

# **Review – For the Earth to Live: The Case for Ecosocialism by Allan Todd**

“For the Earth to Live” is a compelling and essential read for anyone seeking a radical and comprehensive understanding of the interconnected ecological and social crises facing our world. Written by Allan Todd, with a foreword by Professor Julia Steinberger, it emerges as an unapologetic and passionately argued case for ecosocialism.

The book distinguishes itself by its direct and unwavering commitment to ecosocialist principles, boldly asserting the necessity of uniting ecological concerns with socialist solutions. In an era often characterised by cautious and diluted discourse, “For the Earth to Live” offers a bracingly clear analysis and position, advocating for a political direction that is uncompromisingly pro-ecology and pro-socialism. It actively seeks to combine “Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will,” drawing on the wisdom of Antonio Gramsci to provide both a stark awakening to the realities of our situation and a powerful call to action.

A significant strength of this work lies in its well-informed and thoroughly cited analysis. Todd presents a treasure-trove of political, historical, and scientific evidence to contextualise the climate, biodiversity, and health threats we face within our prevailing political and economic systems. The book is structured logically, building from an exposition of ecological dangers to examining political and economic threats, culminating in a powerful argument for revolutionary ecosocialist politics as the necessary response. The extensive referencing provides readers with an excellent foundation for further exploration and independent understanding.

“For the Earth to Live” makes a significant contribution by aiming to articulate a majoritarian perspective for ecosocialism. It moves beyond the notion of ecosocialism as a fringe ideology, presenting it as the potential “political home of the majority of humans on planet earth” and of the rest of life on Earth. This book offers a more accessible pathway for arguing for ecosocialism as a vital project for the 99 percent.

Furthermore, the book actively seeks to counter the understandable despair that can arise when confronting the severity of the ecological and political challenges. By promoting Gramsci’s “optimism of the will,” it encourages readers to see “horizons even in the darkest night,” fostering the determination needed to continue the struggle for a better future. It explicitly states that ecosocialism offers the “best hope for replacing today’s ‘old order’ with a new one”.

The author doesn’t shy away from highlighting the dire warnings from climate, ecological, and pandemic-health science reports, illustrating the interconnected crises facing our environment and the failures of current political responses. The book also touches upon the historical context of humanity’s relationship with nature, including the more harmonious approaches found in Indigenous societies, suggesting important ways forward.

In conclusion, “For the Earth to Live” is a vital and inspiring contribution to the literature on ecosocialism. It combines a rigorous and well-researched analysis with a passionate and hopeful call to action. By directly confronting the crises of our time and offering a clear and compelling alternative, this book will likely be an essential resource for activists, scholars, and anyone seeking a pathway towards an ecologically sustainable and socially just world. It encourages readers to embrace “optimism of the will” grounded in a clear understanding of the challenges, ultimately arguing that our best chance for the Earth to live lies

with ecosocialism.

Reviewed by Duncan Chapel, "For the Earth to Live" is published by Resistance Books and is available [here](#).

**Allan Todd** is an ecosocialist/environmental and anti-fascist activist. He is a member of Anti-Capitalist Resistance and Extinction Rebellion North Lakes (Cumbria), and is the author of *Revolutions 1789-1917* (CUP), *Trotsky: The Passionate Revolutionary* (Pen & Sword), *Ecosocialism Not Extinction* (Resistance Books), and *Che Guevara: The Romantic Revolutionary* (Pen & Sword).

Allan will speaking about the book at a free event in Glasgow at 7pm on 21st May 2025. For further details of the event and to reserve a copy of the book see [Mount Florida Books](#)

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## **Leónidas Iza (Pachakutik, Ecuador): 'Our election campaign is an extension of the people's struggle'**

In conversation with Iain Bruce, Ecuadorian Indigenous leader and presidential candidate Leónidas Iza analyses the profound economic, social and institutional crisis the country is going through, marked by the advance of neoliberal policies, state repression and the precariousness of living conditions.

Iza reflects on the impact of popular demonstrations on the upcoming general elections, with the first round to be held on February 9, and the need to build a political project from the

grassroots that defends plurinationality, the public sector and national sovereignty. He also addresses the tensions and challenges facing the Ecuadorian left, the role of the Citizen Revolution led by former president Rafael Correa, and his strategy for the elections.

Faced with a political scenario dominated by the right, the rise of drug trafficking and the fragmentation of progressive forces, the Indigenous leader reaffirmed his commitment to an alternative that does not abandon street protests, but rather integrates the electoral dispute into a broader social and political struggle to transform Ecuador.

**Over the past year, Ecuador has faced a series of difficult situations – rising levels of gang violence and state repression, drought and an electricity crisis, deepening poverty and mass migration. Could you describe what the context was like at the start of this campaign, a little over a year after Daniel Noboa became president in November 2023?**

Ever since the idea of a “bloated state” and excessive bureaucracy was introduced, the model imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – successively implemented by the [Lenin] Moreno, [Guillermo] Lasso and now Noboa governments – has resulted in a fragile state lacking in social policies to strengthen key sectors of the Ecuadorian economy and society. Education, health and employment have been seriously neglected, as has support for the grassroots and solidarity economy. This has led to a drastic deterioration in living conditions for ordinary Ecuadorians.

As a consequence, in the most impoverished areas, many have ended up seeing drug trafficking, organised crime or illegal activities as their only way out. For the majority of Ecuadorians, this represents a problem; but for the political and economic elites, for the oligarchies, it is an opportunity – they have exploited this suffering to promote their usual projects.

We now find ourselves in [a painful situation](#). After [President Noboa's declaration](#) of a “state of war”, which is now a year old, these elites have managed to establish their hegemony over public consciousness and discussion. The so-called [Phoenix Plan](#) to tackle gang-related violence does not really exist and there is no real intention to put an end to crime; instead, what we are seeing is the use of this crisis as a mechanism of control.

In economic terms, the declaration of war has hit the country hard. It has scared off investment and affected strategic sectors, such as tourism, which has declined on the coast, in the highlands and the Amazon. Furthermore, due to the energy crisis, we have recorded losses of more than \$8 billion, according to estimates by concerned business groups.

On the other hand, we are experiencing serious violations of human rights. Cases such as that of the four children in Maldivas [where four Afro-Ecuadorian boys were detained by the army and later found dead] are just one example of a systematic policy. It is estimated that under the state of war, more than 20,000 young people have been prosecuted but data indicates that only between 350-500 of them had any real involvement in illegal activities. What happened to the rest? We do not know.

Added to this is a climate of structural racism. In Ecuador today, if a white or mestizo person sees someone of African descent, they assume they are a criminal. If they see an Indigenous person, they label them a terrorist and a “Quito arsonist” [in reference to the Indigenous-led uprisings of 2019 and 2022]. If they see a poor person, they stigmatise and racialise them. This is the scenario that the Ecuadorian right has been able to take advantage of, and it is one that we have to confront.

Today we face systematic violations of human rights, a state that operates with a monarchical logic, the breakdown of basic

conditions for democratic coexistence, and the failure to comply with the Constitution and Code of Democracy. The four branches of government have subordinated themselves to the executive, and the latter, in turn, is subject to the conditions imposed by the IMF.

In the past year, Ecuador has agreed to a new loan of \$5.5 billion, not yet disbursed, but destined exclusively to pay previous debt. Meanwhile, the economic and political elites continue to control national politics, deepening a crisis that increasingly affects the majority of the Ecuadorian people.

**Last month there was a major mobilisation in the Amazon against the construction of a super prison. Do you think this marks a reactivation of the social movement after the impact of Noboa's security policy? And, in that sense, do you think this has influenced the campaign, generating a new political climate?**

Look, Ecuadorians are, by nature, a fighting people. Throughout history, all governments have tried to curb this rebelliousness and dismantle organisational processes in different ways: criminalising and persecuting leaders, inventing parallel organisations, or trying to link us to organised crime and drug trafficking. We have seen these strategies time and time again. But popular resistance is stronger, and they will never succeed in breaking it.

When we have mobilised, we have done so forcefully, as happened in 2019 and 2022. Leading up to the uprising of June 2022, there were 28 protest events; leading up to October 2019, there were 38. Currently, we have already had between 5 and 10 mobilisations, which indicates that concrete actions from different sectors are accumulating. First, there are scattered struggles, then they are articulated and, finally, they lead to social outbursts. This is a cyclical process, so I am not worried: governments can continue trying to repress us, but sooner or later the issues come together and the

struggle arises again.

What happened in the Amazon is a blow to Noboa's government. He governs arrogantly, with a monarchical vision, as if he were the landowner on a big estate. This time, he had to back down because the resistance affected him electorally. He did not suspend the construction of the prison due to concerns about life in the Amazon – for him, the region represents only 3% of the national electorate, it does not interest him – but because he feared this would impact his image in other parts of the country.

For now, the project is suspended and they have promised not to resume it. However, they have not provided any official document to confirm this. We will continue to pay close attention to what happens.

### **How have these protests influenced the mood of the campaign?**

I think that all mobilisations force people to have to take a stand. The first thing we must understand is that the political and economic elites have managed to implant the idea that politics is something negative for popular sectors and their leaders.

They have constructed a discourse that if we participate in politics, we do so for our own individual interests, that we are “taking advantage” of mobilisations to run for office. They say, for example, “There they are again, the golden ponchos, using the struggle to get into elections.” But when they stand for election, then it is democratic, it is legitimate. Unfortunately, many people have fallen into that trap.

We, on the other hand, have been clear: without abandoning the streets, we are going to contest elections as a further extension of the struggle. We are not abandoning mobilisation, but complementing it with electoral participation. That is why the organised rank and file who have been on the streets are

now taking a stand in this election.

I will give you a concrete example: our comrades who have been defending the hills and highland moors from extractivism. Yesterday I saw a statement from them that said: "We're backing Leónidas Iza". Not because they believe that the elections are an end in themselves, but because they understand that the electoral arena is another tool for channeling the strength that they have built up in the streets.

Our struggle is not reduced to electoral politics; it is another dimension within a broader process. We fight in the streets, in national and international courts, in the drafting and reform of laws, in local governments. What we have not yet fully achieved is consolidating all these struggles under a unified project. We are on our way to doing that.

That is why I firmly believe that, in time, we will succeed in aligning the struggle towards a proposal that represents the interests of the people in this process.

**And what are the main planks of your program for government?**

Well, when I am asked about "my" government platform, we end up going back to the same old stories that I have been fighting against these days. "What is Leónidas Iza's government program?" No, that is to individualise politics, to make people believe that it is about personal interest. It is not my program, but the government program of the people, the program of the Indigenous peoples, the cholos, the Indians, the mestizos, the stigmatised Afro-Ecuadorians.

