

Support the Wet'suwet'en against the new gas pipeline

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada has made many environmental promises, but he is backing new pipelines and more fracking. A spokesperson of the capitalist class like him just naturally puts money before the world's welfare: in 2017 he said of the Albertan tar sands: "No country would find 173bn barrels of oil in the ground and just leave them there". His stand is environmentalism in words, but taking part in burning the world in practice.

But today there are protests across Canada against yet another pipeline. The indigenous Wet'suwet'en First Nation is fighting against the building of the Coastal GasLink, which crosses their territory, violating their land rights, and helping to destroy the world's environment. Other indigenous tribes and environmental activists have supported them, and there have been demonstrations and train blockages across Canada, not just in British Columbia, but also in the provinces of Manitoba and Ontario. CN Rail and Via Rail Canada have had to cancel many scheduled passenger and freight trains. The protesters have stood up against RCMP violence and arrests.

Most of the Wet'suwet'en band councils approved the pipeline, but not the hereditary chiefs, and it is the struggle against the pipeline that represents the spirit of the First Nations. This struggle is a snapshot of what's going on around the world. Month after month, another part of the world burns, with devastating fires in the Amazon followed by even larger fires in Australia. And still, billionaires like Trump deny this is a problem, while other capitalist leaders like Trudeau pretend to be better but build pipelines, and the UN spouts more hot air in an already hot world. It is only the masses of people who are really fighting to save the world's environment, with larger and larger demonstrations, and we don't see the UN or the establishment environmentalists backing the serious protests.

The same disregard by the rich towards the environment was manifested at the UN's Conference in December. It was the 25th annual meeting dealing with climate change, and yet the UN still doesn't know what to do. It just watches the situation get worse, while calling for the continuation of market measures, whether cap and trade or the carbon tax, which have failed year after year, decade after decade. We need strict regulation and economic control, not subsidies to the big corporations, not complex financial mechanisms. The people were in the streets, but the world leaders were in conference with fossil fuel executives and other big capitalists, trying to preserve the profits of the rich. The following article is an abbreviated version of the *Detroit/Seattle Workers' Voice* mailing list for Dec. 10:

Half a million climate protesters sought to pressure the 25th annual UN climate summit in Madrid, but the world leaders weren't listening

Up to half a million people demonstrated in Madrid on December 6 because they were concerned that the ongoing UN climate summit, COP25, wouldn't accomplish anything. A smaller protest took place in the Chilean capital of Santiago,

where COP25 had earlier been scheduled to take place. These actions are part of the wave of monster climate demonstrations that have taken place this year under names such as Fridays for the Future, Global Climate Strikes, and Youth Strikes for Climate. Demonstrations have taken place in dozens of countries, with the participation of several million people.

This year's UN conference opened with UN Secretary General António Guterres warning that the world faced disaster. He said that "we need to reduce emissions by 7.6 per cent each year to reach our goals...it is imperative that governments not only honour their national contributions under the Paris Agreement, they need to substantially increase their ambitions." But, according to a report from the BBC, "UN climate chief Patricia Espinoza said that the issue of countries increasing their pledges [to reduce carbon emissions] wasn't even on the agenda for the final outcome" of COP25. (1)

It's no wonder that Greta Thunberg, addressing the protesters, said "**The change we need is not going to come from people in power. The change is going to come from the people, the masses, demanding change.**" (2) In an interview, she said "We are angry, we are frustrated, and it's because of good reasons." And she added, "**If they want us to stop being angry, maybe they should stop making us angry.**" (3)

But despite past UN agreements, total world carbon emissions keep going up. During the last decade, they have gone up about 1.5% a year. The American oil and gas industry, spurred on by the maniac Trump, is racing to increase this figure as fast as possible. Meanwhile the world is getting hotter, and catastrophic floods are getting more common.

Why is this happening? Would turning away from fossil fuel have been impossible?

By way of contrast, the Montreal Protocol, which is an international agreement to save the ozone layer from ozone-destroying chemicals, has worked so far. The ozone layer is on the way to recovery, and there were celebrations during the 25th and 30th anniversaries of this Protocol. **True, the celebrations may have been a bit premature: global warming constitutes a new threat to the ozone layer.** For example, the melting of the Arctic permafrost is releasing nitrous oxide into the atmosphere, and this threatens the ozone layer. (4) **Still, it's important that the Montreal Protocol succeeded in cutting the world production of various harmful chemicals to next to nothing.**

Why did the Montreal Protocol succeed while the UN world climate summits have not? It's because saving the ozone layer could be done with only relatively minor changes to industrial production. Yes, the chemical industry cried bloody murder, but the capitalists always do that, no matter how small the obstacle to their greed. The elimination of greenhouse gas emissions, on the other hand, requires major change in, and strictly-enforced regulation of, many spheres of production. It not only requires a radical change in the production of energy, which goes against some of the richest and most powerful capitalist corporations in

the world, but also changes in industrial and agricultural production as a whole. To accomplish this would require the end to market fundamentalism, the reversal of privatization, and a turn to economic regulation and planning. And if this regulation isn't to be oppressive for the majority of the population, it means that the working people would need a major say in this planning, and that individual capitalists shouldn't have unlimited freedom to plunder the earth as they like.

