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Retrieved on 15th October 2021 from ideasandaction.info.

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Contents

A purely localistic focus and purely fragmented control of separate workplaces (such as worker cooperatives in a market economy) is not enough. Overall coordination is needed to move social production away from subordination to market pressures and the "grow or die" imperative of capitalism and build solidarity between regions. There also needs to be direct, communal accountability for what is produced and for effects on the community and environment.

The protection of the ecological commons requires a directly communal form of social governance and control over the aims of production. This means direct empowerment of the masses who would be directly polluted on or directly affected by environmental degradation. This is necessary to end the ecologically destructive cost-shifting behavior that is a structural feature of both capitalism and bureaucratic statism. Direct communal democracy and direct worker management of industry provide the two essential elements for a libertarian eco-socialist program.

Capitalist dynamics are at the very heart of the current crisis that humanity faces over global warming.

When we talk of "global warming," we're talking about the rapid — and on-going — rise in the average world-wide surface and ocean temperature. Thus far a rise of 0.8 degrees Celsius (1.4 degrees Fahrenheit) since 1880. According to an ongoing temperature analysis conducted by scientists at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, two-thirds of this temperature increase has occurred since 1975. A one-degree rise in temperature might seem like no big deal. As the NASA scientists point out, however, "A one-degree *global* change is significant because it takes a vast amount of heat to warm all the oceans, atmosphere, and land by that much."

We know that carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels is at the heart of the problem. For many centuries the proportion of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere ranged between 200 and 300 parts per million. By the 1950s the growth of industrial capitalism since the 1800s had pushed this to the top of this range — 310 parts per million. Since then the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has risen very rapidly — to more than 410 parts per million by 2018. This is the result of the vast rise in the burning of fossil fuels in the era since World War 2 — coal, petroleum, natural gas.

The problem is rooted in the very structure of capitalism itself. Cost-shifting is an essential feature of the capitalist mode of production. An electric power company burns coal to generate electricity because the price per kilowatt hour from coal-fired electricity has long been cheaper than alternatives. But the emissions from burning coal travel downwind and cause damage to the respiratory systems of thousands of people — including preventable deaths to people with respiratory ailments. This is in addition to the powerful contribution to global warming from the carbon dioxide emissions. But the power firm doesn't have to pay money for these human costs. If the firm had to pay fees that would be equivalent to the hu-

man cost in death, respiratory damage and contribution to global warming and its effects, burning coal would not be profitable for the power company.

Firms also externalize costs onto workers, such as the health effects of stress or chemical exposures. The "free market" pundit or hack economist might deny that companies externalize costs onto workers. They might say that wages and benefits paid to workers for each hour of work measure the cost of labor. But the human cost of work can be increased without an increase in the compensation paid to workers. If a company speeds up the pace of work, if people are working harder, if they are more tightly controlled by supervisors, paced by machines or software, this increases the cost in human terms.

Toxic chemicals used in manufacturing, in agriculture and other industries pose a threat to both the workers and to people who live in nearby areas. Usually working class people live in neighborhoods near polluting industries, and often these are communities of color. This is another form of capitalist cost-shifting.

State regulation of pesticides or air pollution often ends up acting as a "cover" for the profit-making firms. Despite the existence of pollutants generated by leaky oil refineries and pollutants emitted by other industries in industrial areas in California — such as the "cancer alley" of oil refineries in the Contra Costa County area or the similar refinery zone in Wilmington — the government agencies set up to deal with air pollution in the Bay Area and Los Angeles County protected polluters for years by focusing almost exclusively on pollution generated by vehicle exhaust. In this way the South Coast Air Quality Management District and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District have been an example of "regulatory capture" by corporate capital.

Power firms that generate vast amounts of carbon dioxide emissions — and firms that make profits from building fossil-fuel burning cars and trucks or from the sale of gasoline and diesel and jet fuel — have not had to pay any fees or penalties for the growing

ers taking over and collectively managing all the industries — including the public services. This is socialism created from below — created by the working class itself.

Syndicalist movements historically advocated a planned economy based on a distributed model of democratic planning, rooted in assemblies in neighborhoods and workplaces. With both residents of communities and worker production organizations each having the power to make decisions in developing plans for its own area, a distributed, federative system of grassroots planning uses delegate congresses or councils and systems of negotiation to "adjust" the proposals and aims of the various groups to each other. Examples of libertarian socialist distributed planning models include the negotiated coordination proposals of the World War 1 era guild socialists, the 1930s Spanish anarcho-syndicalist program of neighborhood assemblies ("free municipalities") and worker congresses, and the more recent participatory planning model of Robin Hahnel and Michael Albert.

