

# Stop Our Future from Going Up in Flames: Capitalism or Survival–We Can’t Have Both!

Climate scientists have been warning for years that we need to keep 80% of known fossil fuels in the ground. Yet, in Canada their extraction is still increasing with energy corporations celebrating soaring profits that are inflated by huge government subsidies.

A 2018 United Nations report gave the world 12 years to severely ratchet down carbon emissions or face climate catastrophes. In the five years since, B. C. has suffered

- a superstorm and a major flood,
- a heat dome that killed hundreds and burned an entire town, and
- widespread drought accompanied by devastating forest fires.

The highest average global temperature ever was recorded in the summer of 2023. More people are being impacted by climate disasters every year. While no one is safe now, in our class society some are in more immediate danger – precarious workers, farm labourers, the unorganized, people in poverty, impoverished nations. Awareness is growing that this will get worse. Youth climate activists, more than anyone, know the system isn’t working for them and their whole future is at stake.

The international climate movement is growing and fighting back against fossil fuel extraction and transport/export, pipeline spills, fracking, and for water and forest protection. Climate activists lobby governments, launch court cases, “pressure” corporations, rally and march, block roads, and get arrested in large numbers.

BUT in spite of many government promises, greenhouse gases increase and produce fires, drought, sea level rise, and disease. (And this is aside from the prediction that the cross-country wildfires of 2023 will double or triple Canada’s emissions.) Canada is one of the worst offenders in increasing fossil fuel extractions since the 2015 “Paris Accord.”



# Why Don’t They Just Stop Climate Change??!

The root cause of climate change is the world’s dominant social and economic system--capitalism. It is based on production for profits, NOT for human needs. Capitalism also depends on unending growth of production to create profits. If growth slows, there is a crisis: investment falls, layoffs rise, spending drops, production dips, and more jobs are lost. Insatiable market forces make capitalism what it is. It is wishful thinking that it can be reformed, that it can exist in some steady-state, minimal-growth version.

A survivable future--for everyone--demands moving rapidly away from fossil fuel energy. We must end the incredible wastefulness of our production, consumption and war-making. We have to create a society and economy that is in harmony with the complex and delicate ecology that creates the air, food, water and temperature range we need to survive.

A survivable economy would have to be a planned economy aiming for social, economic and environmental goals--chosen by all of us democratically deciding on production and consumption priorities, based on principles of social justice and eco-harmony.

We call such a system socialism. It is not a reform of capitalism. We see it as a new system. To get there we will have to replace profiteers’ power with that of working people, replace competitive greed with cooperative community

Going beyond petitions, lobbying, and ‘pressuring’ CEOs, all of us need to:

- Organize in our neighbourhoods, communities, schools, workplaces, unions, and political parties to do battle in huge public rallies, in strikes, and at the ballot box
- Work to link up existing social struggles and develop a plan to transition ourselves to a post-carbon energy system and to a post capitalist economic system

To make genuine socialism work, we must all have an equal stake and an equal voice—everyone must be treated justly. We have to eliminate racism, sex and gender discrimination, and all forms of undemocratic inequality and oppression, while enshrining indigenous rights to sovereignty and self-determination

Vancouver Ecosocialists are working for democratic, egalitarian, ecologically sane socialism. Check our web page:



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