

# CLIMATE CHANGE OR REVOLUTION

**FROM URBANISM TO IMPERIALISM:  
MONTRÉAL AND CANADA AT THE HEART OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS**



**CLAC**

# FROM CLIMATE DEFEATISM TO CLIMATE ANGER!

**W**e don't need any more scientific studies, measurements, reports, or committees to know that we're headed towards mass human suffering and ecological collapse: anyone with a pulse can tell you that our world is on fire. Climate march after climate march, empty resolution after empty resolution, press conference after press conference-- we all know that absolutely nothing is changing. People are dispirited, disillusioned, and disempowered. The prevailing sentiment among young people today is that we live in «end times.» It's much easier for most people to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism.

But this defeatism is not a natural consequence of the crisis we find ourselves in-- it is in fact largely by design. It is the product of calculated government propaganda, delivered to us in schools and in the media, and deliberately designed to trick us into feeling powerless in the face of climate change.

Why? Because ending the climate crisis necessarily requires ending capitalism. In the face of this threat, the capitalist class, and the state governments that uphold it, have devised two clever strategies to protect themselves.

Firstly, they capture all of our anger and creative energy back into the useless machinery and bureaucracy of the state and corporations, where it is rendered completely harmless to them. This is why the capitalist class spends billions of dollars on the spectacle of international climate conferences: these conferences are state propaganda that channel our collective energy, anger, and ingenuity into pointless demonstrations, meaningless legislative reforms, and harmless conference

resolutions-- all of which, they know, poses no real threat to them, (and in fact even presents them as saviours).

Then, when these reforms inevitably fail to produce change, the capitalists willfully promote a climate of despair and defeatism-- they intentionally promote the feeling that nothing can be done. Capitalists would literally rather trick us into believing in the inevitability of our own demise as a species than in our ability to come together to overthrow their rule.

In other words, government propaganda about the climate crisis has led to two disastrous strains of thought: on the one hand, climate reformism (the mistaken belief that we can solve the climate crisis through reform, without overthrowing our fundamentally capitalist state), and on the other hand, climate defeatism (the mistaken belief that we are doomed and there is nothing we can do about it).

The good news is that we see right through these two dead ends and see our third, and only, option for survival-- revolution. Armed with the right information, it's easy to see that a better world really is possible-- and that we already have everything we need to build it, collectively!

This text is counter-propaganda-- by regular people and for regular people. It aims to combat dangerous capitalist and state-promoted disinformation about the climate crisis and to discuss what can we done in the context of Tio'tia:ke (Montréal) .

- **Part I** explains how government propaganda (for example, the COP15 conference) misleads people into the dead-ends of reformism and defeatism.

- **Part II** explains the how capitalism, like a cancer, puts all of the processes central to the healthy functioning of our society in disarray, at both

a local and global scale, creating a «metabolic rift»:

- At the local scale, the metabolic rift separates sites of food production from food consumption, creates disorganized and sprawling metropolitan areas that foster an unnecessary dependence on cars, and pushes the poor out of urban centers-- all patterns that can easily be seen in Tio'tia:ke (Montréal)

- At the global scale, the metabolic rift manifests in extractivist imperialism abroad, as demonstrated by Canada's global imperial projects

- **Part III** explains why, against reformism and defeatism, the only path forward is revolution. It explains how you can join the revolutionary fight against climate change from right here in Tio'tia:ke (Montréal) .

The aim of this text is to counter dangerous capitalist, bourgeois, and state propaganda, to clarify and organize our thinking about the ecological struggle, and to show you what can be done both in Tio'tia:ke (Montréal) and in the Canadian context more broadly. We hope that you will read it and share it widely with your friends and comrades. Together, we must help our friends and family understand that the ecological crisis has capitalist roots that necessitate coordinated, revolutionary, anti-capitalist solutions.

# THE DANGER OF REFORMISM

## AND DEFEATISM

**T**he state of the crisis is so plainly obvious that flat-out climate denialism is no longer a viable option for governments and corporations, as it has been in the past. The world's political and economic elites now speak openly about ecological catastrophe and make impassioned speeches about the importance of planning for it.

But while we can learn many truthful and important facts about climate change in school, from scientists, and in the media (about the rate of warming, greenhouse gasses, energy consumption, etc.), the entire framework in which climate change is presented to the public is totally misleading and wrong.

This propaganda tells us that climate change is an aberrant, external threat to the otherwise smooth, upward trajectory of human flourishing under capitalism. The reality is that the so-called climate crisis is an inextricable part of capitalism itself. Capitalists therefore spend billions of dollars every year on propaganda to «externalize» the threat of climate change: to make it seem like climate change is a threat that is coming from

outside the system. Their continued reign depends on making it seem like climate change is a scary thing happening to the system-- as though it were an alien invasion, or an asteroid-- instead of an inevitable and integral part of the system itself.

While diverting attention away from the true root problem, this dangerous propaganda presents itself in two main forms: reformism, on the one hand, and defeatism, on the other.

### THE DEAD END OF REFORMISM

Reformism, simply put, is the belief that we can get ourselves out of this crisis by some combination of passing the right laws and inventing the right technologies, without having to change anything about the capitalist system of social relations on which all these laws and technologies are built. The success of reformism as a propaganda strategy relies on huge spectacles, performed by government officials and corporations, designed to assure us that they're aware of the climate crisis and that they're doing their best to correct it as quickly as possible-- within the constraints of

our «democratic» systems and institutions, of course. This charade falls flat once you realize our parliamentary system is not actually democratic-- it is a system of capitalist rule, masquerading as a real democracy by and for the people. Indeed, that which is submitted to public decision is only the appointment of a county delegate to a chamber of executive power, and it could be said that the democratic character of our states ends there.

The limits of reformism within our current fake-democratic system of government are obvious. Let's assume for a moment that elections in our current broken system actually could have the power to change things-- that the climate crisis could be regulated by just voting the right set of people into office. Even if this were true, the material incentives that shape our government's functioning stand in contradiction to actually producing sustained change. Our governments have a four-year political horizon. The different parties, competing for control of decision-making positions, would have to show that they have 'improved' something every four years if they want to be re-elected. In



the context of media convergence, where the vast majority of information is produced and broadcast by Quebecor and the state media, the political issues that are promoted in the news are those that are promoted by the capitalist class: economic growth, jobs and the trifles of politicians' lives. Those in power therefore have a vested interest in those who facilitate their elections and who will give them jobs when they leave political office: big industry, led of course, by the capitalist class. This too often leads to a clear cut of what helps the poor and ends up, in re-election year, with the government buying votes with the residue of what it stole from them and giving back some of what was cut. Most importantly, it is not politically profitable for a government to invest in long-term change, since the results of the effort invested can be reaped by another party and could harm its re-election.

We find ourselves, therefore, in a situation where our electoral system merely gives the people the illusion of democratic choice-- a vote for any major political party is fundamentally a vote for the exact same capitalist class, and the exact same climate inaction-- the different parties just

wear different political hats and use different language to express vastly similar ideas. The illusion of choice provided by an election gives people the false hope that things might fundamentally change from within the system itself, if only they can convince their friends and family to vote differently. Elections serve an important propaganda function in upholding the charade of a democracy, capturing the energy, anger, and diverse ideas of the people into a system with the same, pre-determined outcome: capitalist rule.

