



# Speak Out Now

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## Climate Change? No! We Need a System Change!

There have been five major extinction events on earth where most of the larger plant and animal species were wiped out. The last extinction killed the dinosaurs. An asteroid crashing into earth and drastically changing the climate caused that extinction. Now we are living in what could be the sixth extinction. But this time, our species would be the cause of disaster as well as one of its victims.

Scientists have been documenting and alerting us to the dangers of climate change for decades. But those who are in control of society, politically and economically, have refused to act. And each year the situation has gotten worse. Severe weather is just the tip of the iceberg. Rivers are drying up; oceans are becoming more acidic; sea levels are rising; grasslands are turning into deserts – the ecology of the planet is in crisis.

Scientists explain that ongoing carbon emissions into the atmosphere are causing this worldwide change in climate patterns that threaten another extinction event. It's true that carbon emissions are the immediate source of this situation. But the real problem is what is behind this climate change.

### Capitalism – A Deadly System

This drastic climate change is just one outcome of this deadly system known as capitalism, where the only goal is profit. This economic system is what's driving us down a path of mass extinction. And as long as the corporations and the politicians who serve them are left in charge, they will keep heading us in the same direction. Their system puts profits before the environment and the well being of all of humanity.

This disregard for the environment is nothing new. Rivers, lakes, oceans and the air have been dumping grounds for the poisons produced by their industries. Entire mountaintops are being blown up to get at coal, one of the deadliest polluting fuels.

Trying to regulate this destruction is not enough. We have seen laws imposed when people mobilized a large enough opposition. But as the movements subside and the pressure is reduced, the laws are not

enforced, or they're overturned. Or, corporations can afford to break the laws and pay the fines.

As a result, this system of capitalism has led to the misery of billions of people and has destroyed vast areas of the earth. If we are to have a future, we must put a stop to the system that is destroying us.

### We Must Look to Ourselves

People around the world know that something is deeply wrong. Our schools, our cities, our lives and our planet are being torn apart. We are working harder for less. We can't hope for change or look to the politicians with their false promises.

We can't leave our future in the hands of those who have put humanity on the endangered species list. They will continue to pollute and ravage the planet to get the profits that await them, even if it means destroying the precious possibility of humans and other species to live on the earth.

Our lives and our planet are worth more than their exploitative system for profit. It is in the interests of the majority of people to stop this environmental destruction. It's up to us to change it. The challenge we face today is one that will decide the fate of humanity.

We need a society that is organized to meet human needs, that develops scientific knowledge to understand the world and how we can live well. Working people make this society run, and together we can organize a society that puts our collective needs and health above all else – a truly socialist society. Such a society will recognize that our needs include a healthy planet. Only when we remove the interests of profit and put the needs of humanity front and center will we be able to tackle the problem of climate change.

That society is possible. It is the only possibility for our species to avoid the crises that lie ahead and our possible extinction. It is the only possibility to provide all human beings with healthy and fulfilling lives. Either capitalism will lead to the extinction of our species, or we will carry out the extinction of capitalism – which one is up to us.

# Their System Provides No Future!

Capitalist society cannot provide a decent future for the majority of people. A very small minority, the 1% owns and controls the resources and productive forces of society. It organizes the economy to serve its own ends. As a consequence on the world scale, there is massive poverty and environmental destruction. Wars have engulfed the lives of people all over the world. The facts of the current world situation are an indictment of this system. It is a situation that we cannot allow to continue.

## Destroying Our Planet

**Wars** There are 15 major wars taking lives today, most involving the U.S. directly or indirectly including:

**Democratic Republic of Congo** – 10 million killed in the past decade and millions displaced.

**Syria** – More than 300,000 killed, 4 million refugees, and 7.5 million internally displaced.

**Iraq** - Iraqi deaths are estimated to be as high as 1.5 million with 4.5 million pushed from their homes. 4493 Americans have been killed.

**Afghanistan** More than 750,000 civilians have been killed since 2001, more than 20,000 this year. 2358 U.S. troops have been killed.

**US Veterans** An estimated 320,000 have brain injuries that often result in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Veteran deaths due to suicides, now average 18 per day.

## Climate Change & Global Warming

Scientists agree that the burning of fossil fuels – oil, coal and gas is responsible for much of the signs of climate change we see today. The most visible are melting glaciers and polar ice caps and the powerful storms like Hurricanes Katrina and Wendy and the recent typhoon, Goni, in the western Pacific.

This rapid climate change is responsible for the floods and droughts that currently plague the planet. 2015 is so far, the hottest year on record.

The United Nations estimates that increasingly severe heat waves, floods, storms and forest fires, drought and illnesses associated with climate change are responsible for as many as 150,000 deaths a year. Other reports estimate 400,000 a year.

Those in power refuse to act on this information. Their decisions are based on one thing – profit. If it is more profitable to produce cars than implement efficient mass transit, they produce cars. If it is more profitable to burn coal than to use sustainable forms of energy production, they burn coal.

From their shortsighted, profit-driven view, it is worth the risk. From humanity's view it is suicide.

## Their Wealth And The Human Misery It Creates

**Oil Profits** In four months alone in 2014, Exxon Mobil took in \$8.8 billion in profits. This year profits were \$4.2 billion in four months. They are hardly broke!

**Personal Wealth** The 80 wealthiest people own \$1.9 trillion, equal to that of the poorest 3.5 billion people.

**CEO Pay** Walmart and other large corporations oppose the \$15 minimum wage where the starting wage is \$9 an hour. The president of Walmart was paid \$19,392,608 last year. That would be \$9,323 an hour – if he worked 40 hours a week every week of the year), which he didn't. The CEOs of the largest 500 companies in the U.S. are paid 373 times what the average worker earns.

## Poverty in the World

Nearly half of the world's population – more than 3 billion people – live on less than \$2.50 a day. More than 1.3 billion live in extreme poverty – less than \$1.25 a day.

At least 80% of the world's people live on less than \$10 a day.

**Children** There are 2.2 billion children in the world, one billion of them live in poverty.

**Oxfam** estimates that it would take \$60 billion a year to end extreme global poverty. That's less than one quarter of the income of the richest 100 billionaires!

## A Child's Life In The U.S.

The conditions of a society are reflected in the condition of its most vulnerable. The U.S. has the widest gap between rich and poor of any industrialized nation.

More than one in five children live below the U.S. poverty line of less than \$22,000 a year. This ranks the U.S. as 34 of the 35 European and industrialized countries, just above Romania.

In 2007, twelve of every 100 children were on food stamps. Today it is 20 out every 100.

Personal wealth in the U.S. has grown 60% over the past six years. In the same time the number of children who are homeless has increased by the same percent.

Over half of public school students are poor enough to qualify for lunch subsidies and almost half of African-American children under the age of six live in poverty.