

Call for an Global Ecosocialist Network

Sunday 2 February 2020, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 31 January 2020).

Presentation of the initiative

As we know the climate emergency is developing apace. In this situation different sections of the international bourgeoisie are responding in different ways.

1. The Trump-Bolsonaro approach – outright rejection and relentless pursuit of their ‘national’ capitalist interests regardless of the effects on the environment
2. Greenwashing – talking green but pursuing business as usual
3. Some attempt to reduce emissions and reach Paris targets by means of developing renewable and using various market mechanisms (carbon taxes etc)

Many governments veer between 2 and 3. But in so far as capitalist governments opt for 3 they are pursuing , and will continue to pursue their class interests by attempting to make the working class pay for whatever environmental measures are introduced by means of job cuts, higher prices and extra taxes. This creates obvious dangers for us in that it may seriously alienate large swathes of the working class (potentially pushing some into the arms of the right) and split the environment movement by co-opting sections of it – most obviously the Green Parties – to support the ruling class agenda.

The developing climate emergency has generated much increased public awareness of climate change and the environment generally and a new wave of activism (School students, XR etc) which many socialists are part of and engaging positively with. However, the current environmental discourse – internationally – both in terms of the media and most of the public is dominated by what could be called ‘green liberalism’. A more radical version of green liberalism is also prevalent among activists along with a vague ‘deep green’ consciousness and semi-autonomism. This goes together with a preference for so –called ‘horizontal ‘ organising (at least in words) and an understanding of system change as essentially a change in collective mind set which lends itself to illusions in the possibility of converting corporations and mainstream politicians and the State.

At the moment the socialist voice in the movement is very limited, certainly not dominant. But the socialist voice is essential because capitalism is not going resolve either the climate change issue or the wider environmental crisis. Socialist transformation of society is objectively necessary. Moreover a socialist approach is crucial to winning over and mobilizing the mass of working class people. Unfortunately in this extremely urgent situation much of the international revolutionary left is very weak. This proposal is an attempt in a small way to improve this situation, to amplify the socialist voice and reach out to new forces.

Proposal

The proposal is that we should attempt to initiate an international eco-socialist network - possible name Global Ecosocialist Alliance or Network(GEA/N) . This would consist of a website and social media operation to which socialist and labour movement organisations , left campaigns and individuals would be invited to affiliate.

People Before Profit lacks the resources or international authority to launch such a project on its own. We are first approaching individual writers and activists, like yourself, to see if you are willing to support the proposal, at least in principle. If we can get a sufficiently broad and representative list together we could then go public.

A further step might be the convening of an Ecosocialist conference sometime next year – maybe on a delegate basis. We would have to consider in which country and city.

The main points we would stress are that the principles should be clearly socialist but otherwise minimal and that affiliation should be ‘commitment light’ ie any affiliating party or organisation or individual might pay a small fee for running costs but would otherwise be free to pursue all its other goals and activities providing they were not grossly in contradiction to the network’s principles and goals.

We may attract the attention of tiny sectarian grouplets but should try to devise a structure that allows us largely to ignore them and swamp them with more serious people.

In the longer run I think GEA/N if it develops, will be able to urge support for actions eg if it existed already it would have urged support for 20 Sept or XR Rebellion week, and if the opportunity presents itself even issue its own calls for action.

At a deeper level and in the future it might be possible for this venture to lay the foundations for socialist cooperation in a way that overcomes divisions based on old issues.

Just to make the whole idea easier to envisage we have laid out provisional principles/ action/ structures . These are just first thoughts for discussion.

John Molyneux

Global Ecosocialist Network (GEN)

Key principles

1. There is a generalised environmental crisis of which climate change is the lead element. This crisis is extremely urgent and threatens the future of humanity and countless other species.
2. The cause of this crisis is capitalism – an economic and social system based on competitive exploitation and production for profit.
3. Solving this crisis and surviving it involves an international break with capitalism and its replacement by socialism – an economic and social system based on collective ownership of the main forces of production and democratic planning.
4. To achieve this we need a global mobilisation of people power from below in conjunction with other struggles for social justice.
5. Such mobilisation requires a commitment to a genuinely just transition ie not one based on attacking the jobs and living standards of the mass of working people, and one based on recognition

of the immense inequality between the Global North and Global South in terms of current and historic responsibility for climate change and in terms of its immediate effects.

6. The united mobilisation we need also requires opposition to all racist, sexist, national, homophobic and transphobic oppression.

