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COP27 in a warming world beset by multiple crises

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Introduction

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1848) begin Chapter 1 of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* with the observations that “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” and that the struggles between oppressor and oppressed classes have always ended “either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.” The interlinked ecological, economic, social and political crises generated by capitalism in this later, more mature phase of capitalism’s development, raises the stakes even higher. As ecosocialists argue, capitalism’s inherent drive for profit and ‘infinite growth’ threatens not only “the common ruin of the contending classes” but the very habitability of our planet and the continued existence of countless other species in addition to our own.

Although capital’s imperative to expand causes widespread environmental destruction, this article focuses only on one aspect of this destruction: the climate crisis caused by the anthropogenic greenhouse gases (GHGs) that the operations of global capitalism emit into the atmosphere. These GHGs have accumulated over time and have, to date, increased the Earth’s global mean temperature by an estimated “ $1.15 \pm 0.13^{\circ}\text{C}$ above the 1850-1900 average” (WMO 2022, 3). While climate scientists consider 1.5°C to be “a threshold beyond which humankind would dangerously interfere with the climate system” (Schlosser 2022), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO 2022, 3) reports that the anthropogenic GHGs that cause global warming continue to rise and that “concentrations of the three main greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide – reached record highs in 2021.” As is discussed in more detail later in this article, the institutions established to address the climate crisis are inadequate to the task of doing what is required: implementing policies that would stop the emission of GHGs. The outcomes of the most recent annual global climate change negotiations, the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties (COP27), once again confirm ecosocialist arguments that capitalism is incapable of solving the environmental, economic and social crises that it causes. The outcomes of COP27 are discussed with reference to the broader geopolitical context of war, rising militarism, and a deepening global economic crisis – developments that compound the everyday difficulties people face in a fragile world that is already plagued by the staggering

levels of inequality and widespread social injustices characteristic of the capitalist mode of production. Before discussing the context and outcomes of the climate negotiations at COP27, the article begins with a brief overview of scientific arguments about the urgency of rapidly reducing anthropogenic GHG emissions in order to address the climate emergency.

Global warming, climate change and rising emissions

Several alarming scientific reports emphasise the dangers humanity faces as GHG emissions continue to rise and cause average global temperatures to increase. The WMO's *Provisional State of the Global Climate 2022* Report highlights, for instance, include that "the eight years 2015 to 2022 are likely to be the eight warmest years on record" and that "despite La Niña conditions keeping global temperature low for the second consecutive year, 2022 is still most likely to be 5th or 6th warmest year on record" (WMO 2022, 3-4). The WMO Report also draws attention to how the persistence of La Niña conditions over three continuous years is unusual, that the rate of sea level rise is accelerating, and that 2022 extreme weather events such as heatwaves and drought conditions on the Eurasian continent and in east Africa, and monsoon floods in Pakistan have broken records. The social consequences of such extreme weather events are dire, particularly for poor and disadvantaged people and for people who live in global South countries that do not have the resources to deal with them. In east Africa, for instance, where "rainfall has been below average in four consecutive wet seasons", nearly 20 million people suffer from food insecurity and hunger while the floods in Pakistan affected over 33 million people and resulted in at least 1,700 deaths (WMO 2022, 3). Climate scientists warn that these already devastating effects of climate change are predicted to increase dramatically as average global temperatures rise further:

Climate model projections clearly show that warming beyond 1.5°C will dramatically increase the risk of extreme weather events, more frequent wildfires with higher intensity, sea level rise, and changes in flood and drought patterns with implications for food systems collapse, among other adverse impacts. And there can be abrupt transitions, the impacts of which will result in major challenges on local to global scales. (Schlosser 2022)

Despite the imperative to ensure that the rise in average global temperatures remains below 1.5°C, the voluntary Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which are commitments to cut GHG emissions submitted by countries that are ‘parties’ to the current climate treaty, the Paris Agreement, are completely inadequate. The United Nations Environment Programme’s *Emissions Gap Report 2022* states that “Countries are off track to achieve even the globally highly insufficient NDCs” and that current policies “are projected to result in global warming of 2.8°C over the twenty-first century. Implementation of unconditional and conditional NDC scenarios reduce this to 2.6°C and 2.4°C respectively” (UNEP 2022b, xvi).

