

## Copenhagen: deal or no deal for global south

The wealthy nations will not agree to a carbon-cutting deal that damages their profits – even if that means destroying the planet. Only the united actions of billions, involving strikes, demos, occupations and direct action, north and south, can ensure a worldwide shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources and implement a global plan of sustainable production

From 7-18 December, Copenhagen will host the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

At least 10,000 people are expected to attend, among them more than 60 world leaders (including Obama, stopping off en route to picking up his Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo), industry groups and NGOs.

The summit's aim is to draw up a treaty to succeed the 1997 Kyoto Protocols, but the UN is downplaying the possibility of reaching any agreement on carbon emission reductions.

Outside the conference rooms, more than 20,000 people will gather to protest against the wholesale sell-off of the earth's future, culminating in a mass demonstration on 12 December with a clear message: "System Change, Not Climate Change!"

Over 410 supporting organisations – trade unions, NGOs, charities, church groups, environmentalists, socialists, anarchists, development groups, greens, etc. – are participating in protest marches, direct action, alternative forums, even a 12-day caravan journey from Geneva.

The question of industrialised nations helping developing countries tackle climate change will be a hot

topic, yet previous promises of "climate aid" have turned to nought. In 2001, 20 rich countries pledged \$410 million a year until 2008, yet only \$260 million has ever been paid into two UN funds earmarked for the purpose. Now the EU has pledged 100 billion euros until 2020. This is a pittance compared to the debt repayments by developing countries – Africa alone pays Western banks more than \$25 billion a year to service just the interest on its external loans.

Parts of the anti-climate change movement argued against protests of any type, saying that COP15 was the chance for the developing nations to club together and fight back against the industrialised world. But these talks are not a level playing field where everyone comes to the table as equals: the imperialist powers wield economic power, while the others are pressured, held to ransom and threatened into subservience.

We must also remember that class divisions exist in developing countries too. The "representatives" of these nations will not consistently fight for the interests of their working class and poor. We need thousands of protesters outside to give a voice to these masses and send a message that their fight is our fight too.

Instead of trying to stop delegates

from reaching the summit, as done previously, some protesters argued for surrounding the conference centre to prevent delegates from leaving until an iron-clad, legally binding accord for reducing carbon emissions – fair and just for developing nations – was hammered out.

Although it sounds like a grand idea, the problem is that the delegates that hold real power – the US, EU, Japan – would rather chew off their right arm than sign up to anything that may hurt the profits of big corporations. While a small layer of companies think "going green" might be the ticket out of the crisis, the major polluters all refused to sign up to an agreement in Bali two years ago. Profit trumps the environment every time, and means that the likelihood of any serious deal is slim to none.

But we must act now to prevent catastrophe, as leading scientists warn that global warming is happening even faster than previously thought. In a new report, 26 experts, many from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), say global sea levels could rise by up to six and a half feet by the year 2100. We can't wait for the capitalists to change – we need to overthrow the capitalist system that is causing this destruction.

# Reclaim the environment

This is an extract from our programme, From Protest To Power

Throughout history, human activity has involved degradation of the environment. Until the age of capitalism, these changes were local, leaving most of humanity and the planet as a whole unaffected. Industrialisation ruined the environment in which workers worked and lived and the working class movement, therefore, led the struggle to clean up these conditions.

Capitalist driven consumer culture means overproduction and the creation of vast mountains of waste, poisoning the environment. Species of wildlife are dying out on a daily basis, and tons of poisonous fertilisers and weedkillers are sprayed on our foods to overproduce while products which do not fit the supermarket image of perfection are destroyed. At the same time big corporations are pushing for genetically modified organisms (GMOs) to enter our food chain in order to make yet more massive profits, gambling with our health and our environment.

Moreover, capitalist industrialisation and the plunder of the earth's raw materials threatened a qualitative change in the dangers to the life systems of our planet - because this was the first worldwide mode of production.

The increase in the scale of production in the twentieth century has created a situation where the whole world ecosystem is threatened. The destruction of the equatorial rain forests - the lungs of the world - threatens massive climate change. A man made cataclysm threatens to occur in the new century because of global warming. This will have terrible effects on human beings - social, economic and psychological. Agricultural decline, the spread of dis-

ease, starvation and stress will make a living hell of large parts of the planet. Already, the land, rivers and seas are contaminated with toxins and the very air we breathe deteriorates by the day.

The "Greenhouse Effect" is caused by increasing amounts of gases such as CO2 in the atmosphere. The main causes of this increase are the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation. The climate changes this causes already appear to be having the most serious consequences. Weather patterns will alter, leading to floods and droughts. Some parts of the world will get much hotter - others much colder. Water levels will rise as the seas warm and the ice caps melt.

The USA has systematically blocked and sabotaged even the weak global agreements (Rio, Kyoto, Johannesburg) designed to limit greenhouse emissions and climate change. This is because the interests of Big Oil - companies like Exxon - come before those of the world's population.

## The working class

Capitalism is environment unfriendly by its very nature. Capitalists need ever-greater profits to compete, so resources are used up without regard for peoples' needs and the effects on future generations. Capitalists are reluctant to conserve resources, control pollution or recycle, as these are often "expensive". It is cheaper to pump pollutants into the environment than to clean it up.

Yet the combination of scientific and technological advance has created the potential of superabundance for all.

The working class has a vital interest in stopping capitalism laying waste to our world. Throughout its history, workers have fought to stop dangerous production methods and impose safety standards on the capitalists and on their state. Through forcing legislation on the ruling class, it has made tangible gains, helping to create a habitable environment in many cities and towns again. The working class can take the lead and rally the poor peasants, the inhabitants of the world's slums, to halt and reverse

of reforestation. We need a massive expansion of public transport to combat pollution caused by the growth in use of the private car.

The working class and all those who see the need to save our planet must fight for strict controls and punitive penalties to clamp down on corporate polluters. Corporations - like the big oil companies - that defy these must have their property confiscated and their power broken.

Energy production through nuclear fission represents a severe environmental risk, particularly under capitalism since security and environmental measures are expensive and reduce profits. Nuclear energy must not be run for profit. We oppose privatisation and call for nationalisation of the nuclear industry.

The Chernobyl disaster proved, however, that state ownership in itself is no guarantee of acceptable security, if it is under bureaucratic control. We are for workers' inspection of all nuclear plants and closure of those found to be unsafe. We are for the fullest workers' control of nuclear plants' security - involving representatives of the employees, the local communities, the trade unions and environmental groups.

We oppose the indiscriminate closure of nuclear plants because of the acute threat of devastating climate change that would result from a shift to fossil fuel burning.

None of the above demands for a sustainable environment can be secured permanently on a national basis alone or without the seizure of political and economic control from the capitalists. Therefore in order to fight for a clean and safe environment we need to struggle for workers' control, the expropriation of capitalist corporations and a democratic global plan of production. Only in this way can we eradicate the huge disparities between overcrowded cities choking in traffic congestion and a deprived, depopulated, countryside.

A militant defence of the environment from the depredations of capital; a rational reconstruction of the urban and rural environment to abolish the disequilibrium between town and countryside; a socialist

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