst of it. We are already beginning to see its effects, as wildfires in the Amazon rainforest, Australia and California burned down over 50 million acres of land, destroyed thousands of homes and killed over 500 people in 2019-2020. In July 2021, in India, Europe and China, flooding killed over 700 people and over 1 million people had to be evacuated from the flooded areas. Rising sea levels will continue to exacerbate flooding and will submerge large sections of coastlines making them uninhabitable, destroying homes and displacing millions. The increase in heat will dry out crops, leading to starvation and deadly famines, especially for those living near the equator. Migrants seeking refuge elsewhere, where they might find food, work or peace, will be turned away, detained, or will die travelling across dangerous terrain. This mass of misery is undeniably inevitable. The Syrian refugee crisis showed us just how capable the world's richest states are at allowing millions of desperate people, fleeing a civil war, to die.

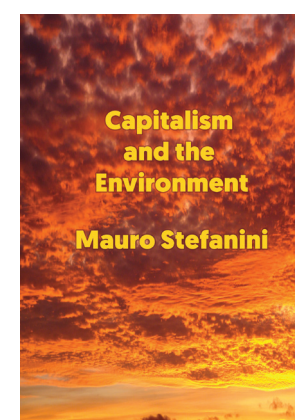
And the more the planet heats up, the more impossible it will be to reverse it, if at all. The melting of the ice caps will reduce the amount of reflected sun rays which will further increase global temperatures; the melting of permafrost will release huge stores of previously trapped greenhouse gases; the acidification of the oceans will kill most of the ocean's plankton, the basis for the majority of the oceanic food chain; continuing deforestation will increase levels of CO2 in the atmosphere as fewer trees will be able to absorb it; rising temperatures will further exacerbate water scarcity, a problem that already affects over two-thirds of the global

population. Moreover, states' humanitarian response to these tragedies will decline as they focus their efforts on maintaining civil obedience through the police and warring over dwindling resources with their armies.

Only One Solution: Revolution!

Our hope for the future doesn't lie with politicians or CEOs. No international agreement will be able to reverse capitalism's effects on the climate; no such agreement could even be enforced. The United States' brief exit from the Paris Climate Accords [from November 2020 to February 2021] shows the ease with which a powerful state can suspend any supposed "commitment" to stopping climate change. With imperialist tensions mounting the cost of combating climate change will increasingly become an unnecessary expenditure.

The truth is clear: so long as capitalism survives, the habitable land on this planet will shrink and hundreds of millions will die prematurely. It is clear we need a new social model. We need a society which can take and adapt the technology that has been built, and use it for the satisfaction of human needs rather than the accumulation of wealth for a few. A society where decisions can be made by all for the benefit of all, and where the survival of human life on the planet is not under constant threat.



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Working Class Revolution is the Only Solution

Despite all the talk about ‘humanity’ as a whole being responsible for climate change, the world is class-divided. Inevitably, the ‘carbon footprint’ of the rich folk at the top of each national pyramid is far larger than the rest of the population. In the United States emissions from the richest 10% of households are more than five times bigger than the whole of the bottom 50%! (It’s the same ratio for the UK even though the richest 10% account for ‘only’ half the amount of CO2 emissions as their US cousins.) It’s the same the whole world over. The richest people in the world don’t need to think twice about paying higher energy bills, frequent flyer supplements, fuel price hikes, heating more than one home, or anything else. And in fact, the richest people in the world are responsible for an increasing share of carbon emissions.

Yet governments are busy dreaming up new ways of imposing carbon taxes which inevitably hit those who can least afford to pay hardest, and who are among the lowest carbon emitters. Unsurprisingly the “we’re all in this together” approach (à la Cameron as his government imposed social spending cuts in the wake of the 2007-8 financial crash) is wearing thin. EU governments especially have not forgotten the Yellow Vest (*Gilet Jaunes*) protests in France sparked by a “green” tax hike on fuel prices in Spring 2018, which forced Macron to back down.

Protests against price rises — ‘Green’ or otherwise — and government measures which exacerbate social injustice, are instructive and reflect the wider crisis capitalism is facing everywhere. But radical

reformism, much less ‘Green’ demands for a blanket restriction on ‘growth’, is not the road to abolishing the system of production for profit. Meanwhile ‘levelling-up’ is utopian at this stage in capitalism’s existence when wage workers’ share of GDP has been declining everywhere since the post-war boom ended in the 1970s. As for changing personal consumption patterns, capitalism remains capitalism, and profits are still profits (derived from the value of all the hours workers put in over and above their wages) whether or not cars are petrol or battery powered; whether or not we choose to eat meat or vegetables...

This is what makes the strategies of those like Greta Thunberg or Extinction Rebellion, who think that they can “lobby” the existing power structures into adopting a “greener agenda”, so futile. Their protests do not even begin to scratch the surface of the issue, since governments answer to far richer and more powerful capitalist lobbies. This has led some in the environmental movement, like George Monbiot, to recognise that the real problem is capitalism itself. What they fail to tell us is how a new social ‘model’ can come about.

This is the key. In order to save the planet it must be saved from capitalism, first of all by abolishing the whole economic and political machinery which props up those who profit from workers’ unpaid labour. Only the world working class can do this. They remain humanity’s last hope even after decades of retreat in the face of capitalist attacks. One thing is certain: even beyond the Covid pandemic, the climate emergency coincides with an even deeper crisis for capitalism: the crisis of profitability

for which it has no answer except to ramp up productivity, drive down wages, tighten borders and call for more sacrifices.

