

Into the streets on Earth Day!

March for Science—Seattle

Saturday, April 22, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm at Cal Anderson Park, 1425 Broadway

Record global temperatures. Melting icecaps. Methane releases in the Arctic. Earth Day 2017 comes at a time of earth emergency. Burning fossil fuels simply must be stopped, and stopped quickly.

But the Trump Administration is proceeding full speed ahead to extract more fossil fuels; he's ordered completion of Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) and revived the Keystone XL pipeline; he's promoting coal production; he's moved to open more waters to drilling; and he is trying to dismantle the EPA. In sum, it's a wholesale assault on the environment.

Can this just be explained by the fact that the Trump Administration is filled with climate deniers? No, denialism has a long history: 40 yrs ago Exxon funded a scientific study that proved carbon emissions would cause global warming but then went on to fund climate-change denial groups anyway.¹ The Obama Administration had its own form of denialism, i.e., in 2015 Obama said “the science is stark” and “we’re not moving fast enough” to fight climate change, but under the reactionary nationalist banner of achieving “energy independence” his administration opened more waters to oil and gas drilling, and more lands to fracking and coal mining. This was denialism in practice, smoothed with hypocrisy.

Beneath this denialism lies in the fact that both parties are servants of the polluters and the Wall Street banks who finance carbon energy production. Driven to make the highest profits, the finance capitalists and their political parties fight to pump the last drop of oil despite knowing this is ecocidal.

But none of this is washing with the masses of people. Everywhere in the country there are environmental struggles that are winning victories as well as suffering defeats. And through this process activists are continually learning.

They've learned that even if protests are completely peaceful the state will still resort massive violence and arrests—as happened at Standing Rock. But the other side of this is that by refusing to capitulate to these assaults the Standing Rock protesters gained massive support everywhere.

Another lesson is not to depend on official or self-appointed leaders. For example, Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II supported the call for setting up the protest camp but then told protesters to go home when the government refused to issue the permit needed to run the DAPL under the Missouri river – despite everyone knowing the permit denial was only temporary.

And another example is the filthy role of the labor bureaucrats who betray the environmental struggles. They don't just work to prevent and sell out workers' strikes, they faithfully serve their capitalist masters on all fronts. Thus, the leaders of the building trades unions have heaped praise on Trump, and rejoiced when he issued orders restarting construction of the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines. The oil and coal companies are driven to destroy the planet by their need to profit, and these lackey labor officials smooth their way by saying jobs will come out of it. The only conclusion is that the environmental movement must directly appeal to the rank-and-file workers by (among other things) demanding that workers laid off in the transition to renewable energy be reemployed in other industries for at least as good wages. In fact, renewable energy, energy-efficient retrofits in buildings, public transit and light rail, etc., will require millions of new workers once the capitalist government is forced to accept them.

Along with these lessons we must oppose getting diverted into chasing the false solutions offered by establishment environmentalism. These entail relying on market measures in order to preserve the profits of

the polluters, and they have failed. ² The latest establishment environmentalist favorite, the carbon tax, won't meet environmental goals either. It's also a regressive tax that will tend to drive the workers and poor away from environmentalism while the worst-polluting corporations pass their tax onto their customers. ³ Climate justice activists should ask themselves why even the World Bank and International Monetary Fund—who make life hell for the workers, small farmers and indigenous peoples of the poor countries—are now promoting the carbon tax?! ⁴

But the environmental movement has real solutions. These go against the denialism and market measures of the establishment. So long as capitalism still exists, we need to fight to keep carbon fuels in the ground and convert to renewable energy sources. More, we need to fight for direct regulations, environmental and economic planning, and mass involvement in their formation and implementation. Life on this planet is just too precious to sacrifice to the profits of capital.

It is going to take a mighty movement that is boiling up everywhere to achieve this, and it can be achieved. From day one, the Trump administration has been met by protests on nearly every issue, and Trump has already had to back off on some of his plans. But we need more than that, we need to reverse Trump's entire course. To accomplish this we must have an orientation of increasingly basing the environmental movement in the majority class in society, the working class. This means we must stand up for indigenous rights and the struggles of national-minorities and immigrants against environmental

racism. And it means we must stand against Trump's moves to divide and pick off the working people one by one, i.e., immigrants, national minorities, women.

This Earth Day we call on everyone to urge their fellow workers, fellow students, neighbors and friends to:

- Join in all the upcoming environmental actions;
- Initiate your own movements in communities and workplaces;
- Urge your compatriots to read, discuss and pass on leaflets like this one, as well environmental news more generally;
- Furthermore, let us use Earth Day 2017 to make ties with fellow activists, and turn it into an important stepping stone in the struggle to end the burning of fossil fuels.

We must rely on ourselves and the tool of mass struggle.

Seattle Communist Study Group,
April 15, 2017

1. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/exxon-knew-about-climate-change-almost-40-years-ago/>
2. <http://communistvoice.org/41cAlGore.html>
3. <http://communistvoice.org/42cCarbonTax.html>
4. <http://www.communistvoice.org/DWV-160429.html>

About our masthead and mailing list

The Seattle Communist Study Group, which is Seattle supporters of the Communist Voice Organization, has long published leaflets under a SCSG masthead. But it is now publishing under a *Seattle Workers' Voice* masthead. This reflects the class issues we wish to raise in the ongoing movement. It also corresponds with the *Detroit Workers' Voice*, which is put out by Detroit supporters of the CVO. And the DWV mailing list, which has previously provided more frequent contact with the CVO than leaflets, is now called the *Detroit/Seattle Workers' Voice* mailing list. We encourage workers and activists to contact us through this list. For more information, see http://www.communistvoice.org/DSWV_email_list.html

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