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FIGHT THE FIRE

ECOSOCIALIST MAGAZINE



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fight the fire

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NOUS SOMMES LES SOULÈVEMENTS DE LA TERRE

ON NE DESCEND PAS EN MOUVEMENT

editorial note

It's happening now. What necessarily would come to pass has sped up. 2023 will be a year of climate chaos all around. That means it will be of year of disruption for many societies, and probably yours as well. In the Northern Hemisphere we may very well surpass last year's records in Europe and in China, with the US and Canada also battered.

The movement has accelerated and radicalised. We may have different definitions and different goals for where we should be, but the letargy of the last year and a half has been broken. High intensity civil disobedience, sabotage, mass direct action in infrastructure and sheer dauntlessness has shown a more resilient and determined climate justice movement in 2023. Much more is yet to come, though.

Suicidal fossil capitalism has pulled all stops and told its repressive apparatus that it is time to shut us down. In most countries, center to far-right governments and parliaments, together with business elites, have decided that the climate justice movement needs to be repressed. Legislation has been shifted accordingly. No climate emergency except the emergency of getting climate activists off the streets and far away from effective action.

From Australia to the UK and US, draconian protest laws and trumped up charges mean to shut us up and jail us. In Germany and in France police use anti-terrorist laws to storm our militants' homes - from Letzte Generation and Les Soulèvements de la Terre - and arrest them. In the Netherlands, 1500 arrested in one action. They mean to terrorise us.

They mean to guarantee that no one rises up against collapse. They are sorely mistaken. Calls for compromise and slow down of tactics are emptied. Capitalism will have only one response to any attempt to stop its fossil blood from pumping: repression. It may feel new, but this is as old as it gets. From peasant revolts to the first labour struggles, from the fight for the abolishment of slavery to independence movements, whenever the flow of wealth has been in the slightest disturbed or threatened, the upper classes have aligned to break the resistance. Now, we fight for all those fights. We face these developments with the tranquility of knowing that many have faced them and overcame them. We know the tasks we face today, the task ahead of stopping climate collapse and we will not falter.

Some are immediate. This summer will certainly be a moment in which episodes of climate chaos such as droughts, heatwaves, forest fires and floods need to be given a clear political and social meaning. The hot-earth summer which are now all the summers, was created by the fossil companies. Their crimes manifest in climate extremes. They must be directly pointed out as the culprits of this without hesitation. No extreme event can now pass as normal.

Many upcoming events will also be relevant. In the next months, climate camps and conferences will be essential for strategic and tactical reflection over last year.

In our 5th issue, we operate our first shift in the Editorial Board. We have been joined by **Vanessa Dourado**, from Brazil and Argentina, by **Christian Zeller** from Austria and Switzerland, by **Noah Herfort** and **Jack Johnson**, from the UK and USA. Their political work, social engagement and theoretical contributions to ecosocialism as a political force are most welcome! Their biographies can be read in our website.

In the current issue of Fight the Fire we have analysis of the current moment, with articles from Christian Zeller about the Fossil Fuel counter-offensive and from Jonathan Neale about the traps that are being laid for the movement, blocking parts of its in inaction. Alice Gato presents the mobilisations against cost of living and for climate action around Europe on the 30th of September, while Alex Foti introduces the World Congress for Climate Justice, which will take place in October in Milan, with the aim of creating a "climate Internationale". Leonor Canadas reflects on the clear limits of institutional dialogue to reach a "Just Transition", while I present a roadmap of financial crises directly linked to the climate crisis, which will aggravate in the future. Momentously, Noah Herfort and Jack Johnson present a first take on an Ecosocialist Political Program, with the tasks of uprooting capitalism, executing system change and avoid climate and ecological collapse. Its happening now. We need to move.

João Camargo

Fossil

counter-offensive

Investment in fossil infrastructure increases again

BY CHRISTIAN ZELLER

Introduction

The perspective of green capitalism is based on a comprehensive energy transition from fossil to renewable energy sources. Since the 2009 climate conference in Copenhagen governments, corporations and opposition parties have been relying on the assumption that the energy companies can be persuaded to rethink their business and initiate a transition process towards renewable energy and engagement in the "green" economy. That reliance has only increased since the climate talks in Paris in 2015.

But it's not just politicians and business. Scientists and important parts of the climate justice movement have also adhered to this idea. Most concepts of a socio-ecological transition and a "Green New Deal" assume that somehow fossil capital

can be integrated into a transformation perspective.

Several theoretical arguments speak against this assumption. So does the historical experience of comprehensive social and industrial restructuring processes.

Under what conditions will capital leave fossil sectors and flow into "green" sectors when profitability in non-fossil sectors is lower? This would require a major government investment drive in building renewable energy infrastructure. Covering electricity peaks also requires redundant infrastructure. This is not currently happening anywhere.

In addition, what would governments use to finance these investments?

This situation has fundamentally changed. Uncertainty has given way to confidence that fossil infrastructure investments will continue to be highly profitable for many years to come. If stranded assets do pile up, the industry is relying on its own strength to extract large compensation payments from states - and thus societies. The climate justice movement is proving too weak to force corporations to phase out fossil fuels. With energy security fears growing in the wake of Russia's war on the Ukrainian people, almost all governments are now committed to a major expansion of gas infrastructure. The largest energy companies would not make their renewed investments if they did not have the certainty of profitable returns - or at least the certainty of substantial government subsidies in the event of devaluation.

I will now proceed in three steps. First, I will formulate some observations on the political landscape. Then, I will shed light on the investment behaviour of fossil corporations and show some examples to illustrate this behaviour. In the conclusion I will name the basic challenges for the climate justice movement and the ecosocialist current.

Political backlash

The mobilizations of the climate movement before the start of the pandemic were huge. And in recent months there have again been broad-based demonstrations and civil disobedience in many countries. Still, there is a critical balance to be made.

Jonathan Neale does that in more detail in this issue. I only touch on a few facts here.

The climate justice movement has not been able to get unions in any country to adopt truly substantive climate policies. For example, the recent extensive mobilization of workers and mass strikes in France, Britain and Germany did not integrate the impending climate catastrophe into their demands. Nowhere have unions committed themselves to policies that will ensure that greenhouse gas emissions come down immediately. This inability of the climate justice movement to socially enforce changes in production and transport provides the fossil fuel industry with the certainty that they can extend their development path.

The increasingly severe state repression against activists of the climate justice movement fits into this picture. The activists are to be intimidated and the movement weakened. Moreover, parts of the movement are to be integrated into the ruling political system.

COP27 took place last November under the patronage of the dictator Sissi in Sharm el Sheik. This year COP28 will be held in the United Arab Emirates under the leadership of Sultan Al-Jaber, the head of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company. The climate conference in Sharm el Sheik already avoided a decision a phase-out of fossil fuels. This will also be the tenor of the next COP in Dubai, which will focus on carbon capture technologies. This is a

technological bet, because these CCS technologies do not yet exist on the scale required (Hodgson and Williams 2023).

Numerous governments are now clearly indicating that they are backing away from the resolutions of the Paris climate conference. They also want to extend the fossil fuel development path. Sharpened imperialist rivalry and concerns about energy security are reinforcing this trend. These political changes are closely linked to the resurgent inertia of fossil capital.

Fossil capital starts a new round of investment

According to the IEA's (International Energy Agency) World Energy Investment Report, some USD 2.8 trillion is expected to be invested in energy worldwide in 2023. Of this, more than USD 1.7 trillion is expected to flow into supposedly "clean" technologies. The IEA includes into this category renewables, electric vehicles, grids, storage, efficiency improvements and heat pumps, as well as so-called low-emission fuels and nuclear

power. Just over \$1 trillion will be spent on coal, gas and oil. The organization expects annual investment in so-called "clean energy" to increase by 24% between 2021 and 2023, driven by renewables and electric vehicles. Fatih Birol, chairman of the IEA, says that investment in solar energy will surpass spending on oil production for the first time this year. That, he says, will help reduce global emissions. But the picture conveyed of an energy transition is deceptive.

High prices have led to an increase in fossil fuel investment, which is expected to rise 15% from 2021 to 23. The IEA expects large and medium-sized oil, gas, and coal companies to increase their investment in new fossil fuels by 6% to \$950 billion in 2023. Spending on upstream oil and gas production is expected to increase by 7% in 2023, returning to 2019 levels. They already rose by 11% in 2022. Oil companies in the Middle East, in particular, will invest even more than before the pandemic. Investments in fossil fuels – in coal and oil as well as gas – have increased strongly since 2020.





Net revenues for the global oil and gas industry reached a record high of \$4 trillion in 2022. Before that, net revenues had been lower between 2015 and 2021 than they were from 2008 to 2014. But in 2022 fossil fuel producers earned 'windfall profits' of \$2 trillion. That total was over and above their usual 2021 net revenues. The reason was higher prices. Moreover, in the face of feared energy shortages and high prices, governments, especially in rich economies, have so far allocated well over \$500 billion to protect consumers from the immediate impact. In other words, fossil fuel subsidies have increased massively.

In 2022, most of the cash flow generated by the fossil companies went to dividends, share buybacks and debt repayment. Only a tiny fraction of free cash flow was used for clean energy investments. Financial investment capital thus appropriated much of these profits.

Uncertainty is decreasing and profitability is increasing again. A closer look reveals that investments in less profitable network infrastructure have remained largely at the same level since 2015. This means that "green" investments are lopsided. The less profitable grid infrastructure remains deficient and will become a bottleneck factor.

The IEA warns: "If policymakers and regulators do not provide the necessary incentives for investment in grid spending, it could pose a significant obstacle to the clean energy transition." In contrast, investment in battery storage has increased massively in recent years, with China responsible for a significant portion of this commitment. Finance is a central component of the fossil fuel economy. The world's 60 largest banks have placed about \$5.5 trillion in fossil fuel extraction and production since the 2015 Paris

Agreement.. Placement of financial capital into fossil fuels stabilized in 2020, increased again in 2021, and then declined somewhat in 2022 (\$669 billion). I deliberately use the term placement here instead of investment because the funds and banks want to generate financial returns. That decline was due to uncertain geopolitical and economic conditions, not to a change in bank strategy. Given the record profits in the fossil fuel corporations of \$4 trillion in 2022, many could easily self-finance. Exxon Mobil and Shell PLC therefore refrained from bank financing in 2022, according to Rainforest Action.

It is notable, however, that financial placements in companies serving the fracking and LNG (Liquified Natural Gas)

sectors increased significantly. The top 30 companies developing LNG received \$23 billion in financing in 2022, up 50% from the previous year. Funding for the top 30 fracking companies totaled \$67 billion in 2022, 8% more than in 2021. There are currently 170 liquefaction and regasification terminals worldwide. At least as many more terminals are in the project stage.

The so-called “transition” of the corporations is a long time coming. According to an IEA analysis, the oil and gas industry’s total investment in low-emission energy sources accounts for less than 5 % of total spending on fossil fuel production. Therefore, it is not surprising that



global energy-related carbon emissions increased by 0.9 % in 2022 to a record 36.8 billion metric tons. This happened, even though corporations were also spending more money on so-called “clean energy” according to IEA data.