By promising political reforms and technocratic solutions, governments obscure the fact that the *raison d'être* of the state is in fact the protection of capitalist profit, both at home and abroad. For example, the BC NDP has consistently and relentlessly defended the interests of capitalist investors by calling for the deployment of the RCMP to violently suppress Wet'suwet'en land defenders, while ingenuously washing their hands of any responsibility by blaming the RCMP or the federal state. In reality, all three of these institutions seamlessly coordinate to defend private interests while scapegoating each other when the public seeks to hold an

institution accountable.

But it's not just political institutions that play a propagandistic role. Institutions of science also play a very important propaganda function in a liberal democracy, helping to protect the capitalist class and to disempower the masses-- especially when it comes to climate change. The never-ending stream of scientific committees, inquiries, and technocratic reports serve as a substitute for social analysis, while the uncertainties and unknowns inherent in the scientific process serve as excuses for political inaction. In fact, there is a growing trend towards «agnotology»-- the deliberate manufacture of uncertainty and ignorance in scientific literature in order to keep the science «unsettled»-- as in the case of Monsanto, which financed «independent» scientific publications in order to cast doubt on the ecological and health harms of glyphosate pesticides. As long as the facts generated by scientific institutes play a role in justifying government regulation (or lack thereof), large corporations will always want to be involved in the generation of scientific knowledge.

Most importantly, mainstream scientific explanations about climate change serve as powerful propaganda:





they paint the ecological crisis as a technocratic problem that only a small group of environmental experts and intellectuals are qualified to resolve. This could not be further from the truth. On the contrary, climate change actually has social roots that can only be solved through the collective action and empowerment of the people en masse.

### **THE MYTH OF «POLITICALLY-NEUTRAL» SCIENCE**

This year marks the publication of the latest IPCC report, which focuses on the different possible scenarios for avoiding global warming of up to 4 or 5 degrees, enough to eliminate the majority of the human presence on the planet by 2100. The report is thousands of pages long, but its conclusions are pretty straightforward: we need to radically stop producing greenhouse gases and stop thinking we are on the right track. The IPCC's demands are tacitly revolutionary, since they implicitly require a transition to an economic system that the capitalist class and the states that back it simply cannot provide. But the plans and objectives that the IPCC explicitly lists are in massive contradiction to their demands-- they are not revolutionary in the slightest. This is because this official scientific report,

and most others like it, are written by a panel of scientists and technocrats that have either been duped by state propaganda into dead-end reformism, or are otherwise censored from explicitly criticizing the capitalist politics of the governments on which they depend for funding.

Though usually well-meaning, most climate scientists are tricked by capitalists into believing that there is no place for politics in good science. They are taught that high quality science is «objective,» «neutral,» «unbiased,» and «value-free.» But of course, science is an inherently social process, and the dominant scientific explanations and theories of a given time period have historically always reflected the dominant values of society, serving to justify misogyny, transphobia, white supremacy, and of course, capitalism-- sometimes unbeknownst to the scientists themselves. Political ideology is manifest in all of the basic assumptions that scientists make-- and when those findings are received by society as a source of «politically neutral» knowledge, scientific explanations in turn serve to reinforce the attitudes that gave rise to those assumptions in the first place. For example, over-medicalized theories of health have been used to minimize the way that social and material factors give rise to conditions

like diabetes and depression, instead over-emphasizing the contribution of genetics and biology. Climate science has similarly been co-opted by the capitalist class to perpetuate the myth that the climate crisis is best explained by reduction to the mechanisms of greenhouse gasses and CO2-- a narrative that conveniently excludes our capitalist mode of production from the explanation altogether.

Strong science is without a doubt critical to the success of any revolution-- but science under the leadership of reformism only leads to an incomplete and misleading picture. The types of scientific narratives and explanations that capitalists permit to enter public consciousness will only ever be those that serve to legitimize and perpetuate the political status quo. In this case, the scientific narratives that dominate public discourse are those that emphasize the mechanistic part of the picture and the proximal causes of the climate crisis (i.e., carbon emissions and rising sea levels) while obscuring its inherently social roots (i.e., the logic of capitalist production). In the case of climate change, carbon emissions may be symptoms of the disease, but, scientifically speaking, it's capitalism that is the root cause and singular culprit! Insofar as scientists are not permitted or empowered to directly state this



fact, mainstream scientific explanations will always paint an incomplete and therefore misleading picture of the climate crisis.

## TECHNOCRACY WON'T SAVE US

Governments have largely responded to public pressure on climate change by placing ineffective regulations and tariffs on fossil fuel investments, which, coupled with supply chain disruptions, have contributed to soaring oil and gas prices due to supply shocks. But the transition to a so-called «green economy» simply cannot be accomplished by these economic reforms because the reforms and their stated goals contradict each other, even by their own bourgeois logic. For example, the contradictions of «green inflation» mean that as government reforms increase demand for materials needed for clean energy production, there is an increase in demand for the extremely carbon-intensive processes of copper, aluminium and lithium mining - materials that are considered essential for the transitions

to wind, electric and solar power. The costs of these essential metals and minerals have continued to rise dramatically in tandem with rising oil and coal prices, rendering green legislation reforms and incentives wholly ineffective and, indeed, self-defeating, even in their own terms.

For example, there is no evidence that soaring gasoline prices are accelerating the shift to mass consumption of electric vehicles or mass transit, as many reform-capitalists had hoped. Instead, the rising cost of semiconductors, due in part to green inflation and

will continue to dispossess communities like the Neskantaga First Nation in Ontario's Ring of Fire in order to gain access to the «critical minerals» that will be used to meet the growing demand for electric vehicle batteries, defence technology, smartphones and laptops. With a plan to invest heavily in infrastructure for the growth of a \$3.5 billion «critical minerals» industry in the Ring of Fire and across Ontario, it is clear that the provincial and federal governments will continue to protect the interests of the capitalist class through greenwashing and gra-

uitous state violence. Meanwhile, at the municipal level, investments in electric vehicle infrastructure perpetuate exclusive, car-centric urban sprawl that will single-handedly negate the minor gains achieved by electrification itself, proving once again that techno-

cratic, consumer-driven solutions and a «green new deal» or «green transition» will never save us without revolutionary system change. A capitalist technocracy simply cannot undo the damage it has caused.

This December (2022), Tio'tia:ke

### Anti-capitalist Convergence CLAC - Montréal

CLAC pushes an anticapitalist analysis through campaigns and demonstrations, such as the annual Anti-capitalist May Day Rally. CLAC Montréal works on an anti-authoritarian basis and according to the People's Global Action (PGA) hallmarks. CLAC is an explicitly anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchal, anti-authoritarian and anti-colonial space. The CLAC's popular education committee is part of GRIP-UQAM.

pandemic plant closures, has led to a shift in production almost entirely to luxury electric vehicles for the wealthy. Worse still, with the growing demand for nickel, cobalt, lithium and platinum deemed «essential» to the capitalist «green transition», the state

(Montréal) will host COP15 (COP for Conference of the Parties), a summit that brings together scientists and the leaders of the majority of states to discuss the lamentable state of biodiversity. This COP is a splinter of the other COP on climate, which has been through this charade 26 times. Now, on its 26th year, we all know exactly what to expect. The charade is so formulaic that we might as well save these scientists and politicians their air mileage and write their empty speeches for them, since everybody knows exactly what they'll say anyway-- the hypocrites will shed crocodile tears, propose solutions that are not solutions, and then go home and sit on their hands until the next iteration of this kind of event.

### **DEFEATISM**

In light of these empty words and useless policies, it's easy to slide into climate defeatism-- to fall victim to the false belief that there's nothing that

can be done. We've seen this attitude in our friends and family members, in university professors and construction workers, in scientists and farmers alike-- it's pervasive on the left, and there is no corner of the internet that escapes its deadly reach.

