

REVIEW

Ecosocialist solutions to the climate crisis

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Review by Ash Pemberton: *The Global Fight for Climate Justice: Anticapitalist Responses to Global Warming and Environmental Destruction* Edited by Ian Angus Resistance Books, London, 2009 286 pages, \$49 (pb)

With crunch time rapidly approaching for the climate crisis, this anthology compiled by Canadian ecosocialist Ian Angus has arrived at the right moment.

The Global Fight for Climate Justice: Anticapitalist Responses to Global Warming and Environmental Destruction provides an overview of the crisis and its causes. Its comprehensive range of articles cover almost every point of debate within the environment movement from an anti-capitalist, usually ecosocialist, perspective.

Opening with an overview of the nature of the climate crisis as well as the related food crisis, we are presented with a disturbing vision of our potential future.

The focus then shifts to taking on the false solutions to the problem. The book includes articles on the problems with “green capitalism” and carbon trading, but also discusses population control, biofuels and carbon capture and storage. This section underlines capitalism’s status as the antithesis of an environmentally sustainable system.

The only glaring omission here is the issue of nuclear power. Some articles mention it in passing, but no article is specifically devoted to the subject.

This is one of the more compelling false solutions to climate change bandied about by supporters of capitalism, as well as a minority of the environment movement.

The omission is unfortunate and baffling — both Ian Angus’ Climate and Capitalism website and the book’s publisher Socialist Resistance are openly anti-nuclear — so we have to assume that this is a simple oversight on their part.

The chapters “Starving the Poor” and “Voices of the Global South” are refreshing because they are almost exclusively written by people from the Third World. These highlight the role of imperialism in the current state of economic and environmental affairs, and emphasise that the world’s poor will suffer the most from the destructive actions of the super-rich.

The most salient section of this book — for activists in the First World, at least — is the final two chapters: “Building a Climate Emergency Movement” and “Ecosocialist Responses to Capitalist Ecocide”.

These chapters outline the key tasks that lie ahead in the struggle, and convey many lessons learnt from experiences so far.

All these ideas have benefited from years of discussion and practical involvement within the broader climate emergency movement.

The articles are reprinted from a wide range of sources — from world leaders like Evo Morales and Fidel Castro, to academics like John Bellamy Foster, to activists from the First and Third World, to journals and newspapers such as *Green Left Weekly*, and political organisations from across the globe involved in the climate struggle.

This diversity reflects the global nature of the struggle in a way that is rarely able to be appreciated within a single volume.

Two articles included here appear in English for the first time. One is by Peruvian Indigenous leader Hugo Blanco. He talks about the importance of Indigenous ideas and cultures in building an alternative, non-capitalist, environmentally friendly society.

The other is by Belgian ecosocialist Daniel Tanuro of the Fourth International. Tanuro puts forward a 40 point argument about why the environment question is fundamental to any future socialist society, and why today's socialist struggle must be defined as "ecosocialist".

Tanuro also provides the insight that Marx failed to extend the concept of the "metabolic rift" to the production of energy — an oversight that was also missed by generations of Marxists and contributed to poor responses to environmental issues by Marxist groups in the past.

"The integration of socialism and ecology is a fundamental precondition for the restoration of Marxism's revolutionary vitality", he said.

To anyone familiar with ecosocialist thinking, most of this book will contain nothing new. However, anyone in this situation will remain engaged due to the fact that it is compiled with action in mind.

Angus writes in the introduction "the articles in this book aren't abstract meditations: they are products of the authors' concrete experiences in building movements against global warming and environmental destruction".

These experiences are what make *The Global Fight for Climate Justice* a vital resource for activists serious about creating a real solution to the climate emergency.

P.S.

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