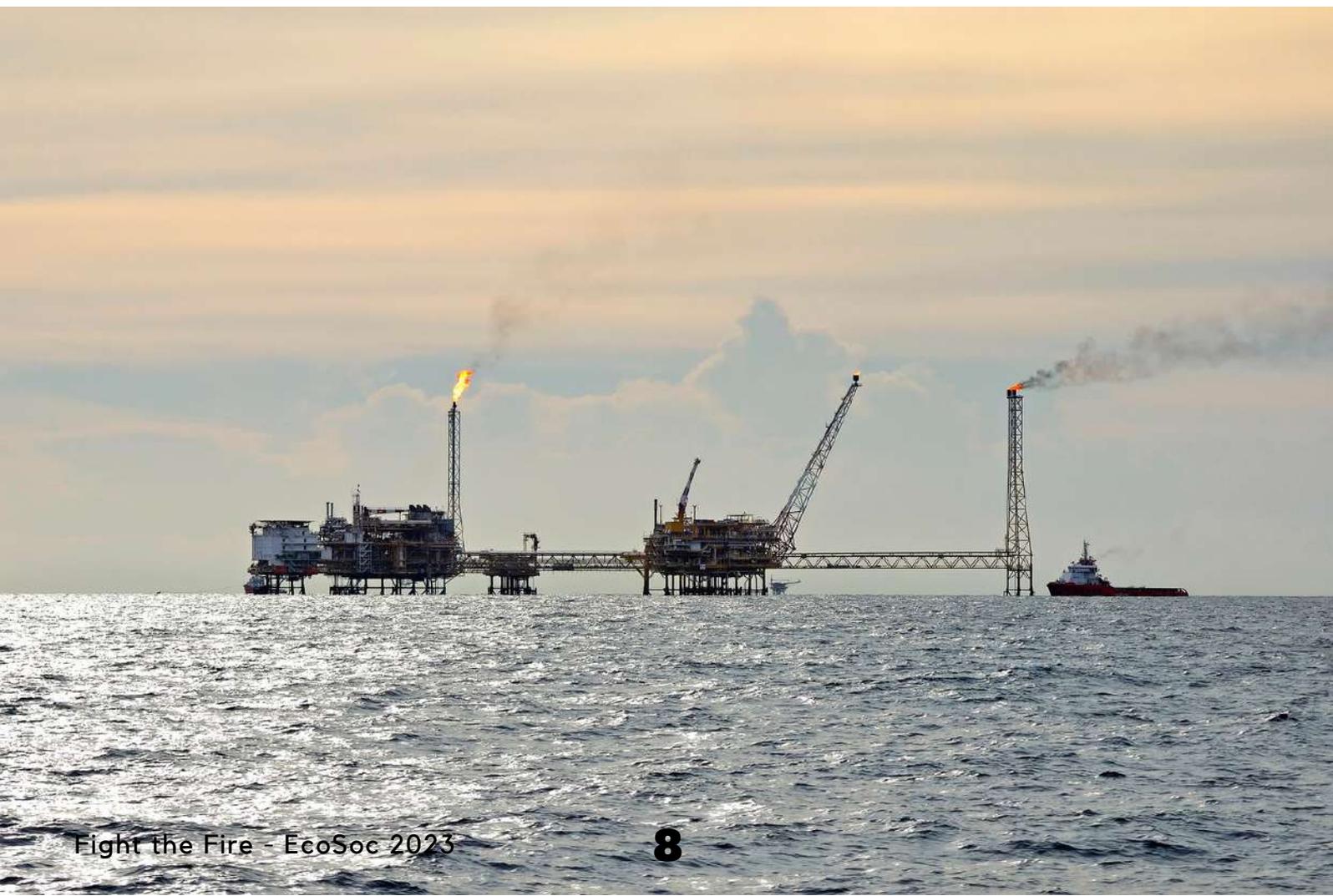
Texas and Gulf of Mexico

The general trend described above can be illustrated by two current examples. A comprehensive analysis of the fossil counteroffensive remains to be done. For the first example I will look at the British Petroleum (BP) group, because for some time it has tried to give the appearance of wanting to transform itself “Beyond Petroleum”. But in February 2023, BP CEO Bernard Looney announced that the company planned to reduce its oil and gas production by only 25 % by 2030.

By contrast, the target set in 2020 during a historic oil price slump had called for a 40 % reduction. This change in strategy by BP exemplifies the fossil capital's energetic desire to extend its development path.

BP said goodbye to its plan to cut oil and gas production after rising fossil fuel prices helped the British energy company post its highest annual profit – \$28 billion – in its 114-year history. CEO Bernard Looney, however, deflects responsibility for this. “Governments and societies around the world are asking companies like ours to invest in today’s energy system,” he told the Financial Times (7 February 2023).

However, the company is primarily responsible to the financial capital that has been placed. And that capital has called for action. That's because total shareholder return at BP since February 2020 has been



the lowest among Western energy companies. None of the other companies have set a formulated target for reducing oil and gas production. Many investors argue that a shift to renewables hurt profits, and that is why the performance of the company's shares lagged its peers. Wall Street preferred the strategies of ExxonMobil and Chevron, which are avowedly committed to oil. Thus, the finance capital placed wants BP to also hold on to high-yield fossil fuel projects.

This April BP began pumping crude oil through a new \$9 billion Argos offshore platform in the Gulf of Mexico. This is BP's first new platform and largest investment in the region since the Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill in 2010. That took the lives of 11 people and caused the largest environmental disaster in U.S. history.

With the commissioning of the huge Argos oil platform, BP clearly marks its departure from "Beyond Petroleum".

Argos can pump 140,000 barrels of oil and gas per day from fields under thousands of feet of water. The platform will increase the company's production capacity in the region to 400,000 barrels per day, or nearly 20% of the group's total global production.

CEO Looney affirmed that the commissioning of Argos shows that the company is "investing in today's energy system." He said this platform will strengthen the company's position in the Gulf of Mexico, where it is the largest producer, in the coming years.

"The Gulf of Mexico has some of the best



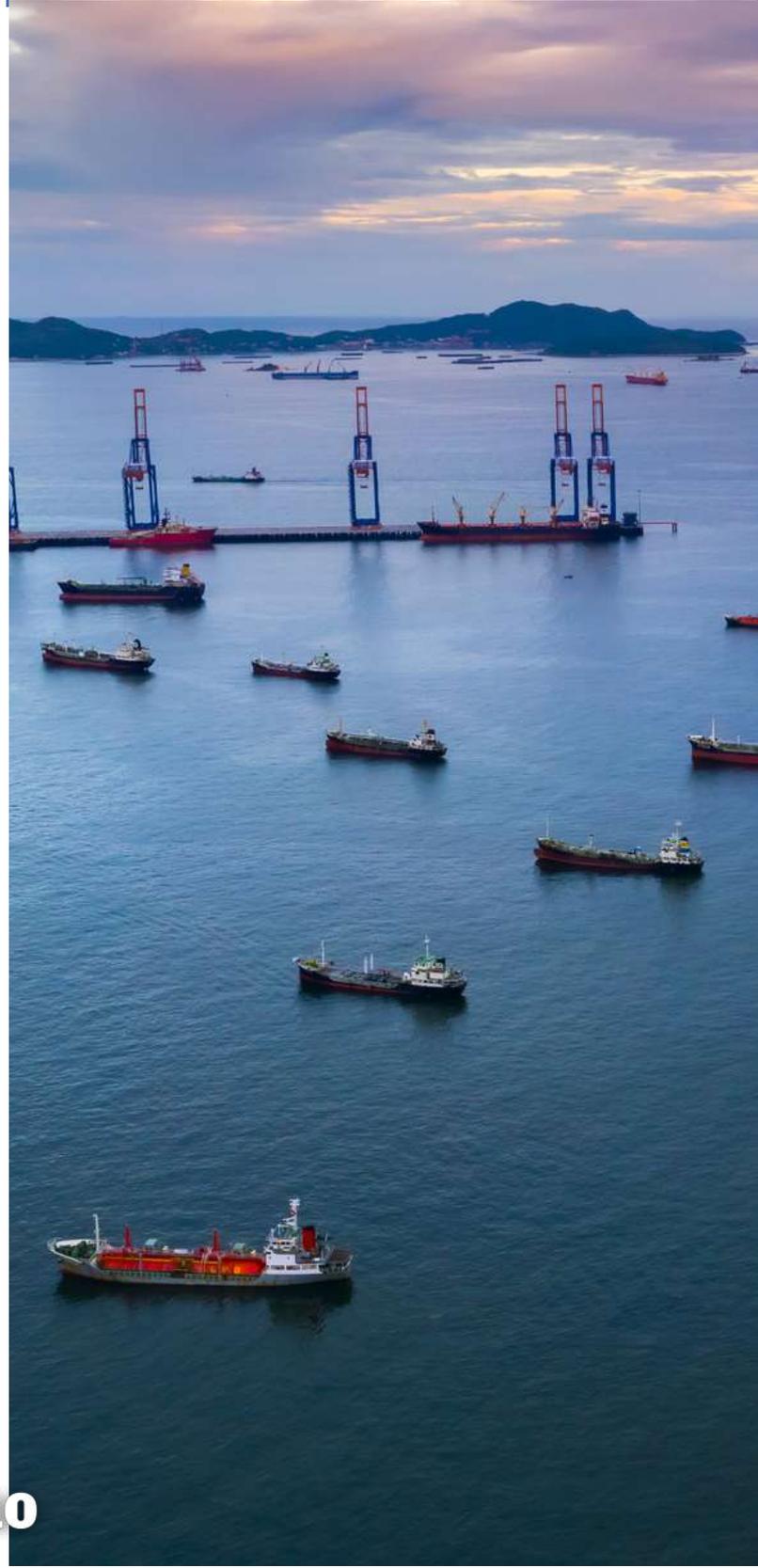
barrels we've got and we want to explore and develop more," Starlee Sykes, head of BP's Gulf of Mexico business, said in an interview with the Financial Times. BP sees the possibility of increasing oil production in the region for decades to come, she added, even as the company pursues a goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Stopping oil production now would be "simply impractical", Looney told the Economic Club of Washington, DC. He suggested that such a move would risk a renewed economic crisis.

BP is vigorously implementing this counteroffensive. When the corporation scaled back its climate targets in early 2023, it simultaneously announced a dramatic increase in fossil fuel investment and an aggressive plan to increase U.S. oil production. Since that announcement, BP shares have outperformed those of Exxon.

LNG in the USA and Germany

Building a giant infrastructure for LNG is another area of fossil offensive. Venture Global LNG announced on March 13, 2023, that it would begin the second phase of a giant liquefied natural gas export project in Louisiana. The company plans to massively expand the Plaquemines export facility already under construction on the U.S. Gulf Coast. The total cost of the plant is reportedly \$21 billion. It has the capacity to process about 2.6 billion cubic feet of



LNG per day, or 2.5% of the U.S.'s gas production of 20 million tons of LNG per year for export. The plant will be among the largest LNG export facilities in the world.

With the approval of the Plaquemines expansion, total U.S. LNG export capacity will exceed 20 billion cubic meters per day in the next few years with projects already committed. This will make the U.S. by far the largest LNG exporter in the world.

“It’s a free market and we’re not going to stand in the way,” US Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm told Energy Source, referring to the huge export capacity currently being built. “What’s good is that we’re expanding our ability to help with energy security,” Granholm said.

In fact, this has nothing to do with a free market. Rather, corporations are ramping up capacity in coordination with the government in a planned way. ExxonMobil and Cheniere Energy are pushing ahead with other major expansion projects. Cheniere Energy is looking to expand its Sabine Pass LNG plant in Louisiana, already the largest in the U.S. Again, expectations from finance capital are driving the expansion. Venture Global LNG says it has received \$7.8 billion for the Plaquemines expansion from a variety of lenders, including Goldman Sachs, Bank of China, JPMorgan Chase, MUFG, and Natixis.

In March the Biden administration also gave the green light to ConocoPhillips' Willow project on Alaska's North Slope.

Seeking Oil in the Arctic



According to ConocoPhillips, Willow will produce a peak of 180,000 barrels of oil per day – about 1.5% of current U.S. production. The company will more than double production nationally this year alone

These recent reports should not make us forget that oil and gas production in the Permian Basin in Texas has been expanding at a gigantic rate. And the Permian Basin was already, one of the most prolific oil producing regions in the world. Between 2018 and 2019 alone, oil production there increased by 44%, according to U.S. company Chevron. The region is also a major supplier of natural gas. About 17% of U.S. gas production now comes from the Permian Basin. Not surprisingly, export capacity for LNG is being massively expanded. The high prices for oil and gas have encouraged corporations to massively increase their investments. Unconventional extraction methods such as fracking allow oil to be extracted from deeper layers.

The companies are sitting on immeasurable amounts of capital in the form of oil and gas . They will not voluntarily allow this capital to be depreciated. They will continue to claim the profits from these deposits.

All over the world, the fossil offensive is being led and fuelled by government anxious to create competitive conditions for resident corporations. U.S. President Joe Biden, for example, urged domestic oil producers to increase production. All governments in Europe are vigorously

building a liquefied natural gas infrastructure. Or they are maintaining purchases of Russian gas, which helps the Putin regime finance its war of conquest against the Ukrainian people. Guaranteed supplies of relatively cheap fossil fuels remain a priority of the ruling policy everywhere.

A brief look at Germany illustrates this tendency. In the wake of the Russian war in Ukraine and energy security fears, European imports of LNG increased by 66% in 2022. Germany previously had no LNG infrastructure because it had benefited from much cheaper pipeline gas from the USSR and then Russia since the early 1970s. This was a key factor in the competitiveness of German industry.