Our government program has not been produced from behind a desk, but out of grassroots struggle. It is the result of what we stood up for in 2019, of what we took to the streets for in 2022. And that was clear: financial relief for the people; no mining in watersheds and fertile areas; genuine and deep implementation of plurinationality; and total rejection of



privatisations.

In our government, we will strengthen the productive capacity of Ecuadorian state-owned companies and defend national production. What does this mean? That we are going to promote policies to support small farmers – those whom the state has abandoned but who were the first to take to the streets when the crisis hit. This is a government program built from the people and for the people.

One of the central issues is crime. They have led us to believe that the solution is to put more weapons and more police on the streets. No. In our government plan we have been clear: yes, there are some young people who have fallen into criminal networks and who we may not be able to rehabilitate socially, and we will have to face up to that. But crime cannot be combated with repression alone; we need a solid social policy linked to neighbourhoods, communes and territories.

We need to strengthen education and healthcare and create minimum employment conditions. Why? To prevent 12- or 13-year-olds, whose parents work in precarious conditions and cannot look after them, from being recruited by organised crime. This is the vision of the popular sectors, not of those who think that crime can be solved with a warmongering mentality, with more weapons and repression.

And what has happened? The state has been deliberately weakened, its capacity reduced under the pretext of combating its supposed “bloatedness”. But when you dismantle the state, you dismantle the basic policies that sustain any society, be it in the First, Second or Third World.

In terms of institutional framework, we are going to respect democracy. Why do we write democracy in the Constitution if each government then interprets it as it pleases, turning us into a monarchy? No! Democracy cannot be a concept manipulated

by political and economic groups as they see fit. It must be a democracy rooted in the people, not in the interests of an elite that uses it as an instrument to perpetuate its power.

**Halfway through last year, in Pachakutik, in CONAIE, I believe you tried to unify or at least bring together the different left-wing currents and groups. I understand that at least a minimum agreement was reached: not to attack each other and to support whoever reaches the second round. Is that agreement, even if minimal, still in place? How do you see the current situation and what is your position towards a possible second round?**

Yes, there is a general government program that some sectors accepted, assuming that it should be the basis for an agreement. However, there are central issues that many of those who call themselves progressive are still not willing to stand firm on. Issues such as mining, bilingual education, redistribution of wealth, defence of national production and the public sector continue to be points of contention.

For example, on the mining issue, some people ask: "Where are we going to get the money from?" The answer is clear: we have to collect it from those who are not paying what they should. But many sectors lack the necessary determination to face these debates. These are pending issues that remain open and which, in the event that we are an option in the second round, could serve to unify the struggle even more from the perspective of the popular sectors.

Now, why have more pragmatic and long-term agreements not been achieved? Precisely because of the history of how certain sectors have governed. They have not understood what plurinationality really means, nor have they accepted that the rights of Indigenous peoples are not a concession from the state or a favour from governments, but fundamental collective rights.

Free, prior and informed consent, the application of Indigenous justice, bilingual intercultural education, defence of food sovereignty, of our culture and our languages ... all these issues have been left at the mercy of the political will of the government in power, without any real commitment. This historical debt has held back genuine unification through this process. These are issues that still need to be resolved in any space for debate.

Until now, the non-aggression pact has been respected. But in political and ideological terms, we must take as a reference point the structural problems that any government must overcome, regardless of who comes to power.

At the moment, there are candidates who claim to represent the left and others who present themselves as right-wing. They all try to present themselves as "new". But the real question is how much sensitivity and how much memory people have to recognise who can genuinely be a real option for Ecuador.

**Sorry, Leónidas, but specifically, if you make it to the second round, you are obviously going to want the other left-wing parties to support you. Now, if the scenario were different and the final contest were between Luisa González [the presidential candidate of the Citizen Revolution movement] and Noboa, would you call for a vote for the Citizen Revolution?**

At the moment, I cannot say what will happen in the second round. We are focused on building support for our option in the first round. If we start discussing hypothetical scenarios now, people might end up voting in this first round for an option they do not really agree with. That is why the responsible thing to do at the moment is not to speculate about the second round, but to consolidate our proposal and our strength at this stage.

Now, if we reach the second round, and I am sure we will be

one of the options in that round, at that point we will have to assess our capacity to integrate the different sectors of Ecuador and move forward based on that scenario

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## **Rising Clyde Episode 17: COP28 Again – Historic breakthrough or corporate capture?**

The latest issue of Rising Clyde, the Scottish climate justice show hosted by Iain Bruce is now available on YouTube thanks to Independence Live.

The Show asks what really happened at the recent UN climate talks in Dubai and what we should do about it, including a look at what role the Scottish government is playing in the process, with two activist experts who were there: Scott Kirby in Edinburgh, from the UK Youth Climate Coalition and in London, Dorothy Guerrero of Global Justice Now.

# Rising Clyde Show – the Scottish climate justice show.

**Rising Clyde** examines the key issues and the big challenges facing the struggle for climate justice in Scotland. After the surprisingly big and hugely diverse protests in Glasgow during COP26, how can the breadth of that movement be held together, how can we build on its energy?



- After the suspension of Cambo, can the movement stop any more new oil or gas projects in the North Sea?
- How can we wind down the whole oil and gas industry in Scotland in this decade, while ensuring no layoffs and decent new jobs for all those affected?
- Was the Scotwind auction a major step on the transition to renewable energy, or a sell-off of the family silver?
- How can an independent Scotland tolerate one of the most unequal and damaging systems of land ownership on the planet

For half an hour on the first Monday of each month, we'll be talking to activists and experts about these and many other issues that will shape this country's future.

The host of Rising Clyde, **Iain Bruce**, is a journalist, film maker and writer living in Glasgow. Iain has worked for many years in Latin America. He has worked at the BBC and Al Jazeera, and was head of news at teleSUR. He has written books about radical politics in Brazil and Venezuela. During COP26, he was the producer and co-presenter of Inside Outside, a

daily video briefing for the COP26 Coalition.

**Playlist...** To see previous episodes, start the video below, then click on the top right icon.

<https://youtu.be/0qK7olrAtvk?list=PLxc3IWpJ3vJZLQg9hFjnGWvvfSHdIrnXG>

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## **COP28: Trashing the UN is easy, but where is the alternative?**

*Alan Thornett writes on Ecosocialist Discussion blog about COP28 and debates the key issues raised.*

Despite being held in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – the sixth biggest oil producer in the world, and presided over by a top oil executive with the biggest fossil fuel lobby ever seen at a COP conference, COP28 was a surprisingly productive event.

It met at a time of dramatic acceleration in global warming, of course. 2023 was not only the hottest year since records began, but it did so by an unprecedented margin. The global average figure for 2023 was 14.98°C, a massive 0.17°C above the previous record. For the first time, every day in that year was 1°C above the pre-industrial level. Almost half were over 1.5°C above the pre-industrial level, and two were more than 2°C above it.

It was against this background that COP28 agreed—after a heated debate and an overrun of the conference—that the conference agreed unanimously to call for “a transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science”.

UN Secretary General António Guterres told the [Guardian](#) on December 13 that. “Whether you like it or not fossil fuel phase-out is (now) inevitable”. “Let’s hope it hasn’t come too late.” I agree with him on both points. Fossil fuel is now an obsolescent energy source in which investment will become increasingly problematic and which must be replaced by renewables with the utmost urgency.

He is absolutely right. It is an important strategic breakthrough that could eventually spell the end—or at least the beginning of the end—of fossil fuels and the fossil industry. He is also right to question whether it has come too late to save the planet from catastrophe, which only time will tell, unfortunately. We are, however, better placed to defend the planet with this agreement in place than without it.

It is of comparable importance, in my view, to the two key decisions agreed in Paris in 2015. The first was that global warming is anthropogenic, i.e., a product of human activity. The second was the recognition that achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 could only be achieved by holding the global average temperature increase over preindustrial levels to below 1.5°C.

A last-minute decision to remove all references to oil and gas sabotaged a similar proposal to phase out fossil fuels at COP26 in Glasgow in 2022. Remarkably, fossil fuels had never been mentioned as such before at a COP conference, presumably to avoid frightening the horses.

Johan Rockström, a hugely respected Earth systems scientist, a member of the Stockholm Resilience Centre, and the leader of the team that developed the concept of planetary boundaries, welcomed the decision.

He told the Guardian that the agreement is a “pivotal landmark” in the climate struggle. It does, he says, deliver on making it clear to all financial institutions, businesses, and societies that we are now finally—eight years behind the Paris schedule—at the true ‘beginning of the end’ of the fossil fuel-driven world economy.”

[Greenpeace](#) said that while there are still some important loopholes to address, this package is “a powerful milestone.” While much more campaigning will be needed over the next year to make this happen as soon as possible, “its game on from here!”

## **Other key decisions**

The first item on the agenda in Dubai was the “loss and damage fund,” which was agreed upon in principle at COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh. It was declared operational on the first day of COP28, with an initial \$700 million to fill the fund. This is a drop in the ocean, however, compared to the \$580 billion in damage that vulnerable countries will face by [2030](#).

A stocktake of the “Nationally Determined Contributions” was also conducted as a part of the “ratcheting up process” adopted in Paris in 2015, after which it was reported that there had been a collective effort to meet the \$100 billion target set in Paris and that new pledges would be sought to make up the shortfall. There were also policy discussions on a wide range of important issues, including the following:

- *Renewable energy.* The conference agreed to triple [renewable energy](#) globally, double its energy efficiency by 2030, and accelerate emissions reductions from road transport. It was also agreed to [cut methane](#) by



at least 30 percent by 2030.

- *The internal combustion engine.* It was agreed that the [internal combustion engine](#) would be phased out by 2030. Electric vehicles powered by renewable energy, it said, are the future, and we can't achieve global decarbonisation of transport without them.
- *Low-carbon cities.* There was a report from the Local [Climate Action Summit](#) regarding energy consumption in cities. It was noted that cities are responsible for more than [three-quarters](#) of global energy consumption and more than [half](#) of global greenhouse gas emissions. Navigating this within a low-carbon and resilient framework can foster a more equitable and just future. Cities need to start building much more eco-friendly infrastructure at a much faster pace.
- *Public transport.* It was agreed that global public transport capacity should be [doubled](#) by 2030.
- *Food and agriculture.* The [World Resources Institute](#) reported that there were six major food and agriculture breakthroughs made in Dubai. Food and land, they say, drive one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, food systems around the world are vulnerable to droughts, flooding, extreme heat, and other impacts of climate change. The issue is particularly critical in many developing countries—for example, in Brazil, where food and land use drive [70% of emissions](#) while over half the population remains food insecure.
- *Deforestation.* The Brazilian delegation successfully proposed [a new global fund](#) to pay countries to keep their tropical forests intact. The proposal called for the creation of a massive global scheme to help preserve rainforests in scores of countries, called the "Tropical Forests Forever" fund. The concept would pay residents and landowners who help preserve forested areas like the Amazon. Finance would initially be raised from sovereign wealth funds as well as from other investors, such as

the oil industry.