A 21st century form of self-managed socialism would be a horizontally federated system of production that can implement planning and coordination throughout industries and over a wide region. This would enable workers to:

- Gain control over technological development,
- Re-organize jobs and education to eliminate the bureaucratic concentration of power in the hands of managers and high-end professionals, develop worker skills, and work to integrate decision-making and conceptualization with the doing of the physical work,
- Reduce the workweek and share work responsibilities among all who can work, and
- Create a new logic of development for technology that is friendly to workers and the environment.

wood products industry (and their unions) with environmentalists who were trying to protect old growth forests against clear-cutting.

Worker and community organizations can be a direct force against fiossil fuel capitalism in a variety of ways — such as the various actions against coal or oil terminals on the Pacific Coast, or labor and community support for struggles of indigenous people and other rural communities against polluting fossil fuel projects, such as happened with the Standing Rock blockade in the Dakotas. Unions can also be organized in workplaces of the "green" capitalist firms to fight against low pay and other conditions I described earlier.

The different strategies of syndicalists and electoral socialists tends to lead to different conceptions of what "socialism" and "democracy" mean. Because politicians tend to compete on the basis of what policies they will pursue through the state, this encourages a state socialist view that socialism is a set of reforms enacted top down through the managerialist bureaucracies of the state. Certainly state socialists are an influential element in Democratic Socialists of America.

I think a top down form of power, controlled by the bureaucratic control class in state management, is not going to work as a solution for the ecological challenges of the present. The history of the "communist camp" countries of the mid-20th century showed that they were also quite capable of pollution and ecological destruction rooted in cost-shifting behavior.

On the other hand, the syndicalist vision of self-managed socialism provides a plausible basis for a solution for the environmental crisis because a federative, distributed form of democratic planning places power in local communities and workers in industries, and thus they have power to prevent ecologically destructive decisions. For syndicalists, socialism is about human liberation — and a central part is the liberation of the working class from subordination and exploitation in a regime where there are dominating classes on top. Thus for syndicalism the transition to socialism means work-

build up of the carbon dioxide layer in the atmosphere. The global warming crisis thus has its explanation in cost shifting and the search for short-term profits and ever growing markets — features that are at the heart of the capitalist system.

If global capitalism continues with "business as usual", the warming will have major impacts — killer heat waves, more ocean heat pumping energy into hurricanes and cyclones, rising ocean levels from melting of ice in the polar regions and melting of glaciers, destruction of corals in the oceans, and a greater danger to the survival of many species of living things.

Previous attempts to get global agreement to cut back burning of fossil fuels have been ineffective. The Paris accords merely proposed voluntary targets. NASA scientist James Hansen described it as a "fraud": "There is no action, just promises." According to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the dire situation calls for "rapid and far-reaching transitions…unprecedented in terms of scale." The IPCC warns that there needs to be a 45 percent world-wide reduction in the production of heat-trapping gases (mainly carbon dioxide) by 2030 if humanity is to avoid dangerous levels of global warming.

Clearly a global change is needed. But how to bring this about?

The concept of a Green New Deal has been proposed by Green Party activists, climate justice groups and various radicals for some time. The slogan is based on a comparison with the statist planning used by President Roosevelt to respond to the economic crisis of the 1930s as well as the vast and rapid transition of American industry to war production at the beginning of World War 2. The idea is that the crisis of global warming should be treated with equal urgency as the mass unemployment of 1933 or the fascist military threat of the early 1940s.

After the election to Congress of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez — a member of Democratic Socialists of America — the Green New Deal resolution was introduced into the US Congress by Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Ed Markey. This lays out a set of ambitious

goals, such as 100 percent electric power generation in the USA from "clean, renewable, and zero-emission energy sources."

Other goals include "removing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from manufacturing…as much as is technologically feasible" and "overhauling" the transport sector "to eliminate pollution and greenhouse gas emissions" from transport "through investment in zero-emission vehicles, accessible public transportation and high speed rail." Along with this resolution, a letter was sent to the US Congress from 626 environmental organizations backing the Green New Deal proposal. These environmental groups made it quite clear they oppose any market-based tinkering — reforms that we know won't work — such as "cap and trade" (trading in pollution "rights").

Many have proposed "public-private partnerships" and public subsidies to private corporations. Robert Pollin, writing in *New Left Review*, talks about "preferential tax treatment for clean-energy investments" and "market arrangements through government procurement contracts." All part of a so-called "green industrial policy." A green capitalism, in other words.

