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COP 25

# Climate: the solution lies in struggle, not COPs!

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### **The resounding failure of the Madrid Climate Conference casts a harsh light on the capitalist system's inability to ward off the climate threat. Solutions will not emerge from COPs but from social mobilisation, peoples' struggles against exploitation and oppression.**

In 25 years of existence, the COPs have not provided a single effective and fair means of preventing the "dangerous anthropogenic disturbance" of the Earth's climate that scientists have been warning us about for decades, as it becomes more and more precise and urgent.

The outcome lies before our eyes: fires, floods, cyclones, droughts... So much time has been wasted since the Rio Earth Summit (1992) that it is no longer possible to avert catastrophe. While means of halting it do exist, it is growing swiftly around us and threatens to take the form of a terrible cataclysm. Hundreds of millions of humans and non-humans may lose their lives.

There is no doubt as to the cause of this hallucinating, terrifying and absurd situation: fossil sector firms refuse to leave these fuels in the ground. Banks support them, as do all major economic sectors and governments are behind them because they are at the service of capitalist profit and competitiveness.

Political leaders attempt to reassure us by saying that COP26, set for Glasgow next year will finally adopt the "new market mechanism" decided in principle at Paris in 2015, which negotiators failed to reach agreement on in Madrid. Just be patient, we are told, everything will fall into place then, because States will have a sound basis to exchange "emissions credits" and thus fulfil their national commitments (+3.3°C!) and the goal of 1.5°C maximum at a lower cost.

One must be naïve to believe in such promises! The Kyoto Protocol also created a so-called "robust" market mechanism. But the balance sheet is clear: 73% of the credits exchanged were in large part phony; scarcely 2% really represented effective reductions. Moreover, many of these credits were acquired at the expense of people in the global South, in particular Indigenous peoples thrown off their lands. The attempts to "correct" the mechanism eliminated the most blatant frauds, but changed nothing in terms of the fundamentals...

Some 4.3 billions in emissions credits generated in the former system remain unexchanged. This amounts to more than the European Union's annual emissions. China holds 60%, India 10% and Brazil 5%. Although the ease with which these credits are generated through a whole series of magic tricks resulted in price collapses, the stock of unsold ones still amounts to a tidy sum. Those holding it refuse to renounce it.

In Madrid, Brazil, China, India and Australia demanded to be allowed to continue selling their old "Kyoto" emissions credits via the new mechanism. Rejecting this exorbitant demand would be the absolute least, because it is simply a matter of these countries continuing to enrich themselves through fraud, pretending to act on behalf of the environment. But all governments allow for replacing fossil CO2 emissions reduction by using forests to absorb CO2. This "carbon compensation" is itself an enormous scam.

In truth, scams are part and parcel of the principle of neoliberal climate policy. Why? Because fraud alone makes it seemingly possible to overcome the irreconcilable antagonism between the Earth's limits and the unlimited capitalist thirst for profits. Yes, climate policy is more and more clearly and directly controlled by multinationals. The latter have changed their tactics: instead of denying reality, they pretend to embrace it, proclaim their desire to co-operate

decisively, thus taking the reins of decision-making... and play for time to keep on burning coal, petroleum and natural gas, while coming up with new scams.

The very organization of COPs reflects this growing takeover. Even more than the previous ones, the Madrid conference was sponsored by polluters. Thus, two major Spanish energy groups, Iberdrola and Endesa, funded the summit by around 2 million Euros each. However, two hundred NGO activists were expelled from the congress centre and the representatives of poor countries were excluded from some final meetings...

Some place their hope in the summit between the European Union and China, set for September 2020, a few months before Glasgow. One must be utterly outside reality to imagine that an agreement between these two imperialisms (or other bilateral agreements) could lead COP26 on the path to a fair and effective way out of the climate crisis.

The "Green Deal" whose launch was announced during COP25, by the EU, leaves no doubt. "Carp, I christen you rabbit". As sustainable development is no longer enough as a smokescreen, this "Green Deal" is nothing more than the new mask of green capitalism (adding a touch of "fair transition" to make the unions doze off)... To protect competitiveness, an import tax will be imposed... but the EU can continue exporting its cheap agricultural products to the South, bankrupting local producers.

In Madrid, the Chinese government posed as a defender of the global South. It set as a precondition for its climate goals that the rich countries must honour their pledges of financial aid and compensation for "losses and damages" incurred by the poor countries. But this is only tactics. Like those of all imperialisms, Peking's concerns are geostrategic: extend its foreign control and strengthen its military potential.

The EU and China have only one thing in mind: take advantage of the US administration's climate denial to win over "green capitalism's" markets ... and global hegemony. The other side of the coin is delocalising dirty production towards peripheral countries, geological storage of CO<sub>2</sub>, illogical expansion of nuclear power, not counting grey emissions and those of international transport, and cornering lands and forests' capacities to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>. It is no coincidence that China is relaunching its coal production.

Along with two other activists, Greta Thunberg recently wrote that "the climate crisis is not just about the environment. It is a crisis of human rights, justice and political will". It was fed by colonial, racist and patriarchal systems of oppression. We must all dismantle them". At the COP tribune, the young Swede declared that the solution would come from peoples, not summits. This is the solution that must be reached after a quarter-century of capitalist Climate High Masses: the solution will come from struggle, not COPs!

No market mechanism will halt the climate catastrophe caused by the market. Destruction of society and nature are two sides of the same coin. Repairing society and nature absolutely requires producing less, transporting less and sharing more, to satisfy real social needs, not those of capital accumulation. It is a choice of society and of civilisation, only struggles can put forth or confirm such choices. The enemy must be clearly named. The enemy is the capitalist system; productivist, exploitative, racist, patriarchal and deadly.

16 December 2019

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