The rise of defeatism is great news for the capitalists and the bourgeoisie. The capitalists rejoice a first time when our energies are channeled into useless reforms that won't hurt them. The capitalists rejoice a second time when we slide inevitably from reformism into climate defeatism, because it means we've given up trying to fight the system altogether.

Climate defeatism is reactionary to the core, and it's a tendency we need to fight against even in the most progressive communities. To give up in the fight against the climate crisis is to be fooled into giving up in the fight against capitalism. Contrary to capitalist propaganda, the battles against climate change and capitalism are actually one and the same-- and both are

eminently winnable.

Against dead-end reformism and defeatism, there is only one other path: revolution. Before we explain the necessity of revolution and how to go about building it, we must first counteract the capitalist story about climate change by getting clear on what the real causes of the climate crisis are.

**Manifestation du 23 septembre CLAC – Montréal**

# THE ROOT CAUSES OF CLIMATE CRISIS

**B**ourgeois propaganda spreads falsehoods about the climate crisis in schools and the media-- and this propaganda leads to useless reformism or deadly defeatism. Against this, we must educate ourselves and one another about the real root cause of the climate crisis: capitalism, and the «metabolic rifts» that it creates on both a local and global scale.

We can describe the relationship between humanity and nature as a metabolic interaction-- we are part of nature, and there is a constant and dynamic interchange between man and nature. Capitalism not only alienates us from our own labour, but it also alienates us from the land. The act of transforming nature and being transformed by nature-- through labour-- is part of what makes us human. When we understand human interactions with nature as grounded in Indigenous notions of reciprocity or Marxist notions of «metabolism», we can see how capitalism creates a breakdown in the metabolic cycle, turning all of our material relations with nature into a cancerous game of senseless resource extraction.

Many people have compared capitalism to a disease, or a cancer-- the analogy is apt. Like a cancerous tumour in the human body, whose cells replicate like a virus at the expense of its host, the capitalist class is programmed to require ever-accelerating resource extraction and consumption just in order to continue existing as a class. And just like a virus or a cancerous tumour, the capitalist mode of production, when left untreated, could eventually result in the death of the entire organism, even including the cancerous cells themselves.

This «metabolic disease» manifests as an excess build-up of resources in

one place and a scarcity of resources in another place-- both of which prevent the completion of a full metabolic cycle, where materials would otherwise be produced and then returned to nature. It leads to all kinds of strange, irrational, and senseless «imbalances» in the production, distribution, and consumption of material goods that deviate from the healthy metabolic cycles of a well-functioning and organized system-- we see excess in one place and poverty in another, extreme cold in one environment and oppressive heat in another, droughts in one place and floods in another, produce rotting on grocery store shelves while the poor go without fresh vegetables just next door. Under capitalism, everything in our global system-- wealth, heat, water, food-- exists both too much and too little, all at once. Capitalism prevents us from building the healthy metabolic cycles that we need to balance these contradictory extremes. In fact, one could say that generally, plants, by producing oxygen, are balanced by the animals that consume it. On the contrary, in the capitalist system, almost everything comes from the mine and ends up in the dump.

This metabolic breakdown is apparent at the urban scale as well as the global scale, as we will see in the next section. But first, it's easiest to explain the concept of metabolic rift in its most crude and basic form: the relationship between food and poop!

## **SHITTING WHERE YOU EAT**

The ecological crisis we're living through is not new-- it has taken on a new form and urgency in recent years, but it has been around for as long as capitalism has. For example, Marx talked about the importance of returning the «excrement produced by

man's natural metabolism» (including industrial byproducts and other waste) to the soil in order to complete a full metabolic cycle. Peasants used to put human and animal manure back into the food production process (through the application of «nightsoil» as fertilizer). But in the 1800's, more and more landless people were migrating to live in cities-- food was grown en masse in the countryside, transported tens or hundreds of kilometers, then consumed in the cities, where the waste was discarded into polluted rivers instead of being recycled back into the food cycle. As a result, in the mid-1800s, capitalist economies were extremely concerned about the exhaustion and degradation of the soil-- without nutrients being returned to it naturally, the soil would be depleted, and within a matter of decades, it would be unable to grow food.

The depletion of soil minerals led to a great panic about soil exhaustion in most major capitalist countries like Britain and America. As a result, something called «guano»-- which is literally the poop of sea birds-- became extremely desirable as a concentrated, nutrient-rich fertilizer. At this time, Britain had a monopoly on Peruvian «guano», which it was importing en masse from Latin America by the shipload to fertilize depleted countryside soil. Since the US were barred from to access Peruvian guano due to the British monopoly, congress passed the Guano Islands Act in 1856 which brought into effect the imperial annexation of 94 islands that were rich in this valuable bird shit between 1856 and 1903. (9 of these 94 islands are still claimed by the US today!) And so, the US began importing bird shit by the shipload from Peru to the coasts of America.

From this fascinating example of



bird shit and «guano imperialism» we can draw two important inferences: firstly, we can conclude that the capitalist «metabolic rift» renders the distribution of material wealth and natural resources chaotic, disorganized, inefficient, and totally irrational-- at the level of cities, countries, and on a global scale. Here, you have a pile-up of shit in the riverways surrounding the cities, while there, you have a shortage of much-needed nutrients for growing food in the countryside.

Now that we have built some intuition about what this «metabolic rift» looks like under capitalism, let's look at how these inefficiencies play out in the modern context in the urban metropole of Tio'tia:ke (Montréal), and how they manifest in Canada's parasitic, imperial relationship with the global south.

### **GREENHOUSE GAS PRODUCTION IN TIO'TIA:KE (MONTRÉAL)**

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as ecosystems collapse and extreme weather events become more severe and more frequent, it's the Global South that pays the price for our luxury in depleted resources and human suffering.

Canada is, without a doubt, an imperial center that profits off the backs of the global poor. But much of Canada's high fossil fuel and resource consumption can be explained by the massive inefficiencies in resource distribution and transportation within

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Secondly, it shows us how capital will always try to rectify this problem through violence and imperialism, by annexing or controlling foreign resources in the Global South-- in this case, they annexed foreign islands just to be able to ship bird shit thousands of kilometers by sea from Peru to Great Britain. The ridiculous inefficiency of the distribution of resources under capitalism would be hilarious if it weren't so deeply infuriating.

The imperial cores (Canada), and the urban centers that comprise them (Tio'tia:ke (Montréal)), are consumers in this broken metabolic «cycle»-- elites from the Global North extract energy and resources from the Global South in order to enjoy a wasteful and excessive standard of consumption at home. Rich Canadians produce the climate crisis by burning fuel and mining resources extracted both domestically and from the Global South-- and then,

Canada itself. Canada's population has the highest per capita greenhouse gas emission rate on earth. The excesses of our consumption can be seen everywhere. In Quebec, 45% of our greenhouse gas emissions come from transport (80% of which is road transport) and 30% comes from the industrial sector. Despite the green progress announced by our governments, electricity consumption is still increasing in Quebec, while residential space per

capita has expanded by 44% between 1995 and 2014 .

Urban disorganization and car culture

66% of our total expenditure is related to housing, food and transport, which are basic needs. How can our consumption, mostly related to primary needs, allow us to pollute so much? The answer lies in the inefficient organization of cities and their surroundings under a capitalist system that treats land as a commodity. In fact, the main determinant of petrol consumption and car use is the distance between home and work. So, since 1950, our energy footprint has increased without us really realising it, because workers are always further away from their jobs. But how did this happen?