However, even before the Russian war against Ukraine, the German government had laid the groundwork for a massive expansion of LNG even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Since the start of the war, the German government has expanded and is rapidly advancing its LNG offensive. By the end of 2026, the government plans to have built a total of eight floating and three fixed LNG terminals. The import capacity of all eleven facilities will amount to around 73 billion cubic meters. This would allow Germany to import about 50% more natural gas than the 46 billion cubic meters it purchased from Russia in 2021.

This suggests that these investments go far beyond replacing Russian gas

and aim to develop Germany into a European gas hub with the corresponding power. The German government thus assumes that gas consumption will increase massively. It is no longer thinking about reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the gas sector to the extent required. The Federal Ministry of Economics plans to have 77 billion cubic meters of import capacity for liquefied natural gas. But only just 7 billion cubic meters of capacity – barely the amount of a terminal ship – would meet “climate targets”.



- Gas pipeline projects
- ≡ Gas storage projects
- Terminals for LNG**
- 📍 Operational
- 📍 Operational and expansion planned
- 📍 Under construction
- 📍 Planned



Conclusion: disempowering and expropriating fossil capital

Recent developments confirm a conclusion that can already be drawn from the entire history of fossil capital. The corporations in the oil and gas business, as well as the closely intertwined downstream sectors, such as the automotive and energy industries, are among the most important and powerful fractions of capital. The coal, oil and gas deposits of the corporations are capital waiting to be turned into value. Even under great political pressure, the corporations will not be willing to give up the value of this capital and the expected profits.

The climate justice movement thus faces a comprehensive challenge of power. But our movement alone will not be able to decide the question of power. Only a socially broad movement that includes large sections of workers will be able to build a social and political balance of power that allows the social appropriation of fossil corporations – and thus the smashing of corporate power.

But this alone would does not solve the problems. It would only create the conditions for the possibility of enforcing comprehensive de-fossilization. Fossil capital is decidedly centralized and organized in large transnational corporations. So, social appropriation is not a trivial matter.

Public ownership alone in no way guarantees socio-ecological conversion. We are therefore faced with the challenge of enforcing a real democratic socialization. This cannot stop at the borders of nation states.

Questions arise. How can we in Europe initiate the necessary disempowerment of fossil capital? How can we dismantle and covert the fossil infrastructure? How can we construct an ecological and socially just energy infrastructure in a coordinated manner on the continental level?

But the most urgent task now is to transform the climate justice movement into a comprehensive social movement. We need a movement that also embraces the essential concerns of workers in their workplaces, homes, and everyday lives, in a way that aims for an ecologically compatible social metabolism with nature. To advance this orientation, we need to build a strong revolutionary ecosocialist current that understands these challenges and helps to broaden and radicalize the movement.

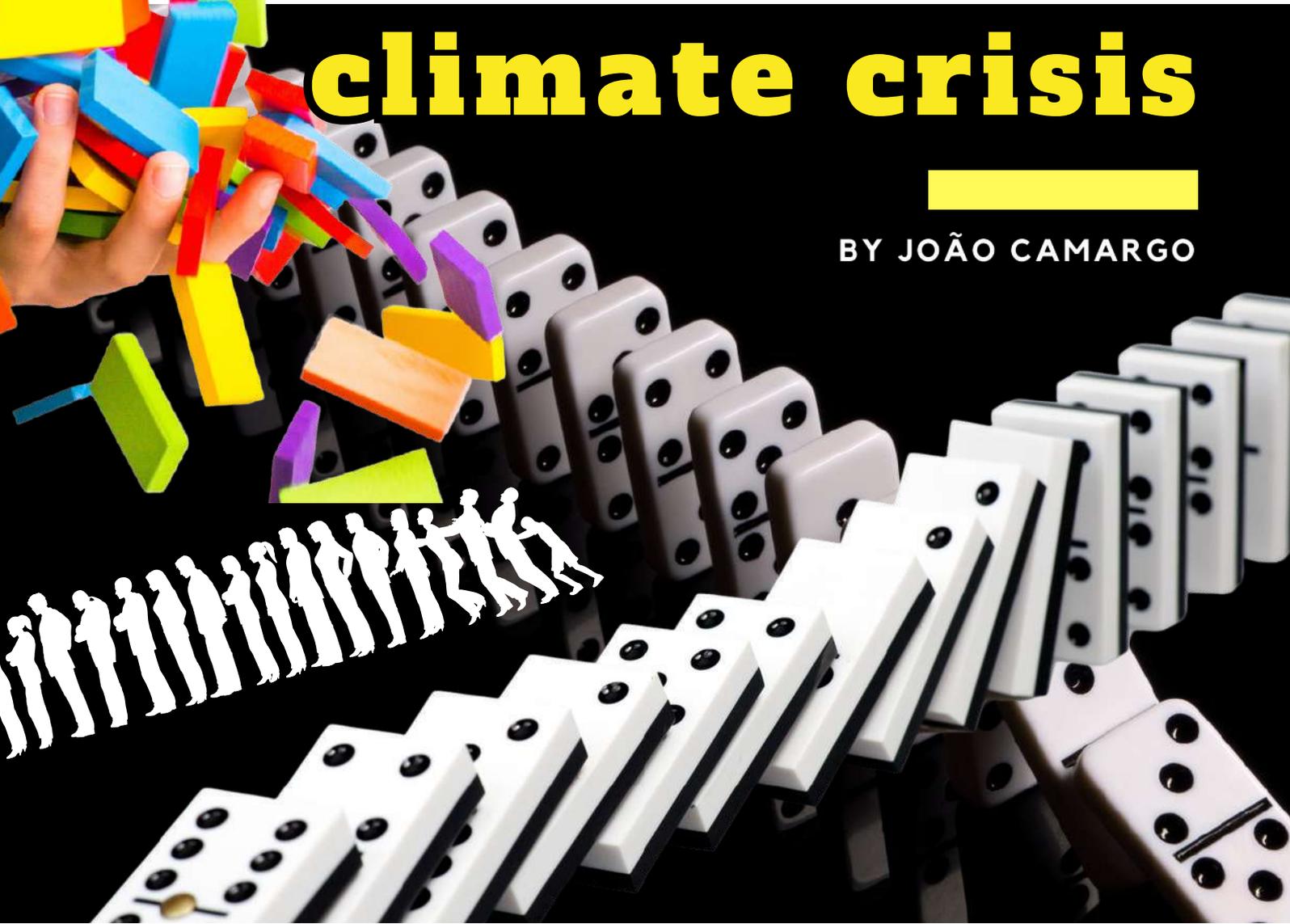




The financial



crises of the



climate crisis

BY JOÃO CAMARGO

The criminal profits of large multinational corporations in 2022 might seem to indicate a reversal of the historical trend for global profit decline of recent decades, but they are only a hiccup and a massive assault enabled by the privileges of the monopolists of global capital. The fall in profitability continues and the climate crisis is already and will continue to be the main factor in the current and future financial crises.

The inflationary spiral we are still living in was triggered by the oil companies' choice to use their monopoly over the energy system to offset their falling profits during Covid lockdowns. This comes after decades of hooking the economy on fossil fuels in an alliance with the political mainstream, with the complacency and sometimes even agreement of green and left-wing parties. All agreements have been torn up – now only barbarism remains. However, on top of this assault produced by the imposition of unparalleled high prices, other imbalances beyond the control of the capitalist elite have begun to manifest themselves.

In 2022, Pakistan was submerged by the biggest floods in its history, with a third of the country under water, with over 30 million people displaced to other places and other countries. Pakistan is one of the world's largest producers of cotton and textiles. The

prices of textiles, of almost all kinds of clothing, have soared. Parts of Pakistan are still under water. Several of the people who have been displaced will not return to where they were. The likelihood of mega-monsoons happening again in the coming years is high. The heat wave currently ravaging the Asian continent has, in the middle of moderate temperature months such as March or April, caused record highs in China, India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Vietnam and Laos, among others. This heat wave coincides with territories with high humidity, so that mass death is already occurring (directly due to the heat and indirectly to people with health problems, the very young or elderly).

The abundance of cotton and textile production on a global level has been squeezed, prices have increased and it will not necessarily be possible to return to previous levels without further disruption.

Maize, wheat and rice crops were affected by drought in the United States, Europe and China. In California, the smallest rice area since the 1950s was planted in 2022 and the harvest will be about half that of a "normal" year. In the United States the winter wheat harvest has fallen by 25%. The disruption of the flow of grain in the Black Sea because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine exacerbated this already drastic decrease in supply, with



knock-on effects on the global price of cereals, bread, pasta. Some of this production could recover by 2023 if we do not experience a scorching summer in the Northern Hemisphere, but so far the historic drought on the Eurasian continent and in North America continues. Agriculture in the mega-artificialised plastic prairie of southern Spain is suffering from drastic declines in production, driving up the price of vegetables and legumes. The Alqueva Dam in Portugal and the absurd amount of cash/export crops currently grown in the Alentejo region are now at the limits of viability. Although we have experienced the worst drought in Europe since the 16th century and the worst drought in the history of China in 2022, this was a year in which the climate phenomenon La Niña contributed to a global reduction in temperature. In 2023, this will not happen, and probably during the year El Niño will form in the Pacific Ocean, leading to a global increase in temperature.

We already live on another planet, not the one where all the exploitative relations, the institutions and the banking and financial system that sustained the growth of capitalism were created.

To fight rising inflation, central banks and battalions of economists trained in the schools of suicidal capitalism chose to do what they learned: raise interest rates to take money out of the economy

and make it squeeze. Everyone who had a loan saw the value of their loan increase, while the prices of all goods increased too. Many companies that had loans - everyone, therefore - also saw their operating costs increase, which will increase wage compression, eventually leading to layoffs and, in some cases, bankruptcy. Silicon Valley Bank went bankrupt because of rising interest rates, because it was a bank that specialised in debt, with a large amount invested in long-term US government treasury bonds, considered probably the safest investment in the world economy.

What happened to Silicon Valley Bank and the others will happen again and again in the future. Contagion to other banks will be more and more frequent and, with higher prices, will happen by other means as well. Household debt is increasing to combat high prices. As even the rare wage increases that do occur are below inflation, the level of debt is rising just to maintain

similar living standards as before. Since the price of fossil fuels will remain high and climate disasters such as droughts, floods and forest fires will erode the general capacity to produce goods and services on a global scale, it is inevitable that the climate crisis will continue to express itself directly as a cost of living crisis.

The global rise in interest rates further increased the burden on public debt of poorest countries, already pressed by historical debt interest, paying for Covid-19, price inflation of goods and growing exposure to extreme climate phenomena. The countries of the Global South that have followed the orders from international financial and credit institutions (in particular the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) have become food importers and have abandoned peasants and small local producers to their fate in favour of agribusiness multinationals. They have become dependent on imports of food which was "cheap", but will not be anymore or in the future.

Silicon Valley Bank



In the forcefully liberalised markets, states are currently being forced to acquire and distribute food, increasing public debt, having to take out new loans and defaulting on others. The bill for neocolonialism never stops coming and with the climate crisis it gets worse.

This means that growing debts will, in increasing amounts, go unpaid. This means more banks going bust. But maybe it's possible to cover all this with insurance, no?

No.

Global insurance premiums are on the rise because risk is moving from being risk to certainty. Banking's close relationship with insurance ensures that every climate catastrophe is also a financial crisis. And considering that risk is becoming or approaching a certainty in many cases, more and more insurers are refusing to insure investments, industrial projects, construction in dangerous zones, crops in flood or drought risk zones, and even general insurance on buildings,

transport and other areas. They refuse because their business is to make profit and because the previous distribution of risk is no longer the case and is only confirmed. Even when insurers



don't refuse to do issue insurance, they increase premiums and therefore both people and businesses are paying more to have insurance. If you consider an area like Pakistan, which is under water year in, year out, or a state like California, one of the most important agricultural areas in the United States whose annual fires are now permanently devastating vast areas and even cities, which insurance companies will ever be able to insure all the damage caused?

None.

So who will pay for these disasters? Can you imagine? Well, the people of that country through the State, the ultimate guarantor of losses. This will happen with countries or territories where the state is rich, like California. In cases like Pakistan, the answer is that nobody will pay for these disasters in their entirety. States, to pay for these fossil-fueled disasters, will have to raise taxes or divert revenues from activities like Education or Health for recovery - in capitalism we can take for granted that the funding of the repressive apparatus, the police

and armies, will not be touched, in particular because social discontent has no way not to increase.