- *The biodiversity crisis.* There was strong support for the landmark agreement for nature recovery that was signed last year at the UN COP51 conference on biodiversity, which included protecting 30% of nature by 2030.

### **Carbon taxes**

There was a remarkable intervention by IMF chief [Kristalina Georgieva](#) (no less) on carbon pricing and carbon taxes. In what was the first time the subject had been discussed at a COP conference, she made a two-part proposal on behalf of the IMF:

- First, the abolition of all subsidies for fossil fuel production
- Second, put an explicit charge (or tax) on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at the point of production. This, she said, would raise the trillions of dollars that are needed to tackle the climate crisis.

She claimed that because right-wing climate denial politicians and parties all over the world have targeted them, governments have delayed implementing such taxes. However, she said, “When you put a price on carbon, decarbonisation accelerates.” The IMF, World Bank, OECD, and World Trade Organisation, she said, have set up a taskforce to examine carbon pricing policies and their application around the world.

As someone who has been arguing for exactly this many years, I found this intervention staggering. It appears that a large section of the ruling elites have adopted one of the key elements of an exit policy from fossil energy. The IMF is not only a capitalist institution but one that was founded precisely in order to oversee the international market on behalf of global capitalism.

COP conferences have traditionally resisted discussing this

kind of specific emissions reduction demand in favour of general principles. It is important that they are now discussing both.

### **The harsh reality**

This positive outcome in Dubai reinforces what has long been clear: i.e., that at this stage of the climate crisis, with global temperatures rising at an ever faster rate and time running out, the only way to avoid catastrophic damage to the planet is by making the COP process work.

Any other proposition is leftist posturing. The science is irrefutable. The global temperature is rising at an ever-increasing rate. Dangerous tipping points are starting to trigger. Time is running out. The 1.5°C limit hangs by a thread, climate chaos could be irreversible within a decade, and in the end, nothing can be built on a dead planet.

At this stage, moreover, only governmental action—and action taken by governments prepared to go on a war footing—can make the changes necessary to stop climate change in the limited time we have left, and only the UN COP process has a chance of achieving it.

Not that it will be easy, of course. The implementation of COP policies has been a battle from the outset. Member states are quick to exploit any loopholes on offer, including, for example, carbon capture and storage and the notion of transitional fuels, both of which provide the opportunity to hang on to fossil fuels for a bit longer.

Others simply ignore their previous commitments—flagrantly, if necessary—if they cut across their domestic political interests. A prime current example is the UK Tory government, which has dumped a raft of previous ecological commitments in order to exploit a backlash from car drivers against measures to improve air quality in London, which it thinks it can use against Labour in the general election later this year.

These include delaying the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 to 2035; delaying the ban on the sale of fossil-fuel heating boilers from 2035 to 2040; deprioritizing the transition to electric vehicles; issuing over a hundred new licences for oil and gas exploration; and a completely new oil field in the North Sea.

Such governments, however, have to be faced down if there is to be a solution, and that can best be done within the COP process.

### **The role of the left**

Most of the left denounce the UN COP process at every opportunity, in the most vitriolic terms they can find, with no regard to factual or historical accuracy, while having no viable alternative to offer itself. This is a big problem, in my view.

George Monbiot, for example, whom I greatly respect and who should know better in my view, declared in the [Guardian](#) of December 9 that the whole COP process had broken down, had “achieved absolutely nothing since it started in 1992, and are now they are talking us into oblivion.” “Let’s face it,” he goes on: “climate summits are broken. The delegates talk and talk, while Earth systems slide towards deadly tipping points”. In other words, it is a roadblock to doing anything positive about climate change, and the sooner it gets out of the way, the better.

The Swedish writer and climate campaigner Andreas Malm, author of *How to Blow Up a Pipeline*, told the [Guardian](#) on April 21, 2023, that “climate diplomacy is hopeless” and that he does not have “a shred of hope that the elites are prepared to take the urgent action needed to avert catastrophic climate change.”.

The COP conferences, he tells us, “have degenerated into kind of an annual theatre for pretending that we’re doing something

about global warming while, in fact, we're just letting fuel be poured on the fire. "If we let the dominant classes take care of this problem," he said, "they're going to drive at top speed into absolute inferno. Nothing suggests that they have any capacity to do anything else of their own accord because they are totally enmeshed with the process of capital accumulation."

They reflect Greta Thunberg's Glasgow "blah, blah, blah, blah" speech when, in fact, crucial debates were taking place into which she should have been intervening.

George Monbiot says that he had considered proposing changes to the decision-making procedure at COP summits but had decided against it. Andreas Malm proposes that the climate movement should have some kind of military wing, which would get us nowhere when it comes to building the kind of broad global mass movement that is going to be necessary.

### **The revolutionary left**

The revolutionary overthrow of global capitalism, which they imply is imminent, is the solution that the revolutionary left advocates, whether explicitly or implicitly. The fact that the far-right is growing dangerously across Europe, and Trump stands a very good chance of winning the US Presidency in November (for example), does nothing to deter them in this.

This kind of maximalism, however, has many consequences beyond wishful thinking. It implies that anything short of a global revolution is a reformist diversion and that victories are not victories but defeats if a reformist institution like the UN COP process is involved.

It implies that the collapse of the COP process, which is entirely possible as the crisis sharpens, would be good for the future of the planet, when in reality it would let global warming rip and leave us facing a catastrophe situation without a global project by which to confront it and with the

right-wing waiting in the wings.

It also leads many on the radical left to oppose the placing of environmental demands on the COP process because, they say, it is a capitalist institution. This is not only wrong and ultra-left, but strange, since the left demands such institutions in other arenas of struggle all the time. We put demands on the employers, who are capitalists, and on governments that are also capitalist institutions. The fire service is a capitalist institution designed first and foremost to protect private property, but we would not refuse its help if our house was burning down.

### **A transitional approach**

The task we face today is not whether global capitalism can be overthrown by revolutionary means in the next few years, but whether it can be forced to take the measures necessary to save the planet from global warming today as a part of a longer-term struggle to eventually replace capitalism with an ecosocialist society. If we are unable to build a movement capable of forcing change under capitalism, how are we going to build a movement capable of its revolutionary overthrow?

It is not true—as many on the left insist—that capitalism cannot be forced to make structural changes that are contrary to the logic of its existence. In fact, it made concessions when it agreed under pressure to support a maximum global temperature increase of 1.5°C in Paris and when it agreed under similar pressure to transition away from fossil fuels in Dubai.

We need a transitional approach, built around a set of transitional demands, that, as well as addressing the immediate needs of the struggle today, also has a strategic logic towards a post-capitalist solution. Reforms are not necessarily reformist. The road to revolutionary change is forged in the struggle for reform. In fact, the struggle for

reform is often the only real road to revolutionary change. Depending on the dynamics of struggle they generate, in fact, both the 1.5°C limit and the temperature increase and reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 are transitional demands.

The ruling elites, in any case, are deeply divided on the future of the planet. While its more enlightened wing recognises the approaching climate catastrophe and supports the COP process as the only way to save the planet—and within the capitalist order, of course—its dystopian, anti-woke, climate-denying wing, such as Trump, Bolsonaro, and Orbán, are prepared to gamble on the future of the planet against their climate denial, fight it out on the streets, and impose an authoritarian regime if they get the chance.

These people are deeply hostile to the progressive agenda required to save the planet, i.e., humanitarianism, collectivism, environmentalism, and the defence of nature and the natural environment, that are involved in saving the planet on a sustainable basis.

The role of the left and progressive forces in the climate struggle must be to exploit this division on behalf of the future of the planet.

## **The role of the UN**

I am not a natural defender of the UN—the “thieves kitchen,” as Lenin called its predecessor, the League of Nations—or even of its environmental work.

It is important, however, to recognise the positive role that the UN has played in global warming over the last 35 years, decades before the socialist left showed any interest. In fact, it is difficult to play a useful role in the climate struggle today without an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of that contribution and what it represents as a focus for international campaigning and mobilisation.

The idea that the UN could have resolved the climate crisis many years ago if only it had been prepared to snap its fingers hard enough—which is implicit in the left critique—is nonsense. As is the notion that it has “achieved absolutely nothing since it was launched in 1992” or that its conferences are “a kind of annual theatre for pretending that we’re doing something about global warming.” Such caricatures contribute nothing to the struggle.

The UN’s engagement with the ecological crisis began in 1972 with the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme.

The [International Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC), a scientific body comprising 2,500 scientists from 130 countries, was launched in 1989. It’s mandated to “prepare a comprehensive review and recommendations with respect to the state of knowledge of the science of climate change, the social and economic impact of climate change, and potential response strategies and elements for inclusion in a possible future international convention on climate.”

It coincided with James Hansen’s [historic address](#) to the US Senate on global warming and climate change.

The [Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) was launched in 1993 at the Earth Summit in Rio. Its mandate was to establish an international agreement in order to “stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere and prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate systems.” What it did in practice was establish the COP process.

The Convention, in particular, was a frontal challenge to the petrochemical industry and what it produced, which had dominated planet Earth for almost a century and had shaped it in its image. Abolishing fossil fuels and replacing them with renewable energy was always going to mean uniting every country in the world in a monumental confrontation.



The fossil fuel industry responded with extreme hostility to all this and went on over the next 30 years to spend billions of dollars on the next opposing COP process, including the mobilisation of an army of climate deniers around the world to discredit the science, and they were initially very successful.

### **Legally binding votes**

The most contentious issue in the COP process faced from the outset was the issue of legally binding (or non-legally binding) votes at conferences. While the Framework Convention did not provide for binding votes, it had the authority to require them on carbon reduction pledges by way of a protocol to the Convention. Such a protocol, called the Kyoto Protocol, was agreed upon at COP3 in Kyoto in 1997. It was, however, highly contentious and difficult to implement.

This came to a head at COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009, when 25 countries, including some of the world's biggest polluters—the USA, China, Canada, and Australia—refused to accept a legally binding vote over a proposal to restrict the global temperature increase to no more than 2°C above the preindustrial level. They all walked out, and the conference broke up in disarray.

The split effectively paralysed the COP process until COP21 in Paris in 2015, where legally binding votes on carbon reduction pledges were replaced by a consensus system, i.e., by unanimous, non-binding votes. Member states failing to meet their pledges would have to face the political and reputational consequences involved at the next COP, and under conditions where the crisis itself would inevitably be even worse.

This was correct, in my view. This has certainly been more effective, both in holding the whole thing together and in implementing decisions. Although getting 198 diverse and

complete countries to act together to save the planet is always a formidable task, it is better than endless splits with no dialogue and no progress.

