



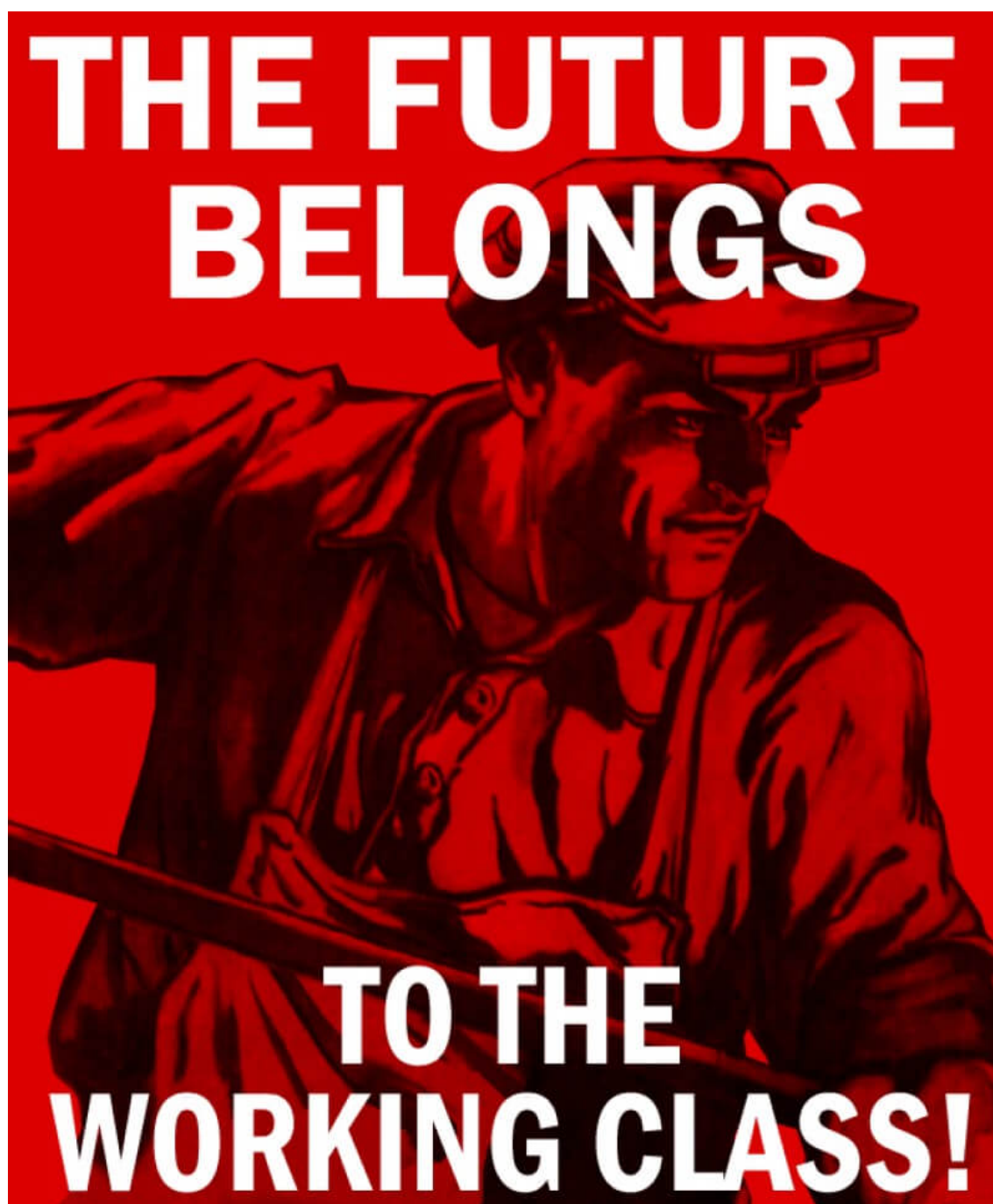
No Class

by

John Steppling

on

[Wrong Kind Of Green](#)



In class society, everyone lives as a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of a class.

- Mao, On Practice, 1937

That belief in Christ is to some a matter of life and death has been a stumbling block for readers who would prefer to think it a matter of no great consequence.

- Flannery O'Connor, Wise Blood, March 6, 2007

I think that most of the confusion in this respect has been the product of a failure to develop a class analysis of these changes. From a class perspective, it is clear that what we are seeing is the growth of various movements in the fascist genre (whether prefascism, protofascism, classical fascism, postfascism, neofascism, neoliberal fascism, ur-fascism,



peripheral fascism, white supremacy, or national populism-you can take your pick). Fascist-type movements share certain definite class-based characteristics or tendencies. Although it is common in liberal discourse to approach such movements at the level of appearance, in terms of their ideological characteristics, such an idealist methodology only throws a veil over the underlying reality.

- John Bellamy Foster, Interview, Monthly Review, September 2019

The purveyors of free-market global capitalism believe that they have a right to plunder the remaining natural resources of this planet as they choose. Anyone who challenges their agenda is to be subjected to whatever misrepresentation and calumny that serves the free market corporate agenda.