Some academics are so disheartened at the persistent unwillingness of governments to act on scientific evidence that they describe the “science-society contract” as “broken”, and go as far as proposing putting a moratorium on doing the scientific research that policymakers should be acting on but continue to ignore. As Bruce Glavovic and his co-authors point out,

The tragedy of climate change science is that compelling evidence is gathered, fresh warnings issued, new institutions established and novel methodologies developed to redress the problems. Yet, greenhouse gas emissions and other indicators of climate change, and global change more broadly, rise year upon year. (Glavovic, Smith and White 2021)

“How bad could climate change get?”

A recently published scientific paper begins with the question “How bad could climate change get?” (Kemp *et al.* 2022). The authors of this paper argue that while “prudent risk management” involves exploring worst-case climate change scenarios, the lack of research focusing on such scenarios can partly be explained by “the culture of climate science to ‘err on the side of least drama’,” and for scientists “not to be alarmists” (*ibid.*). This conservative culture within the scientific community seems to be at odds with articles that have recently been published in scientific journals calling on scientists to participate in climate protests, direct action, or civil disobedience in order to draw attention to the urgency of the current “existential environmental crisis” (see, for example, Capstick *et al.* 2022) and the growing number of scientists taking up this call (for example, refer to Scientist for Extinction

Rebellion n.d. and Scientist Rebellion 2022). This departure from the “normal” scientific culture of apolitical objectivity can be interpreted as a clear indicator of exactly how worried these professionals are and how serious the climate crisis is. The following extract from Scientist Rebellion’s *Our Demands Letter* demonstrates the level of some climate scientists’ concern:

Some believe that appearing “alarmist” is detrimental – but we are terrified by what we see, and believe it is both vital and right to express our fears openly.... Self-reinforcing feedbacks within the climate system, in which hotter climates cause additional heating (e.g. increased forest fires, thawing permafrost, melting ice) threaten to drive the Earth irreversibly to a hot and uninhabitable state. These effects are being observed decades earlier than predicted, in line with the worst-case scenarios predicted. To be informed is to be alarmed. (Scientist Rebellion 2022)

Another activist tactic that concerned climate scientists have recently adopted involves leaking important information to the press in order to counteract censorship or having their findings and conclusions watered down as politicians try to conceal the severity of the climate emergency (Monthly Review Editors 2021). Scientists working in capitalist institutions find themselves having to resort to such tactics because these institutions are embedded within the system and are established in ways that facilitate the ruling class’s control over, and censorship of their work (Croeser 2020).

Controlling the climate change narrative

Scientists have been warning about the dangers of anthropogenic climate change for more than three decades, ever since Dr James Hansen’s landmark testimony about this issue before a United States Senate Committee in 1988. At that time, Hansen was the director of the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Goddard Institute of Space Studies. Hansen explained how the accumulation of GHG emissions that result from burning fossil fuels creates a “greenhouse effect” that could lead to dangerous climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a scientific body charged with assessing and synthesising the most recently published peer-reviewed scientific

literature relevant to climate change and related issues, was established in the same year as Hansen's testimony.

The scientists and experts that produce the IPCC reports are volunteers, and they are organised into three Working Groups (WGs). WGI reports on physical science research findings, WGII focuses on the vulnerability of socio-economic and natural systems to climate change, and WGIII assesses possible policy responses to the vulnerabilities identified by WGII. Each Working Group produces three reports, including a *Summary for Policymakers* (SPM) that highlights the key findings of the assessment. The SPMs have to be approved line-by-line by government representatives. Because of the length and complexity of the main IPCC reports, journalists and members of the public are more likely read the SPMs, so this approval process is an important mechanism that facilitates negotiators' control over the information that the public has access to (Hajer 2012). The IPCC has produced six major assessment reports to date, the latest being the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6). The reports are intended to update governments on the state of knowledge on climate change and, in theory, play an important role in the annual climate change negotiations in that they provide 'policy relevant' (but not 'policy prescriptive') information to the negotiators who attend the annual global climate conferences, which operate under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

'Copitalism': 30+ years of failing to address the causes of the climate crisis

The UNFCCC is a multilateral environmental treaty that entered into force in 1994. UNFCCC signatories are referred to as the 'parties' to this treaty framework, and they convene in annual sessions of a Conference of the Parties (COP) to negotiate the terms for taking the necessary action to address what has now developed into a climate emergency. The climate emergency is the result of what the editor of the journal *Ecologist*, Brendan Montague (2021), refers to as the failure of 'copitalism'.