Meanwhile, the COP process, we should recognise, has been instrumental in defeating the climate deniers and winning the overwhelming majority of the scientific community over on the science of climate change—without which we get nowhere. Additionally, the COP process, without which the fight against climate change would be ineffective, has significantly contributed to a seismic shift in the public's awareness of the climate crisis in recent years.

### **An exit strategy from fossil fuels**

Any campaign against climate change, if it is to be successful, must have a viable existing strategy for fossil fuels based on a socially just transition to renewables, whether it is the UN or the left. While the exit strategy being pursued by the COP process until now has been net-zero emissions by 2050, it does not propose by what mechanism this should be achieved.

I have long argued that the most effective way to cut carbon emissions quickly and in a way compatible with social justice is by making fossil fuels far more expensive than renewables by means of carbon taxes, as argued (remarkably) by the IMF in Dubai. When properly managed and carried out as a part of the significant transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor, this can both provide a socially just transition for the most vulnerable members of society and shield it from right-wing forces like the far right in Britain or the yellow vests in France.

The best way of doing this, in my view, is through a fee-and-dividend project along the lines proposed by climate scientist James Hansen in his 2012 book *Storms of My Grandchildren*. He set out the main points as follows:

- Fossil-fuel companies would be charged an easily implemented carbon fee imposed at the well head, mine shaft, or point of entry.
- 100% of the revenue collected would be distributed monthly to the population on a per capita basis as dividends, with up to two-half shares for children per family.
- Dividends would be sent directly via electronic transfers to bank accounts or debit cards.
- The carbon fee would be a single, uniform amount in the form of dollars per tonne of carbon dioxide emitted from the fuel.
- The carbon fee would then gradually and predictably be ramped up so as to achieve the necessary carbon reductions.
- At the same time, current subsidies to the fossil fuel industry would be eliminated.

When applied to the USA, he argued that 60% of the population would receive net economic benefits, i.e., the dividends they received back would exceed the increased prices paid. As the IMF speaker concluded in Dubai, as mentioned above, “when you put a price on carbon, decarbonisation accelerates.”.

The best exposition of Hansen’s proposal can be found in *The Case for a Carbon Tax* by Shi-Ling-Hsu, published by Island Press in 2011.

Cutting emissions from the demand side in this way is the only socially just way of doing it since it can be carried out within the framework of an overall taxation system that is heavily progressive and brings about a major transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor. Other alternatives, often advanced by the left, such as production cuts by government decision or the rationing of energy, not only do not work but can generate popular backlashes along the lines of the yellow

vests, and rationing would create a black market.

It might be expected that the left would support such taxes since it supports taxing the rich, but this is not the case. Most on the radical left oppose carbon taxes, I presume, because they do not involve the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

## **Mass movements**

It is unlikely that the climate struggle will be resolved without big confrontations and mass movements, for which ecosocialists have a responsibility to make preparations.

The best scenario, of course, is that a mass movement is built out of the existing global justice movement and includes everyone who is prepared to fight to save the planet on a progressive basis.

There is another scenario, however, which is that a mass movement or movements arise spontaneously following ecological or societal breakdown as a result of the failure of humanity to stop runaway global warming, resulting in catastrophic impacts on the planet, and with ultra-right and fascist forces waiting in the wings.

While any movement capable of saving the planet will initially be (hopefully) progressive rather than ecosocialist in character, it will be crucial that there are ecosocialists inside it able to fight not just for a sustainable energy transition but one based on social and economic justice and in an anti-capitalist direction.

It is the need to address these eventualities that makes the strategic discussions we have today around the climate and ecological struggle so important. The challenge for ecosocialists in such a situation is not just to be on the right side but to be able to make a contribution to the line of march and the principals involved.

Alan Thornett January 24th 2024

Originally published on Ecosocialist Discussion Blog:  
<https://www.ecosocialistdiscussion.com/2024/01/25/cop28-trashing-the-un-is-easy-but-where-is-the-alternative/>

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# **#NowWeRise – 9 Dec Day of Action on Climate Justice 12.30pm Scottish Parliament Edinburgh**

From the [\*Climate Justice Coalition\*](#):

**Temperatures are rising. Corporate profits are rising. Now we're rising.**

The hottest summer on record. Politicians backtracking on climate commitments. Continued corporate profiteering fuelling the climate and cost of living crises. **It's time for us to take action.**

As world leaders gather for the UN's climate negotiations at COP28, a climate summit presided over by an oil executive, **we're coming together on 9 December to demand climate justice.**

## **COP28 Day of Action for Scotland**

**Start: Saturday, December 09, 2023•12:30 PM**

**Outside Scottish Parliament• Scottish Parliament,  
Edinburgh, EH99 1SP**

**Host Contact Info: [info@climatefringe.org](mailto:info@climatefringe.org)**



**Temperatures and waters are rising.  
Injustices are rising.  
We are rising!**

At a time when the UK Government is rolling back on climate and nature policies, and the Scottish Government has delayed its vital new climate plan (which sets out the steps to achieve legally set targets), it's more important than ever for us to come together to show people in Scotland want the urgent and fair climate action that they've been demanding for decades.

**[Join us at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh on 9th December](#)** to send a strong message to decision makers that we are united for action, to tackle the climate and nature crises, secure sustainable jobs, a fairer, greener, healthier society for everyone in Scotland and justice for those impacted by the climate crisis.

There will be inspiring speakers, the opportunity to send a message to the Scottish party leaders with your wishes for action on climate and nature in 2024, kids activities, and more!

**[Join Us! – Click on this Link](#)**

**NOW WE RISE: JOIN US TO SHOW  
SCOTLAND IS UNITED FOR ACTION**

In 2021 over 100,000 people took to the streets of Glasgow to tell world leaders at the COP26 climate talks they wanted

action on the climate and nature emergencies.

Since then, despite record breaking temperatures and increasingly devastating climate impacts, we have seen a lack of progress on action to reduce emissions, protect nature, or make the biggest polluters pay for the damage they are causing.

## **Temperature and Waters are Rising**

2023 will be the hottest year on record. As the world heats up, extreme weather events on every continent – from floods in Brechin to wildfires in Greece – are causing mass devastation, loss of life and livelihoods in communities around the world. The evidence is right in front of our eyes: our climate is breaking down. And, if we're to have any hope of a liveable planet and tackling the climate crisis, we must deliver a just transition and dramatically and immediately reduce the use of fossil fuels.

## **Injustices are Rising**

The cost of living crisis and climate crisis are driven by our reliance on dirty fossil fuels, and by the excessive emissions of the richest people. The climate crisis disproportionately affects ordinary people and communities in the global south, while those most responsible profit. In 2022, the five biggest oil and gas companies made record profits of over £150 billion. As corporations make billions, we struggle to make ends meet. Energy prices in Britain are still double what they were two years ago, soaring above wages and benefit levels and many thousands will be cold in their homes this winter.

## **Now We Rise!**

People in Scotland from all walks of life are coming together

to say we know the solutions, and we want our leaders to take robust and urgent action to implement these. We can replace the destructive fossil fuel economy with a real alternative. We can take advantage of cheap renewable energy, insulate homes, reduce energy waste and implement accessible and affordable public transport. We can create an economy that meets the needs of communities, creates secure and sustainable jobs and places the wellbeing of both people and nature at its centre.

We will stand with communities in the Global South who are suffering from the climate crisis which they did not create, and which does the greatest damage to countries already burdened by unjust debt. Rich nations must provide urgent climate finance and grants for loss and damage.

At a time when the UK Government is rolling back on climate and nature policies, and the Scottish Government will soon be publishing its new climate plan, it's more important than ever for us to come together to show people in Scotland want action.

**[Join us at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh on 9th December](#)** to send a strong message to decision makers that we are united for action, to tackle the climate and nature crises, secure sustainable jobs, a fairer, greener, healthier society for everyone in Scotland and justice for those impacted by the climate crisis.

*For other actions taking place across the UK check this [interactive action map](#) by the Climate Justice Coalition.*

*Source: <https://climatefringe.org/cop28-scotland/>*

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# Rising Clyde: Climate Camp vs. Scotland's biggest polluter

This month's Rising Clyde programme was recorded at [Climate Camp Scotland](#) in Grangemouth.

The year's most important gathering of climate justice activists from different movements across the country, took on the giant INEOS oil refinery and petrochemical plant which spews out close to 3 million tons of CO2 equivalent every year.

We talked to Kenny Alexander, a former oil worker who is from Grangemouth, Jessica Gaitan Johannesson, an organiser with Climate Camp, and Duncan Harbison from the Stop Rosebank campaign. about the aims of the camp and the challenges ahead for the climate justice movement in Scotland.

[\(581\) Rising Clyde: Climate Camp vs. Scotland's biggest polluter – YouTube](#)

Rising Clyde is the Scottish Climate Show, presented by Iain Bruce, and broadcast on the [Independence Live](#) Channel. Previous editions can be found in the embedded video below by clicking in the three lines in the top right hand corner and choosing from the video list.

A report on Climate Camp Scotland by RS21 members is here: <https://www.ecosocialist.scot/?p=1898>

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# Climate Camp Scotland 2023 – report by RS21 members

*This year, Climate Camp Scotland set up on the doorstep of INEOS, Scotland's biggest polluter. **rs21 members** participated and here they report on the camp and lessons learned.*

From 12 to 17 July, the oil town of Grangemouth experienced a new sight. Tents were pitched, people wandered about with camping gear, and dog-walkers were making new friends. Climate and social justice activists from across Britain had come to the town for the third Scotland Climate Camp.

## Why Grangemouth?

Grangemouth is host to one of Europe's largest petrochemical facilities and ports, producing plastics, refined oil, and various other products. Much of the facility is run by INEOS, owned by British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe. One of Britain's richest men, he is estimated to avoid around £4bn of taxes through 'residing' in Monaco. From 2013 onwards, Grangemouth workers have been [repeatedly victimised](#) by this management. This creates a site of near-cartoonish evil, that climate and worker organisers decided to focus upon.

On several occasions at the camp, local residents and workers spoke of the impacts of the port and industrial site. Workers are exploited, the community is made ever sicker by the port, and the wider planet is destroyed. On an evening walk to the nearby bay, those at the camp saw thousands of plastic pieces washed upon the shore, released by the facility.

It is for the above reasons that Climate Camp Scotland decided to focus on Grangemouth. The camps are structured to have several days of political discussion and training, and then a

mass direct action at the close. In this way, people get to learn from each other, both technical skills and political analyses, as well as, in the end, taking action together. As opposed to actions done by a small group of activists, the aim is to get something akin to a 'mass' character – a space where community members, workers and environmentalists have all got to know each other and engage in resistance together for the first time.