Immediate proposals:

We call for :

1. Leave it in the ground – halt all further extraction of fossil fuels
2. Rapid run down of fossil fuel use through massive taxation of the fossil fuel companies
3. Huge public investment in renewable energy – wind, solar and tidal energy.
4. A rapid transition to free and greatly expanded public transport.
5. Massive state led programmes of retrofitting homes.
6. An immediate end to the destruction of the earth's forests and a huge international programme of afforestation in conjunction with indigenous peoples and forest protectors.

Action:

GEN will establish a website and social media operation through which we will:

- a) Issue statements , manifestos and publications arguing the case for the eco-socialist transformation of society
- b) Host debate and discussion of eco-socialist ideas
- c) Convene, as and when possible, international and regional eco-socialist conferences and gatherings.
- d) Issue, as and when appropriate, calls for international action eg support for 20 Sept climate strike or a day of solidarity rallies with Tar Sands resistance.

Structure:

Membership of GEA will be through organisational and individual affiliation. Politically all that is asked of organisations or individuals (which can be campaigns, trade unions, political parties or community groups) is that they accept the principles and demands outlined above and commit to acting in a cooperative way. Both organisations and individuals will retain complete political autonomy to take up other issues and campaigns as they see fit provided these do not directly contravene the principles outlined above.

The fee for organisational affiliation will be €/ \$ 100 (200?) per annum. (Large organisations with serious funds eg a trade union, will be asked to contribute more on a voluntary basis). The fee for individual affiliation will be €/ \$ 10 per annum.

GESA will be run by an International Coordinating Committee (ICC) composed of delegates from affiliated organisations who will meet initially by Skype or conference calls . Individuals can secure representation on the ICC on the basis of nomination by 50 other (distinct) individual members. If GESA grows to the point where this structure becomes unwieldy the ICC will be able to nominate

a smaller Steering Committee from within its ranks.

The ICC will endeavour to organise an international conference or gathering if and when this becomes possible.

Contact: John Molyneux
jmolyneux1968 gmail.com

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ECOSOCIALIST NETWORK CURRENT LIST OF SIGNATORIES

John Molyneux Socialist writer and activist, Ireland

Kate Alexander South African Research Chair in Social Change, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

Joe Carolan, Unite trade union organiser, Aotearoa/ New Zealand

Patrick Bond, Professor of Political Economy and author , University Of Witwatersrand , South Africa

Rehad Desai ,radical documentary film maker - Miners Shot Down and Everything Must Fall. South Africa

Munyaradzi Gwisai , Lecturer in Law, University of Zimbabwe

Leo Zeilig, writer and researcher. author of books on Franz Fanon, Thomas Sankara and Class Struggles and Resistance in Africa

Buchholz Christine Die Linke deputy in the Bundestag. Germany

Ibrahim Alsahary Egyptian ecological journalist in Canada

Gyekye Tanoh ,Development Economist/Economic Justice Campaigner, Ghana

Baba Aye Policy Officer, Public Services International and Workers Socialist League, Nigeria

Jesus Castillo Senior Lecturer in Ecology, University of Seville, Spanish State

Hugo Blanco Peruvian revolutionary

Michael Lowy, author of 'Ecosocialism' etc, France

Trevor Ngwane, South African socialist and activist, Lecturer at University of Johannesburg

Martin Empson, socialist and environmental activist and author, UK

Alan Thornett, Ecosocialist activist and writer, author of Facing the Apocalypse

Paul Murphy TD, MP for Solidarity- People Before Profit in Irish Parliament , Ireland

Ian Angus, editor Climate & Capitalism, author of Facing the Anthropocene, Canada

Brid Smith TD, People Before Profit. MP in Irish Parliament, Ireland

John Bellamy Foster, editor of Monthly Review, author of Marx's Ecology etc, USA

Salvatore Engel- Dimauro, Ecosocialist Horizons (USA) and Editor of Capitalism Nature Socialism, Brazil

Jacklyn Cock , University of Witwatersrand, South Africa

Bandile Mdlaposa, South Africa

Donna Andrews, Dept of Political Studies, University of Cape Town

Ana Isla, Professor Department of Sociology and the Centre for Women and Gender Studies, Brock University, Canada

Susan Price, Co-editor Green Left Weekly, Australia

Federico Fuentes, Co-editor Green Left Weekly, Australia

Terisa Turner, International Oil Working Group

Arlindo Rodrigues, researcher and activist of the ecosocialist movement in Brazil

Daniel Tanuro, ecosocialist activist, author of Green capitalism. Why it can't work, Belgium

Jonathan Neale, writer and climate jobs activist, Britain

Antonater Tafadzwa Choto, socialist activist and student at U.J, South Africa

Suzanne Jeffery, socialist, climate activist and author, Britain

Hanna Holleman, activist and professor of sociology at Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts

Website:

<http://www.globalecosocialistnetwork.net>