Montague describes 'copitalism' as "a new global economic paradigm where national governments work together through the United Nations (UN) Conference of the Parties (COP) process to limit [GHG] emissions and prevent runaway climate breakdown – while leaving capitalism otherwise intact." He identifies the main

weakness of the COP process as being that its “outcomes are, by design, not action but words. The conferences are focused on national governments setting out new commitments [to reduce GHG emissions], always framed by deadlines years into the future.”

In the Paris Agreement, commitments to reduce GHG emissions are referred to as “nationally determined contributions” (NDCs). In contrast to the legally binding emission reduction targets and timetables of the Kyoto Protocol, the climate change treaty that preceded the Paris Agreement, NDCs are non-binding by design (McGee and Steffek 2016). Refusing to ratify the Kyoto Protocol (which was adopted in 1997 and received sufficient ratifications to enter into force in 2004), the US embarked on a sustained campaign that lasted several years in order to replace it with a climate treaty that absolves developed countries of any legal responsibility either for taking the lead in reducing current GHG emissions or, indeed, for reducing them at all (ibid.). As Jeffrey McGee and Jens Steffek (2016, 62) explain when discussing the legal status of the NDCs in the Paris Agreement,

While all countries have a binding *procedural* obligation to prepare and communicate to the secretariat a nationally determined contribution every five years from 2020, the *substance* of these nationally determined commitments will not be legally binding and will simply be noted on the UNFCCC secretariat website.

The distinction that McGee and Steffek make between ‘procedural’ and ‘substantial’ obligations raises an important question: if there is no legal obligation for any country to implement its NDCs, how will global GHG emissions actually be reduced? Part of the answer to this question is to be found in another shift in emphasis that the US succeeded in achieving when forcing the transition from the Kyoto Protocol climate regime to the Paris Agreement: the sidelining of the “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR) principle. The CBDR principle is contained in Article 3 of the UNFCCC, which states that:

The Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of equity **and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities**. Accordingly, **the developed country Parties should take the**

lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof

[emphasis in original]. (McGee and Steffek 2016, 51-52)

The US rejects arguments that because developed countries have emitted the vast majority of the GHGs accumulated in the atmosphere they have a responsibility to take the lead in reducing these emissions, and insists that all countries (whether ‘developed’ or ‘developing’) have a common responsibility to reduce their GHG emissions. Diego Pacheco, the lead climate change negotiator for Bolivia and a representative for the Like Minded-Group of Developing Countries (LMDC), describes this strategy for achieving global GHG reductions as “carbon colonialism”:

The narrative of having almost similar obligations among all parties, is moving [to] a new phase of colonialism in the world: carbon colonialism. Imposing hard obligations for developing countries, while giving enough flexibility and comfort to developed countries to achieve net-zero by 2050, and ignoring their historical responsibility [for] the climate crisis. In the meantime, developed countries will continue consuming the carbon space that belongs to developing countries. (Carbon Brief 2022)

The “net zero” concept that Pacheco refers to plays a central role in shifting the burden of global GHG emission reductions from the advanced capitalist economies onto the global South. As an Oxfam briefing paper explains, “Net zero emissions are achieved when anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere are balanced by anthropogenic removals over a specified period” (Sen and Dabi 2021, 5). As the same briefing paper points out, however, planting trees and using land to store carbon are the only proven ways of removing it from the atmosphere. This means that “there is a very real risk that the explosion in net zero commitments will fuel a new surge in demand for land to be used as carbon offsets (via the mechanism of “carbon trading”), particularly in low- and middle-income countries, which would lead to mass displacement and hunger” (ibid., 7). The demand for land in the global South would be driven by carbon offset markets, whereby governments and companies can pay for “offsets” so that they can continue “business as usual” while paying others to reduce GHG emissions on their behalf (Bradbury 2021).