## **The program**

The camp this year began with an address from [Ecuadorian activist Leonidas Iza](#), leader of the country's biggest indigenous group. Iza led the 2019 and 2022 protests against the Ecuadorian government's austerity measures and rising fuel prices, which disproportionately impacted the country's poorest.

His speech brought the urgency of internationalism to the camp. We must not only unite workers and environmentalists against facilities like Grangemouth's, but also be able to mobilise in solidarity with those globally facing the violence of capitalism.

The workshops were interesting and varied. They included a discussion with the Scottish histories of resistance project, which highlighted the importance of learning from past struggle and explored how our climate movement could be understood in a historical context. Fuel Poverty Action ran a workshop on their [Energy For All campaign](#), and how a shift to renewables could combat overpriced heating bills. A workshop on anti-fascism dug into how liberal discourse can be hacked by fascists to swing mainstream ideas on climate to the right.

In addition, an important workshop on the history of energy transitions looked at first-hand accounts from workers who experienced the move from coal to oil. The discussion explored what we would need to bring about a 'just transition' to

renewables led by rank-and-file workers.

The artistic side of the camp was quite wonderful – a climate cabaret took place one evening, and another there was an impressive open mic. A band performed fantastic songs against police, billionaires and queerphobia. There was also an arts tent where people could make banners and masks of INEOS-mogul Jim Ratcliffe. The chance to meet other activists and swap stories was also an invaluable part of the week.

## **The action days**

On Saturday the 15th, the camp geared up for action. Early in the morning, around 100 activists began the march from the site to the facility. As they attempted to exit the forest and walk towards the facility, police officers appeared en-masse to block their passage.

This tells us something crucial about the role the police force has today. The police do not protect INEOS workers facing victimisation, they do not take on the billionaire owner who's avoiding an estimated £4bn in tax, they don't do anything for the Grangemouth community who are being poisoned. Rather, the police mobilise with force to protect the polluters.

What resulted was a pitched struggle where the marchers attempted on several occasions to pass police lines, with 5 being arrested for attempting to merely try and find ways to walk past the police. The march ended when police ruined the entire road system around Grangemouth, so they could kettle a series of people marching along the pavement.

Not all was lost. In all their excitement to harass and attack the protesters from the camp, Scotland's finest had foolishly left their flank wide-open. Having sent a significant number of officers to that end of the facility, they were not prepared for [another crew of activists](#) from the camp, who succeeded in entering the site unopposed by private security

or the police.

Having succeeded in entering the site, these activists proceeded to occupy the roof of the facility's power station for seven hours, with a banner reading 'Climate Justice for Grangemouth'. The police force, terrified now that activists had succeeded to get on site, were forced to allow them off-site without arrest having recognised that attempting to remove them by force from the roof would likely end badly.

Early in the week, [activists on kayaks](#) had also succeeded in getting on site with a banner reading 'INEOS: Profiting from Pollution'. Finally, after the camp had packed up, [This is Rugged activists](#) further succeeded in getting into the site and blockading it with a series of actions lasting many days. Ultimately, the forces of the state, despite their desperation to defend fossil fuel billionaires, have been revealed as incompetent. This also shows that we can be more impactful than we ever thought we could be.

## **Questioning the way forward**

A core strength of Climate Camp Scotland is its experimental attitude toward its work. The camp relies upon an ecosystem of organisations, who provide everything from accessible toilets to facilitation of meetings, legal advice to delicious food. There is an openness to reflecting on what configurations would be most effective, and how the participatory democracy of the camp could be expanded.

One of the challenges of the camp was how to connect the educational aspect of the workshops with the action-oriented nature of the week. On one hand, a case could be made for focusing the workshops more closely on the imminent action: the skills training could focus on fence-climbing rather than tree-climbing, a history workshop could look at previous instances of direct action and what those achieved. Given that many attendees are new to this type of activism, allowing more

critical engagement with direct action strategy could bring new ideas into the fold of the action.

On the other hand, climate justice depends on a lot more than direct action, and it's essential to broaden out the conversation. The mix of workshops was eclectic, but it catered to a range of concerns which all have a place in the discourse of activism. A camp with a pedagogical focus, separate from action, would also be a useful intervention in our movement. Given the police presence was particularly onerous after the camp's action, a safer space could be generated by separating camp and action. (By the end of the camp, there were allegedly 300-400 police officers on duty in the Grangemouth area.)

Another alternative would be to split the camp into different strategic pathways – a collection of workshops and activity which respectively focus on direct action, broader discourse and community outreach. The question hinges on how the camp could best enable more people to engage with climate activism toward a just transition.

## **Reaching workers and front-line communities**

The camp's stated aim to 'build bridges between workers, front-line communities, and the climate movement' was more difficult in Grangemouth than Aberdeen the previous year. Aberdeen had [a community campaign](#) which the climate camp was able to support, generating solidarity with local people in Torry. In Grangemouth the route was less clear, although conversations occurred with local people across the week which point the way to building stronger relationships in future. The camp's media team drew connections between INEOS's environmental harms and its impacts on the health of people who live in its toxic vicinity. Conversations with locals were positive. During the march, Grangemouth residents were clear-sighted about the fact that it was the police who stopped traffic, not climate activists.

Although the climate camp is clear that we need radical direct action that isn't simply adventurist, but is actually linked to a mass politics of unions, activists, and frontline communities, that is easier said than done. Building those relationships is slow and difficult, particularly given the way mass media tend to distort environmentalist actions. [Brian Parkin's account](#) of the history of Unite in INEOS is essential reading to understand the necessity to go beyond the union bureaucracy in seeking to reach out to the facility's sub-contracted rank and file.

How can direct action link with the demands of workers and communities? It is worth thinking about how broad climate messaging could be supplemented with more practical demands. A focus on energy bills, cancer rates, life expectancy, and the sheer practicalities of converting INEOS machinery to worker-controlled renewable energy production, must be hashed out and made tangible, if climate activists aren't to be rendered alien abstract beings by the mainstream media. The fight for climate justice is a fight for a better quality of life, locally and internationally. We need to make these material necessities feel real in local areas.

INEOS want to close Bo'ness Road and turn it into a private internal road for their facility, and [the community are against](#) the plan. If that campaign were to escalate, it would be a good opportunity to create the kind of practical solidarity we saw in Aberdeen. Further, just transition strategies need to be developed which will facilitate the agency of [rank and file](#) INEOS workers to figure out the shift to sustainable energy.

Climate Camp Scotland rose to the challenge of setting up in Grangemouth this year, and now the journey begins to incorporate the many lessons learned, so we can progress Scotland's climate movement further.

28 July 2023

Republished from RS21 website:  
<https://www.rs21.org.uk/2023/07/28/climate-camp-scotland-2023/>

*Ecosocialist.scot Editor's Note: RS21 – [Revolutionary Socialism in the 21st Century](#) – is a group originating in splits in the British Socialist Workers Party around a decade ago. ecosocialist.scot members also participated in Climate Camp Scotland and helped organise the tour of Britain by [Leonidas Iza](#). We will be writing about our experiences and reflections in future articles.*

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# **Not Coal, Not Dole! Just Transition & Climate Jobs – protest against Cumbrian Coal Mine Sat 22 July**

There is a “Speakers’ Corner” public protest against the UK government’s approval for a new coal mine in Cumbria on Saturday 22 July noon. Details are below.

[ScotE3 \(“Employment, Energy and Environment – Campaigning for climate jobs and a just transition\)](#) and [Edinburgh Climate Coalition](#) are mobilising from the Edinburgh area, so you can contact them for details of transport. The West of Scotland is nearer to Cumbria, for many it’s nearer than Aberdeen, but the only possible transport is by car. We are not aware of any other transport but will publicise details if we get any. Let us know at [info@ecosocialist.scot](mailto:info@ecosocialist.scot).

Our friends in [Anti\\*Capitalist Resistance in England & Wales](#) have an article by Cumbrian activist Allan Todd on their



website

>> [here](#)

and you will be able to get Allan Todd's new book "[Ecosocialism Not Extinction](#)" from our [Resistance Books](#) bookstall at [Climate Camp Scotland](#).

*From the organisers of "Speakers Corner" Cumbria*

*Join us in Whitehaven on Saturday 22nd July, at 12 noon, to oppose the West Cumbria Coal Mine. We say: Not Coal, Not Dole! We want Climate Jobs and a Just Transition*

*We are inviting Trade Unions and supporters to join us for the third Speakers' Corner event which will explore the themes of Climate Jobs and Just Transition. **Bring your Trade Union banners!***

*Is it possible to campaign against the proposed coal mine while supporting jobs for local people and boost Cumbria's economy? We believe it is. Thousands of jobs could be created in Cumbria in renewable energy, transport, housing retrofitting, and other sustainable activities. We can not have our communities left behind but coal jobs are not the jobs for the future or the present. Local communities shouldn't be held to ransom by West Cumbria Mining Ltd which is 82% owned by a Capital Investment company registered in Singapore!*

*Join us at the site to hear from great speakers talking about the prospect of Climate Jobs for Cumbria and a Just Transition for the area as an alternative to the coal mine.*

*More [information by South Lakes Action on Climate Change](#) about the mine and why we oppose it.*

*Speakers TBC. You can also share and invite friends on the [Facebook event](#).*

**Meeting point:** Outside the Marchon site, Whitehaven. On Wilson Pit Road, near junction with High Road. SatNav: 54°31'25.6"N 3°35'35.6"W. [Click here for Google map pindrop.](#) More information about parking will be shared closer to the date.

**Travel:** Note that the RMT union has announced a train strike for 22nd July. We are still going ahead with the event but you won't be able to travel by train. You will have to travel by vehicle to the event. We will try coordinate and support attendees with their travel arrangements.

**Direction:** Arrive via the A595, as if heading for Whitehaven. Stay on that road until you see a road off [R., if travelling from the north; L., if travelling from the south], signed: 'St. Bees/Sandwith' – this is Mirehouse Road. Travel along this until you meet the B5345: turn L. onto St. Bees Road, and then, almost immediately, take the first R. on to Wilson Pit Road. The coalmine site is on the L., next to West Coast Composting (Wilson Pit Yard). SatNav: CA28 9QJ. Note there are limited parking near the site.

**Accommodation:** You may also want to stay over if you are travelling for far afield so you may want to book campsite/accommodation early. So far we haven't made arrangements to support people with accommodation but we will explore accommodation with local people and other options. We are also hoping on the day to also carry out some outreach/door knocking activity in the local area and hold a social/film event tbc. More information soon.

**From ScotE3**

### **Solidarity with stop the Cumbrian Coal Mine Campaigners**

- Keep the carbon in the soil: Scientists across the globe are clear that if we are to prevent catastrophic global warming then we can't continue to develop new oil fields and dig new coal mines.
- Coal energy has the highest carbon footprint of all energy types.