The rising cost of living is already a consequence of the climate crisis.

And it will continue to be because overall supply is falling. All the weaknesses that already existed before - weak health systems, energy monopolies, unavailable, poorly built housing stock, touristification of cities, lack of quality public transport, precarious mass employment - will be exacerbated. Health systems are on the verge of collapse, people can't pay rents, can't commute to work without exorbitant costs, stop paying bills and debts. And banks threaten, evict, sue, but there is no money to save them. Not paying the people directly, the states pay, again the last guarantor of the financial system, reducing public services and social capacity, increasing public debts and bowing to pressure to sell public assets.

And they will always tell us that it is necessary to save the banks, because otherwise the whole economy collapses. They will guarantee the collapse of society to save the banks, once again. But this time it is not the same as previous financial crises.

The economic and financial models are not designed for the climate crisis. Just look at the Nobel prize winner in economics, William Nordhaus, and his models and the proposition that considering cost-benefit analysis, we could allow a global temperature increase of up to 4°C. Right now, we have a global temperature increase of 1.1 to 1.3°C and there are already global scale resource and product shortages. One more degree and not only will there not



be remotely the amount of products needed to sustain billions of people, there will be no international trade as anything even remotely stable. Economists and their models don't realise what is or what will happen, they have generally been taught not to realise it and are lauded when they utter deranged hypotheses, like that of William Nordhaus.

Exactly how the financial crises of the climate crisis will unfold is as diverse and multiple as the capitalist economy: bankruptcies because of high prices or interest rates, real estate crises, monetary crises when a country goes under water, debt crises when national

production and tax revenues fall or banks, companies or insurance companies have to be saved, stranded assets when a government decides to bet on a failed fossil projects - we cannot help but point here to the stupidity of the project of a new Airport in Lisbon, of the cascade of dams to make an "Alqueva of the Tagus", of the thousands of imbecile projects that abound in the national and international press every day.

With a global temperature increase of 1.1°C to 1.2°C we are already in a general financial crisis of a general lack of income from capitalism, despite the neoliberal parroting that we live in the best of all worlds. Quality of life is in decline across

the world because of the climate crisis and the system we live in, which is incapable of solving it. The profitable investments of the last seven decades no longer exist. That is why we see so much excitement and hype with artificial intelligence, cryptocurrencies and other intangible assets. They are the search for yield that today has to be based primarily on divestment and on products whose verifiability is low. The time when investing in cement, cars, factories, roads and construction had guarantees of profit (even if brokered and favoured by the state, based on the idea of guaranteed future growth and profitability) is over. What is left is chaos and alienation.

On the other hand, alienation is widespread among the population

and so it becomes very difficult to translate that the financial crises in which capitalism has always lived now also have an umbilical link to the climate crisis. It is on the basis of this understanding that some of the anti-systemic alliances essential to an ecosocialist political breakthrough can and must be made.

The climate crisis will be the mother of all financial crises, because it is the fundamental crisis of the human species and will have repercussions for the Earth systems upon which we depend. The preponderance of the financial world in our societies means that this is also where we will see the world burn, economically and politically.



The choice to design political programmes that abandon the need for the urgent closure of fossil industry or that base the solution to the crisis on wage increases that do not entail any fundamental redistribution of power are proposals almost as alienated as the proposals of the capitalist elite.

We must not only know the current crises but use them at all times to propose the political programmes of rupture necessary to stop the climate crisis and capitalism.

This bridge is expressed in processes like the Last Winter of Gas, which promotes a multi-tactic articulation and an alliance between different political groups in the simultaneous fight against the social, economic and climate crisis. The break with the capitalist system and the road to climate chaos will have to be an articulated, international and incisive process. The successive financial crises cannot be allowed to pass by as key moments for action.





EAT THE RICH!

It's their time to pay - mobilising on climate and cost of living next September

BY ALICE GATO

In 2011, thousands of people went out into the streets in several countries against austerity because their lives were being stolen to pay for banking crisis. In 2019, thousands of kids went out on the streets all over the world against climate change because their life (and future) was being stolen for profit. Now, in 2023, capitalist elites are getting their biggest profits ever at the expense of oil and gas expansion and its inflation, and we are paying for it.

It's not the time to postpone the fight against the climate crisis because people need to worry about how they are going to put food on the table, pay rent or pay for their studies. It's time to fight for system change not climate change exactly because of that. The cost of living crisis which we are living and paying for out of our pockets has the same root as the climate crisis which we have been living for decades and paying with our lives: a capitalist system addicted to fossil fuels that thrives from our suffering. Last year, the fossil profit driven inflation became the everything profit inflation. In Europe, under the excuse of the Russian invasion of the Ukraine, they have deployed a massive historical investment in more fossil infrastructure. This only increases the profits of these companies, while dragging us towards climate chaos and making us pay for it - through public subsidies and historically high prices. Haven't we payed enough?

We are paying for their insane profits every time there is a flood, a heatwave

or a drought. We are paying for their crisis every time they cut our wages or the investment on public services because they want "energy diversity", which is just a way they have of to fool us into paying for increasing global emissions and crossing the 1.5°C warming during this decade. We won't let them continue to lead us to the climate hell they're setting up, and we definitely won't pay for it. It's their time to pay.

This Northern Hemisphere summer will likely be a glimpse of the hell they are setting for us, with heatwaves all over the world, historical droughts and massive forest fires. By the end of it, they will try to steal even more from us. We know there is no way out of this crisis that relies on fossil fuels expansion. We also know there is no way they are going to solve the crisis they have created. The time has come to usher in a popular social movement across Europe and the world, to bring about the change that governments and institutions refuse to assume. We will not wait to cross 1.5°C warming for the "perfect conditions" to change everything. This is the time where we fight back before everything changes irrevocably against us. It's time to go out to the streets united, like we did in 2011 and 2019, against precarity, fossil fuels, oppression, for housing and essential services, and

demanding what they've stolen from us. The choice of letting their crimes continue is a political one which we refuse. We have paid more than enough. Now, they will pay.

On the September 30th we will gather in the cities and the squares of Europe, demanding:

- Price controls over all essential sectors (food and water, electricity and heating, house rents and healthcare);
- The end of their tax havens and fiscal paradises;
- The deployment of decentralised, community-based and democratically controlled renewable energy to achieve 100% of renewable electricity by 2025;

- Free public transports for all;
- Public housing for everyone.

We are people from different political backgrounds and European countries. Some of us have been working in unions and against precarity and know that the only way to ensure workers rights is to fight for a just transition others come from the climate movement and know that there is no way to achieve climate change within the capitalist system. Some of us come from the housing movement and know that the housing crisis and the crisis of all essential services being taken from us is just another way to keep a system that doesn't benefit the majority going. All of us know that there is no justice for

- **Price controls over all essential sectors**
- **End of tax havens and fiscal paradises**
- **Deployment of decentralised, community-based and democratically controlled renewable energy to achieve 100% of renewable electricity by 2025**
- **Free public transports for all**
- **Public housing for everyone**



ON NE DEMANDE PAS LA LUNE
JUSTE UN AVENIR
POUR NOUS ET LA TERRE

A QUOI BON
AVOIR UNE
SI L'ON N'A PAS
DE PLANETE

WHAT I STAND
FOR IS WHAT
I STAND
ON

SAUVONS
PLANETE

EXISTENCE

LA PLANETE
MAIS

ON
DEMANDE PAS
LA LUNE
ON VEUT JUSTE
RESTER SUR
TERRE!

How can you
help US???

EXISTENCE NE
DEFE RA PAS
NOTRE

the global south and the working class on the global north until our life is more valued in this society than capitalist profits. Until we put an end to the colonialist fossil fuel expansion, until care is at the center of our economies and until we start cutting the emissions that are leading us towards climate chaos we will not stop and we will not falter.

So, if you come from a social movement, if you just know it's time to join this fight for your life, if you know that you've paid enough and that it's their time to pay, come with us on this day, with your imagination, your willpower and your rage, with your banners and your families, your friends and your allies, and join us. If you are reading this from Austria, Portugal, the Netherlands or Germany, join the marches that will take place there. If you come from any other European country and want to mobilize with us, organize this march on your own country. You can reach out to us through our website theirtimetopay.org or via email contact@theirtimetopay.org.

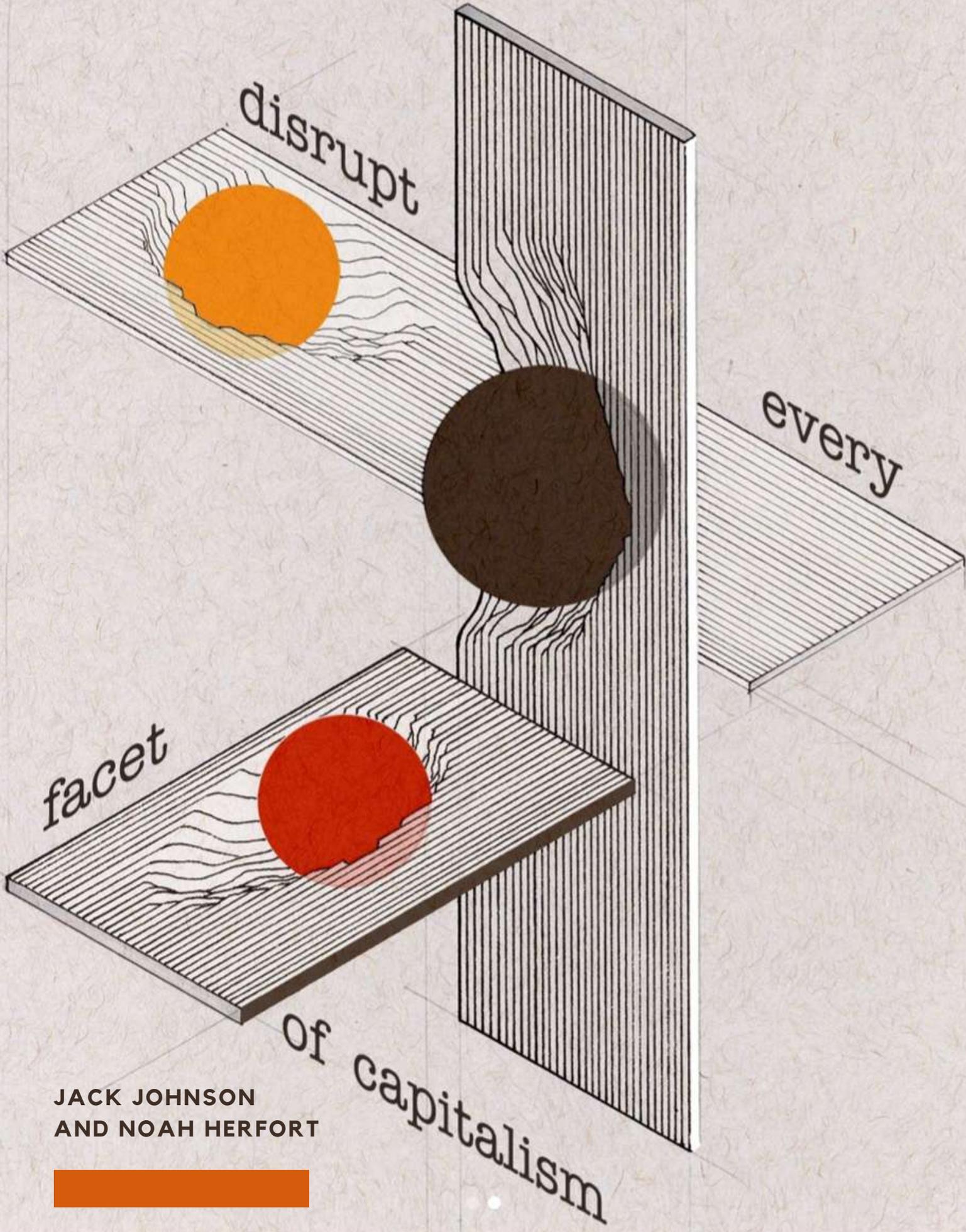
Everyone of us has the power to fight back, and together we will show that we have the power to refuse the catastrophic direction they are taking us towards. We will not take it anymore.