While exacerbating existing inequalities and social injustices, the strategies described above are also likely to be ineffective if the intention really is to reduce

GHG emissions. Climate scientists James Dyke, Robert Watson and Wolfgang Knorr provide detailed explanations to justify their conclusion that the “concept of net zero is a dangerous trap,” and sum up their argument with yet another warning:

Current net zero policies will not keep warming to within 1.5°C because they were never intended to. They were and still are driven by a need to protect business as usual, not the climate. If we want to keep people safe then large and sustained cuts to carbon emissions need to happen now. That is the very simple acid test that must be applied to all climate policies. The time for wishful thinking is over. (Dyke, Watson and Knorr 2021)

Climate justice groups make a similar point about the need to actually reduce GHG emissions by making a clear distinction between “net zero” and what they refer to as “real zero,” and furthermore point out that “Net zero by 2050” is too little, too late” (Actionaid International *et al.* 2020). The recording of a side event at the June 2022 Bonn Climate Change Conference entitled “Climate Justice Pathways for Real Zero, Real Finance, and Real Action” is another informative resource on this issue (UN Climate Change – Events 2022a). As the rhetoric in several reports published before and during COP27 demonstrates, however, the concept of “net zero” remains central to climate change negotiations (for example, refer to IEA 2022 and OCI 2022).

Preparing for COP27: Bonn Climate Change Conference (June 2022)

Preparations for COP27 were meant to be finalised at the 56th session of the UNFCCC’s subsidiary bodies (SB 56), which was convened at the Bonn Climate Change Conference in June 2022. As staff writers at Carbon Brief concluded, however, “negotiators [at SB 56] quickly became bogged down in many of the same issues that have always plagued UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) events,” including ‘developing’ country demands that a new finance mechanism for “loss and damage” being “left off the agenda, following pushback by wealthy nations” (Carbon Brief 2022). As developing countries bear the brunt of the extreme weather events that the current $\approx 1.1^{\circ}\text{C}$ of warming above pre-industrial levels has unleashed, they are becoming more desperate to be compensated for the loss and damage they are suffering through no fault of their own. (Carty and Walsh 2022) While Harjeet Singh, the Head of Global Political Strategy at Climate Action

Network International, described loss and damage finance as “a make-or-break issue for the upcoming climate conference in Egypt,” the US and other developed nations continued to strongly oppose developing country demands to address this issue, and even refused to include it on the formal climate negotiations agenda. However developing countries continued to demand that the issue of financial compensation for loss and damage be prioritised at COP27 (Volcovici 2022), and their tenacity paid off.

In addition to demands that developed countries establish a Loss and Damage Finance Facility, at SB 56 developing countries also continued to demand financial assistance and the transfer of technology to help them meet their mitigation commitments as well as to help them adapt to the changing climate. Although developed countries have pledged to “mobilise” funding that developing countries can use for these purposes, developing countries argue that these pledges fall far short of their needs and that the funding is often difficult to access and comes at a cost. These issues and additional global South concerns were discussed by panel participants at a side event entitled “Developing country views on Road to COP 27” at the June 2022 Bonn Climate Change (UN Climate Change – Events 2022b). The urgency of gaining access to financial assistance to deal with extreme weather events at COP27 was compounded by the post-COVID-19 pandemic economic hardships that are being exacerbated as a result of geopolitical tensions, war, rising militarism, and the fragile state of global capitalism.

Geopolitical and economic crises and COP27

On 29 September 2022 the government of the Russian Federation (hereafter Russia) requested that the United Nations Security Council hold an emergency meeting over the sabotage that had two days previously damaged Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2, two undersea pipelines that transport Russian gas to Europe. This act of sabotage was part of a conflict that has been brewing ever since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) eastwards towards Russian borders (McGovern 2022). Russia began its “special military operation” in Russian-language speaking areas of the Ukraine on 24 February 2022 and this conflict has continually escalated since then (Snider 2022). While the war between Russia and Ukraine (which some analysts

refer to as a proxy war between the US/NATO and Russia) rages, the Biden Administration seems to be trying to provoke another major conflict, this time with the People's Republic of China (Corbley 2022). A detailed analysis of the social and environmental implications of current and possible future conflicts is beyond the scope of this article, but it is important to at least list some of the challenges such conflicts present when it comes to addressing global problems like the climate crisis.