In December 2022 the Westminster government gave the green light for the development of a new coal mine at Whitehaven on

*the Cumbrian coast. The decision flies in the face of statements made by the Tories took while the UK hosted COP 26 in Glasgow. But post-COP and during an ongoing cost of living crisis their mantra has become 'energy security'. This apparently justifies opening a new licensing round for North Sea oil and gas, massive investment in nuclear and a U-turn on coal. As we write this it looks likely that the Tories will use their majority in the House of Commons to strike out a Lords amendment that would ban all new coal mining.*

*The new mine is intended to supply coal that can be processed into coke for use by the UK steel industry. Tory ministers argue that coke is essential for steel production and that domestic production will cut the carbon emissions resulting from the transportation necessary for imported coal. But the focus of the two major UK steel producers is on decarbonising steel production by using green hydrogen, moreover the Cumbrian coal is unsuitable for steel production:*

*'The UK steel industry has been clear that the coal from the West Cumbria mine has limited potential due to its high sulphur levels," said Chris McDonald, chief executive of the Materials Processing Institute, which serves as the UK's national centre for steel research.'*

*So, in reality, the government's arguments are simply a poor attempt at greenwashing. It's estimated that if the project goes ahead around 83% of the 2.8 million tonnes of coal extracted each year will be exported. They talk about it being a Net Zero coalfield. It's the same sleight of hand as they use to argue that the North Sea will become a Net Zero oil and gas producing area. You electrify the industrial processes required for extraction, offset other emissions and don't count the carbon embedded in the coal (or oil) because that's the responsibility of the end user! All in all It looks like the government's coalition to go ahead is an entirely political strategy aimed at pushing back genuine action on climate in favour of the big corporate interests*

that dominate energy production.

Lord Deben, Tory chair of the UK Climate Change Committee stated in June 2022 that:

'As far as the coal mine in Cumbria is concerned, let's be absolutely clear, it is absolutely indefensible. First of all, 80% of what it produces will be exported, so it is not something largely for internal consumption. It is not going to contribute anything to our domestic needs in the terms we're talking about, the cost of energy and the rest.'

The other argument used by ministers, however, is one that we do need to take seriously. Whitehaven is a one-time coal and iron mining town and currently has high levels of deprivation. Proponents of the mine say that it will guarantee 500 jobs for 50 years. Putting the investment required for the mine into almost any other form of local economic activity would produce more jobs and certainly investing in renewables in the Whitehaven area would provide, more and more long-term sustainable jobs. But while local people have no faith in their being such investment the pull of the mine remains attractive.

Two court cases aimed at stopping the mine are due to be heard near the end of October 2023. In the meantime, a coalition of national and local environmental organisations are organising resistance. On Saturday 22nd July there will be a day of action in Whitehaven with a rally, leafletting and door to door conversations with local people.

We want to coordinate solidarity contingents from Scotland. If you are able to join It would be very helpful if you could answer these three questions.

I am interested in joining the delegation to Whitehaven on 22nd July.

I could provide a car and take passengers.

If it's an option, I would prefer to stay overnight and

*return on Sunday 23rd.*

*Please reply to [triple.e.scot@gmail.com](mailto:triple.e.scot@gmail.com) (you can use the [contact form](#) on the ScotE3 if you wish) and cc [edinburghclimatecoalition@gmail.com](mailto:edinburghclimatecoalition@gmail.com)*

*<https://scote3.net/2023/06/23/climate-jobs-not-coal-or-dole/>*

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# **Aberdeen: Occupation of Edinburgh offices in support of Torry community**

**Activists occupy tree outside Edinburgh offices in support of Torry community in Aberdeen.** Press statement from This is Rigged.

Ironside Farrar, Environmental Consultants with offices in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Manchester were commissioned by Energy Transition Zone Ltd (ETZ Ltd) to produce a 'Masterplan' for the industrial development of parts of [St. Fittick's Park](#), Gregness and Doonies Farm in Aberdeen. They were also tasked with obtaining Planning Permission for this development. Ironside Farrar's plans were presented to the Aberdeen City Council Management Planning Committee yesterday morning (29<sup>th</sup> June). The Council say they will adopt the 'Masterplan' as Planning Guidance.

On the same day, supporters of This Is Rigged went to the Edinburgh offices of Ironside Farrar and met with Julian Farrar, Managing Director of the company, to discuss the issues and request that Ironside Farrar withdraw from further work for ETZ Ltd, and that employees boycott all further work for ETZ Ltd for the following reasons:

St Fittick's park is the last remaining green space in Torry, which is one of the country's most deprived communities, where residents have a life expectancy ten years lower than people living in wealthier parts of Aberdeen. Commenting on the potential loss of the park, local doctors and nurses fighting to improve the health of the Torry community, say that industrialising any part of St. Fittick's Park will be devastating for the health of that community.

In addition to its positive contribution to human health, St. Fittick's Park is an oasis for wildlife, including many species of migrating birds, and Gregness and Doonies Farm support this wildlife as green corridors. In a recent article in the Guardian, journalist Tom wall suggested the park's wetland is "perhaps Aberdeen's most unlikely beauty spot. Reeds flap and bend in blasts of salt-edged wind. Grey and blue light catch in watery beds, where ducks dip and preen. Birds shelter in a young woodland of oak, dark green pine and silvery birch trees."

It therefore makes no sense to destroy this important habitat while Scotland is in the midst of a biodiversity crisis. Furthermore, the wetlands and forest created 10 years ago in St. Fittick's Park are already capturing carbon, and it is increasingly recognised that ecosystems like these even regulate local climate including rainfall.

The main purposes of the proposed Energy Transition Zone will be to develop carbon capture and hydrogen technologies, both of which are considered by leading scientists to be unproven and dangerous excuses for continued oil extraction and habitat

destruction.

In yesterday's meeting, Julian Farrar was warned that being complicit in destroying the wetlands and woodland, both of which are vitally important green spaces and biodiversity sites that have taken years and a tens of thousands of community man-hours to create, would be seen as an act of immeasurable violence.

Ishbel Shand, member of the Friends of St.Fittick's Park campaign said,

"The proposed industrial development is simply a land grab by the oil and gas industry to fill the pockets of their shareholders and directors."

After leaving the meeting with Julian Farrar, This is Rigged activists Mike Downham and Tom Johnson decided to occupy a small tree outside the Ironside Farrar offices, and are there awaiting a response.

Mike Downham, a retired paediatrician and children's DR said,

"There is a high incidence of asthma in children in Torry due to particulate matter air pollution from the nearby incinerator and the South Harbour industrial development. Further industrial development in this community would have a serious negative impact on the health of children in Torry."

Following the meeting, Tom Johnson, a painter-decorator and This is rigged supporter who knows St. Fittick's park well said,

"If Ironside Farrar were to pull out of the project at this stage, it would have a huge positive effect on the wellbeing and health of the Torry community – disempowered folk who have lost so much already. I mean, Imagine losing an entire bay – your access to the sea. And now forests they planted 10 years ago are to be ripped up and concreted over with "green"

factories.”

“Julian Farrar explained to me that Ironside Farrar have reduced the amount of harm to be done in the park, but if they now come out against any destruction WHATSOEVER of these spaces, that will be a really bold statement of solidarity, and an action that shows their real concern for the environment, and people. We understand it’s difficult for a company to do something like that in current economic and political contexts, but to me Julian did seem to be uncomfortable with what’s going on with the ETZ.”

Republished from [Scote3 -“Employment, Energy and Environment – Campaigning for climate jobs and a just transition”](https://scote3.net/2023/07/01/occupation-in-support-of-torry-community/):  
<https://scote3.net/2023/07/01/occupation-in-support-of-torry-community/>

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**Climate Camp Grangemouth –  
12-17 June 2023 – Indigenous  
leader and Ukrainian activist  
among international speakers**

**At Climate Camp Grangemouth**



**community groups, local people, workers and climate activists will assemble for a people-powered 'festival of resistance'.**

Learn practical skills, watch local and international talks and films, meet new people, explore local nature and history, play games and take collective action! Vegan food will be provided on site and the camp will be fully equipped with compost toilets and camping space.

□

## **[Book a place](#)**

INEOS Grangemouth is Scotland's most polluting site and billionaire owner Jim Ratcliffe stashes record profits in a tax haven while the community here are blighted by pollution and struggling with food and gas bills.

Climate camp will be a place to build a just transition led by people, not billionaires, to resist and reimagine a greener future together.

Details about the programme, travel and practical information can be found in [the Camp Guide](#). And remember to [book your place](#) and donate to [help us cover our costs](#).

# Climate Camp Scotland Press Release 27 June 2023

## Indigenous leader and Ukrainian activist among international speakers at camp



- Indigenous leader and Ukrainian activist among international speakers to address Climate Camp in Grangemouth
- The programme of events for Climate Camp Grangemouth, taking place 12-17th July, has been released and will include a number of international speakers, as well as sessions focusing on Scottish independence and land rights.
- The Camp will be opened by Indigenous leader Leonidas Iza, Ecuadorian activist (pictured above) and president of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador.
- Grangemouth will also hear from Ukrainian activist Iryna Zamuruieva about the Russian destruction of land and environment in Ukraine, and autonomous resistance in the

country.

- Campaigners from Kurdistan and India will also speak at the camp.
- The camp will challenge INEOS's petrochemical plant in Grangemouth, Scotland's biggest polluter, emitting 2,752,000 tonnes of CO2 in 2020 (1)

**Free Photos of speakers and camp at this link:**

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1KG1UspbztIfMgBBLPpJ4\\_tEK7eEoNekX?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1KG1UspbztIfMgBBLPpJ4_tEK7eEoNekX?usp=sharing)

International speakers and activists will join local communities and campaigners as part of the programme at a climate camp in Grangemouth.

Held from 12 to 17th July, the camp is a chance for local residents, workers and activists to meet and build relationships. With guests from Ecuador, Ukraine, Kurdistan and India, the camp aims to forge solidarity between those affected by the fossil fuel industry worldwide.

The camp will be opened on 12th July by Ecuadorian activist Leonidas Iza, leader of the country's biggest indigenous group. Iza led the 2019 and 2022 protests against the Ecuadorian government's austerity measures and rising fuel prices, which disproportionately impacted the country's poorest.

Later in the programme, campaigner Iryna Zamuruieva will hold a session about Russia's destruction of Ukrainian ecosystems and land, exploring the resistance to such practices in the country.

Other international speakers include representatives of the Internationalist Youth Coordination, who will share knowledge on Kurdish ecology and youth mobilisation, as well as a

session on LGBTQ+ climate activism in India. Discussions on land rights, rewilding and Scottish independence will also feature, among other topics.

