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Let us not however flatter ourselves over much on account of our human conquest over nature. For each such conquest takes its revenge on us. Each of them, it is true, has in the first place the consequences on which we counted, but in the second and the third cases has unforeseen effects, which only too often cancel out the first. With everyday that passes, we are learning to understand these laws more correctly (laws of nature), and getting to know more about the immediate and more remote consequences of our interference in the traditional course of nature. But the more this happens, the more will humans not only feel, but also know their unity with nature... – Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), a German revolutionary socialist and co-author with Karl Marx of *The Communist Manifesto*.

Capitalism: Leading the Way to Extinction

There have been five major extinction events in the planet's history. The dinosaurs were killed during the fifth extinction, which scientists believe was caused by an asteroid crash that drastically changed the climate. Now, scientists say we are living in what could be the sixth extinction. But this time, our species is the cause of climate change and also the victim.

Scientists have pointed out the dangers of climate change for decades but the problem has only gotten worse. Severe weather is just the tip of the iceberg. Rivers are drying up; oceans are becoming more acidic; sea levels are rising; grasslands are turning into deserts – the ecology of the planet is in crisis.

Scientists explain that ongoing carbon emissions in the atmosphere are causing this worldwide change in climate patterns that threatens another extinction event that would wipe out more than half of the world's species including our own. It's true that the carbon emissions are the immediate source of the rising temperatures. But the real problem here is not climate change.

Capitalism – A Deadly System

Climate change is just one part of this deadly system known as capitalism, where the only goal is the endless generation of profit. This economic system is what's heading our species down a path of extinction. And as long as the corporations and the politicians who serve them are left in charge, they will keep heading us in the same direction. They know exactly what they want – to maintain their profits at all costs, their motto: to grow or die. Since there is always money to be made in the short run – they have no concern for what will happen in the long run.

Their disregard for the environment is nothing new. Rivers, lakes, oceans and the air have been dumping grounds for the poisons produced by their industries. Entire mountaintops are being blown up to get at coal, one of the deadliest polluting fuels.

Regulations have been imposed when people mobilize an opposition but eventually any restrictions are either ignored or overturned in order to keep the profits coming. Laws are



sometimes passed, imposing restrictions on pollution but corporations would rather break the laws and pay the fines because the profits are so enormous.

The challenge we face is one that will decide the fate of humanity. The source of these problems is this system of capitalism, which has led to the misery of billions of people and destroyed vast areas of the earth. If we are to have a future – we must put a stop to this system.

We Must Look to Ourselves

People around the world know that something is deeply wrong. Our schools, our cities, our lives and our planet are being torn apart. We are working harder for less. We can't hope for change from politicians with their false promises.

We can't leave our future in the hands of those who have put humanity on the endangered species list. They will continue to pollute and ravage the planet to get at the profits that await them, even if it means destroying the precious possibility of humans and other species to live on the planet.

Our lives and our planet are worth more than their system of pollution for profit. It is in the interests of the vast majority of people on this planet to stop this environmental destruction. It's up to us to change it.

We need a society that is organized to meet human needs, that develops scientific knowledge to understand the world and how we can live well within it. Working people are the ones who do the work to make this society run, and together we can organize a society that truly puts our needs and the needs of the planet above all else – a truly socialist society. Only when we remove the interests of profit and corporations, and put the needs of humanity front and center, it is only then will we be able to tackle the problem of climate change, and begin to live in harmony with the planet.

That society is possible. It is the only possibility for our species to avoid extinction, and to provide all human beings with healthy, fulfilling lives. Either capitalism will lead to the extinction of our species, or we will carry out the extinction of capitalism – the choice is up to us.

Destruction of the Environment – A Ticking Timebomb

Climate change is an immediate danger to humanity. Every year for the past 37 years has been warmer than average. And the twelve warmest years have all happened since 1998. We are experiencing this through rising global temperatures, increased numbers of storms and natural disasters. These environmental changes will cause massive human suffering and destruction in the decades to come unless human beings change the way we live on this planet.

The majority of scientific researchers agree that human beings are causing global climate change. How do we know human beings cause this change? Climate scientists have understood for decades that carbon dioxide in the air causes a greater amount of the sun's heat to remain in the atmosphere, heating the planet. Since humans began burning fossil fuels – oil and coal – the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased by 500 billion tons, one third of the total. The temperature is rising fast as the carbon dioxide traps heat.



The last time that carbon dioxide was as concentrated as it is today, the earth was three degrees hotter, melting the ice caps and raising the sea-levels by 100 feet.

What does this rise in temperature lead to? Since the beginning of the industrial revolution, the Earth's temperature has been raised by 0.8 degrees. This has already resulted in drastic changes. One third of the ice in the arctic has melted, and there is five percent more water in the atmosphere. This has resulted in rising sea levels and an increase in the sort of floods, hurricanes, and tsunamis that have been in the headlines in the last years. The changing composition of the oceans has led to a 30 percent increase in acidity, causing massive destruction of fish and other marine animals. Increasing temperatures have released carbon dioxide as well as methane and other gases trapped in arctic ice, speeding up the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, accelerating the warming process.