- Michael Parenti, Interview with Jason Miller, 2016

When environmentalism unfolds within a system of heightened inequality and inadequate democratization, it does so unequally and autocratically. The result is not a "saved" climate, but rather enhanced revenue streams for corporations.

- Maximillian Forte, Climate Propaganda for Corporate Profit: Bell Canada

John Bellamy Foster noted that it was a lack of class analysis that has stifled left discourse over the last twenty years. And I have noted that when one does engage in class analysis the first response, very often, is to be called a conspiracy theorist. Now, this is largely because any class dissection will tend to unearth connections that have been hidden, consciously, by Capital - that those hidden forces and histories are experienced by the liberal left and faux left as somehow impossible. Class analysis means that the non-marxist liberal left is going to be faced with the malevolence of the ruling class, and in the U.S. certainly, the ruling class tends to be adored, secretly or otherwise, by the bourgeoisie.

When the U.S.S.R. dissolved the West intensified its propaganda onslaught immediately. And a good part of this propaganda was focused on the denial of class. On the right, the FOX News right, "class warfare" became a term of derision and also humour. And among liberal and educated bourgeoisie the avoidance of class was the result of a focus on, and validations of, rights for marginalized groups - even if that meant inventing new groups on occasion. Class was conspicuously missing in most identity rights discourse.

And the climate discourse, which was suddenly visible in mainstream media early 2000s, there was almost never a mention of class. Hence the new appropriation of that discourse by open racist eugenicists like "Sir" David Attenborough, and billionaire investors and publishers. Even by royalty. By 2015 or so there was what Denis Rancourt called the institutionalisation of a climate ethos. I have even seen of late self-identified leftists suggesting the "Greta" phenomenon was the working class finding its voice. (No, I'm not making that up). I have also seen many leftists - many of whom I have known for years - simply hysterical around the subject of this teenager. Her greatest appeal is to middle aged white men. I have no real explanation for that. But then these same men quote, often, everyone from Guy McPherson (who I think needs a padded cell, frankly) to Bill McKibben - an apologist for militarism and wealth... [here](#)

Gosh kids, let's rely on big Wall Street money. That's a gall darn good idea. What an unctuous fuck he is.

The Attenborough and Greta (and Jane Goodall) video was absent content, really. Terms like *tipping points* were used several times but not identified. And they were not identified because they don't have to be. This is the near religious end of the climate spectrum. I hear people angrily denounce someone as a "denier". This is the tone reserved for all apostates. For heretics.

Now before continuing I find it very interesting that those predicting the most dire effects of climate change, those who say we're dead in twenty years or thirty - they are still publishing books, still marketing those books. It's still a business. I guess I might expect climate Sadhus to appear - naked mendicants, covered in dirt and dried mud, hair matted, living off alms. Or like preachers standing on the street corner, a sort of eco Asa Hawks, Bible in hand (or climate bible in hand) offering spiritual solace to the multitude. But instead we get TED talks and more rather expensive books.

I want to make clear, the planet is getting warmer. It's already happening. To say otherwise is irrational. That does not mean there are not many questions left answered, and increasingly undiscussed. Nor that alarmism isn't in full swing (fear and sex pretty much form the basis of all advertising). There is very little serious adult debate about what must be accounted the most serious subject, or one of two most serious subjects, in contemporary life. The other would be the global rise of fascism. And neither of these topics is given a serious public discussion. The entertainment apparatus is, at this point, ill-equipped to handle anything serious.

I do not consider the side show carnival of Greta and the Prince of Monaco, Arnold and Barack, and eugenicist scum like David Attenborough (as an Brit friend of mine referred to him, "that old racist tosspot") as serious. The Green New Deal is western Capital laying claim to a new market. And Attenborough and Goodall both are members of the anti immigration (Malthusian) group Population Matters. This has been exhaustively catalogued by Cory Morningstar, but then she is now being smeared as a "conspiracy theorist". And this is, again, because class figures rather prominently in her writings.

This reminds me of my Wall Street days, I mean all the new markets, the high yield markets, different convertible markets - this is how they all start.

- Mark Tercek, CEO, The Nature Conservancy, 2015.

Now, the bourgeoisie is perfectly happy to let the ruling class lead and be the decision makers. It is startling, really, how indigenous activists from the global south are so conspicuously missing in all this. So invisible in media. And to complain of this means one is met with just a myriad of apologetics about Greta and this carnival. And the paternalism that demands nobody "beat up" on the teenager. There was never such outrage at criticism of Rachel Corrie. And amid all the young girl propaganda props (Nayirah al-?aba?, Bana Alabed, Park Yeon-mi, et al) the only constant is that PR firms are doing a lot of business. But the new investment in Green technology (sic) will really only result in - as it always does - a further growth in unemployed labor and an uptick in low end minimum wage service work. This is straight out of Capital, the general law of capitalist accumulation.

But if a surplus labouring population is a necessary product of accumulation or of the development of wealth on a capitalist basis, this surplus-population becomes, conversely, the lever of capitalistic accumulation, nay, a condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production. It forms a disposable industrial reserve army, that belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost.