Under capitalism, a home is not really valued for its «use value» as a home-- it is first and foremost seen as an investment commodity for the capitalist, that is, a vehicle for generating wealth, if they can cause housing prices in a particular area to rise

en masse. Capitalists are therefore incentivized to drive up housing prices in urban centers and kicking poor people out further and further into the suburbs. This leads to massive urban sprawl by forcing middle-income people and families into the suburbs and into homes far from their work or place of study, forcing them to commute for hours to get more comfortable and affordable housing.

You might think this is result of various levels of government in Canada failing to protect us from landlords in urban centres who keep raising rents and making housing conditions deplorable. But this would be technically incorrect, because the Canadian state, the Quebec state, and municipal governments have in fact actively encouraged and fought for this completely dysfunctional development model. In other words, if people had access to low-cost, adapted housing in neighbourhoods that allowed them to meet their needs through active transportation, they would do so. Instead, it is the capitalist-backed policy makers who are at fault for initiating the all-car

system in the late 1950s which has stayed with us until today. Quebec's cars and light trucks alone emit as much greenhouse gas as the 44 countries that emit the least combined, or nearly 55 million people.

Instead, they propose half-measures that don't really work. Densification, for example, cannot really work for two reasons. Firstly, in the vast majority of boroughs, minimum parking requirements are imposed. To understand the logic, it is important to remember that parking, like roads, is designed for peak periods, i.e. four parking units are needed to accommodate one car: at home, at work, in shopping centres and other businesses. This is why cities have been quick to impose parking requirements in urban planning bylaws and why the construction of a 40-unit building in Hochelaga is required to provide 10 parking units. The problem is that the new dwellings are replacing buildings that were not subject to minimum parking requirements. So we are actually «densifying» by adding parking. Secondly, in Tio'tia:ke (Montréal),

## Doing the math

Deep disorganization in the way we live and work under capitalism makes energy consumption far more wasteful than it has to be. For example, in Quebec, a flat has an electricity cost 41% lower than a single-family home. However, owners of rental units do not worry about heating costs because they rarely pay for it, so the units are rarely properly insulated.

Secondly, people who live in the suburbs need to travel several kilometres, usually by car. The City of Montreal's origin-destination survey shows that in central neighbourhoods, the number of litres of gasoline consumed per driver's licence is sometimes 10 times higher in the outer suburban rings. On average, it seems possible to reduce the number of kilometres driven by a third by keeping the vehicles in place.

Finally, the suburbs do not have sufficient population density, or a coherent organization to facilitate public transit or active transportation. So it would be possible to get another 50% by replacing the majority of cars with buses, without even including walking and cycling, which are much more efficient by these metrics. In short, if we put all these measures together, in the context of Tio'tia:ke (Montréal), where 50% of the population lives in peri-urban areas, and put an end to the «all car» policy, we could effectively reduce residential energy costs in the Montreal region by 27%, and reduce greenhouse gas production related to transportation by 63% without really affecting the comfort of Montreal residents.

There are obviously better ways to organize consumption and transportation in urban centers like Tio'tia:ke (Montréal), but these common-sense solutions run contrary to the capitalist class and the governments that represent their interests.

only one third of the new housing units built are in buildings of less than 50 units. Most of these are multi-storey projects that create transportation problems by concentrating hundreds of people on the same block. The inhabitants of these units are therefore moving onto low-value land by displacing the homes of less wealthy people who were there before the construction; in short, by pushing the poor further away from the metro and services. So we have a densification movement that accelerates social exclusion, while increasing the amount of parking built.

### **THE ORIGINS OF URBAN DISORGANIZATION**

Before the 1950s, cities were already organised around urban centres, where commercial arteries were interwoven into the urban fabric, such as Masson Street, St-Hubert Street, Wellington Street and Côte des Neiges Street. Surrounded by residential areas, these old neighbourhoods gave residents the option of taking their cars or walking to meet their basic needs, drastically reducing car use.

However, from the 1950s onwards, the housing strategy changed rapidly, with the creation of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), which aimed to facilitate mortgage lending for households. Soon, in such a context, downtown homeowners began to buy up the land around the city to prevent a decline in demand for their downtown homes, since it was now possible for families

to move out of urban centres. To slow the rural exodus, marked by the

### **Temporary foreign workers and food production**

Even when we don't import produce from the global South, we import producers from the global South to grow food at home for poverty wages. Indeed, Canadian agribusiness is increasingly dependent on the labour of temporary foreign workers-- modern day indentured labourers who are brought in to perform dangerous and difficult essential jobs, often in the agricultural sector. These workers, who make up 18% of the workforce in the agricultural sector, suffer the most abysmal work conditions, in the country and are barred from organizing under constant threat of deportation. In 2022, the federal cap on low-wage temporary foreign workers tripled from 10% to 30% in food manufacturing, wood product manufacturing, and other essential industries; Quebec similarly doubled the proportion of temporary foreign workers that businesses can employ in the agricultural sector from 10% to 20%. With support from government immigration and labour institutions, agribusinesses are enabled to import desperate and disempowered workers from the global South to keep wages low and profit margins high.

construction of the Champlain Bridge, which would lead to the construction of Brossard and Candiac, developers would make golden profits on the land they converted from farmland to housing land. The conversion of farmland to residential zoning will allow tons of profits to be passed from the mayors of neighbouring municipalities to developers, without affecting the profits of urban landowners. To meet the consumption needs of these new areas, the shopping centre will be the most common option.

Moreover, in parallel with the construction of the suburbs came the concentration of jobs in the urban centres. At the same time as the construction of Place Ville-Marie and the Stock Exchange Tower, the development of Parliament Hill in Quebec City took place with the construction of complexes G and H. In both cases, many working-class neighbourhoods were destroyed, whether for

the construction of the buildings or for the highways that linked them to the suburban areas. The construction of the Ville-Marie Expressway and the widening of René-Lévesque Street came during these years. The tramways were soon replaced by buses and finally the metro. However, the STM's transportation peak, reached in 1949 when trams were still dominant, with 370 million trips that year, would not be exceeded until 2009. This is because the metro stations were built according to the needs

of the wealthiest. Indeed, between the Savane station built to take customers to the Blue Bonnets hypodrome and the Parc Jean-Drapeau station, which will only be used during the Expo, the populations most likely to benefit from the metro will not have stations in their vicinity. It is only afterwards that the urban fabric will be built around the stations, and new construction means construction for the richest.

So for 70 years, the improved living conditions of those who were able to escape to the suburbs were used to buy winter tyres, pay gas bills and a mortgage, providing more space than a city home and a car, which remains primarily a means to get to work. From 1950 to 2019, the share of spending on housing and transport has remained roughly the same for households, but this is only because millions of cars have been added to the roads, thousands of hectares of suburbs have

been built, shopping malls, office towers, highways and parking lots have been built. In the current context, governments have used the car craze and continue to build bridges and highways to promote an energy-intensive lifestyle. Household consumption would never have been able to sustain the growth necessary for the capitalist system if half of the middle class had not been driven into the suburbs.

### **WHO PAYS FOR THIS?**

The source of the problem is that landlords can charge \$1,500 for a three-and-a-half bedroom near where you work or study, which makes you live further and further away. Thus, densification policies, which are social cleansing policies coupled with parking, will reinforce the dynamics they aim to address.

