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Speak Out Now

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The U.S. Government Won't Grant a Green New Deal Our New Deal Will be a New System

High school students and other young people around the world are demanding real action to solve the Climate Change crisis. They know that the forces of nature are not going to wait for those in power to respond. Greta Thunberg's "school strike for the climate" in front of the Swedish Parliament gave voice to this growing impatience among the youth of the world. In the U.S. people are also rising up, with some focusing on the resolution for a "Green New Deal", introduced by Democrats Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ed Markey to Congress. This is not proposed legislation, it simply polls members of Congress on these questions and many Republicans and Democrats have already responded angrily against it.

The Green New Deal proposes to carry out some of the basic recommendations of international climate scientists – changes like moving industry to 100% renewable energy; rebuilding the country's infrastructure; and offering workers new jobs at a real living wage and more. Taxes on the super-rich would pay for this.

It is positive to have this attention focused on the climate change crisis. Those who are demanding a Green New Deal are laying out a challenge to the government. For decades the U.S. government, like all governments, has refused to really respond to the evidence of climate change. Conclusive information was available to the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations and all failed to take action. When Obama was elected, many expected new legislation to meet the demands of climate scientists. But it never happened. Obama appeared at the 2015 Paris climate summit, which James Hansen, longtime head of NASA's institute on climate change, called "*a fraud really, a fake. It's just bullshit [...] There is no action, just promises.*" Confirming Hansen's point, after signing the Paris Agreement, the Obama administration lifted a 40-year ban on oil exports, increasing fossil fuel extraction! Trump's environmental policies are disastrous!

The facts are clear. The last decade has been the hottest on record. Scientists have to constantly revise their predictions of the impacts of global climate change. They estimate that 150-200 species of plants, insects, birds and mammals become extinct every day - greater than anything the world has experienced in 65 million years.

Glaciers are melting faster with a rapid rise in sea levels. Extreme weather events have grown in intensity and frequency. Powerful hurricanes, tornadoes and tsunamis are more common. Large regions have faced severe droughts and firestorms, often followed by massive rainfalls and floods. Weather-related disasters are responsible for displacing millions of people. There are at least 24 million climate refugees at the present time.

Climate scientists have explained what is required to reduce the impact of climate change. The global economy must quickly shift to entirely renewable energy, with zero emissions of carbon, and remove excess carbon from the atmosphere - now. This will not immediately stop the impact of climate change, but could reduce its severity and impact. So why has little or nothing been done?

The fossil fuel industry is one of the most profitable in the world. Production of energy, food, plastics, drugs, transportation and weapons are tied to fossil fuels. Tens of trillions of dollars are invested in this system of production and trillions of dollars in profits are generated each year. Despite the threat to life as we know it, those in power will not and cannot stop it.

We must mobilize now to put an end to an economy dominated by the fossil fuel industry. For starters, many of the steps outlined in the Green New Deal are necessary, from conversion to 100% renewable energy production to an end to fossil fuel reliant industrial agriculture which destroys the soil. But this means the end of the massive petro-chemical industry and everything connected to it.

If we want the necessary changes to be implemented, some of which are called for in the Green New Deal, we have to be ready to challenge the system that has brought us to this point of almost no return. And that means to prevent the climate disaster we are heading for we must be ready to take on capitalism and its defenders. Time is running out. We need a revolutionary change to bring about a system that puts the needs of humanity and the ecosystems of the planet first. Power must be in the hands of the majority to democratically decide and act in our collective interests. Our lives, those of future generations, and the future of the planet depend on it.