

Climate Change, Capitalism & the Camp for Climate Action

www.climatecamp.org.uk

What is climate change?

We are changing the climate of the earth by producing huge amounts greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane. These remain in the earth's atmosphere, and retain heat from the sun causing what is known as global warming or climate change.

Why are we producing greenhouse gases?

Our whole way of life is based on burning oil and other fossil fuels (like gas and coal) to create energy. This produces greenhouse gases. Almost everything in our modern way of life depends on energy from burning fossil fuels – from our food which is farmed intensively and transported from across the world to our dinner plate, to our entire transport system, and the energy we use to drive industry and heat our homes.

What are the expected impacts of climate change

Scientists predict temperatures to rise between 1.4°C and 5.8°C this century. Some of the likely effects of these temperature rises are given below. Whilst most emissions are produced in the west and by those with higher incomes, the worst effects are borne by those in the 'developing' world and the poor for example the appalling droughts in Kenya or hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

1°C Tropical coral reefs wiped out. Deserts spread through the American mid-West.

2°C: Greenland ice sheet begins irreversible collapse, raising sea levels. Polar bears extinct. Glaciers disappear from the Andes, causing drinking water crisis in Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia.

3°C Collapse of the Amazon ecosystem, destroying half the world's biodiversity and giving a massive boost to global warming. Stronger hurricanes strike tropical coastlines around the world.

4°C Likely collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, which holds 5 metres of sea level equivalent. Net food shortage leads to global starvation.

5°C Collapse of human civilisation due to pressures from famine and water shortage. Conflicts emerge as refugees flood into habitable areas.

6°C Mass extinction involving nearly all life on Earth. Only a few human survivors hold on close to the poles.

Peak Oil

Peak oil refers to the point in time at which half the oil contained on the planet is used up. Beyond this point, the world's ever growing demand will always outstrip supply leading to massive price rises. A growing number of oil geologists say this will happen sometime between now and 2010.

Oil is central to the world economy and to almost everything about our modern life that we take for granted: our food, our medicines, our transport, our holidays, our energy. Everything is going to become vastly more expensive. There are likely to be ever increasing wars for oil.

Why peak oil and climate change should be tackled together

Peak oil is another reflection of the fact that we have an unsustainable system - at the same time as our resources are being depleted our dump space is filling up and becoming overloaded. A market led solution to peak oil will involve an attempt to use the vast reserves of other fossil fuels, such as coal, to fill the gap. If these are used to replace oil, then carbon emissions will reach catastrophic levels. The only lasting solutions to peak oil are also the best solutions to climate change.

Why the government is failing to act on climate change

While the government recognises that climate change is the biggest problem our planet faces today, it is unwilling and unable to take serious action to prevent it. The government is positively encouraging the burning of more fossil fuels through its massive airport and road expansion programmes. These dwarf the small positive changes it has made like introducing a climate change tax to reduce energy use in some industries, and encouraging people to use energy efficient light bulbs. Why is it doing this? It is under huge pressure to maintain the capitalist economy.

Capitalism and climate change

The government is under massive pressure from corporations to maintain the capitalist system. Capitalism is based on the idea of economic growth. It demands that we produce more, buy more, and use more resources all the time. As the economy grows, we burn more and more fossil fuels creating green house gases with which the earth's ecosystems cannot cope with. It doesn't take a genius to work out that something has to break!

Solving climate change requires changing society and changing our whole way of looking at the world. We need to massively cut down our energy use and to 'relocalise' our world.

The need for action on climate change is so urgent and so important that we cannot wait for governments and big businesses to sort the mess out. **WE** need to start creating an alternative world now!

The Camp for Climate Action

14th August - 21th August 2007 near Heathrow Airport, London

The Camp for Climate Action will bring together thousands of people from the UK who want to act to stop climate change before it's too late. We are aiming for about 1,000-2,000 people.

What's on?

The camp itself will be a mix of workshops, meetings, socialising, information sharing and action. It will be a place that encourages discussion on what we are faced with, what the alternatives are, how we can achieve them and the diversity of tactics and action we will need to get there. The camp will also facilitate direct action against some of key sections of the fossil fuel economy.

Ecovillage

We will be living as sustainably as possible: Compost toilets, grey water systems, vegan locally supplied food, powered by alt-tech, run on consensus, recycling, reusing, and waste minimisation. It will be a living example of what the life could be like!

Neighbourhood system

The camp will be split into areas of roughly 200 people, each area will have it's own large marquee with a kitchen at its centre. This in effect means that the camp will have lots of communities within it, which will meet everyday to discuss issues relating to the camp, what's happening the next day etc.

DIY ethic

In order to change society to survive climate change, we need to take control of our own lives and start doing things ourselves again. It is hoped people will get involved with running the camp— whether this is doing the recycling, chopping veg, building compost toilets, staffing the gate. People are also invited to get involved with setting up and taking down the camp. It is a great opportunity to learn and teach new skills!

Accessibility

The camp will be wheelchair accessible. People with accessibility issues are advised to email the Site Practicalities Working Group - site@climatecamp.org.uk - so that we can cater specifically for their needs.

For more information, contact info@climatecamp.org.uk
www.climatecamp.org.uk