Above all, the dynamics are amplified by the fact that people who live further away will not pay the full price of this choice. The poor pay dearly for the rich to wait in traffic jams: every year the provincial government invests almost twice as much in road transport as in public transport. The same is true at the municipal level: parking stickers that cost between \$100 and \$250 allow access to a parking space in residential areas that costs between \$800 and \$1300 to maintain. A study estimates that cars cost more than 6 times as much in social costs (health, accidents, etc.) as public transport. In short, if we are so poor in the city, it is partly because we pay for the infrastructures (parking, highways, bridges, boulevards) that allow the rich to cross our neighbourhoods to go to work.

### **THE GLOBALISATION OF FOOD PRODUCTION**

We've seen how transportation infrastructure is a disaster under capitalism-- it's chaotic, inefficient, and completely non-sensical. It's also

easy to see how our agricultural systems are in complete disarray as a result of the same metabolic rift. Just as how urban sprawl is forcing workers to live further and further from their jobs, food is also being produced further and further away from where it is being consumed-- all driven by the singular logic of capitalist profit. The construction of the suburbs around Tio'tia:ke (Montréal) has taken away some of the most fertile land in Quebec. The destruction of this agricultural land around Tio'tia:ke (Montréal) is not without consequences, but it is mainly because as the food produced close to home has disappeared to make way for highways and parking lots, food production has been quietly shifted to the countries of the South. Since the early 2000s, more than 50% of what is consumed in Quebec has come from outside the country. With export costs drastically reduced by the low price of gasoline and well-established trade routes in the context of free trade, food production has become specialised in the world. In 2019, Quebec exported 8.8 billion food products, while it imported 7.7 billion.

This globalisation of food is in fact the sign of three joint phenomena. First, farmland has become overly concentrated in the hands of huge producers. This means massive holdings: the average farm is worth \$3 million. Production has become specialised: it is produced by the ton and for export. Quebec has specialised in particularly lucrative niches: pork is the leading export, followed by chocolate, which is strangely produced here. This is a far cry from the diversified production that would have allowed for a certain degree of food autonomy, local food production and consumption, and the possibilities of a minimum of permaculture.

Secondly, these massive productions are marked by inputs and outputs that come from economic markets.

The ideal example is egg production. In artisanal production, the egg shells are fed back to the hens so that they can have enough calcium to make a solid egg the next day. In contrast, with today's food distribution, eggshells are at best composted, if not thrown in the garbage. It is therefore necessary to extract calcium from the earth. Industrial hens are therefore fed crushed eggshells, so that they can better fill the landfills-- a complete and total breakdown in normal metabolic cycles under capitalism that mirrors the same crisis in soil fertility that Marx observed in 1830.

Similarly, urban compost, which is beginning to be collected in most areas, is rarely used for anything other than urban purposes. In the metabolic rift produced by capitalism, there are a host of commercial and often industrial ecosystem palliatives because the products are consumed hundreds of kilometres from where they are produced.

Finally, in addition to transport, we have to take into account the electricity consumption related to inefficient and non-sensical distribution. Hundreds of thousands of pigs, for a total value of \$2.1 billion, are generally slaughtered in several regions of Quebec. In these slaughterhouses, they work at -20°C year-round, and they fill trucks that go to the ports that will export the meat to Asian markets, frozen. Since it is the position in the economic chessboard that determines the place of production, in such a calculation the effects on the environment are erased. It is not for nothing that many analysts report a decline in food security: if more than half of our food is traded on world markets, we are not immune to sudden price increases. Conversely, since our exports are based on luxury products such as pork, veal, chocolate and maple syrup, it is quite possible that these will be the first to be reduced in the context of rising food costs.

## REDUCING THE DISTANCE BETWEEN FOOD PRODUCTION AND FOOD CONSUMPTION

In an urban context, the only way to rectify the metabolic rift is to reduce the massive differences between «town and country,» including decreasing the distance between food production and food consumption.

Thus, in the context of Tio'tia:ke (Montréal), the objective is to build workspaces close to living areas, designed in such a way that transport remains minimal. Housing cannot remain a commodity as it is now. And these work and living spaces must be close to the places where food is produced and processed. Community gardens in the city must be multiplied, in the lawns of Westmount houses as much as possible. The suburbs too, which often have urban centres, must be transformed to bring back places of food production and processing. It

is the industrial model that needs to be rethought: rather than an economic system that pushes for ever greater concentration of production in a single space, the goal will be to have a fabric of production and processing sites that take into account local resources and the needs of everyone.

The metabolic rift plays out on a the country-to-country scale just as much as it affects the relationship between cities and their surroundings. In the example of guano imperialism, we saw how capitalist countries invaded islands in the Global South to gain access to bird shit, only to ship

it thousands of kilometers to their coasts by boat. In the modern context, Canadian capitalists similarly build their wealth through the extraction of resources and exploitation of workers both domestically and in the imperial periphery.

## CANADIAN IMPERIALISM: EXTRACTION, ACCUMULATION, AND DISPOSSESSION

Canadian corporations have more assets abroad than domestically, and Canadian investments in extraction in the Global South have grown exponentially in the last few decades.



The capitalist-imperialist model for Canadian mining is very simple: Canadian mining companies are a middle-man that extract resources from poor countries and sell them to rich countries for a profit. Often, these companies do not even process the metals in Canada at all-- they're simply engaging in arbitrage.

In fact, Canada is home to 75% of the world's mining companies, with most of its foreign investments targeting Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean. Meanwhile, Canada's biggest export commodity to rich countries like the UK and Hong Kong is

gold. Extract from the poor and sell to the rich: the Canadian state is perhaps the greatest champion of the extractive industry in the world. Global investors incorporate in Canada because the state offers a non-existent regulatory environment, generous tax incentives for transnational mining companies, and protection against regulatory organs. The TSX and TSVX (Toronto Stock Exchange and Venture Exchange) are the most important exchanges in the world for raising finance capital for mining and exploration markets, and Canada spends more money on mineral exploration than any other country, contributing 14%

of all global financing for natural resource exploration. The dual colonial and imperial consequences of this are clear: at \$188 billion, Canadian mining assets abroad are over 68% of all Canadian mining assets.

How do Canadian mining companies maintain control of resources in the south if all they do is serve as a totally unnecessary

middle-man? Canadian mining companies deal with local narco or paramilitary groups for exclusive access to resources. Indigenous activists that resist mining and foreign investment are systematically attacked by paramilitary groups that collude with the government and military, as in the case of Gurrero and the murdered Ayotzinapa, where numerous Canadian gold companies enjoy a strong presence and close relationship with paramilitary groups. Canadian-owned mines in Peru, Colombia, and throughout Latin America have for decades led to the systematic murder of local

and indigenous people resisting dispossession and trying to defend their land. Canadian capital investments in the imperial periphery leave an irreversible trail of human and political violence in their wake. And in the last few decades, particularly as the costs of copper, aluminum, and lithium increase, this pattern of primitive “accumulation by dispossession” has only accelerated.

## **IMPERIALISM AND NEOLIBERALISM**

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Whether the resource in question is gold or bird shit, capitalism invariably gives rise to imperialism. Capitalist expansion into foreign countries is one important strategy for capitalists to temporarily stave off the effects of a crisis of over-accumulation-- a hallmark of metabolic rift. In short, the declining profitability brought about by overproduction under capitalism can be rectified by accessing fresh streams of consumers, cheaper labour and raw materials in other geographic areas of the world. Under capitalism’s cancerous metabolic logic, peripheral regions must constantly be absorbed into the global capitalist system, and remade in the image of its neo-colonial imperialist core, so that new markets and cheap resources can in turn absorb the capital surpluses in advanced capitalist countries like Canada, thus delaying the devaluation of capital that would otherwise inevitably occur without imperialist expansion.