**IT'S
THEIR
TIME TO
PAY**

**30
SEPTEMBER
2023**

THEIRTIMETOPAY.ORG



JACK JOHNSON
AND NOAH HERFORT

An Ecosocialist Political Program: First Take

Standing on the cusp of the 1.5°C guardrail, with emissions rising and nature vanishing, our task is to uproot capitalism and plant the seeds of ecosocialism. In other words, execute system change to avoid climate and ecological collapse.

Fulfilling this task requires rupture from capitalism. We cannot rapidly transform society through bourgeois electoral systems or incremental reforms. Nor can we build isolated alternatives while the world crumbles. The task is to face the system head on. And win.

The primary responsibility of the climate movement is to undertake realistic, principled actions to lead an ecosocialist mass movement with the collective capacity for ruptural transformation. With this context in mind, we present a program that outlines the policies to be implemented upon gaining power. This vision serves as a potent mobilisation tool, compelling the masses to step into action and organise for revolution.

To narrow the scope, this program is specifically directed at the European context – with the exclusion of Russia, which necessitates a more tailored approach. Even within the narrowed geography, we recognize that it makes large generalisations that don't fully account for sub-region particularities.

This program should not be read as prescriptive, but suggestive of the authors' vision alone. It is merely an initial probe that should be critically analysed and updated through feedback from the movement.

Moving through three central themes – democratise, decommodify, decolonise – this program offers a vision of society in transition. A society still wrestling with the capitalist scars of the old world while negotiating the emancipatory potential of the new. But it is a world of liberation and material improvement for the majority, all nested within planetary boundaries.

Recalling Lenin, *"in revolutionary times the limits of what is possible expand a thousandfold."*

Democratise the means of production

Over two centuries, fossil capitalism has poured the material foundation of society. In a matter of years, we must turn this material foundation to rubble and build something in its place. Already without historical precedent, we must take on this revolutionary task while managing the chaos of planetary destabilisation and the seething reaction of a capitalist class deprived of its life source.

Only a centralised democratic state has the means to transform society, absorb ecological shocks, and beat back revanchist ruling classes in the claustrophobic timeline left to prevent total earth systems collapse. Therefore, the ecosocialist movement, composed of the people's majority, must take power, cut the capitalist wires, and put the state on emergency footing against the root causes of climate and ecological breakdown.

Assuming the masses gain power, let us now outline the transformations that follow.

To execute the state's functions, community representatives are directly elected to the state, paid an equal living wage, and subject to a strict statute for recall as well as term limits. They are responsible for democratically planning the ecological transition and ensuring for effective, centralised coordination. Universal voting rights are guaranteed.

The first order of business is to democratise society by restoring the means of production to all. In the people's hands, we can produce for human and planetary needs, both advancing the material interests of the masses *and* healing our frayed connections with Earth.

In this process of democratisation,

everyone has access to a purposeful, decent, self-organised job. Economic life is democratically planned in accordance with urgent ecological imperatives and a portion of labour output is appropriated to fund universal basic services.

The parochial definition of labour itself is expanded beyond waged work, acknowledging the central importance of the reproductive and metabolic labour that sustains humanity and nature. Without the imperative of producing for capital accumulation, the working week can be shrunk, freeing up time for recreation, exploration, and leisure. Together with guaranteed vacation, the spell of productivism is broken. We can finally re-discover our creative, curious, spiritual selves.

We are not promising utopia. We are offering the vision of a new world where everyone has an equal right to what they provide for society, not an equitable right attuned to the vagaries of different, and thus unequal, people. The latter will only come with the former's maturation and fruition.



Decommodify the ecological means of survival

Under capitalism, life is commodified. To access the means of survival, people need to sell their labour power to capitalists. People receive a wage, which can be used for rent, food, and energy, and the capitalists receive surplus value – the difference between a wage and the final market price of the commodity under production.

This economic arrangement has no parallel in history. Even in the most exploitative societies, the majority of people had some customary access to the means of survival, with land, far and above, the most important. But through a process of primitive accumulation, people's connection to the soil was severed.

Today, billions of people rely on the market for survival, a majority of which eke out an existence on less than \$5 per day. Not only are people alienated from the product of their labour through surplus value extraction, but they are alienated from nature, the very basis for human survival. With production and distribution decisions democratically distributed, the following needs are decommodified:

Energy: Zero-carbon energy becomes a universal basic service. The energy system is rapidly





electrified and transmitted through a continental supergrid combining large-scale solar and wind with local, community-owned renewable energy. Rare Earth minerals, including lithium, nickel, and cobalt, necessary for renewable energy and battery infrastructure, are sourced through just supply chains in respect of labour and indigenous rights and deployed in compliance with planetary boundaries. A mass retrofit campaign insulates homes and installs ground-source heat pumps.



With decision making power transferred from fossil capitalists to the people, an immediate moratorium is placed on all new oil, gas, coal, and fossil hydrogen projects. Fossil fuel production and consumption is phased out by 2030 in line with 1.5°C decarbonization. Workers retool fossil infrastructure into a public utility of carbon waste management, sucking carbon out of the air and safely burying it underground.



Transport: Mass expansion of light rail, metro, bus, cycle infrastructure, and pedestrian routes. Regional public transport is free and accessible to all. Mass aviation is phased out and replaced with the rapid rollout of high speed rail.



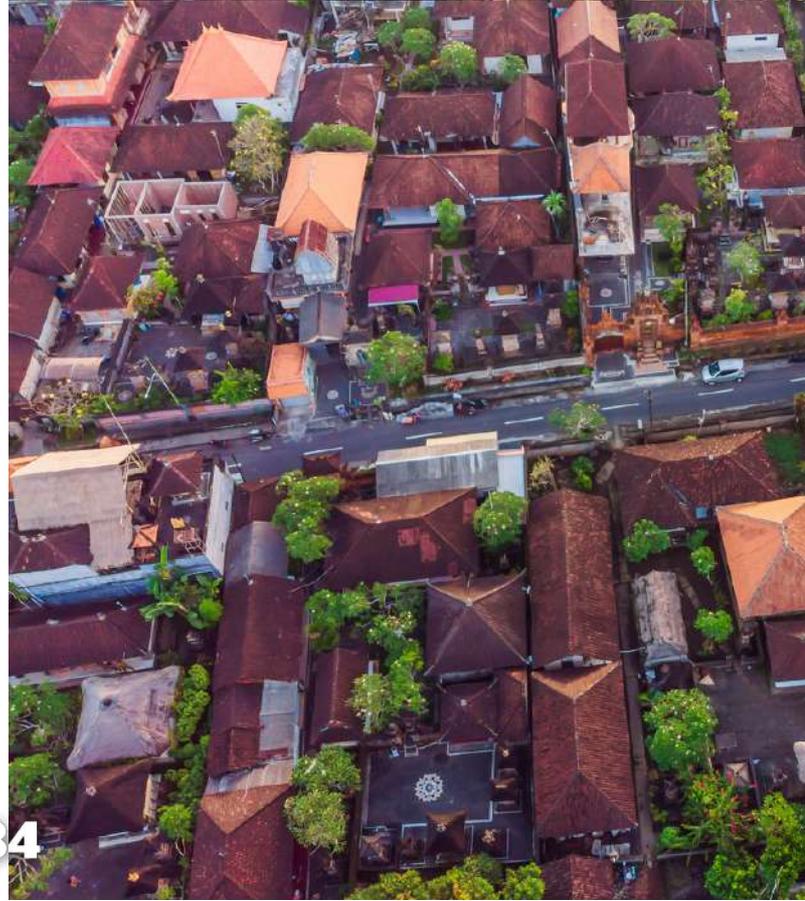
Education: Free, high quality education from preschool through university is guaranteed for all children and adults. Places of education are a vital source of social

reproduction – they ought to be treated as such. Robust mental health care, nutritious meals, ample time for play, nature connection, and student-teacher curricula co-creation replace competitive, bureaucratized capitalist education systems. Trade schools are fully funded to upskill an ecological workforce.

Food: Food provisions are means-tested, ensuring those in need have full access to regular, free, nutritious meals. The food production system is overhauled to produce for people, not profit. Agricultural corporations are broken up, crops are diversified, seeds decommodified, and diets relocalized to make the food system more resilient, isolating food shocks brought on by an overheated planet. In addition, the land freed from a plant-based transition gives way to land-back policies and large-scale rewilding. In the process, anti-speciesism and nature connection are fostered.

Housing: Having a home doesn't depend on money, status, or job. Everyone is guaranteed more than just a shelter, but a home – a comfortable space to rest, host friends, and be with family. Priority is placed on redistributing multiple homes and mass retrofit, as opposed to resource-intensive new builds.

Healthcare: Healthcare is a guaranteed universal human right. It is free for all and there are low barriers to access.



Health services are expanded to appropriately address mental health challenges due to widespread feelings of loneliness and alienation experienced under (digital) capitalism.

Areas traditionally neglected can be appropriately accounted for, including trans health, elder care, reproductive health, abortion, and addiction treatments.



Decolonise nature, society, and the economy

Imperialism and colonialism are twin forces that have enabled centuries of capital accumulation. We must decolonize nature, society and the economy.

I. Nature

Land is the oldest enclosure. Its privatisation has driven the degradation of nature and wealth inequality. In the people's hands, a program of public land-ownership is implemented, converting large landholdings to community land trusts. This process is critical in transforming capitalist social property relations that feed on exploitation and dominate people and planet. Not only has land been enclosed, but the atmosphere has also been colonised by European fossil capitalist development. A project of carbon drawdown is also under way, returning historic emissions back below fair share levels (understanding 350 ppm as the safe limit of atmospheric CO2 concentration).

II. Society

Police and Prisons: The police were created in the late 18th and early 19th century to enable colonialism, slavery, and capitalism. They are not concerned with public safety, but with

criminalising the symptoms (e.g. mental health illness, homelessness, poverty) of exploitative systems and cracking down on systemic resistance, most prominently labour and racial struggles.

Equally, prisons are part of the repressive colonial apparatus. They continue that legacy as a carceral colonisation of human bodies. No human being deserves to live in a cage, even for violent crime. Matching violence with violence only perpetuates systems of harm. With a society full of social security and widespread, accessible healthcare services, police can be replaced by a new means of collective security rooted in harm reduction and care. The steady abolition of prison can also lay the seeds for a new society of common safety and wellbeing.

Borders: Migrant justice is central to reckoning with the long history of colonialism. The influx of migrants displaced by climate and ecological breakdown are welcomed and offered full rights including a home, healthcare, education, and a guaranteed zero-carbon, unionised job.

Military: The imperial military forces are defunded, international bases shut down, and nuclear weapons disarmed.

Community: A process of decolonising capitalism's influence on social

relations and community is under way. The social fear, anxiety and individualism – capitalism's social colonisation – is combated by large scale investment in public luxuries, including public parks, community theatres, leisure centres, and sports facilities. In addition, expanding the commons enables a rediscovery of collective belonging, safety, and purpose. To guide the process, accessible programs of community healing that help address compounding systems of oppression, including racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, queerphobia, and transphobia are deployed.

III. Economy

Shifting power structures to serve people and planet means implementing a program of international economic decolonisation. Debts are cancelled and grant-based climate reparations are issued in line with historic responsibility and capacity to pay. Intellectual property rights are waived, enabling the transfer of low-carbon technologies that facilitate the process of global mitigation and adaptation.

Conclusion

This is not the eco socialist program – merely a synthesis of ideas to spark conversation. A real program will only come to be by going to the

people, asking what they need, and creating a set of policies in accordance with their ecological material interests. As a start, we invite people to submit their thoughts in [this survey](#) and write counter proposals that enrich our inchoate efforts.

From the flames, we will smelt, cast, and forge the ecosocialist lantern as guide through our planetary twilight. Dawn awaits.

If you're interested in writing a response and publishing it in Fight the Fire, please email us at program@fighthefire.net.



greenwash, redwash and climatewash

BY JONATHAN NEALE

~~IT'S TOO EARLY.~~

~~I WAS UP TOO LATE.~~

~~I HAD A LONG DAY.~~

~~I'M TOO TIRED.~~

~~I'LL DO IT TOMORROW~~

At the end of 2021 I came away from the COP (the UN climate talks) in Glasgow with a strange feeling. Then I realized what was wrong. Where was the greenwash?

