



CLIMATE CHANGE



OCCUCARD #9



EXPOSING AND OPPOSING THE CORPORATE STATE

Since the early 1900s, the earth's average temperature has risen by 1.5° F (0.83° C). Two thirds of this increase (1° F) has taken place in just the last thirty years, and has resulted in the melting of hundreds of billions of tons of arctic sea ice, the raising of ocean levels 4 to 8 inches, and a dramatic increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. In recent years, abnormal droughts, heat waves and floods have led to thousands of deaths, reduced crop yields, and a dangerous increase in desertification. Global surface temperatures are expected to rise a further 2 to 11.5° F (1.1 to 6.4° C) by the end of this century, threatening catastrophic consequences for human civilization and all life on the planet.

There is a worldwide scientific consensus that global warming is caused by human activities—such as deforestation and the burning of fossil fuels—that increase atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases. Nonetheless, the fossil fuel industry has engaged in a massive disinformation and lobbying campaign to discredit climate science, slow progress on international climate treaties, and prevent government regulations reducing carbon emissions.

Their efforts have been greatly successful. Corporate-backed “cap and trade” programs in Europe and elsewhere have not only failed to reduce CO₂ emissions, but have spawned a multi-billion dollar commodities market enriching private speculators and large investment banks that now trade “carbon credits” for profit. Recent UN climate summits in Copenhagen, Cancun and Durban have yielded no concrete agreements, largely due to resistance from the U.S. and other wealthy nations. And public discourse around the need to transform the global debt-based banking and economic system into one based on sustainable rather than unfettered development continues to be overshadowed by calls for

more bailouts and the false promises of a return to exponential growth and prosperity.

There is perhaps no better example of the cynical and fatalistic perspective of corporate ideology than climate change denial, for in dismissing the science of global warming, corporations will ultimately destroy themselves. A similar cynicism infects the U.S. government. A 2004 Pentagon study acknowledges the reality of global warming and warns that climate change could lead to “a significant drop in the human carrying capacity of the earth.” Yet the report focuses exclusively on the national security ramifications of climate change, emphasizing the increased need to “secure access to energy supplies.” Mitigation efforts are never considered.

Many scientists believe that the earth's average temperature must not rise more than 3.6° F (2° C) in order to avoid triggering various “tipping points”—like the thawing of the arctic permafrost—that would cause a runaway process of global warming resulting in the near total destruction of the biosphere and the end of human civilization. According to NASA climate scientist James Hansen, this will require a rapid reduction in atmospheric CO₂ concentrations to below 350 parts per million (ppm). Given that CO₂ concentrations are already above 393 ppm (Jan 2012) and rising, a mass movement of **education, protest and civil disobedience** that puts direct pressure on corporations and the government is absolutely necessary and offers the best chance to protect humanity's future and the future of the planet.

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