But workers are often skeptical of these promises. Companies will simply lay people off, under-pay them, or engage in speed-up and dangerous work practices — if they can profit by doing so. For example, low pay, work intensification and injuries have been a problem at the Tesla electric car factory which has received 5 billion dollars in government subsidies. Tesla recently laid off 7 percent of its workforce (over three thousand workers) in pursuit of profitability.

An alternative approach that looks to statist central planning has been proposed by Richard Smith — an eco-socialist who is also a member of Democratic Socialists of America. Smith characterizes the proposal by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez this way:

> Ocasio-Cortez…is a bold, feminist, anti-racist and socialist-inspired successor to FDR…She's taking

"deep state" — such as the military and police forces — moved to overthrow them. Most of these parties eventually changed their concept of what their purpose was. They gave up on the goal of replacing capitalism with socialism.

Eco-syndicalism

Eco-syndicalism is based on the recognition that workers — and direct worker and community alliances — can be a force against the environmentally destructive actions of capitalist firms. Toxic substances are transported by workers, ground-water-destroying solvents are used in electronics assembly and damage the health of workers, and pesticides poison farm workers. Industrial poisons affect workers on the job first and pollute nearby working class neighborhoods. Nurses have to deal with the effects of pollution on people's bodies. Various explosive derailments have shown how oil trains can be a danger to both railroad workers and communities. The struggle of railroad workers for adequate staffing on trains is part of the struggle against this danger.

Workers are a potential force for resistance to decisions of employers that pollute or contribute to global warming. Workers can also be a force for support of alternatives on global warming, such as expanded public transit. An example of working class resistance to environmental pollution were the various "green bans" enacted by the Australian Building Laborer's Federation back in the '70s — such as a ban on transport or handling of uranium.

A recognition of this relationship led to the development of an environmentalist tendency among syndicalists in the '80s and '90s — *eco-syndicalism* (also called "green syndicalism"). An example in the '80s was the organizing work of Judi Bari — a member of the IWW and Earth First!. Working in the forested region of northwest California, she attempted to develop an alliance of workers in the

and independent worker and community organizations can also direct their pressure on what politicians do. But here I'm talking about our strategy for change. I'm arguing against a strategy for change that relies upon — focuses on — the role of elected officials, a political party, or the full-time paid union apparatus.

An electoralist strategy leads to the development of political machines in which mass organizations look to professional politicians and party operatives. This type of practice tends to create a bureaucratic layer of professional politicians, media, think-tanks and party operatives that develops its own interests.

When the strategy is focused on electing people to office in the state, college-educated professionals and people with "executive experience" will tend to be favored as candidates to "look good" in the media. And this means people of the professional and administrative layers will tend to gain leadership positions in an electorally oriented party. This will tend to diminish the ability of rank and file working class people to control the party's direction. This is part of the process of the development of the party as a separate bureaucratic layer with its own interests. Because they are concerned with winning elections and keeping their hold on positions in the state, this can lead them to oppose disruptive direct action by workers such as strikes or workplace takeovers. There is a long history of electoral socialist leaders taking this kind of stance.

To the extent electoral socialist politics comes to dominate in the labor movement — as it did in Europe after World War 2 — declining militancy and struggle also undermined the commitment to socialism. The electoral socialist parties in Europe competed in elections through the advocacy of various immediate reforms. This became the focus of the parties. Sometimes they won elections. At the head of a national government they found that they had to "manage" capitalism — keep the capitalist regime running. If they moved in too radical a direction they found they would lose middle class votes — or the investor elite might panic and start moving their capital to safe havens abroad.In some cases elements of the

> the global warming discussion to a new level…She's not calling for cap and trade or carbon taxes or divestment or other "market" solutions. She's issuing a full-throated call for de-carbonization — in effect throwing the gauntlet down to capitalism and challenging the system…[1]

Smith believes the goals of the Green New Deal can't be realized through things like "incentives" — and he's right about that. He points out that the Green New Deal resolution "lacks specifics" about how the goals will be reached. To realize the goal of "decarbonizing" the economy, he proposes a three-part program:

- Declare a state of emergency to suppress fossil fuel use. Ban all new extraction. Nationalize the fossil fuel industry to phase it out.
- Create a federal program in the style of the 1930s Works Progress Administration to shift the workforce of the shutdown industries to "useful but low emissions" areas of the economy "at equivalent pay and benefits."
- Launch a "state-directed" crash program to phase in renewable electric power production, electric transport vehicles and other methods of transport not based on burning fossil fuels. Develop programs to shift from petro-chemical intensive industrial agriculture to organic farming.