The first challenge to consider is how military infrastructure and operations compound problems like environmental destruction and rising GHG emissions by directly increasing both, even in times of peace (Crawford 2019). In addition, money spent on building up military forces (as is happening now with NATO) is money that cannot be devoted to funding vital social programs such as healthcare and education or climate change mitigation and adaptation projects (Lücking 2022). Sanctions imposed against Russia by the US and NATO also compound the economic woes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic by creating an energy crisis, which was already a problem before the Russia-Ukraine war began (IEA 2022), and that also contributes to rising inflation. In addition, the energy crisis generated by the sanctions against Russia delays plans to decarbonize the global economy, as evidenced by European Union member state plans to encourage African countries to develop extractive industries, and to build new fossil fuel infrastructure that environmentalists fear will 'lock' the European Union into continuing to burn fossil fuels (Cook 2022; DGA 2022; Mathiesen and Weise 2022). At a time when we need global cooperation and collaboration to address perhaps the greatest challenges we have yet to face as a species, such conflicts also serve to distract everyone's attention and to make it even more difficult than it already is to collaborate on finding solutions (Ni 2022; Shih 2022).

COP27, Egyptian politics and the climate justice movement

To add to the complexity of the geopolitical context within which COP27 was being convened, Egyptian activists organising under the banner 'The Egyptian Campaign for Climate and Democracy' put out an urgent appeal to climate justice movement activists and asked them to not participate in the "state-orchestrated charade" of climate negotiations being held in a country ruled by a repressive regime (Egypt Solidarity Initiative 2022). In that communication, the activists argue that

Abdelfattah El-Sisi's government has "crushed all forms of opposition through a campaign of terror" since it seized power in a "brutal Military coup" and is conducting an exercise in "greenwashing" as host of COP27 (ibid.).

This appeal energised pre-existing debates within the ecosocialist activist community about whether or not to participate at the COPs. While some ecosocialists interpreted the Egyptian activists' appeal as a call to boycott COP27, others argued that doing so would be a mistake given the urgency of addressing the climate crisis and the opportunities afforded to continue building a mass movement that can put pressure on governments "to make the major structural changes necessary to get rid of fossil energy in the timescale available" (Thornett 2021). Climate activist debates about whether or not it is useful to attend events such as the COPs continue (Johnson 2022). What is certain, however, is that with each passing COP, and each year of rising GHG emissions and rising global temperatures, more and more people come to share the ecosocialist understanding that capitalism is the root cause of the climate crisis and that it is not capable of solving this crisis. The outcomes of COP27 are just another instance of these failures.

COP27: Talking about climate finance, talking about carbon trading, not talking about fossil fuels

The main outcome from COP27 is that negotiators for the advanced capitalist countries finally (albeit unenthusiastically) agreed to establish a dedicated "Loss and Damage" fund to help global South countries that are vulnerable to climate change. As many analysts note, however, the promise to establish such a fund is merely a first step. Global environmental policy expert Adil Najam (2022), who has been following climate negotiations since they began in 1992, cautions that "the legacy of climate negotiations is one of promises not kept" and that this promise "is particularly vague and unconvincing, even by U.N. standards." Important details about the fund's establishment and implementation - such as who will pay into the fund, whether the money put into the fund will be additional to money already earmarked for providing aid, and who will be eligible to receive support from the fund - are yet to be determined by a "transitional committee" that will present its recommendations for consideration at the 2023 climate conference (Najam 2022). The contentious nature of the negotiations that culminated in the establishment of the new fund, which

included attempts by global North country negotiators “to divide the G77 and China negotiating group by arguing that China, India, and other less vulnerable countries should also have to pay for loss and damage” (Valodia and Taylor 2022), also suggest that future negotiations about this fund may be problematic.

Other issues that generated acrimonious negotiations between global North and global South countries at COP27 involved the governance framework for carbon markets, with the introduction of language that “could jeopardise transparency and accounting processes and reduce the likelihood of carbon markets contributing to mitigation,” and the failure to “develop an action plan to double adaptation finance” (ibid.). The most significant (albeit predictable) failure of COP27, however, is that it did not address the root causes of the climate crisis: the continued use of the fossil fuels that cause GHG emissions and climate change (UNEP 2022a; Valodia and Taylor 2022).

