



# Speak Out Now

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## COP26 - We Can't Hand Them Our Future!

Last weekend, an estimated 100,000 people demonstrated in Glasgow, Scotland, joined by tens of thousands of people worldwide. Their anger was directed at COP26, the global climate meeting. They know that this meeting of heads of state and billionaires, is a gathering to defend the system that brought us the climate catastrophes in the first place.

The supposed goal of COP26 is to almost halve global emissions by 2030. This would meet the world's target of holding the warming of the planet to 1.5 degrees Celsius (C) (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit). We are already at 1.1 degrees of warming and global emissions are rising. People around the world have already suffered from terrifying climate catastrophes. Last year a record number of people, 31 million, were displaced by severe weather conditions. The lives of the people of Mozambique, the Maldives, Antigua, Barbuda, Dominica, Fiji, Kenya, Samoa and Barbados are already threatened by climate disruption.

President Biden **actually proposed to increase** U.S. production of oil and gas. Why? He rationalized that this would stave off more coal burning. Indeed, coal causes the highest level of emissions. And he knows the U.S. Congress won't legislate the massive investment in alternative clean energy because they are protecting the oil, gas and coal companies' profits.

Nonetheless, the press exclaimed, "Progress!" when over 100 countries signed a pledge to significantly reduce emissions of methane, a major greenhouse gas, and to eliminate deforestation by 2030. But, like the 2015 Paris climate accords, there is no enforcement built in, so it's pie-in-the-sky.

The gap between what is needed and these hollow pledges is HUGE: There needs to be at least a 55% reduction of greenhouse gases to prevent further global temperature increases. And the United Nations Environment Program Emissions Gap Report shows that the commitments made for 2030 would only lead to a 7.5% reduction in annual greenhouse gas emissions. That is not even a fifth of what is needed!

The politicians at COP26 blame their pathetic failure to meet their promised goals on the need to protect their national economies. The real reason is that oil, gas and coal are at the foundation of the industrialized economies and the basis of much of their wealth. Forty-three U.S. oil companies reported a combined income of \$28 billion in 2018! Regardless of the destruction caused by extracting, shipping and burning those fossil fuels, what counts for them is protecting their profits. Many of the young people, who went to Glasgow to demand an end to the destruction of their future understood this very well.

We can't afford to leave our future and the future of all life on this planet in the greedy irresponsible hands of the one percent! We are the 99%, the majority. It is in all of our interests to reduce this existential ecological threat. It is in all of our interests to create a world where we can breathe the air, be guaranteed jobs, homes and good food, education and healthcare. The working class produces all the goods and runs all the services that keep the global economy working. And with the youth and the majority of the world's peoples we can shut it down.

We must act now to get rid of this system of mass destruction – global capitalism – and replace it with a system that is centered on the health of our planet Earth and the health of all living things. We can decide and use our power to create a different future!