Even though "AOC explicitly makes a powerful case for state planning," Smith says, a weakness of the Green New Deal resolution, from his perspective, is the failure to "call for a National Planning Board to reorganize, reprioritize and restructure the economy." When he talks about nationalization, he notes "We do not call

[1] "An Ecosocialist Path to Limiting Global Temperature Rise to 1.5℃" (systemchangenotclimatechange.org)

for expropriation." He's talking about buying out the shareholders at "fair market value." This is essentially a proposal for a largely state-directed form of capitalist economy — a form of state capitalism.

Smith's proposal is wildly unrealistic. Are we to believe that the corporate-media influenced American electoral scheme can be used to elect politicians — through the business-controlled Democratic Party — to enact a multi-trillion dollar program of seizures of the fossil fuel industry, auto manufacturers, and chemical firms and set up a planning board to direct the economy?

The American working class did make important gains in the Thirties — such as the Fair Labor Standards Act (minimum wage, unemployment insurance) and Aid to Families with Dependent Children. These concessions were only won due to an uprising of the American working class in a context of vast struggles around the world — a working class revolution in Spain, plant occupations in France, a communist insurgency in China, the Communists holding on in Russia. In that moment capitalism faced a threat to its very existence.

The USA saw a huge working class rebellion between 1933 and 1937 — millions of workers on strike, hundreds of thousands of workers creating new unions from scratch, rising influence for revolutionary organizations, a thousand workplace seizures (sit-down strikes), challenges to Jim Crow in the south. And in 1936 this angry and militant mood also pushed very close to the formation of a national Farmer-Labor Party that would have been a major threat to the Democrats. Many formerly intransigent corporations were forced to negotiate agreements with unions. The Democrats chose to "move left" in that moment.

It's also a mistake to romanticize the New Deal. People talk of the 1930s WPA as the model for "job guarantees" — that is, government as employer of last resort. But there was still 17 percent unemployment in USA as late as 1940. Workers in the WPA often had beefs such as low pay. Communists, socialists and syndical-

how to organize, builds more of a sense that "We can make change," and people also learn directly about the system. More people are likely to come to the conclusion "We have the power to change the society" if they see actual power of people like themselves being used effectively in strikes, building takeovers, and other kinds of mass actions. In other words, a movement of direct participation and grassroots democracy builds in more people this sense of the possibility of change from below.

On the other hand, concentrating the decision-making power in the fight for social change into bureaucratic layers of professional politicians and an entrenched union bureaucracy tends to undermine this process because it doesn't build confidence and organizing skills among working class people. It fails to build the sense that "We have the power in our hands to change things." Thus a basic problem with electoral socialism ("democratic socialism") is that it undermines the process of class formation.

The electoral venue is also not favorable terrain for the working class struggle for changes because the voting population tends to be skewed to the more affluent part of the population. A large part of the working class do not see why they should vote. They don't see the politicians as looking out for their interests. The non-voting population tends to be poorer — more working class — than the voting population. This means the working class can't bring the full force of its numbers to bear.

A strategy for change focused on elections and political parties tends to lead to a focus on electing leaders to gain power in the state, to make changes for us. This type of focus leads us away from a more independent form of working class politics that is rooted in forms of collective action that ordinary people can build directly and directly participate in — such as strikes, building direct solidarity between different working class groups in the population, mass protest campaigns around issues that we select, and the like.

To be clear, I'm not here arguing that people shouldn't vote, or that it makes no difference to us who is elected. Often in fact it does,

self-confidence, self-reliance, organizing skills, wider active participation, and wider solidarity between different groups among the oppressed and exploited majority.

Syndicalism is a strategy for change based on non-reformist forms of action and organization. Non-reformist forms of organization of struggle are based on control by the members through participatory democracy and elected delegates, such as elected shop delegates and elected negotiating committees in workplaces. And the use of similar grassroots democracy in other organizations that working class people can build such as tenant unions. Non-reformist forms of action are disruptive of "business as usual" and are built on collective participation, such as strikes, occupations, and militant marches.

A key way the electoral socialist and syndicalist approaches differ is their effect on the process that Marxists sometimes call *class formation*. This is the more or less protracted process through which the working class overcomes fatalism and internal divisions (as on lines of race or gender), acquires knowledge about the system, and builds the confidence, organizational capacity and the *aspiration* for social change. Through this process the working class "forms" itself into a force that can effectively challenge the dominating classes for control of society.