Thirty years of climate change negotiations have clearly failed to generate policies to reduce GHG emissions. At the same time, climate change negotiators from advanced capitalist countries have been devising policies that are designed to unfairly shift the burden of reducing future global GHG emissions onto those least responsible for the climate emergency we now face, who also already suffer disproportionately from a crisis they did not cause. This constitutes a failure on two levels: firstly at the technical level of taking effective “climate action” that actually reduces GHG emissions, and secondly at the ethical level of addressing the climate crisis in ways that achieve climate justice. The reasons for these failures are predictable because they are structural, as ecosocialist analyses explain.

Why capitalism cannot solve the climate crisis

Ecosocialists argue that the capitalist mode of production, particularly as it has developed historically on the basis of a global economy powered by fossil fuels, is incapable of solving the climate crisis (Croeser 2020). The power of the fossil fuel industry continues to prevail despite the emergence of opposing factions of capital that are eager to profit from a shift to “green capitalism” and despite the establishment of institutions that are ostensibly designed to mitigate anthropogenic climate change by facilitating this shift (Croeser 2021). One source of the fossil fuel industry’s power emanates from an energy treaty that is not often mentioned in the

mass media, the Energy Charter Treaty. As award-winning journalist Jonathan Cook (2022) explains, signatories to this treaty (which include the European Union and the United Kingdom) are unable to decarbonise as they face enormous financial implications if they threaten the profits of fossil fuel companies. What is extremely concerning, from both a GHG emissions and a climate justice perspective, is that this “treaty is being pushed aggressively at Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Asia, with the promise of new energy investments” (Cook 2022). Not only will signing the Energy Charter Treaty make it more difficult for the countries concerned to achieve their NDCs (ibid.), it is also likely to lead to financial debts that the global South can ill afford when it becomes clear that actual decarbonisation is the only real solution to the climate crisis.

Even if some of the technical solutions proposed by the current ruling class manage to somehow alleviate some of the negative effects of the climate crisis, ecosocialists argue that capitalism cannot solve the broader environmental crisis it causes in its normal operations as it depends on infinite economic growth and cannot survive as a system if this growth is constrained in order to respect finite “planetary boundaries”, which are ecological thresholds critical to life. Crossing one or more of the planetary boundaries could lead to abrupt and irreversible environmental changes that may threaten the biosphere’s integrity and life itself (Stockholm Resilience Centre n.d.).

Ecosocialists conclude that the long-term solution to the climate crisis and the wider ecological and socio-economic crises that capitalism causes is its replacement with a socially just mode of production based on sound ecological principles (Croeser 2021a). In the meantime, however, as I write in another article, it is incumbent on Marxists to continue supporting “community campaigns at the intersection between ecological issues and the existing fault lines of capitalism: exploitation, inter-imperialist conflict and oppression” (Croeser 2021). As John Bellamy Foster and Brett Clark (2022) explain, given the inevitable severity of the current climate crisis, we must also pay attention to developing strategies for survival:

Up to now, the ecological, including ecosocialist, strategy with respect to climate change has focused almost entirely on mitigation, aimed at stopping greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon emissions, before it is too late.

Yet, this general approach has all too often been rooted in a type of reformist environmentalism that does not seriously challenge the parameters of the present system, allowing the ecological crisis to deepen and expand. Mitigation – but today necessarily of a far more revolutionary character – still has to play the leading role in any global climate strategy, since it is essential for the continuation of civilization and survival of the human species (and most of the known species on Earth). However, it is now also necessary, given the inevitable degradation of the earth this century, to *mobilize immediately for survival at the level of communities, regions, nations, and whole peoples*. The harsh reality is that during the next few decades, which according to even the IPCC’s most optimistic scenario will involve breaching the 1.5°C threshold – at least for a time – humanity will inevitably see the proliferation of environmental catastrophes at all levels and throughout the planet. This requires that populations organize, plan, and create spaces of ecological sustainability and substantive equality designed to protect what Karl Marx called ‘the chain of human generations.’ (Foster and Clark 2022, 3-4)

The knowledge of what current and future generations will face as the climate crisis intensifies terrifies climate scientists so much that some of them are willing to enter what is, to them, the alien realm of politics and activism. The most important task of ecosocialists is to support these climate scientists by taking every opportunity to reveal that the underlying cause of the climate crisis is the capitalist mode of production.

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