Quân Nguyễn, a spokesperson for Climate Camp Scotland, said:

*“Climate Camp Grangemouth is an orientation point for climate activists to think about our strategies and tactics, and how we can restore momentum to hold polluters and governments to account. Having so many activists and resistance leaders from abroad leading the debate helps us learn from those on the frontline of the climate crisis. This knowledge in the face of an ever intensifying climate crisis is more urgently needed than ever.”*

Climate Camp Grangemouth speaker Iryna Zamuruieva added:

*“Ukraine’s resistance is also a climate justice struggle. This war reinforces the need to end the fossil fuel economy which Russia uses to fund ecocide and genocide. It also shows the need to join up our struggle with those defending their kin-regions against imperial and colonial violence.”*

INEOS petrochemical plant in Grangemouth, the location for this year’s climate camp, is Scotland’s biggest polluter, emitting 2,752,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2020. Last month INEOS refused to participate in a Parliamentary inquiry about transition at Grangemouth (2) Levels of inequality in the surrounding areas are high, with 25% of children in the Falkirk council area living under the poverty line (3) while INEOS’s owner, Jim Ratcliffe, consistently ranks as one of the UK’s richest people (4).

The organisers of the camp say that this same pattern of inequality and exploitation exists across the world. By bringing international leaders and activists together, they hope to learn from each other’s struggles for fairness,

equality and safe environments.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

*Climate Camp Grangemouth is being coordinated by Climate Camp Scotland, who are bringing workers, front-line communities, and climate action groups together to build the movement for a swift just transition from fossil fuels, and to take mass action that brings about climate justice.*  
[www.climatecampscotland.com](http://www.climatecampscotland.com)

1. INEOS controls four sites in the top 20 climate polluters in Scotland, all in Grangemouth town. See:  
<https://theferret.scot/rogues-gallery-climate-polluters-top-20-revealed/>

2. Petrochemical giant Ineos snubs Scottish Government net zero committee refusing to 'go on the record' – Falkirk Herald  
<https://www.falkirkherald.co.uk/news/environment/petrochemical-giant-ineos-snubs-scottish-government-net-zero-committee-refusing-to-go-on-the-record-4126406>

3. One in four children across Falkirk council area living in poverty – Falkirk Herald  
<https://www.falkirkherald.co.uk/news/politics/council/one-in-four-children-across-falkirk-council-area-living-in-poverty-4179839>

4. Manchester United bidder Jim Ratcliffe up to second on UK rich list – The Guardian –  
<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/may/19/manchester-united-bidder-jim-ratcliffe-up-to-second-on-uk-rich-list-hinduja-family-richard-branson>

**Republished from Climate Camp Scotland website:**

<https://www.climatecampscotland.com/>

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# **Ecosocialist Film Night: PickAxe – Tuesday 27 June, 6.30pm, Glasgow**

To book tickets, click >>> [HERE](#)

Join us for a showing of PickAxe, a 1999 documentary about the victorious struggle of American eco-activists to stop the logging of a protected, old growth forest at Warner Creek in Oregon.

When Warner Creek suffered an arson attack which led to a wildfire in 1991, the forest service sold off the protected woods to the highest bidder to be salvage-logged. In order to stop that, activists occupied the logging road into Warner Creek with a fortified camp, tore up the tarmac with pickaxes, and settled in for a months-long battle against the park service, the timber companies, and the police.

A fascinating document of resistance by and for activists, PickAxe has much to teach a new generation of climate activists who are becoming ever more interested in direct action and protest militancy.

After the showing, there will be time for a discussion of the film and its message: What can we learn from the Warner Creek blockade? Can we take any of the politics and tactics from there and apply them to Scotland? What were the shortcomings

of the Warner Creek activists?

Sales of tickets go towards fundraising for the costs of sending a delegation of Scottish activists to this years Socialist Youth Camp being put on by the 4th International over in France! Lend a hand to the comrades, watch a good film and have a good chat about eco-activism!

TIME: 6:30PM to 9PM

PLACE: Red Rosa's event space, 195 London Rd, Glasgow, G40 1PA

TICKETS: You can either pay on the door or purchase a ticket online here.

£5 entry

Or if you wanna be a real gem: £8 solidarity price

(And for all stalwarts who would give yet more to the cause, the fundraising tin will be there too!)

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## Our Power: Offshore workers demands for a just energy transition

An important new report from [Friends of the Earth Scotland](#).

*Over the past two years, we've come together with offshore workers to build demands for a just energy transition. These workers developed 10 demands covering training and skills, pay, job creation, investment and public ownership.*

*We surveyed over 1000 additional offshore workers and over*

*90% agreed with these demands. This plan is comprehensive in scope, transformative in scale and deliverable now.*

*Below you will find a series of resources setting out the demands and the paths we can take to turn them into reality.*

*We need a rapid transition away from oil and gas that protects workers, communities and the climate. But the government has no plan to phase out oil and gas production in the North Sea.*

*Oil and gas workers are ready to lead a just transition away from oil and gas, but they are caught in a trap of exploitation and fear created by oil and gas companies. Working conditions are plummeting, just as profits, prices and temperatures are soaring.*

*The UK and Scottish Governments must listen to workers to make this transition work for all of us. These demands lay out a comprehensive plan, which includes:*

*Removing barriers that make it harder for oil and gas workers to move into the renewable industry.*

*Ensuring safety, job security and fair pay across the energy industry.*

*Sharing the benefits of our energy system fairly, with public investment in energy companies and communities.*

*Workers have told us what they need for a just transition, now we need to work with them to make it happen.*

## **Hear from workers**





# Our Power: Offshore workers' demands for a just energy transition

The [‘Our Power’ report](#) is a blueprint for a just transition in the UK North Sea.

*Reproduced from [Friends of the Earth Scotland](#) with thanks to [Red Green Labour](#).*

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## Scottish Government Energy Strategy – what’s wrong with

# it and what we need to change

The public consultation on the Scottish Government's [Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan](#) ends on **Tuesday 9 May 2023**, writes Iain Bruce.

That means responding to it will be one of the first big tasks for the new leader of the SNP and Scotland's new First Minister.

The deeply disappointing [consultation document](#) was published on 10 January after a year or more's delay. It fails to build on the recent positive steps taken by Nicola Sturgeon towards opposing any more oil and gas extraction from the North Sea – after she came out against Shell's proposed Cambo oilfield following the mass protests in Glasgow at COP26 in November 2021.

The [consultation document](#) reiterates, at great length, the SNP Government's obsession with false 'techno-fixes' to the climate crisis, in particular hydrogen and carbon capture and storage. It ignores the pressure from environmental organisations and some offshore oil workers and their unions, for a just transition to renewable energy that is led by the communities and workers most affected. And it is partly at odds with the positive steps taken by Sturgeon herself and the outgoing SNP administration, through their [initiatives on 'Loss and Damage'](#), to recognise that a just transition must be just for the global south too.

In the coming weeks we need to build maximum pressure on the government to change the most negative aspects of this draft strategy.

The interview below with Mary Church of [Friends of the Earth Scotland](#), for the [Rising Clyde Climate Justice show on Independence Live](#), gives a lot of [important context and background](#) for such a campaign.

However, it is also important, for the climate justice movement in Scotland and for the radical forces in the independence movement, to understand and challenge the deeper contradiction that underpins this energy strategy, as it does almost all the Scottish government's economic policy. This is its attempt to combine progressive, humane and necessary steps on a number of environmental and social issues, with an inability or refusal to question the underlying systemic factors which hinder such action, and makes it necessary in the first place – in other words its unwillingness to challenge the priorities of the free market.

**Link to Video:**

Also on Facebook:

[Rising Clyde Episode 10: Scotland's Energy Strategy- leading the way or sitting on the fence? | We talk to Mary Church of Friends of the Earth Scotland, about the Scottish government's new Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan – where it needs to... | By Independence Live | Facebook](#)

7 March, 2023 (YouTube link added 10 March 2023)

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**COP27 was a spectacular failure – boycotting future COP conferences, however,**

# would only compound the problem

[Alan Thornett](#) offers his thoughts on a troubling end to COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh.

COP27, the 27th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, held last month in Sharm El-Sheikh to confront the planetary emergency caused by climate change, failed spectacularly in the face of the most challenging set of circumstances a COP conference had faced since the Framework Convention was launched at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

It faced a critical situation from the outset, both in terms of the global geopolitical situation today arising from Putin's invasion of Ukraine and the stage that has been reached in the implementation of the UN COP process itself.

Only a last-minute agreement to establish a "loss and damage" (or "reparations") fund into which the rich countries, which are the most responsible for climate change, would subscribe to help the poor countries, which are the least responsible for global warming, minimise and mitigate the impact of climate change and transition to renewable energy saved COP27 from total ignominy.

Prior to the COP, UN Secretary General António Guterres had argued strongly for such an agreement, warning that unless there is what he called an "historic pact" between the rich and poor countries on this issue, the planet could already be doomed.

The creation of such a fund had been scandalously kept off the agenda by the rich countries for 30 years and was only forced onto it this year after heavy pressure from the developing countries. There was no agreement, however, as to how much

money should be paid into it, who should pay it, or on what basis. It was still a step forward, but it was the only one that could be claimed at this conference.

Arguments will continue about the size of the fund and which countries will benefit, and there is a proposal to ask the International Panel on Climate Change (the IPCC) to prepare a recommendation for the COP28 next year in Dubai in the UAE.

When it came to carbon emissions reduction, however, COP27 was an unmitigated disaster.

The UN carbon emissions reduction plan—the so-called “ratcheting up” process adopted at COP21 in Paris in 2015—which required *each member state to determine its own carbon reduction target—or* “Nationally Determined Contributions”—and then enhance them annually at implementation conferences that would be held for that purpose—had fallen apart before the conference was open.

Exactly what happened is not clear. What is clear is that the pledges made in Sharm El-Sheikh, far from building on those made in Glasgow, were well behind those made there, and that the process had suffered a disastrous retreat.

## The energy debate

The general debate on energy was also a disaster. Not only had the Egyptian Presidency produced a draft text that blatantly favoured the oil and gas petro-states and the fossil fuel industries in the region, but it had also opened the door to the biggest contingent of fossil fuel lobbyists that a COP conference had ever seen. All the world’s biggest oil and gas producers were there in force, and they used it to the full. Saudi Arabia (no less) ran an event to promote the “circular carbon economy,” under which carbon capture, hydrogen, and other bogus technologies were scandalously presented as clean.

A major target for them was the 1.5°C maximum temperature increase that had also been agreed in Paris. The session dealing with this became so heated that the EU threatened to walk out at one point if the 1.5°C maximum was not protected. Although a reference to 1.5 °C has remained in the final text, the language is ambiguous and widely regarded as unreliable.

