



Speak Out Now

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Their System Pours More Gas on a World on Fire

Our world is burning, and those who rule this society are doing nothing but pouring gas on the fire. Large parts of Canada, the United States, and Europe are being impacted by deadly wildfires.

In Canada, more than 7.4 million acres have burned, which is nearly the same size as the entire state of Maryland. Hundreds of fires have been burning out of control from the northwest part of the country to northern Ontario, north of Toronto.

In the U.S., more than six million acres have burned so far this year, roughly 60 to 70 percent more than the ten-year average, with national fire agencies at their highest possible alert level. Cities such as New York and Philadelphia have had some of the worst air quality in the world this Summer from smoke traveling down from Canada. Oregon has broken its all-time record for most acres burned in a year with two months of the fire season still left. In Washington state, fires tore through neighborhoods on the edge of the city of Spokane in the first days of August, destroying hundreds of homes and driving tens of thousands of people out.

In Europe, more land has burned by the start of August than last summer. Spain is currently experiencing the largest wildfire in its history. In France, a single fire in the Gironde region forced more than two hundred thousand people to evacuate their homes. In Greece, two firefighters died when their helicopters collided while fighting a fire near Athens. Working people are being evacuated and having their homes and livelihoods destroyed, while the smoke from all of it settles over cities a thousand miles away and into everyone's lungs.

These fires are not just based on bad luck. Hotter air, longer droughts, drier soil, and forests primed to burn are the direct product of the carbon emissions released into the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuel energy sources. Last year the world passed the 1.5 degree Celsius average temperature threshold that scientists warned for decades would cause irreversible climate damage. This is what the other side of that line looks like, and it will only intensify. And faced with this crisis, what are the rulers of this system doing about it? Pouring more gas on the fire!

Environmental destruction and ever-increasing greenhouse gas emissions have always been a permanent feature of capitalism. Just since 1990 alone, over 50% of all

greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have been released. And now this is going to accelerate further as energy demand increases globally to fuel the growth of artificial intelligence. Data center electricity demand in the U.S. has nearly doubled in three years. Globally, the demand from these facilities is projected to more than double again by the end of the decade. To meet this demand, renewable energy sources such as solar power are growing, but the difference is being made up by fossil fuel sources such as coal and gas. The message is clear: it is their system that is destroying the planet and causing these disasters, and they won't do anything about it.

Meanwhile, workers around the world are suffering the consequences. Climate destruction is now the leading cause of mass displacement, producing about 40 million migrants and refugees per year, more than from all the wars around the world. It is the poor and working class that is impacted the most from fires, heat and extreme weather events. Many workers, from construction and agriculture to delivery and transportation have to go to work in conditions of extreme heat or dangerous smoke, often without air conditioning or respirators. The poor can rarely afford air conditioning or air filtration devices. Since 2006, studies have shown that over 24,000 people have died each year in the U.S. from the effects of prolonged exposure to wildfire smoke.

And when these climate disasters strike, this system has nothing to offer but more misery. The ruling class isn't even capable of using the resources of capitalism to handle the fires. They build more bombs and weapons of war than they do water planes for fighting fires. Insurance companies have stopped offering home insurance in areas of fire danger because they can't profit. Fire departments and disaster relief funds are getting cut while military spending hits record highs.

This is what capitalism has to offer. A handful of the richest corporations on Earth are making these decisions in their own boardrooms, and the rest of us are living with the results — a hotter planet that burns more every year and puts all of humanity at risk. Their whole system of exploitation and profit is making all of this worse, and they will not walk away from the trillions of dollars invested in continued fossil fuel production. These criminals cannot be in charge of our future. It comes down to this: It's our lives or their profits.