

As the demand for climate action grows, **Build a working class movement against climate change!**

As was predicted would happen decades ago, global warming is now giving rise to increasingly devastating floods, droughts and wildfires, cyclones, polar vortexes and other climatic changes, and climate refugees. And as was known decades ago, burning fossil fuels is the main cause of this warming, with deforestation, agricultural and other land-use practices that destroy natural "sinks" that absorb carbon dioxide making it worse. But greenhouse gas emissions reached record highs in 2017 and in 2018.

How can this disastrous situation be happening?

Rather than attempting to plan and directly regulate industry, agriculture and transportation, in the 1990s a large number of "environmentally aware" governments embarked on the path of trying to use market measures--setting up a market in carbon-emission certificates ("cap and trade") and/or imposing carbon taxes--to rein in green house gas emissions. Other countries, such as the United States, didn't even do that much. Furthermore, establishment environmentalism, as represented by Al Gore and the leaders of the mainstream environmental groups, did their utmost to divert the environmentalists into becoming champions of these market solutions that have so miserably failed.

At root of this debacle is that the polluting and otherwise earth-destroying corporations and their financiers are bitterly driven to oppose any serious environmental measures because those will infringe on their profits. Thus, to save these profits the IMF and World Bank, plus

ExxonMobil, Shell, BP and other oil companies have thrown their support behind carbon pricing and the carbon tax.¹ Trump and the Republicans obviously serve them with human-caused climate change denialism: "what problem??" But the Democrats also serve them by foot-dragging when it comes to taking sufficient measures to curb climate change, including Gov. Inslee's pushing the carbon tax.

So the struggle to stop and mitigate climate change is at heart a class struggle, but a class struggle that the polluting corporations and their political servants have been winning at the peril of the huge majority of humanity. The only conclusion is that a trend of working-class environmentalism must be built up in order to fight and overcome them. Such a trend that has no interest in preserving the profits of those destroying the earth and every interest in preserving and replenishing it. Further, such a trend must struggle against the sold out AFL-CIO and other union bureaucrats who fight for business-as-usual pollution, even if means the planet becomes uninhabitable.

Recent developments show that the potential for building a working-class environmental movement exists everywhere.

For example, the French working people are just as concerned about climate change as everyone else, but beginning in November millions of them rose in the powerful "yellow vest" movement that forced the government to abandon another fuel tax increase. This was because the workers and poor were fed up with being economically squeezed in the name of

environmentalism. Indeed, in opposition to that many raised slogans demanding that the rich should be made to pay, while people all over the country also pointed out that they couldn't give up traveling in cars because there was no mass transit where they lived. Their mass rebellion demonstrated to the entire world that environmentalism has to make a choice. Either side with the struggle of the masses for a decent life or side with the corporations and the measures that they prefer, such as the carbon tax.

The potential also exists among the tens and tens of thousands of Belgium environmental demonstrators who forced an environment minister to quit in February, and who continue to mount protests of many thousands. Also in recent months, new environmental groups have been organized around the world that are demanding that governments take serious climate action now. On March 15 they helped mobilize some 1.2 million young people into streets around the world for a "Youth Climate Strike," including many hundreds in Seattle. On April 15 there will be another international protest called by one of these newer groups, Extinction Rebellion (see end for Seattle information).

And the potential exists among the millions of people who are excited by the idea of a Green New Deal and the concept of linking environmentalism with the livelihood of the masses of people. This shows an important shift in mass mood. But Rep. Ocasio-Cortez's talk about a Green New Deal lacks specifics. It only has promises, and the assurance that directed public investment will solve everything. This covers up the deep and profound changes in the economy and the increase of government

regulation and control that will be needed to really achieve environmental goals, as well as to ensure livelihood for all. It covers up the severe struggle with the corporations and the billionaires that will be needed. We need to build a working-class environmental movement that will bring to the fore the real needs of environmentalism, of abandoning market fundamentalism, and of fighting the corporate polluters.

Thus, we must fight for the radical changes that are needed to ensure that environmental goals are really met, or else everything will end up as just going through the pretense of taking effective action. Everyone can help do this. In our schools and workplaces we can initiate discussions of the daily news reports about climate change and its effects, as well as of other environmental issues, including in our workplaces. We can think about organizing environmental groups in our schools and workplaces that study and discuss environmental issues and take actions around them. We can join locally existing environmental groups. And we can encourage friends to go with us to anti-climate change events like those upcoming:

Monday, April 15, beginning at 11:30 AM:
Extinction Rebellion protest rally and die-in,
Henry M. Jackson Federal Building, 915 2nd Ave

Thursday, April 25, 7:30 PM – 9:30 PM: **Dahr Jamail and Extinction Rebellion** speaking on
"Confronting the Extinction Crisis," Kane Hall at the U.W.

Seattle Communist Study Group 4/13/2019

1. <https://qz.com/964499/which-fossil-fuel-companies-support-a-carbon-tax/>

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