The consequences of these environmental changes will continue to be drastic. Climate change will cause even more massive expansion of deserts. Farmland will be destroyed by this process of desertification. Climate scientists predict that if this takes place, within a generation as many as three billion people will face famine and starvation. In other words, climate change threatens to kill almost half of humanity.

Time is running out. Scientists predict that if the Earth's temperature increases beyond two degrees, the changes will be irreversible. Too much ice will have melted and too much carbon dioxide will have been released. The problem is that scientists predict we will likely reach the tipping point within 16 years, and if so we won't be able to stop the earth from reaching the two-degree limit.

What stands in the way of reducing carbon emissions? The money which corporations stand to make. In 2006 Nicholas Stern head of Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy in London issued a report responding to dozens of investigations done by climate scientists. The climate



scientists set a firm limit of carbon in the atmosphere in order for humans and about 50 percent of the world's species to survive. The Stern report said that the proposed limit was too low because the world economy would go into crisis. In other words, in order for capitalism to continue, 50 percent of the world's species including our own must go extinct. It is as if we are headed for a cliff and these companies are putting their foot down on the gas pedal and asking us to close our eyes.

There is a simple solution – to dramatically reduce carbon dioxide emission by changing the way human beings live on the planet. To begin to use human creativity to restore rather than ruin the environment – to live consciously in the world. We have a choice – Climate change or system change.

Fracking – Another Sign of an Insane System

Hydraulic fracturing, also known as “fracking,” is a process that mixes massive amounts of fresh water into a poisonous cocktail of toxic chemicals and silica sand, and then forces it into wells drilled thousands of feet into the earth to extract oil or natural gas trapped underground. Energy companies use millions of gallons of fresh water per well to force natural gas or oil to the surface.



Fracking has disrupted towns across the U.S. and in Europe. The methane released from fracking seeps into the water supply and is so concentrated that people can light the gas coming out of their water faucets on fire. Many communities have already reported serious health problems among children, the elderly and farm animals. This whole process poisons the underground water supply, causes cancer, brain damage and birth defects in humans and animals, and can trigger earthquakes. The fracking concoction contains over 300 chemicals that are poisonous and cancerous to the skin, the brain, the lungs, the heart, the stomach – just about every part of the human body. Millions upon millions of gallons of these toxins have been dumped across the country, poisoning communities.

These toxins were never a secret. In 2005, with the help of then-Vice President, Dick Cheney, energy corporations teamed up to change federal laws in order to allow fracking. The Energy Policy Act was passed, exempting fracking from restrictions in the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Clean Water Act, allowing energy companies to freely poison the water supply without having to comply with any federal restrictions.

In 2013, because of fracking, the U.S. hit a 25-year high for energy production. And by 2015 the U.S. is expected to surpass Saudi Arabia as the world’s largest oil producer because of the acceleration of fracking across the country.

The U.S. plans to use these new energy supplies as further leverage to impose its economic interests around the world.

Fracking is one of the fastest growing industries in the U.S., already having spread across fifteen states, from New York to California. The driving force behind this growth is pure greed. In drought-stricken Texas, the same amount of water it takes to grow \$200,000 worth of crops can be used to frack \$2.5 billion worth of gas or oil. Fracking methods have already spread to 15 countries around the world as energy companies race for the last deposits of oil and natural gas.

In California, energy companies want to open up the Monterey Shale deposits to fracking, an area covering 1,750 square miles. Opening this land up to fracking would destroy the habitat, further poison the air and water, and dump catastrophic levels of carbon into the atmosphere, three times as much carbon emissions as expected from the Canadian tar sands set to supply the Keystone XL pipeline.

People have begun to resist the oil companies’ fracking drive. Moratoriums and bans have been put in place across the U.S., including the states of Vermont and New York, in the cities of Los Angeles, Dallas, and Pittsburgh and internationally in France, Ireland, South Africa, the Czech Republic, Romania and more. But an even bigger fight must be waged to ban fracking completely.

Fracking is truly an insane process of an insane system.

Keystone XL Pipeline – A Toxic Disaster

Last month, nearly 400 people were arrested in Washington, DC protesting the Keystone XL pipeline. This pipeline is designed to carry 830,000 gallons of oil per day, travelling over 1,000 miles from Canada to the gulf. The Keystone XL pipeline will ensure that oil will be available



to use as a fuel in the U.S. for decades to come. The problem with this is that the tar sands are incredibly polluting sources of oil and they are guaranteed to cause massive environmental destruction along with immediate risk to communities that the pipeline will pass through.

Tar sands are actually a type of rock formation that contains oil within its structure. Extracting this oil is much more polluting than drilling, as the tar sands contain huge amounts of carbon. The processing of the tar sands will release 10-17 percent more carbon emissions than crude oil. Keystone XL will release 27 million megatons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. According to James Hansen, a former NASA climate scientist who resigned after criticizing U.S. climate policy, if Keystone XL becomes fully operational it will mean game over for the planet – climate change will be irreversible if this much carbon dioxide is released.