For more than two decades the leaders of the world had been saying that the UN would do something. This time they did not bother to pretend. All the promises from different governments were in, and they were going to take us through 2 degrees to 3 degrees.

I thought it was horrific that they felt they didn't even need to bother with greenwash. But it also presented the climate movement with an open goal.

The COP at Sharm al Shaykh in Egypt the next year was worse. And holding the COP in Dubai this year is a statement of open contempt.

But I was wrong. What I did not see coming was that the greenwash would now come from climate activists, the left, the environmentalists and the NGOs.

Let me start with one example. Last year I gave a talk to a small meeting about climate jobs and how we can build a 100% renewable world. A socialist and long time climate activist spoke up in the discussion.

He said: "Electric vehicles are not the solution. There is not enough lithium in the world for all the batteries. And lithium is poisonous. It will destroy the sacred ecology of indigenous people in Chile and Bolivia.". When he finished speaking, he smiled.

Road transport produces 18% of global CO2 emissions. We need to cut total CO2 emissions by at least 90%. My friend had just proved that was impossible. The appropriate reaction to that is to scream or to cry. Not smile.

The arguments about lithium and transport are complicated. I have written a great deal on the subject, which you can read in *Fight the Fire: Green New Deals and Global Climate Jobs*. The basic point there is that until 1995 there were no lithium batteries in the world. There are many other ways of building batteries. They are just more expensive, so need subsidies from governments.

But here I am making a more general point. Many people and organizations in the climate movement are coming forward with arguments that show why it is politically or environmentally wrong to stop all burning of CO2. Or they argue that we should fight for something else, some smaller and different goal.





There is no unjust transition on offer

Why? Two ways of thought lurk behind this kind of climate justice wash. The first is the feeling that the purpose of the climate justice movement is to prevent capitalism forcing through an unjust transition. This idea is a mistake about reality. There is no unjust transition on offer. Because right now there is no real transition of any kind on offer.

What does that mean? Let me explain.

For thirty years now the governments and corporations of the world have been talking about climate change. As they have talked, the amount of CO₂ going into the atmosphere has risen every year, except during COVID. Things have not just been getting worse, they have been getting worse faster. One quarter of the total CO₂ in the atmosphere has been put there since 2004, while the leaders of the world have been all talking and doing nothing – Blah, Blah, Blah.

In 2020, 8% of global electricity came from wind and solar power (according to the International Energy Agency). That figure may come as a surprise. The figure you see more commonly is that 28% of electricity comes from “renewable energy”.

But more than two-thirds of that second figure comes from nuclear power, hydroelectric power, and biofuels. Only 8% comes from wind and solar, the fuels of the future.

But it's worse than that. Less than half of global energy goes to make electricity. This means that really only 3% of total energy came from wind and solar.

3%. After 28 years of COPs.

At some point, we have to learn from our experience. We have waited decades for politicians and the market to solve this problem. They have not done so. And they won't.

It is not as if the capitalist are going to force through an unjust transition. They don't want to. They are not going to halt climate change.

So we have to organize a global mass movement to make the world renewable. And simply getting existing politicians to make dishonest promises won't work. We have to build movements that can win elections and take power.

That means we are in the fight of the century, not for an alternative just transition, but for any transition at all.

The point is not to comment on capitalism. The point is to fight the

powers of the world to save the world.

That's pretty scary. Many organizations and many people are holding back from taking on a struggle on that scale. After all, we might fail. Actually, we are up against such enormous power that we will probably fail. It makes some sense to despair.

But there is still a chance we might win. We might save the world and each other. And history is not written until humans have made it.

"Yes, but only if"

Another problematic way of thinking is that many people have something else that is more important to them than stopping climate change.

So some people think: Yes, I want to stop climate change, but only if it does not happen under capitalism.

Or yes, but only if we have a revolution first.

Or yes, but only if everyone is vegetarian.

Or yes, but only if the transition does not use enormous resources.

Or yes, but only if there is no extractivism.

Or yes, but only if we have degrowth.

Or yes, but only if I get what I really care about.

I understand why people think this way. I myself came into climate politics twenty years ago as a trade union activist and a revolutionary. I came in thinking, "Oh good, I can use the threat of climate change makes an argument for the necessity of revolution." Shame on me, but that's how I thought.

What we need is to move from "Yes, but only if," to "Yes, and." Let me give some examples of what that would mean.

Flipping "The Revolution"

This is an ecosocialist magazine, so let's start with revolution. A common argument now that goes like this: "Capitalism is a system hooked on growth. So we need to have a revolution before we can stop climate change. That will only be possible in a socialist society."

Observe how this argument works in practice. This argument is not made by people who are currently engaged in organizing a revolution. It's a comment, not a plan.

Most of the people they talk to don't believe that a revolution is possible – certainly not within the time scale on which we need action on climate. So most people hear them saying the



BUT

socialists stopping climate change is not possible.

This argument that we need a revolution first disempowers the movement. And it disempowers the revolutionaries.

But you can flip the argument. Start by saying that we need to stop climate change. So we need to stop fossil fuel emissions. That will take us into conflict with the powers of this world, (On some level everyone knows this.) So let's unite and fight for a completely renewable world.

If that turns out to require a revolution, so be it. And if we can do it within a reformed capitalism, also so be it. Either one would still be an enormous victory for human survival.

Moreover, if people come together on the scale necessary to stop climate change, we will have changed humanity. And we will have changed our understanding of what humanity can do.

And, if we do stop climate change by mass global action, after we do it, everyone will refer to what they did as "the revolution".

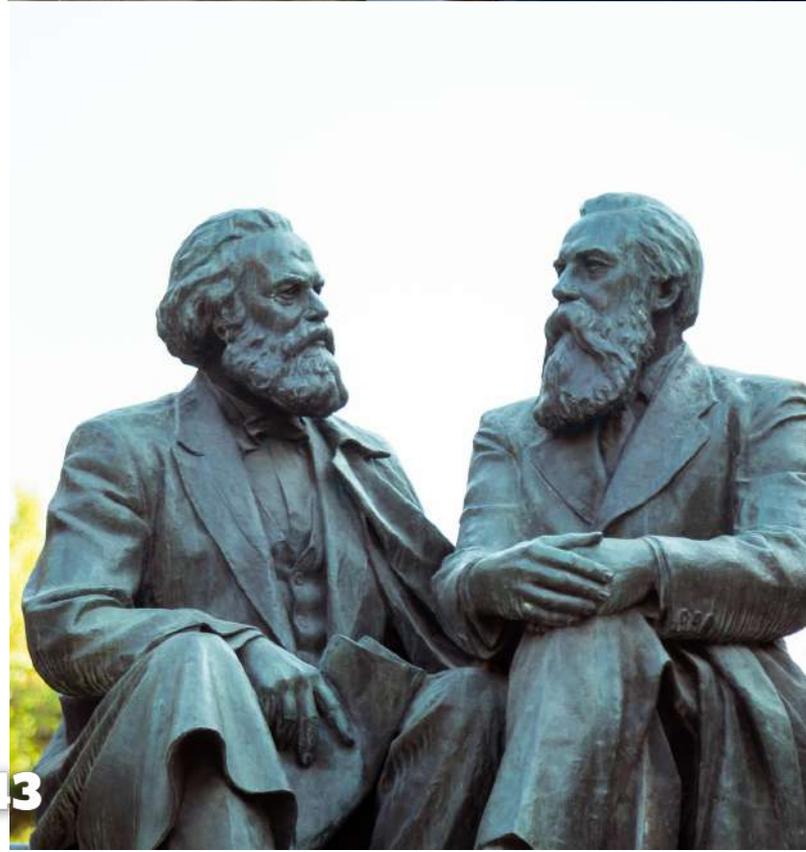
Flipping “The Just Transition”

The same logic applies to thinking about Climate Justice or the Just Transition. I have argued that the task facing humanity is not improving a transition that is going to happen anyway. The question is how to make any transition happen.

To do that we need governments to act now, hire enormous numbers of workers and spend lots of money to cover the earth with renewable energy and make all energy use come from renewable electricity. And then we need governments to make selling fossil fuels illegal.

And this where the values of climate justice do become important. We will be fighting for very large numbers of jobs for working people. Just as important, we will fighting against all the corporations and politicians who have failed to solve this problem. Those people have an enormous amount of power. The only way we can challenge them is with the enthusiastic support and determined participation of working people and small farmers all over the world.

We are not going to build the movement we need if that transition does not give a fair share to workers in China and Pakistan, farmers in Bolivia and Bangladesh, Dalits in India and Blacks in the United States, and so on. What makes a struggle socialist is class struggle.



Flipping “Caring about the Environment”

The same sort of logic applies to environmental radicalism. Many people say, “Before we can stop climate change, we have to change how people feel about the environment.”

No, we don't. People can stop climate change just because they want to survive, and they want the people they love to survive. In the process, they will change how they feel about the environment.

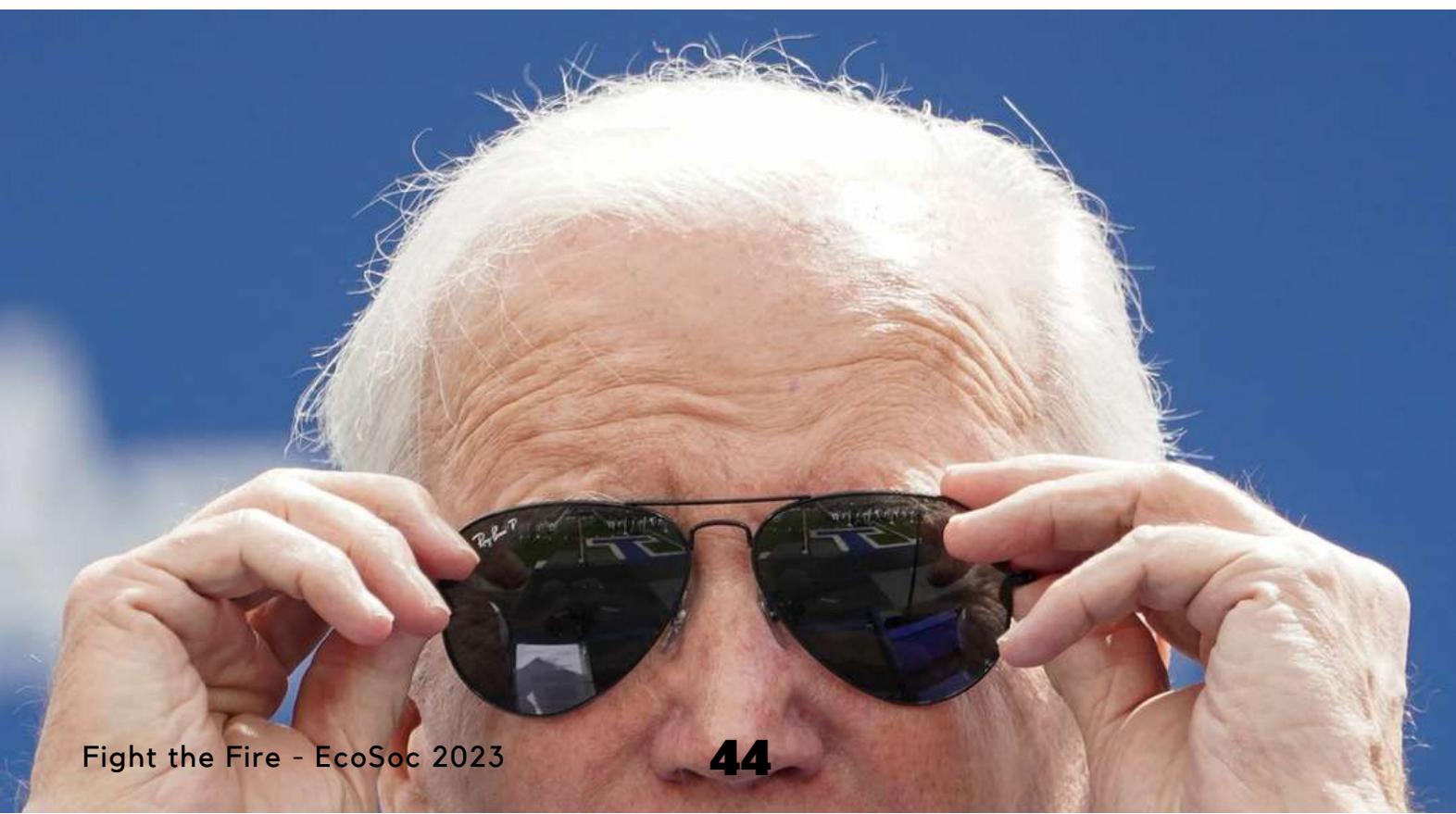
Biden's Bill

All around us, we can see people inventing reasons for not stopping fossil fuels. One of the big reasons is that our organizations are organically, though often informally, connected to the parties and organizations that between them rule the world.