To that end, the Canadian state, through its virulent support of the IMF and World Bank, has for many decades pushed neoliberal “structural adjustment” measures on countries in the global periphery in order to pry open new economies, removing trade barriers for capital investments from Canada, cutting services to local producers and consumers, and privatizing the land and resources on which some of the poorest communities depend.

Canada is a massive beneficiary of free trade agreements with Mexico, Chile, Costa Rica, Peru, Colombia, Panama, Honduras and others, which help to ensure that Canadian resource extraction companies and other foreign corporations are given the same privileges as domestic corporations. These agreements allow Canadian mining firms to take legal action against countries who attempt to protect or nationalize resources, or who seek to regulate their extractive activity in any way, bringing the full force of state violence to bear on those who dare to resist.

**ecological collapse**



or

**anti-capitalist revolution**

## **IMPERIALISM AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

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All of these rifts explain the current policy around climate change. The growth of the mining and oil industry goes hand-in-hand with increases in car and house sizes, the increasing distance between work and residence, and the globalization of food production. This growth is said to be essential to our economy. So guess who is expected to cut their greenhouse gases production ? The global

South of course! It is not by mere incompetence that the Canadian government isn’t doing much to prevent the climate catastrophe: its just that it worked for the last 30 years trying to push the responsibility to other countries by the way of treaties. Indeed the Kyoto protocol and the Paris agreement have been criticized to take as reference the year 1990 to reduce our greenhouse gases emission. Since 1990, a lot of the Canadian industrial production has been transferred to Mexico and to Asian countries. So the two main takeaways of those treaties are that 1) we look at where goods are produced, and not where they are consumed. With NAFTA in 1994, we eased the transfer of our factories to Mexico where labour is cheaper, and we also sent them the responsibility of the greenhouse gases they produce. 2) These treaties are rigged as we knew that we could largely increase our oil production while at the same time reducing the greenhouses gases production since a lot of our industrial production was moving out anyways. This imperialist frame of mind, paired with reformist policies like carbon caps, increases our dependence on the logic of international domination.

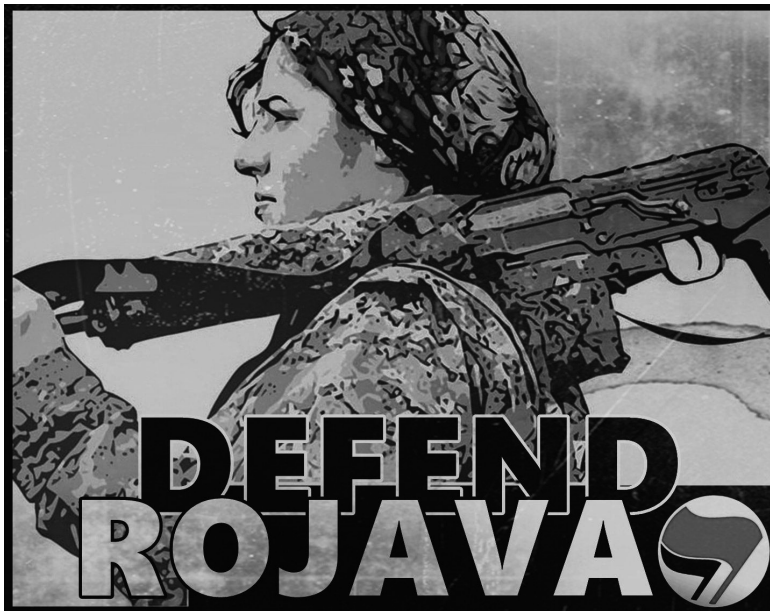
# TOWARDS REVOLUTION !

**T**By now, we have seen how capitalism leads to the climate crisis at the levels of both urban consumption and imperial extraction. A breakdown in normal metabolic cycles leads to wasteful patterns of urban consumption in the imperial core, financed by violence and dispossession in the global south. The question remains: what can be done to fight this?

In our view, the main and most difficult task is to develop a culture of resistance. Because we are inundated with bourgeois propaganda about the real origins of the climate crisis, we need to promote the understanding that the climate crisis is a crisis of capitalism--and that the climate struggle and anti-capitalist struggle are one and the same. These ideas and principles need to be hammered home so hard that they become a form of popular common sense: the disaster that is coming is the product of capitalist society and the only solution is to destroy capitalism. This is where we believe the culture of resistance begins. We go beyond the stage of observation and drama to look for solutions and identify those responsible for the situation. This idea must be emphasised in our podcasts, newspapers, stickers, posters, general assemblies, demonstrations and in general in all our popular education activities. We need to stop focusing on the damage and the cataclysms that lead only to climate defeatism, and instead, openly attack those responsible for the disaster and propose the only solution left: the emergency brake of revolution.

## AGITATION AND POPULAR EDUCATION

When we talk about building a culture of resistance, we mean building a social climate in which anti-capitalist en-



vironmentalist positions and practices have a high profile in society, where the rich and sexist do not have a monopoly on the discourse of what happens next in the world. This culture is materialised through multiple actions and organisations. The need for action must take shape and large sections of the population must start supporting a truly radical environmental movement, which is anti-capitalist, anti-colonial and anti-patriarchal.

At present, the population is excessively empowered in terms of its individual capacity for action. The details of the dangers that threaten us are certainly unclear to most people, but the sense of urgency and the threat of the end of the world seems to be well shared. However, this sense of threat is not yet causing a collective outburst. We believe that one explanation is the dead-end of reformism: the false

solutions that governments dangle in front of our eyes and the «green washing» of the polluters-in-chief. Consumption is criticised rather than capitalism, and SUV drivers are denounced rather than the urban planning that produces this reality. The other side of the coin is the magnitude of the task at hand, and the defeatism promoted by the capitalist class.

It's time to take matters into our own hands, because clearly we can only rely on ourselves. We need to build a revolutionary environmentalist and anti-capitalist force capable of knocking on the doors of these hypocrites' conferences. Our contribution here will start by putting forward some ideas on how to better organise and strengthen ourselves.

## SOCIAL AND LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION

To be successful in convincing people it is not enough to have the best arguments or to be the loudest speaker. People will not join us if we do not have something to offer to counteract the worries caused by the racist and patriarchal capitalist society. Our struggle is lost if we do not offer structures of solidarity and mutual support. The destruction of the natural environment caused by climate change will bring and is already bringing its share of epidemics and pandemics. The Covid-19 crisis is probably only a foretaste of future calamities caused by our destructive production system. Whether in our neighbourhoods

# VERS LA RÉVOLUTION

or internationally, the people who are the first victims of these situations are the poorest and most exploited in our societies. The rich can always flee to the other side of the planet to escape droughts and fires, famines and diseases. We are stuck with our own people in the places where we live, work or study. We must therefore develop structures of mutual aid and solidarity to try to stem the tide of disaster.

Even in the absence of a climate emergency, no one with even a little empathy can remain indifferent to the unjust plight of the most vulnerable among us. Organisations must be created that improve the lot of the people. These self-sustaining structures that provide for the needs of all feed back to the people. Let's bypass the self-help mechanisms of the state, which only seeks to buy social peace through charity and which leads to the dead-end of reformism.