In addition to the greenhouse gases the Keystone XL pipeline threatens to release, the processing of tar sands creates a danger of pollution from spills. The extraction of oil from the tar sands requires boiling it in huge amounts of water – a process that produces toxic waste-water. The tar-sands oil pumped from these sites is also incredibly toxic and

communities with pipes running through them are in danger of mass-poisoning. Already, tar sands leaks have caused toxic pollution in Marshall, Michigan and Mayflower, Arkansas. Residents of these towns have reported nausea, headaches, and other health problems.

While Keystone XL threatens life on the planet, the politicians in Washington continue to support its development. President Obama has pledged to support the construction of Keystone XL, as long as scientists carry out a thorough study of its impact on the environment. But what is there to study! There is no question: the Keystone XL pipeline will be a massive disaster. Why is it receiving the support of Washington? Because Oil companies such as Shell and Trans-Canada stand to make billions of dollars from the development of the Keystone XL pipeline and the tar sands.

The battle over Keystone XL is not over. We should do everything we can to stop the advance of these destructive projects, and raise the question: what is worth more – the profits of the oil corporations or our lives and our planet?



Fighting For Our Planet Fighting For Our Future

Around the world, people are taking up the struggle against global climate change as the corporations use every means at their disposal to continue to profit from ecological destruction. From India to Peru people have answered these attacks with protests, demonstrations and strikes. Here is a small sample of some of these recent struggles.

Germany – March, 2011 After the Fukushima disaster in Japan, 250,000 people gathered in a massive demonstration all over Germany to say no to the dependence on the nuclear industry. The movement has forced the government to promise it will shut down 17 nuclear power plants by 2022.

Ningbo, China – October, 2012 Thousands of people in Ningbo, China demonstrated against the further expansion of a refinery that has exposed residents and workers to deadly chemicals such as paraxylene. The state controlled enterprise, Sinopec Group, was forced to suspend its \$8.9 billion expansion plan. Protests of thousands have broken out against similar facilities in other cities such as Maoming, Dalian, and Kunming.

Cajamarca, Peru – January 2012 About 3,000 Mapuche peasants protested against the Newmont Mining Corporation’s expansion of the Yanacocha gold mine which would destroy the lakes and contaminate the water supply. A state of emergency was declared, during which three people were killed by police. Since then, the mining company has been forced to halt the \$4.8 billion expansion of the mine.

Australia – November, 2013 The largest demonstration ever in Australia to demand action on climate change took place with an estimated 60,000 people across the country.

Karadere, Bulgaria – March, 2014 Over 1,000 people protested against the plan to sell off Bulgaria’s protected Karadere natural public park off the coast of the Black Sea to investors who want to turn it into a massive tourist resort.

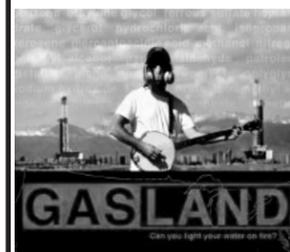
Missoula, Montana – March, 2014 About 80 people from Native American and environmentalist groups demonstrated against the proposed construction of the Keystone XL pipeline to take a stand against the destruction of the climate and likely oil spills into the water supply. They briefly blocked the shipment of machinery used to process the substance in the tar sands.



Film Reviews



A Fierce Green Fire is a 2012 documentary film by Mark Kitchell that showcases various environmental battles spanning fifty years in the U.S. and around the world. In every situation, regardless of the country, whether people are fighting to defend the forests, their neighborhoods, wildlife, or access to water, the enemy they run up against is always the same – corporations in their reckless pursuit of profits. This is an inspiring film that connects the fights in the past with the present fight for the survival of our species. See www.afiercegreenfire.com for more info.



Gasland (parts 1 and 2) are films made in 2010 and 2013 by Josh Fox, which show the devastation behind the growing fracking industry across the U.S. The films show energy companies coerce people to open up their land to fracking, releasing the deadly toxins that poison the water supply, infecting families, animals, and the environment. We see the blatant disregard for any sense of legal requirements as corporations simply re-write the laws to allow for their toxic process. *Gasland* (1 and 2) exposes the insanity of an industry completely fueled by greed. See Gasland.com for more info.

Where We Stand

The world we live in today is increasingly ruled by prejudice and fear, under a system of widespread violence and war, where exploitation and oppression are the rule, with the many dominated by the few. The name of this system is capitalism.

The Force For Change Exists Today

Everywhere, working people’s labor makes society run. Working people have the power to bring this system to a halt and bring about the changes needed. Like slavery, feudalism and other systems that enriched the minority at the expense of the majority, capitalism’s removal is long over due. The time for socialism has come.

We Stand For Socialism

- A world based on peaceful collaboration and international cooperation of working class people -- not the exploiters who rule today.
- The common ownership and sharing of the world’s resources and productive capacity.
- An egalitarian and democratic government, organized and controlled from the bottom up.
- Protection of the world’s ecological systems, putting science to work to sustain life, not destroy it.
- A society where human relations are based on respect, equality and dignity of all peoples, not racism, sexism or homophobia.

Contact us: www.SpeakOut-Now.org

Email: mail@SpeakOut-Now.org