If people see effective collective action spreading in the society around them, this may change the way people see their situation. Once they perceive that this kind of collective power is available to them as a real solution for their own issues, this can change their perception of the kinds of change that is possible. The actual experience of collective power can suggest a much deeper possibility of change.

When rank-and-file working class people participate directly in building worker unions, participating in carrying out a strike with co-workers, or in building a tenant union and organizing direct struggle against rent hikes or poor building conditions, rank-and-file people are directly engaged — and this helps people to learn

ists organized unions and strikes among WPA workers. The gains that working class people were able to win in the Thirties did not simply come about through electoral politics. Nor were the conservative, bureaucratic "international unions" of the American Federal of Labor the vehicle either. They were more of a road block — exactly why several hundred thousand workers had created new grassroots unions from scratch by late 1934.

Smith is not alone in pushing statist central planning as a solution. This concept is being talked up lately by various state socialists, including people associated with *Jacobin* magazine and DSA. These advocates often assume the state is simply a class-neutral institution that could be taken hold of by the working class and wielded for its purposes.

In reality the state is not class-neutral but has class oppression built into its very structure. For example, public sector workers are subordinate to managerialist bureaucracies just as workers are in the private corporations. The day-to-day workings of state institutions are controlled by the cadres of the bureaucratic control class — state managers, high end professionals employed as experts, prosecutors and judges, military and police brass. This is in addition to the "professionals of representation" — the politicians — who are typically drawn from either the business or bureaucratic control classes, that is, classes to which working class people are subordinate.

As a top-down approach to planning, statist central planning has no way to gain accurate information about either public preferences for public goods and services or individual consumer preferences. Statist central planning is also inherently authoritarian. This is because it is based on a denial of self-management to people who would be primarily affected by its decisions — consumers and residents of communities, on the one hand, and workers in the various industries who would continue to be subject to managerialist autocracy.

Self-management means that people who are affected by decisions have control over those decisions to the extent they are affected. There are many decisions in the running of workplaces where the group who are primarily affected are the workers whose activity makes up the production process. Taking self-management seriously would require a form of distributed control in planning, where groups who are primarily affected over certain decisions — such as residents of local communities or workers in industries— have an independent sphere of decision-making control. This is the basis of the syndicalist alternative of distributed planning, discussed below.

State socialists will sometimes make noises about "worker control" as an element of central planning, but real collective power of workers over the production process is inconsistent with the concept of central planning. If planning is to be the activity of an elite group at a center, they will want to have their own managers on site in workplaces to make sure their plans are carried out. Any talk of "worker control" always loses out to this logic.

Statist central planning can't overcome either the exploitative or cost-shifting logic of capitalism, which lies at the heart of the ecological crisis. Various populations are directly impacted by pollution in various forms — such as the impact of pesticide pollution on farm workers and rural communities or the impact on air and water in local communities. The only way to overcome the cost-shifting logic is for the affected populations — workers and communities — to gain direct power to prevent being polluted on. For global warming, this means the population in general needs a direct form of popular power that would enable the people to directly control the allowable emissions into the atmosphere.

As difficult as it may be, we need a transition to a self-managed, worker-controlled socialist political economy if we're going to have a solution to the ecological crisis of the present era. But this transition can only really come out of the building up of a

powerful, participatory movement of the oppressed majority in the course of struggles against the present regime.

The Syndicalist Alternative for an Eco-socialist Future

The problem is not that people struggle for immediate changes that are within our power to currently push for. Rather, the issue is how we pursue change. Changes can be fought for in different ways.

The basic problem with the electoral socialist ("democratic socialist") strategy is its reliance on methods that ask working class people to look to "professionals of representation" to do things for us. This approach tends to build up — and crucially rely upon — bureaucratic layers that are apart from — and not effectively controllable by — rank-and-file working class people. These are approaches that build up layers of professional politicians in office, paid political party machines, lobbyists, or negotiations on our behalf by the paid apparatus of the unions — paid officials and staff, or the paid staff in the big non-profits.

Syndicalists refer to these as *reformist* methods (for lack of a better term). Not because we're opposed to the fight for reforms. Any fight for a less-than-total change (such as more money for schools or more nurse staffing) is a "reform." The methods favored by the electoral socialists are "reformist" because they undermine the building of a movement for more far-reaching change. The history of the past century shows that these bureaucratic layers end up as a barrier to building the struggle for a transition to a worker-controlled socialist mode of production.

We can say that an approach to action and organization for change is *non-reformist* to the extent that it builds rank-and-file controlled mass organizations, relies on and builds participation in militant collective actions such as strikes, and builds