Our argument is simple: the only condition under which the state would bend is if it were threatened with irrelevance. This seems to be the historical lesson of activism in «advanced» capitalist countries since World War II: the capitalist state will only fear

an anti-capitalist organization that demonstrates that we the people are better at managing the needs of our communities than our capitalist government. What terrifies the CIA about the Black Panther Party is that it gives out breakfasts while the state lets children starve when their parents can't get food through the markets. Yes, it's also that it's armed; and one could argue that it's mostly one with the other: a little communism now, to be defended, and the means perhaps of communism one day. This observation also gives pride of place to the idea of not waiting for the big night, the dictatorship of the proletariat, etc., to make the human life that we want to live. We can't give an example of capitalist states without popular pressure threatening its legitimacy; and we would take a rather dim view of a progressive political organisation that did not seek to make its members experience equality and freedom in new social relations between its members and in its circles.

We must participate in the establishment of soup kitchens, free clinics, day care centres, homework help, free spaces, etc. These solidarity structures have historically been major elements in the popular establishment of

revolutionary organisations such as the National Confederation of Labour (CNT) in Spain or the Black Panther Party in the United States. Even today, Athenian anarchists run numerous self-help structures such as a self-managed health clinic, housing squats for undocumented migrants, soup kitchens, language courses and many other initiatives.

This commitment is essential for many of us. It is also what gives us the most support and credibility in our communities. It is easier to talk about revolution when you help feed the most exploited or help educate their children. Solidarity in action is worth a thousand words. It is not difficult to see that where revolutionary movements are firmly established, they are always built through such initiatives. By combining political and solidarity work, we will not fail to develop a social base that sympathises with our ideas, on the scale of a neighbourhood, a city or a country.

## ORGANISING SELF-DEFENCE

Education and solidarity work is only one part of the ongoing struggle. If we build up our strength, ideas and presence in society the defenders of the





status quo will not fail to put obstacles in our way: fascist groups, political parties, scabs, police, army, criminal groups, private security etc. These various organisations have historically been used to break our movements. For example, if we look at Europe, we can see that the countries with the highest level of social conflict are also the ones where the police and fascist groups are the most dangerous. Closer to home, mercenaries were used to repress and intimidate opponents of the Dakota Access Pipeline. In «Canada» the police act as the armed wing of extractivist companies as we can see at the moment with the Wet'suwet'en struggle. Let us not assume that the situation will remain the same as climate disruption worsens.

We must therefore be prepared to defend ourselves if we are to seriously consider changing society. In order to do this, revolutionary organisations need to be prepared for attacks by the above-mentioned enemy groups, whether legally, psychologically or physically. If our efforts begin to bear fruit, or if the deteriorating situation changes the political landscape, we are bound to face greater repression and attacks in many forms.

In Europe, the US and Canada, fascists are arming, organising and carrying out attacks on those they consider their enemies. The unrestrained police violence of the states breaks the bodies and minds of the very people who are the first victims of climate disasters, or who try to escape them. In Laval, for example, a new prison is being built for migrants, while racialised and indigenous people are already over-represented in regular prisons. There is nothing structurally different about the Canadian state compared to other countries. The situation will get worse, although we don't yet know how fast or how bad. Let us not wait until the last minute to react as governments have done with the climate situation.

This self-defence can and should be multiform; strike funds, anti-repression funds, legal knowledge and contacts, anti-fascist groups, order services etc. In Quebec, the work of Montreal Antifascist to document and fight against the establishment of the extreme right allows us to keep an eye on the activities of groups, and the Collectif Opposed to Police Brutality to denounce police abuse. Let's be ready.



### **GOING ON THE OFFENSIVE : STRIKES, BLOCKADES, SABOTAGE**

So far we have mainly talked about how to protect, convince and implant ourselves in people's hearts and minds. However, the aim of all this is not to withdraw into this nascent counter-society. The aim is to create the best conditions to attack the causes of our suffering and prevent environmental destruction. The aim is not to become survivalists who hope to survive the disaster without trying to change society. We want to try to prevent, as far as possible, the worst of the disaster.

In the first place it is about refusing to let the state determine the strategies and tactics that are valid or not our movements. It's about not playing into the hands of the police, showing solidarity and respecting the diversity

of tactics. The law, order and property defended by the state serve to maintain the capitalist system that has brought us to this impasse: it is obvious that we will sometimes have to ignore some of the regulations, not to mention the fact that these are laws imposed on the indigenous communities that were on the territory long before our arrival. Similarly, the state will not let us effectively challenge large extractive companies that are of vital national interest. The environmental community has long been one of the places where this non-violent, legalistic ideology has been strongly established. Since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, governments have been making fine promises. It is high time to see that state measures only serve to defend big industry.

On the other hand, this does not mean that all legal means are useless; autonomous strikes in our workplaces and schools can have an important impact in disrupting production and its infrastructure. Moreover, these strikes are more than just a way to stop production. This break in the daily routine frees up time for the participants. By going on strike, we give ourselves the opportunity to participate in demonstrations, to organise actions, to take a step ahead of the state and capital, or just to discuss amongst ourselves. We have seen recently the effectiveness of blockades of production routes during the struggles in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en. Rail, ports, pipelines, etc, are vulnerable infrastructures for the state and their disruption can have dramatic effects for it. Many such actions are being taken and their widespread use in times of struggle can have a major impact.

### **CREATING A COUNTER-SOCIETY**

We are far from powerless if we give ourselves the means. However, the main criterion is not our capacity to act. If we want our blows to be

effective we need a social base, popular support and structures to organise. We need to develop our organising spaces and establish ourselves on the territory. If we want to be present everywhere, to do popular education, to create structures of defence and solidarity, we need places to do it. Our movement has a certain number of allied structures; bookshops, libraries, communes, work co-ops, community groups, collective houses and other places of life or entertainment. We need to strengthen their network and make them more welcoming to the population. These places are the backbone of our struggles. Meetings, fundraising, recruitment, mutual aid, housing; without these places there is no sustainable movement.

The culture of social centres in Germany, Italy and Greece illustrates the use and importance of these places. In some areas of Milan, the social centre is the heart of the popular life of the place. It is where young people go to drink and smoke away from the police at weekends. It is where tenants can find help for their problems. It's where you can find free arts and sports classes or childcare. This is where anti-fascist self-defence or the fight against reactionary state measures is organised. An Athenian anarchist social centre has even opened a free clinic, which professional doctors run on a voluntary basis. More of these structures need to be created and opened to the population. It is in these places and in our movements that we can create a new society within the shell of the old one. Our places of life, struggle and entertainment must reflect the society we want to build. A society free from the exploitative capitalist system and from sexist, racist and colonial oppression. Our operations must reflect these values and we already have experience of these practices and operations, although they can of course be improved. It is a question of teaching the

newcomers our principles of direct democracy, self-management and federalism. In contrast to the parties and authoritarian structures of the old society, we must emphasise more egalitarian ways of working and improve them through practice.

individual or small group action has no chance of turning the current society around.

Individual actions can create some impact, but they are limited in their ability to transform mass consciousness



### **THE ROLE OF REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATIONS : TRAINING AND RECEPTION**

It is also difficult to imagine doing this work on your own, with a few friends or your own group. We believe that

and are typically only an option for those with the greatest privilege. For example, before XR, Green Peace was the most prominent environmentalist organisation. The organisation relied on the direct action of a few activists to attract a lot of attention to a

message of radical degrowth. If the objective is, say, to block a bridge at rush hour to denounce the polluting organisation of transport, you have a better ratio of activists/amplitude of economic disruption if you only send one person to tie up on the sly

thousand block the bridge. But we can be sure that the comrade attached to the bridge will be prosecuted.