Workers throughout the world are being attacked on all fronts: aside from the millions of jobs lost due to Covid, wages are being ‘frozen’ or blatantly reduced as the price of daily necessities goes up, sometimes a direct result of ‘Green’ policies and fuel tariffs imposed by governments. It’s the 21st century yet public services are either declining (in the ‘advanced’ states) or remain non-existent ... while profiteering and speculation are on the rise everywhere.

In the UK the prospect of a massive rise in fuel bills, never mind wider price rises, the end of furlough (the job retention scheme for workers laid off due to Covid), and the £20 per week uplift to measly Universal Credit, are all combining in a perfect storm of attacks on the whole working class. The situation demands a mass class response and more than union rituals: a serious fight-back of everyone under attack, irrespective of employment and workplace divisions.

Workers in Iran: a Beacon

Here, wage workers in Iran are an inspiration to us all. Largely ignored by the world’s media, in the face of an extremely vicious state where Covid is rampant, over 100,000 oil workers in Iran have been on strike from 19 June. Despite the news boycott, they are fighting on many fronts: from pay to appalling living conditions in barrack-style run-down hostels. They are organising for themselves across employment and contractual divisions, electing their own spokesmen and issuing regular struggle bulletins. All the time they are coming up against brutal state manoeuvres, from the arrest and torture of militants to attempts to install ‘Islamic Councils’ to take over the running of the oil sites under control of the military. They have resisted them all as the workers’ bulletin explains:

“With our strike we have warned them that we are no longer willing to continue to work in humiliating conditions of slavery, with

contractual and temporary contracts in the oil fields. To a great degree, we have been able to weaken the contractors’ position and have imposed our demands on them. Now ... we can go further, march on in strength and in step until all our demands are met. Holding a General Assembly and relying on collective council decisions and exercising the will of the workers, electing real workers’ representatives and establishing a third pillar [of a] workers’ assembly of representatives of all refineries is the practical way of organising,”

**Council for Organising Protests
by Oil Contract Workers**

2 September 2021

No wonder the capitalist press is ignoring what’s going on. This kind of workers’ self-organisation is not just a threat to the Islamic Republic, implicitly it also poses a threat to capitalism itself. They have already inspired other workers in Iran (like teachers) and the call for workers’ councils (*shuras*) to take control of and unite all the struggles is already circulating.

The Road Ahead

But the implicit needs to become explicit. World working class revolution will only come about when workers have created a political organisation to unite them internationally. This is not some new government in waiting but a point of reference for all workers who wish to end a system which increasingly endangers all life itself. Once capitalism is overthrown, when wage labour, money and production for profit are replaced by a world of freely associated producers (without national boundaries) who decide for themselves how and what to produce for the greatest benefit of the community as a whole... then we can legitimately talk about ‘humanity’ and our responsibility to take care of the natural world on which our life ultimately depends. In the meantime workers everywhere need to fight on their own account and revolutionaries need to stand with them to win their confidence that they have the ultimate power to remake the world.

Global War: The Other Existential Threat

Climate change is only one of many threats to our future. Life is already hell for millions trying to survive on low wages or no wages at all; who face both environmental degradation and wars over dwindling basic resources. Imperialist powers stoke these into devastating conflicts which force millions to become refugees, kicked from pillar to post, often dying in their search for a secure existence.

Nowhere on the planet is immune from danger. A stagnant capitalist economy that survives on an increasing mountain of debt (like Evergrande in China, currently under threat of defaulting) is intensifying imperialist rivalries. The slow death agony of the system is now manifest in so many ways. The post-World War Two order that was imposed by the US in 1945 has been breaking down since the post-war boom ended, which forced the dollar off the gold standard in 1971. Today the increasing rivalry between China and the US stretches from South America, via the Middle East and Africa, to the South China Sea.

The US is determined at all costs to maintain dollar hegemony, the source of its continued dominance of the planet. It was for this reason that they engineered the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and Gaddafi. It is for this reason that the US and China have been facing off in a trade war for years. It does not help that China has openly announced it will replace the US by 2049 as the “global leader”. Trade wars have historically always been followed by shooting wars.

And imperialist war plans don’t take medical time outs. Even during the pandemic an arms race in the South China Sea was

intensifying. The recent AUKUS security pact and China’s flyovers of Taiwan only underline this growing struggle between the world’s most powerful states for influence in the South China Sea. The possibility of these tensions boiling over increases with each passing day, and proxy wars, civil or national, will act as training grounds for when the next world war breaks out. And not just for the two main rivals, the alliance systems that are building up will draw more and more states into choosing sides.

There Are No Lesser Evils

The position of the working class in these imperialist conflicts is not about choosing one side or another by comparing who is “better” or who “does the least harm”, much less who is most ‘Green’. When Joschka Fischer (former student radical/turned Green politician) was Foreign Minister of Germany in 1999 his Green credentials didn’t prevent him from intervening in Afghanistan and Kosovo (thus reviving the Germany military presence in the world). There is no “lesser evil” here. Workers have no country. The working class the world over has nothing to gain by throwing their lives away to line the pockets of this or that capitalist class. The only way to end the misery will be to oppose the conflict altogether, to oppose the capitalist class, whether from China, the US or any other state, and bring about the abolition of capitalist society itself.

No War But the Class War!



What The CWO Stands For

We stand for a global society in which production is for need and not profit, where the state, national frontiers and money have been abolished, where power is exercised through class-wide organisations like workers councils. It is a society which can only be created through the activity of millions of human beings. Only such a society can rid us of the capitalist offspring of poverty, hunger, oppression and war: We call it communism but it has nothing in common with the Stalinist state capitalism of the old USSR.

In order to get there we are working to create a world proletarian political organisation: a ‘party’ for want of a better word. This organisation is not a government in waiting. It does not rule but it does lead and guide the struggle for a new world. We by no means claim to be that party but only one of the elements which will need to come together in its formation.

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