Take Biden's big climate bill in 2022. The climate movement and the environmental NGOs want Biden to beat Trump in 2024. Understandable. So do I. But then they say that will mean spending \$496 billion.

I bet you read that as \$496 billion a year. No. That's the total spending over ten years. The annual figure is \$49 billion a year.

But the climate spending within the \$49 billion is even less. Take out the spending on other things that maybe good but won't reduce emissions, and it is \$31 billion a year. Most of that is tax cuts for corporations making renewable energy and electric cars, and for wealthier people buying electric cars and new boilers and insulating their houses. A very generous estimate is that \$25 billion a year will help to reduce emissions each year.



That is nowhere near enough to make America all renewable. Total American GDP is 933 times that much each year. In 2020 under Trump and in 2021 under Biden, the American government spent almost \$2.5 TRILLION a year on COVID subsidies.

In other words Trump and Biden both spent 100 times as much on Covid each year as Biden will spend next year on climate change.

Yet the word has gone out all through the American progressive and environmental movement to support Biden, because otherwise it's Trump. The threat of a Trump victory is very real. And so almost everyone in the American climate movement pretends that Biden's Bill is the solution to climate change. And almost no one in the American climate movement thinks outside that box.

Biden, Scholz and Trump

Then came the Ukraine War. This time the governments of Germany, the USA and all of Europe agreed. The war meant that "we" had to go back to fossil fuels.

In Germany the word came down from the Social Democrats and the Green Party in the government that, unfortunately, we need all the gas we can get. The pattern was the same across much of Europe.

There was one way the climate movement could have reacted to that. We could have argued for subsidies for the price of food, heating, cooking fuel and transport then and there.

And the same time, we could have argued for harsh taxation on the fossil fuel companies so they made no more profits. And we could have tried to



force governments to spend massive amounts of money, to hire workers to build so much renewable energy that no one would ever worry about gas or oil supplies again.

Only our movement did not do it. Some of us said it. Some of us did not. Mostly we talked about other things. In America the word came down from Biden that unfortunately we need more fracking and more drilling and more exports of liquified natural gas. So, the Democrats said, stopping fossil fuels has to wait. Right now we need more fossil fuels, not less.

The people in the American climate movement listened, and they are not talking about going beyond Biden. Mostly, they are not even imagining it. And there is another side to this. Many people, in many parts of the world, have supported Putin against Ukraine and NATO. In the process many of

them are growing closer to a right-wing sexist, racist, pro-fossil alliance led by Putin, Trump and Modi. Putin's regime, after all, is utterly dependent on oil and gas.

In short, on every side the leaders have seized the moment of the Ukraine War to persuade us it is necessary to accept fossil fuels.

The Comeback of Gas and Oil

The weakness of the climate movement and the push by the US, Russia and other governments to encourage fossil fuels have opened the door to increased investment in gas and oil.

There are five oil and gas "supermajors" in the United States and Europe. In 2022, the five made a total profit of over \$200 billion. On the back of that, they have all decided to increase their investment in fossil fuels. The bellwether is BP, which had been promising to reduce investment in fossil fuels and increase investment in renewables. Now, under pressure from investors, they have reversed this policy.

Mike Wirth is CEO of Chevron, one of the "superfive". Early in 2023 he told the London Financial Times: "The reality is [fossil fuel] is what runs the world today. It's going to run the world five years from now, 10 years from now, 20 years from now."



The fossil fuel companies are becoming more confident. The leaders of the world are becoming more openly resistant to action on climate.

At the same time, organizations and people on our side are becoming more reluctant to even try to stop fossil fuels. As they become reluctant, they look for reasons why they do not have to try. And as they repeat those reasons, the fossil corporations and the leaders of the world grow more confident.

Here are some more examples of climate wash from our the climate justice movement.

One person who said to me, "We will have to use too much resources to cover the world with renewable energy. So unfortunately, we can't."

At least he looked at me sadly and did not smile. But it was an argument for giving up.

Actually, many people have said that to me.

Here's another example. A door is opening in many countries to make it a law that all new cars have to be electric. If those cars were powered by electricity from renewables, that would reduce global CO2 emissions by 10%. If buses and trucks were run on electricity too, that would reduce global emissions by another 8%.

This is perfectly possible. Chinese firms dominate the EV market, which helps a lot, and car manufacturers all over the world are rushing to catch up.

Many people say no, that just encourages cars. Environmentalists say cars are bad. Socialists say public transport is good. So we should encourage public transport, not electric vehicles.

That is climate wash. If we shift half of all car journeys to public transport, we reduce car emissions by between 25 and 30%. If we require all vehicles to be run on renewable, we cut those emissions by 100%.

Of course public transport is good. But if you are trying to save the planet, say, "Yes! Let's make all new vehicles electric now. Let's fight tooth and nail for that to happen as soon as possible. And let's build as much public transport as we can."

Doing Other Good Things

There are also many people in the climate movement who argue for doing other things which are good but do not reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

For example, some people argue that climate activists should campaign for more support and funding for care workers. Absolutely, yes. The epidemic has taught us, yet again, the

necessity of care and health workers. I have spent half my working life doing that, and four or the last ten years looking after my elderly relatives. I am proud of that. But it did not reduce CO2 or methane emissions.

Again, many people in the climate movement campaign against giant extractivist projects. Where they close down coal, oil and gas, it is very important in stopping climate change. Where they close down

mines for lithium, rare earths, copper, platinum or even gold, they do little or nothing to stop emissions.

There are many ways to fight, and many causes worth living and dying for. I have no quarrel with that. I have spent more of the last ten years writing about sexual violence than about climate change.

Of course fight where you want to and where you have to. But also: Stop Fossil Now.



Where We Are Now

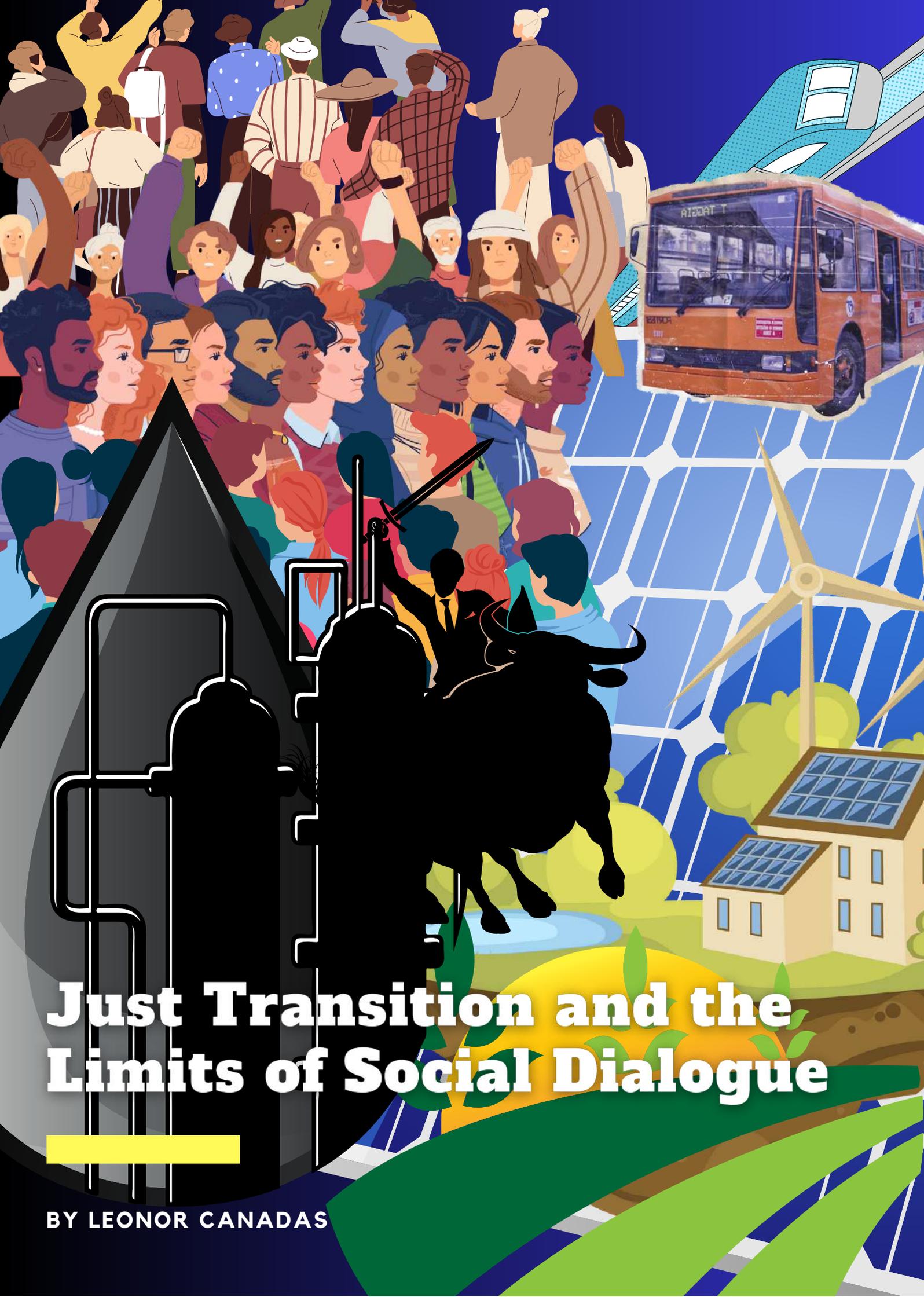
So that's where we are now. The choices are clear. We need to close down fossil fuels completely. To do that, we need governments to spend the money and hire people to do the work of building renewable energy all over the world. Without the jobs and the renewable, we are lost. And replacing fossil fuels is by far the most important thing we can do.

But it is also clear that to achieve that, we have to organize ourselves, globally, from the bottom up, against the people who dominate our world.

That is not an easy task. We may well fail. Despair is a sensible reaction. It is also climate wash.

But our movement is beginning to grow again. There are movements on the streets now, demanding an end to fossil fuels. You can feel the pressure building. And the planet is offering us a choice. Breathe. Stop telling each stories about why we should not try to save the world. And stop changing the subject. Breathe again, reach out, and go for the big one.





Just Transition and the Limits of Social Dialogue

BY LEONOR CANADAS

Recently I was asked to reflect on the question: “what does a credible EU-wide, social and economic framework to achieve a just transition look like?”

The term “Just Transition” is widely used nowadays, but, from my experience, the term has very different meanings for different groups of people. So, before I dive into this question, I first need to define what a Just Transition actually is.

The concept of Just Transition was created by workers' movements, specifically in the efforts of the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW) in the US. They used the term as a set of guarantees for workers whose jobs were threatened by environmental policies. OCAW's president, Tony Mazzocchi, argued that environmental policy could create jobs as part of a broader societal transformation.

Just Transition has since evolved and gained a broader meaning, including the need for income protection, re-employment opportunities, education, and worker retraining, when implementing climate policies. A definition proposed has been of a “transition towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy that maximises the benefits of climate action while minimising hardships for workers and their communities.”.

Just Transition has now established itself politically in major international organisations and it has become visible to the point of being referenced in major institutional texts – including the Preamble of the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal.

However, there is a big difference between talking about a Just Transition and actually implementing one. In a recent paper, Robert Pollin stated that the overarching aim of Just Transition policies should be to protect workers impacted by a fossil fuel phase out. And he presented three critical guarantees for that purpose. “These include: 1) guarantees of a new job; 2) guarantees that the compensation at the new jobs will be comparable to that at their previous jobs; and 3) guarantees that their pensions should remain intact even as their employers' business operations are phased down.” Pollin reviewed different transition policies around the world and remarked that the policies in the EU do not provide workers with these critical guarantees.

“Just Transition” has been, to a big extent, stripped of its original meaning of justice and protection of affected workers and communities, to justice and protection of private companies and shareholders – the exact companies who have been

gaining enormous sums of profits, while perfectly aware of the devastating impact of their activities.