We do not make a final judgement on the privilege of this kind of direct action. However, note that: 1. Green

absolutely senseless, shouted for attention in the night before the dawn of blood; 3. it brings the most mobilised elements of the environmental movement to the attention of the police and judicial system.

In a similar vein, the 2010s have refocused some of the old-style modes of political action: group disruption, demonstrations, direct action among the masses. Malmö has fairly denounced the inconsistency of this international movement (especially in the global north). Where one sees an interest in proximity to the masses that GP does not have, XR seems worse in terms of the security of its militant members, notably by making disobedience action an opportunity to be arrested and put on trial «in the name of the Earth». Ask any of your friends who have experienced a repressed social movement: they will tell you that the status (student or young worker) of the arrested activists was immediately decisive for their sentence. The poor are the only ones who go to jail for riots; for a sociology student to be sent to jail, she has to be suspected of terrorism: a young person from the neighbourhood where a night demonstration is taking place, who works at Tim Horton's, has no education and couldn't raise enough money for a university term, can't tell the judge that it was a youthful mistake waiting for adulthood and will end up in jail. Add to that the costs of going to trial and it's easy to see who can afford to do activism with a motto of not trying to prevent arrest.

Instead, we have in mind a massive popular movement, and in order to put it in place we need to create the structures to help it emerge. It is therefore necessary to create organisations that organise themselves publicly on a revolutionary, democratic basis and that facilitate the integration of new people into the movement. Without such organisations it is difficult to imagine coordinating the efforts of



(the police then have to block the traffic themselves while the fire brigade intervenes on the bridge) than if you call for people to gather nearby for a demonstration and try to block the bridge en masse with a few hundred/thousand people. You also have a better chance of success - until several

Peace may have made partial gains, but it failed to transform the ecological awareness it produced at best into a broad-based social, political or activist movement; 2. the narrative that this kind of action produces is that a few people, both quite reasonable and

enough revolutionaries to convince whole sections of the population. The goal is to bring enough people together in a movement that can weigh in and influence the course of events.

Another major aspect of these revolutionary organisations is that they are more visible and accessible. The dominant ideology frowns on this type of commitment, which can appear utopian or too radical. If you have to chase after activists when you want to get involved, you keep the most determined people, but not necessarily the people you want to organise. Moreover, the most exploited people are not those who have the most time available for revolutionary struggle. They often experience one or more specific oppressions linked to white supremacy, patriarchy or colonialism, which bring their own realities. In this sense, proletarians, feminists and racialized people who criticize the current modes of organization are crucial for the establishment of an inclusive and functional revolutionary movement. The exploited must form the bulk of our ranks, otherwise there will be no revolution or major change. These organisations must be structures that facilitate the integration of these people and help them to develop their autonomy and defend their interests.

Revolutionary groups are also a veritable library of militant practices, tactics and strategies. The experience of past struggles and the history of movements can be shared by comrades who have lived through them. This feedback can save valuable time and avoid many mistakes. The

organisation allows this sustainability to be put in place by ensuring the training of new generations.

### **SUSTAINING AND PROTECTING**

We have seen how important these structures are for sharing the experience of struggles. But one of the major roles of revolutionary organisations is when there is no mass movement. It is easy to find people and feel that organisation is useless when a social movement is stirring up society or in the years that follow. But comrades who have lived through these



magical periods know that they are a flash in the pan in a lifetime. These moments are exceptions to the rule, breaks in normality. What to do in the long down years? Environmental movements are experiencing the same dynamics as other social movements. The current revival of the environmentalist struggle should not make us ignore the reality of the struggles. Some of us remember the experiences of our parents' environmental movements in the 1970s in Europe. These periods were followed by violent reactionary backlashes that sometimes lasted for decades. Organisation allows us to survive hostile times, to keep knowledge and structures as best as possible: money, premises,

experience etc. Without these organisations we are doomed to be in a state of crisis.

Without these organisations we are condemned to an eternal restart; a social movement appears, burns out, the same mistakes are made, the movement falters, the struggle is lost or forgotten, the movement disappears. The cycle will start again the next time. If the organisation survives, or even grows in these down times, the comrades are already ready for action at the start of the next movement. Instead of wasting more time arguing and making the same mistakes, we can

share our knowledge and experience, fight more effectively and maybe win. Not having to rebuild our movements every time also allows us to strengthen ourselves with the arrival of new people who find a place where their action will be useful and beneficial to the struggle. Revolutionary organisations will not start the revolution,

but without revolutionary organisation the revolution will not be victorious.

Defending the autonomy of struggles We believe that one of the major roles of organisations must be to defend movements against individuals and organisations that seek to undermine their autonomy. Political parties, reformist unions, fascist groups, authoritarian organisations; these are the enemies that threaten our struggles and try to use them for their own gain. So it's not just about recruiting, training or building alternatives. Nor is it about directing these struggles or taking control of them, as some leftist groups propose to do. We believe that

only autonomous struggles, led by the people concerned, are truly emancipatory and potentially victorious struggles. We must lend our strength to these struggles and allow them to develop fully.

In this fight for the soul of the movements, the left parties are often the most bitter enemies of autonomous struggles. They only consider our struggles as stepping stones to a better representation in the electoral sphere. They will therefore always favour the modes of action and the themes that they think are most likely to win them votes. For our part, we favour tactical diversity and autonomy. Our positions are therefore irreconcilable.

The organisation participates in the struggles through the example, advice and dedication of its members. Our energy is directed towards the development of the struggle and seeks its victory by using means that favour the participation of all. Beyond victory, we consider that the very process of a struggle has emancipatory virtues. The multiplied strength of an organisation at the service of struggles and movements strengthens our chances of winning all the more.

### **ORGANIZING THE FIGHTBACK**

Organisation is not a magic solution and poses intrinsic problems that have long been discussed, but it seems to

us to be the best solution in the current context. It seems inevitable that we need to build this bridge between the revolutionary movement, the new people involved in the ecological struggle and the rest of society.

Moreover, not everything has to be done or reinvented; many of the structures and practices already exist in one form or another. In Tio'tia:ke (Montréal), we are obviously thinking of the work of the Convergence des Luttes Anticapitalistes (CLAC), but this organisation is not the only one. We can also mention the comrades of the Emma Goldman collective in the Saguenay, the libertarian network Brume noire in the Gaspé region or the Drapeau noir in Sherbrooke. Let's multiply these initiatives across Quebec and coordinate, our enemies are organized, it's up to us to organize the fightback.

### **CONCLUSION**

The capitalist system works by taking over parts of the production that is essential for us to survive: food, housing, clothing, etc. Since it is born from imperialist domination, all of those relationship seem awfully complex and impossible to untangle. Just as in any time in history, the way forward isn't 100% clear, but we need to make a common front against capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism and imperialism. Defeatism and reformism

have already won us over if we accept that the struggle is impossible to fight.

The environmental movement must be fully integrated into the anti-capitalist and revolutionary struggle if its activists really want to attack the root of the problem. Also, it seems impossible to do without a better coordination and structuring of the anti-capitalist and revolutionary movements. Organisation is not a magic solution and poses intrinsic problems that have long been discussed, but it seems to us to be the best solution in the current context. It seems inevitable that we need to build this bridge between the revolutionary movement, the new people involved in the ecological struggle and the rest of society.

We are at a crossroad where the inability of the nation states to tackle climate change is clear. It is now time to show the governments of the world that we will not be duped by their pathetic attempts to distract us with so called ecological summits. We need to prevent them from having their little self-congratulatory party : Let's block the COP 15. So get organized with the revolutionnary communists and anarchists in your area and let's meet in the streets next december against the COP 15.