But much of the world bourgeoisie is clinging to oil and gas, and **even those who aren't are nevertheless clinging to market fundamentalism at all costs**. So the UN climate conferences have promoted market measures such as carbon trading and carbon taxes, as have the World Bank and the IMF; it doesn't matter to them that carbon trading has been a flop. So as the world burns and floods, the UN is continuing down the road of failed measures. The last UN meeting was yet another carbon trading summit, which simply tried to overcome differences among the different groups of capitalists.

So for good reason some climate activists have not just been demanding action, but also denouncing carbon markets. The Indigenous Environmental Network and various other indigenous organizations, and some climate justice groups, have circulated a petition demanding "that carbon markets are kept out of the Paris Rulebook. We say NO to a resolution on carbon markets at COP25." (5) This hits at one of the central problems with COP25.

The overall climate strike movement, however, demands effective action to deal with global warming and to eliminate fossil fuels, but is not united on what this action would be. The abolition of carbon markets isn't yet a general demand, and such measures as the carbon tax are still widely promoted.

Moreover, to effectively oppose market measures, it is necessary to build a working-class section of the environmental movement. Only the working, minority, and poor people around the world can form a consistent, powerful opposition to the bankrupt market measures. There needs to be consistent opposition to the entrenched corporate interests that profit off destroying the world; the class struggle needs to be brought into the environment movement; and only this way will it be possible to force more effective environmental action.

It is very important that COP25 has been met with a mass demonstration. This helps puncture the empty talk of the world leaders. We should never forget that it isn't just outright climate denialism that is leading the planet to disaster, but also the ineffective establishment environmentalism of a section of the rich, the bourgeois governments, and the UN. We need effective measures, and a movement that fights for these measures. The anger at the empty talk of the UN bureaucrats and the mass actions in the street are signs that change is needed, and that change will come.

Notes

(1) <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-50680781>. Espinosa is the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

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Read *Communist Voice*, which is a journal of revolutionary theory. It exposes the capitalist system, and also tackles versies

(2) "COP25: Thousands gather for climate protests in Madrid", <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50694361>

(3) "Greta Thunberg: People underestimate 'angry kids'", <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-50644395>.

(4) "The warming Arctic permafrost may be releasing more nitrous oxide than previously thought", Caitlin Mcdermott-Murphy, <https://phys.org/news/2019-04-arctic-permafrost-nitrous-oxide-previously.html>. The article points out: "Up in the stratosphere, sunlight and oxygen team up to convert the gas into nitrogen oxides, which eat at the ozone. According to the EPA, atmospheric levels of the gas are rising, and the molecules can stay in the atmosphere for up to 114 years." And, it says, "a recent paper shows that nitrous oxide emissions from thawing Alaskan permafrost are about twelve times higher than previously assumed."

(5) <https://www.ienearth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Petition-No-to-carbon-markets.pdf>. <

Background on the UN climate summits, and the failure of carbon markets

* Even if the inadequate targets of the UN's Paris Agreement had been met, the world's march to climate disaster would have continued. See *About the Paris Climate Accord of December 2015*, by Joseph Green, and *Paris climate terror could endure for generations* by Patrick Bond.

<http://www.comunistvoice.org/DSWV-170605.html>.

* *The coming of the environmental crisis*, Jan. 2007, sets forward an alternate program for opposing global warming. <http://www.comunistvoice.org/39cKyoto.html>.

* *Lessons from the failure of the Copenhagen climate conference (COP15)*, 2010, deals with this fateful summit. <http://www.comunistvoice.org/44cCopenhagen.html>.

* **Read about the need for a militant working-class section of the environmental movement at**

<http://www.comunistvoice.org/00GlobalWarming.html>.

The truth about carbon trading

* *Carbon Trading, How it works and why it fails*, Nov. 2009, by Tamra Gilbertson and Oscar Reyes, 102 pages. **It includes case studies of CDM projects in Thailand, India, Indonesia, and Brazil.** It can be downloaded at <https://www.daghammarskjold.se/publication/carbon-trading-works-fails/>.

* *Carbon markets at COP25, Madrid: A threat to people, politics, and the planet* is a denunciation of carbon markets by a number of indigenous and climate justice groups. See <https://www.foei.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/English-carbon-markets-briefing-OK-LOW.pdf>.

* *Carbon Pricing: A Critical Perspective for Community Resistance* is a 60-page pamphlet by the Indigenous Environmental Network and the Climate Justice Alliance. <https://www.ienearth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Carbon-Pricing-A-Critical-Perspective-for-Community-Resistance-Online-Version.pdf>

facing activists. It upholds real Marxism-Leninism, which has nothing in common with the false "communist" regimes like the former Soviet Union, or China and Cuba, or with Trotskyism, Stalinism or Maoism. To see articles, visit: www.comunistvoice.org.