The growing visibility and institutionalisation of the term Just Transition was much based on a call for social dialogue - a process defined by the International Labour Organization as “all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy.”

The Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED) argues that there has been a shift in the meaning of social dialogue, which has had “a disarming effect on a global

trade union movement,” as it “entails a largely uncritical endorsement of the ‘green growth’ framework and agenda.” Therefore, TUED concludes that “social dialogue is simply not up to the task of bringing about any kind of societal transition.” It is chained by the imperatives of perpetual growth and rejects any serious challenge to current arrangements of power, ownership and profit. Simply put: social dialogue won't deliver the kind of systemic transformation we need.

A social dialogue approach to a just transition leaves workers from carbon-intensive sectors in no position to fight for an energy transition. A lot of fossil fuel workers actually have good jobs and incomes.

Social dialogue has had a disarming effect on the global trade union movement

Social dialogue won't deliver the kind of systemic transformation we need

A social dialogue approach to a Just Transition leaves workers from carbon-intensive sectors in no position to fight for an energy transition.



Some know they are going to lose their jobs sooner or later, but they don't feel they will be protected when the time comes. At the same time, unions feel they need to protect their members. But within the current social dialogue negotiation mechanisms they are not, I believe, fully empowered to protect them. The unequal power relation between social partners is huge. Corporations are too powerful and most governments are their allies.

We need governments who are ready to kick fossil capital and corporations out and fully engage in dialogue with unions and workers to lead the transition, not the corporations driving the harm. Governments have the power to guarantee re-qualification, secure incomes, and create high-paying public sector climate jobs. A program that combines economic democracy, social ownership, and widespread participatory planning with millions of climate jobs has the power to stop climate breakdown and secure our collective survival.

But to do so, we must move from social dialogue to social power. As posed on the 11th working paper by TUED, the concept of social power wishes to offer an alternative to the framework of social dialogue. It is

based on the will to challenge "existing arrangements of ownership and power, mainly by asserting, or reasserting, calls for public or social ownership and democratic control over key sectors."

I call all of those who are sick and tired of empty promises, capitalist exploitation and social injustice that want to build *social power* for a real radical just transition to gather in the Netherlands October 4-6th 2023, for the Global Climate Jobs Conference.

We will host open discussions about radically just policies, about the future of working-class organising, and alliances building between climate, labour and other social movements. It is a conference for discussion on programmatic goals and political strategy. A conference based on the acknowledgment that without a radical restructuring of our economy we will fail to deliver a just transition and climate justice. A conference to build the social power that stops climate change.

There is no time to postpone an emergency response. A Just energy transition to stop further damages on climate and ecosystems requires a break from capitalism and the embrace of a new economy that meets people's needs within planetary boundaries.



World Congress for Climate Justice: ideas, strategies, large-scale experiments

BY ALEX FOTI



The World Congress for Climate Justice (WCCJ - October 12-15, 2023) was born during the terrible drought of last summer. As Italian, Belgian and German activists contemplated the dried river basins of Po, Loire, Rhine, they met in Berlin and vowed to do something to assemble the forces of resistance to fossil capital and provide a way to achieve a synthesis between the various tendencies of radical climate activism across the world.

Thus the idea of a world congress of ecological anticapitalism started to take flesh, and when the fascistically neoliberal Meloni government took power, the choice fell on Milano, because the city had held the largest climate strike in the world on 27 September 2019 and continues to oppose racism and homophobia in a country and a continent where nationalist xenophobia is rearing its ugly head.

In the second largest Italian city, we have assembled an organizing committee with the city's Centri Sociali as well as Ultima Generazione, Ecologia Politica, Comitato Acqua, Off Topic, Extinction Rebellion, Fridays for Future and other student collectives and discussion groups, which regularly meets at Piano Terra, a squatted space in the Isola neighborhood. We met several times during these months and the program of the world congress has

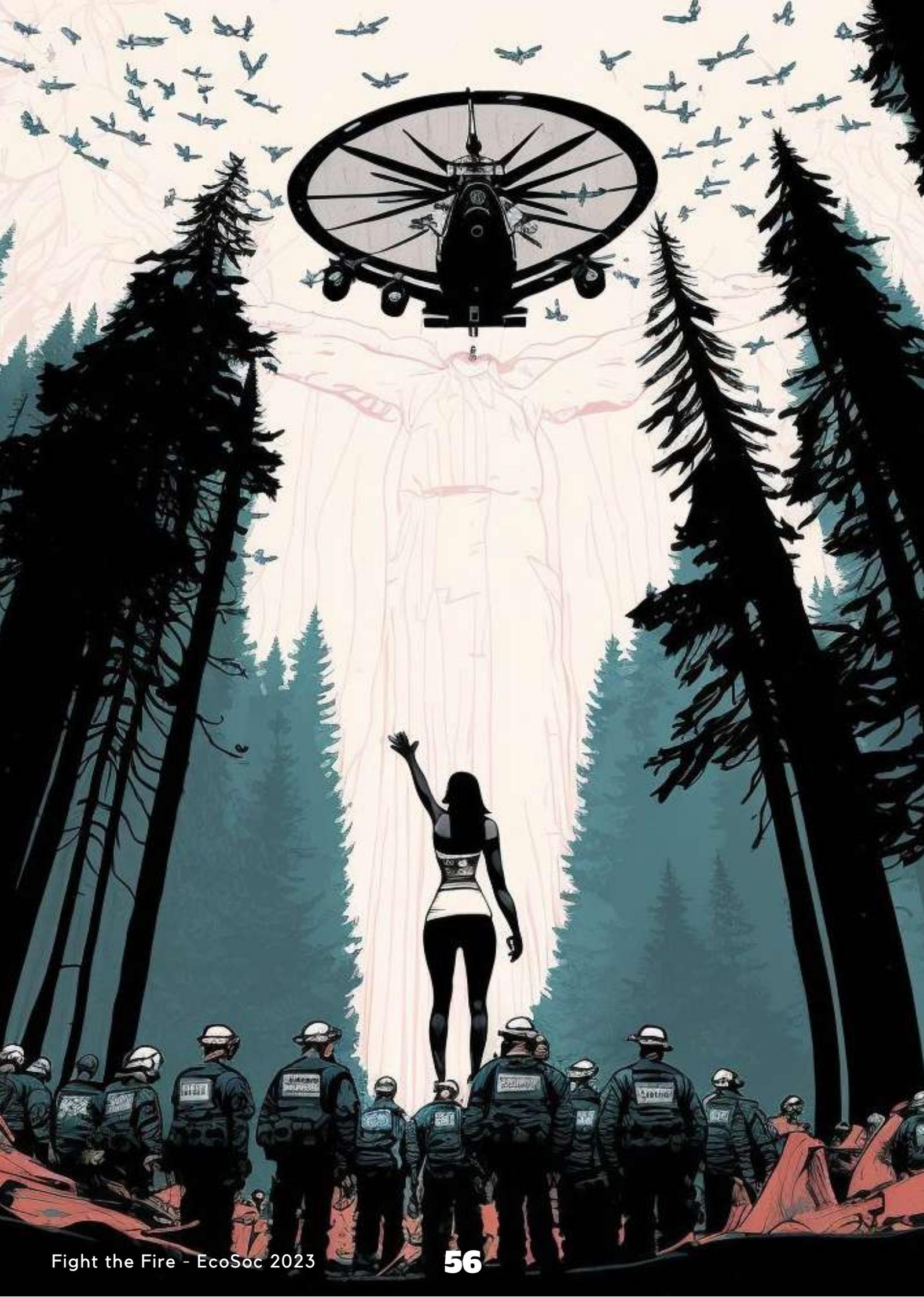
recently been published (wccj.online). It's important to stress that it will be a congress with delegations of gender-parity delegates from many countries and regions of the world who will discuss and deliberate on crucial issues awaiting the climate justice movement in the next months.

This is no forum, but a congress where more than 200 delegates will reach decisions on campaigns, buzzwords, tactics, strategies, projects to dismantle fossil capitalism, in Thematic and Plenary Assemblies. We intend also to promote frank and fertile ideological debate on the main strands of green anticapitalism (e.g. Bookchin and social ecology, Malm/Saito and eco-marxism, ZAD and eco-anarchism, Hallam and climate disobedience). As an appetizer, I highlight the basic structure of the four-day World Congress for Climate Justice.

Thursday: activist and subvertising workshops, press conference and a welcoming session.

Friday: climate horror demo in the morning in the streets of Milano and specialized seminars in the afternoon at State U.

Saturday: the big thematic assemblies. Sunday: final plenary and farewell lunch at Leoncavallo, Italy's first (and largest) social center.



To give a simple idea of what all this seeks to achieve, we are forming the First Internationale of climate anticapitalism. Like the Transnational Social Strike assembly said as it endorsed the Milano World Congress for Climate Justice in Frankfurt, the overarching aim is to constitute the radical faction of the global climate movement. We want to federate diverse revolutionary movements and philosophies, including ecotransfeminism, autonomous marxism, anarchism, post-colonialism, ecosocialism, to build a counter-power so large we can finally destroy fossil lobbies and defeat the rule of digital capital on Earth. Just Stop Oil, Lützerath, Sainte-Soline, End Fossil portend a new wave of climate justice activism, and the WCCJ is there to make sure there is synergy and solidarity among the main forces that mean to overthrow fossil capitalism and the governments that abet ecocide.

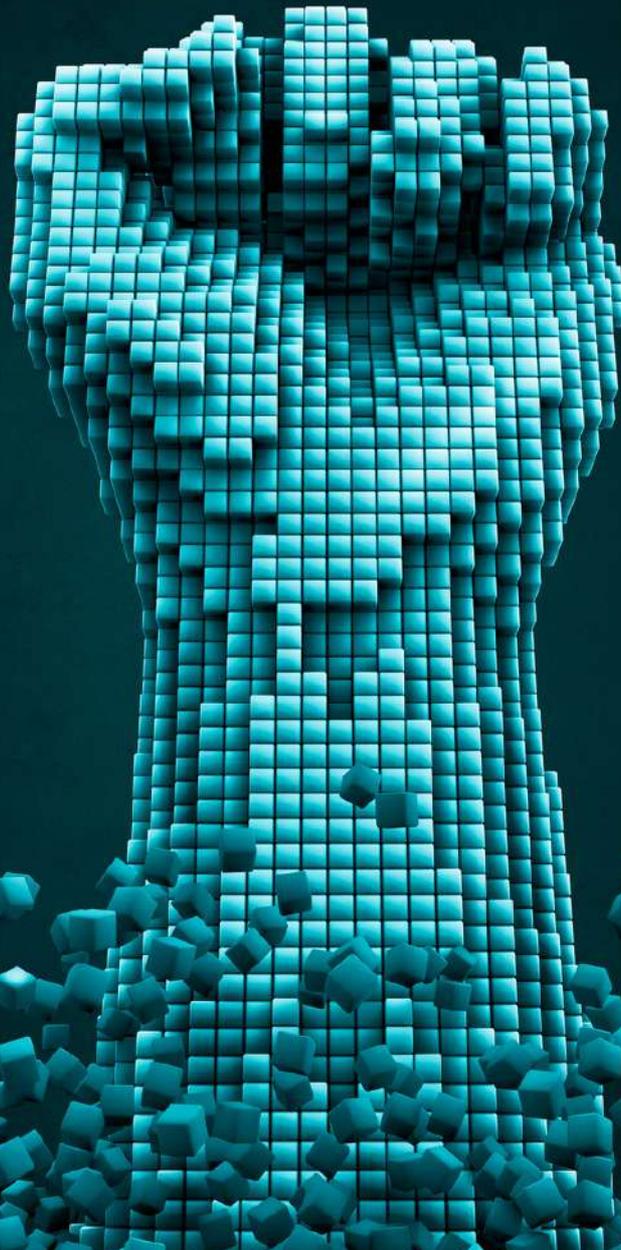
Although there can be disagreement over tactics, we think there is enough political will and repertoire overlapping to converge on common strategies that are scalable to the level of the threat our communities are facing now and for the foreseeable future.

So no matter if you're pink, red, black or green, ask your climate justice movement to join the congress and come to Milano as a delegate. We'll be working and partying hard, and that's a promise. Neoliberalism is fading across the world, let's make sure it kicks the bucket and that a post-capitalist future that is livable for the precarious masses of the South and North of the planet can be attained.



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