The agreement in Glasgow, which for the first time named (and shamed) coal, gas, and oil as major threats to the future of the planet and additionally, in the case of coal, fixed a date for ending its use altogether, was also under attack. In the end, Saudi Arabia and other petro-states, along with China, Russia, and Brazil, who had been campaigning for their removal, were able to get rid of it. Fossil fuels that had been declared obsolete or obsolescent in Glasgow had been rehabilitated in Sharm el-Sheikh. To add insult to injury, the conference agreed to define natural gas as a renewable energy source.

Alok Sharma, no less, the UK's (Boris Johnson appointed) president of COP26, recently sacked from the cabinet by Sunak—but who appears to have become more strongly committed to the cause having been appointed as a stop-gap—was visibly outraged by what had happened to the energy text and lambasted the conference in the closing session:

*“Those of us who came to Egypt to keep 1.5C alive, and to respect what every single one of us agreed to in Glasgow, have had to fight relentlessly here to hold the line. We have had to battle to build on one of the key achievements of Glasgow, including the call on parties to revisit and strengthen their “Nationally Determined Contributions.”*

Repeatedly banging the table, he said:

*“We joined with many parties to propose a number of measures that would have contributed to this. Emissions peaking before 2025, as the science tells us is necessary – NOT IN THIS*

*TEXT. A clear follow-through on the phase down of coal – NOT IN THIS TEXT. A commitment to phase out all fossil fuels – NOT IN THIS TEXT. The energy text, he said had been weakened in the final minutes of the conference to endorse “low-emissions energy”, which can be interpreted as a reference to natural gas.*

The result is a disaster and will directly lead to more death, destruction, poverty, and people having to leave their homes. Climate events become ever more severe as constraints on carbon emissions are lifted. It will speed up the arrival of tipping points that can take climate chaos out of control—possibly disastrously so. It will also give succour to the climate deniers and offset the defeats they suffered in Paris and Glasgow.

*It's true that this COP27 faced very difficult conditions.* Putin's war triggered an obscene scramble back to fossil energy when it is abundantly clear the only answer to either the economic or the environmental crisis is a rapid transition to renewable energy, which is getting cheaper all the time. The UK government immediately issued 90 new gas and oil extraction licences for the North Sea and is seeking an agreement to import large quantities of fracked natural gas from the USA.

Putin's war, however, was there long before COP27, and the Egyptian organisers did nothing to counter it. In fact, they cynically exploited it for their own ends in order to get emissions restrictions lifted or watered down.

## **So where do we (and the movement) go from here?**

One thing that must be avoided as a result of all of this is a boycott of future COP conferences or the entire COP process by

either the radical left or the wider movement. It would simply compound the problem. It was being discussed widely before Sharm El-Sheikh, and it has continued since, both within the radical left and in the broader movement. Greta Thunburg called for it before Sharm El-Sheikh, and George Monbiot advocates it in his November 24 Guardian article.

A boycott by the radical left would primarily be an act of self-harm (or self-isolation), whereas a boycott by the wider movement would demobilise the climate struggle at a critical juncture. Most climate campaigns and NGOs would refuse to follow such a call anyway. The front-line countries certainly would do so because they see the COP process, with all its problems, as their only chance of survival. That is why they mount such ferocious battles at every COP conference.

There has also been a major change in the climate struggle since the 2015 Paris Accords. This is because the job of the UN COP process has changed from agreeing on a plan to cut carbon emissions (the Paris Accords) to convincing 190 countries with different political systems and vested interests to accept their responsibilities and carry them out. This is a huge task, not least given adverse global geopolitical conditions.

It is clear that the UN has failed to do this, and it is a big unresolved problem. It is important that the left and the climate movement recognise this reality. It is pointless to pretend that this problem does not exist. That they are simply refusing to act when all they would have to do if they wanted to resolve climate change is snap their fingers—which is exactly what George Monbiot argues in his Guardian article. He puts it this way:

*“So what do we do now? After 27 summits and no effective action, it seems that the real purpose was to keep us talking. If governments were serious about preventing climate breakdown, there would have been no Cops 2-27. The major*



*issues would have been resolved at Cop1, as the ozone depletion crisis was at a single summit in Montreal”.*

(He is referring to the 1987 UN Montreal Protocol which banned the use of ozone depleting substances in order to protect the ozone layer that was threatening the future of the planet.)

This is glib in the extreme since there is absolutely no comparison between banning a substance that was easy to replace with no major consequence to anyone involved and abolishing fossil fuels, to which the planet has been addicted for 100 years and has massive vested interests behind it. If you misunderstand (or misrepresent) the scale of the problem, it is hard to contribute to its solution.

## **The key strategic dilemma**

What we actually face is some hard strategic choices. The problem, as I [argued in my first article](#), is that only governments—and ultimately governments prepared to go on a war footing to do so—can implement the structural changes necessary to abolish carbon emissions and transition to renewable energy in the few years that science is giving us. The radical left can't do it, the wider movement can't do it, and a mass movement can't do it—other than by forcing governments to act.

We are facing a planetary emergency. And under these conditions, it is only the UN Framework Convention—or something with a similar global reach and authority —organised on a transnational basis that is capable of addressing the 190 individual countries that will need to be involved and convinced if it is to be effective.

In terms of the climate justice movement, it is also the only forum through which the climate movement can place pressure and demands on the global elites and around which we can build

the kind of mass movement that can force them to take effective action.

A socialist revolution (unfortunately) is not just around the corner, but the task we face is time-limited. We have less than ten years to stop global warming; remember, an ecosocialist society can't build on a dead planet.

The task we face, therefore, whether it fits our plans or not or whether we like it or not, is to force the global elites (however reluctantly) to introduce the structural changes necessary to halt climate change within the timescale science is giving us, and we can't do that by turning our backs on the COP process; we can only do that by engaging with it more effectively and building a mass movement to force it to act against the logic of the capitalist system that they embrace.

## **What kind of mass movement?**

Everyone in this debate argues that a powerful mass movement will be needed to force the change that is necessary in this struggle—including George Monbiot. It is an aspiration, however, that begs many questions. What kind of mass movement do we need? It would have to be the largest coalition of progressive forces ever assembled (because we have to save the planet), so it would not be socialist at first, a movement capable of confronting the kinds of societal breakdowns that are likely as climate impacts worsen. But how would it come to be, and how would its future path be decided?

Such a movement must include those defending the ecology and climate of the planet in any number of ways. It must include the indigenous peoples who have been the backbone of so many of these struggles, along with the young school strikers who have been so inspirational over the past two years. And it should include the activists of XR who have brought new energy into the movement in the form of non-violent direct action.

Movements that emerge spontaneously are more likely to move to the right than to the left, depending on the experiences gained by the forces during their formation and the balance of political forces within them; the strength of the socialist (or indeed ecosocialist) forces within such a movement will be determined, at least in part, by the role such forces have played in the movement's development and the political legacy they have been able to establish. It must also have a progressive political and environmental driving force within it that fights for an environmentally progressive direction of travel.

Forcing major structural change against the will of the ruling elites will not only need a powerful mass movement behind it but also an environmental action programme behind it such as abolishing fossil fuels, making a rapid transition to renewables, ensuring a socially just transition, making the polluters pay, and retrofitting homes that can command mass support, not just amongst socialists and environmental activists but amongst the wider populations as they are impacted by the ecological crisis itself.

The key to this is to make fossil fuels far more expensive than renewables by means that are socially just, that redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor, that can bring about a big reduction in emissions in the time available, and (crucially) are capable of commanding popular support. This means heavily taxing the polluters to both cut emissions and ensure that they fund the transition to renewables.

As long as fossil fuel remains the cheapest way to generate energy, it is going to be used. An important mechanism, therefore, for bringing about big reductions in carbon emissions in a short period of time must be carbon pricing—making the polluters pay. This means levying heavy taxes or fees on carbon emissions as a part of a strongly progressive and redistributive taxation system that can win mass popular support.

One proposal on the table in this regard is James Hansen's fee and dividend proposition. It provides the framework for very big emissions reductions, here and now while capitalism exists, and on the basis of a major transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor (as argued above) in order to drive it forward.

As he recognises, it would need to go along with a crash programme of renewable energy production to meet the demand that his incentives would create. It would also need a major programme of energy conservation, a big reduction in the use of the internal combustion engine, the abolition of factory farming, and a big reduction in meat consumption.

## Conclusion

The UN has made a unique contribution to the struggle against climate change, a capitalist institution as it inevitably is, having identified the problem soon after it entered public consciousness 32 years ago. It has confronted opposition from many of its member states, and it has been successful, along with its specialist divisions such as the IPCC, in winning the war both against the climate deniers—who were massively backed by the fossil fuel producers for many years—and in winning the scientific community very strongly over to the climate struggle, without which we would not be where we are today.

It has also been key—along with relentless pressure from the ecological crisis itself—in transforming global awareness of climate change to a level without which the options we are discussing today would not exist.

Today, however, the UN faces a pivotal moment. Its carbon reduction strategy has fallen apart, thanks to the Paris Accords and the Glasgow Agreements. Unless this is addressed urgently, it could paralyse the UN's environmental work for many years. It could weaken the global justice movement and open the door to increasingly disastrous climate events,

leading directly to tipping points that could take climate chaos out of control.

Unless drastic changes are made, not only the Paris Accords and the Glasgow Agreements will be rendered obsolete, but also the entire approach to climate change adopted in 1992 under the UN Framework Agreement on Climate Change; the 1997 Kyoto Agreement.

The UN must stop handing COP conferences over to countries that cannot:

- Support the project the UN is collectively seeking to promote
- Ensure the basic right to campaign and protest
- Support the project the UN is collectively seeking to promote
- Drastically limit fossil fuel lobbies the kind of access to its conferences
- Seek to ensure that the UN's carbon reduction project is a success.

A very good start would be to accept Lula's offer to hold the 2025 COP in the Amazon rain forest, which would be a huge boost to the movement.

Guterres told us in his opening speech in Sharm El-Sheikh that "the clock is ticking." We are in the fight of our lives, and we are losing. Greenhouse gas emissions keep growing. Global temperatures keep rising, and our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible. We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator.

In his closing speech, he told us that:

*"Our planet is still in the emergency room. We need to drastically reduce emissions now – and this is an issue this COP did not address. The world still needs a giant leap on*

*climate ambition.”*

He was absolutely right on both counts. His commitment and his passion for the cause have never been in doubt. His task now must be to make the necessary changes in order for his warnings to be translated into actions by making the UN COP carbon reduction process fit for purpose in terms of the challenges we face in the twenty-first century.

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Alan Thornett was a prominent trade union leader in the 1970s in Britain and is the author of “[Facing the Apocalypse: Arguments for Ecosocialism](#)” (£15), published by [Resistance Books](#), and several volumes of [memoirs of trade union struggles](#).