

# The only solution to climate change is world socialism

By the International Youth and Students for Social Equality  
19 September 2019

Millions of students, youth and their supporters in more than 150 countries will take part this Friday in a worldwide Global Climate Strike demanding immediate and far-reaching actions to abate and reverse climate change. The internationally coordinated protests are being organized in response to the growing realization among young people that the governments of the world are incapable of taking any significant measures to halt global warming.

Climate change has already had a devastating impact on large sections of the world's population. Extreme weather events such as Hurricane Dorian cause billions of dollars in destruction and cost dozens and possibly thousands of lives. Recent reports warn that 821 million human beings are at risk of starvation as global warming makes agriculture increasingly untenable and that 3.2 billion men, women and children reside in areas that will become unlivable possibly in the next decade.

As such, global warming cannot be viewed through a lens that treats all of humanity equally. As the increasingly powerful hurricanes, typhoons and wildfires the world over show, it is the poorest 90 percent, the working class, that suffers the most from the ecological crisis, exacerbating the social misery of hundreds of millions already facing poverty, starvation and war. There are already at least 210 million so-called "climate refugees"—those forced to permanently flee their homes as a result of climate change-related disasters. The United Nations estimates that up to one billion will be displaced by 2050.

Such disasters are precursors to more catastrophic events. If global warming remains unabated, millions of plant and animal species will go extinct as they are unable to adapt to the rapidly changing climate. The Great Barrier Reef will be killed off by coral

bleaching—stress induced on coral by warmer ocean temperatures and higher oceanic acidity—destroying a key part of Earth's food chain and general ecological stability. The Amazon rainforest will burn down, turning to ash one of the cradles of Earth's land-based biodiversity. Glaciers in Antarctica and Greenland will slide into the ocean, raising sea levels and potentially drowning the planet's coastal cities, home to between one-third and one-half of the world's population.

Any serious effort to reverse climate change would involve a scientifically planned global restructuring of the world's energy industry to transition from a reliance on fossil fuels to renewable energy. This in turn would involve a transformation on the same scale of transportation, logistics, agriculture and ultimately society as a whole. Such changes would necessarily cut across national boundaries, corporate profits and national security interests. These institutions are bound up with capitalism: the division of the world into rival nation-states and the subordination of economic life to the accumulation of private profit.

The only form of economic life that is capable of placing the world's productive forces on such an internationally coordinated scale is the opposite of capitalism: socialism, that is the democratic control of the world's productive forces by the international working class.

Efforts to address climate change cannot be separated from this question. Anything less involves appeals to the United Nations or the various "left parties" around the world, which have proven themselves incapable and unwilling to put forward any meaningful solution to climate change. Even as the sentiments of millions demand solutions to the ecological crisis, leaders of every country rush to ensure that any climate agreement, including the 2015 Paris Accord, does not

place genuine limits on greenhouse gas emissions and instead provides new protections for “their” energy corporations.

These resolutions are also increasingly used by the major imperialist powers as elements with which to bludgeon their geopolitical rivals. During the presidency of Barack Obama, the fact that China is the world’s largest polluter was used in an attempt to gain leverage in trade negotiations. Current 2020 Democratic presidential primary candidates Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders have both pledged likely more aggressive measures if they are elected.

Worse are the attempts to make corporations more “green”, even as their executives promote that “over consumption” by the “surplus population” is the real cause of climate change, in an attempt to blame the crisis on ordinary people. The corporate heads, in fact, oversee the businesses which caused global warming in the first place. The 2017 Carbon Majors Report showed that 70 percent of all greenhouse gases released from 1988 to 2015 came from just 100 major companies.

It is therefore critical to turn the students and youth participating in climate strikes away from parliamentary politics and to the working class. It is the working class that will suffer the brunt of the impact of global warming. It is the working class that is objectively and increasingly defining itself as an *international* class. It is the working class whose social interests lie in the overthrow of capitalism, the abolition of private ownership of the means of production, and the establishment of an economic system based on the satisfaction of human need, including a safe and healthy environment.

The objective basis for this movement is expressed most sharply by the ongoing strike of autoworkers at General Motors, in conflict with the United Auto Workers, which is costing the company \$100 million a day and has already sent shock waves throughout the auto industry. This comes after a strike wave of autoworkers in Mexico earlier this year and mass movements such as the “Yellow Vests” in France, mass protests in Hong Kong and demonstrations in Puerto Rico that forced out the sitting governor.

The technology exists to solve the great social problems of our time: climate change, the destruction of jobs, mounting social inequality, the assault on democratic rights and the threat of world war. At the

same time, scientific planning can ensure increased living standards and quality of life for the world’s population. The only social force that can achieve this goal is the international working class, through the method of world socialist revolution. The International Youth and Students for Social Equality urges all young people to fight for this perspective.

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