- Karl Marx, Capital. Volume I: The Process of Production of Capital, September 14, 1867

And it is not even that, really. The ruling class set in motion an environmental program sometime around the year 2000. But the Rockefeller group, remember, founded the Club of Rome in 1968. The aim was to plan for resource depletion and limits to growth. It had a decided eugenicist bent. They issued a report in 1991, and formed a think tank in 2001. Among the members are Al Gore, Maurice Strong, The Dalai Lama, and Robert Muller of all people. And dozens more including Henry Kissinger, Bill Gates, George Soros, and Bill Clinton. You get the idea.

The point is that the current explosion of climate awareness is brought to you, at least partly, by the captains of western capital. And it is very white and very worried about birth rates in dark skinned



countries. So the question becomes, in the midst of a real crises of pollution, and a warming planet, what and who is one to believe and where is one to turn? My first response is NOT to the people who helped create the problem in the first place.

In fact, class itself is something of a verboten word. In the mainstream media, in political life, and in academia, the use of the term "class" has long been frowned upon. You make your listeners uneasy ("Is the speaker a Marxist?"). If you talk about class exploitation and class inequity, you will likely not get far in your journalism career or in political life or in academia (especially in fields like political science and economics).

So instead of working class, we hear of "working families" or "blue collar" and "white collar employees". Instead of lower class we hear of "inner city poor" and "low-income elderly". Instead of the capitalist owning class, we hear of the "more affluent" or the "upper quintile".

- Michael Parenti, "Class Warfare Indeed", Common Dreams, 2011

There is a new religious tenor to climate discussions. And it reflects (among other things) a reductive world view. Global issues and forces and global relations on both a macro and micro level are being simplified. The template resembles a cartoon more than anything else. "Our demise is immanent" is something I have read or heard at least a dozen times. People are enjoying the coming apocalypse. If they really believed that the end is nigh, they would be behaving very differently. But for many on the left the decades of marginalization has left them emotionally raw and psychologically battered. It's so seductive to just give in to the coming apocalypse. And additionally there is a clear pleasure to be found in taking on the role of excommunicating climate Angel - come to smite the deniers with the sword of eco-piety.

Still, there are genuine and committed ecologists and activists working on preserving nature and protecting the wild. Many are from indigenous peoples in South America, Central America, Asia and Africa. They are all but invisible in mainstream media. And increasingly they are being murdered. (See Berta Caceres). One hundred and sixty four activists were murdered last year, with thirty in the Philippines alone. Twenty-six in Colombia. None of this is front page news. Why? Why is a blond teenager now nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize (usually reserved for war criminals) meeting with Obama and the Pope while the defenders of Nature in poor countries remain nameless and anonymous? The answer is because white people care about white people. And because Western capital sees those poor countries as places to exploit, burden with debt, and de-populate. The ruling elite, including those backing the Extinction Rebellion and Green New Deal, are on the side of those who murdered Caceres. Look at big mining in the global south, enormously polluting, destructive of land and community and people. A just very cursory glance at who runs this mega mining concerns is illuminating. Who sits on the board of Newmont Goldcorp, for example. While based in Colorado, its primary mining operations are in Ghana, Suriname, and Peru. Well, one is Gregory H. Boyce, who also sits on the board of directors for Monsanto and Marathon Oil. Or Rene Meldori, former executive director for DeBeers. Or take the infamous Barrick Gold, on whose advisory board sits Newt Gingrich, former secretary of defense William Cohen, Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg former German defense minister, and Brian Mulroney, former Prime Minister of Canada. But it's better than that... here is a bit of background from [Jeff St. Clair](#)... and here is [more](#).

Or what about Rio Tinto, where Jean-Sébastien Jacques holds an advisory position, after leaving Tata Steel (TISCO) in India. Just surf the web and read the bios. There is a deep connection with big oil, with coal, and with nearly every other massively polluting industrial enterprise around the world. Teck is another huge mining company. It is based in Canada. I suggest reading the first [article](#) on this page....

The concern over water scarcity does not breed environmental strategies for reduction, only new ways to extract and plunder during the coming scarcity. For that is the logic of all capitalism. There is an enormous [land grab](#) going on in Africa, for example.

When the fog that fascism creates in all countries clears away, behind it one sees an all-too-



familiar figure. This character is, of course, neither marvellous nor mysterious, he brings no new religion and certainly no golden age. He comes neither from the ranks of the youth nor from the mass of the petty bourgeoisie, even if he is an expert at deceiving both these groups. He is the counter-revolutionary capitalist, the born enemy of all class-conscious workers. Fascism is nothing but a modern form of the bourgeois capitalist counter-revolution wearing a popular mask.

- Arthur Rosenberg, Fascism as Mass Movement, 1934

And [here](#)...

Those billionaire donors are not subsidizing Amazonian tribes fighting for their own survival and the survival of the rain forest. They are not subsidizing activists in the Philippines or in Africa. And they are never once mentioning the U.S. military and its role in despoiling the planet. (just look at AFRICOM, which saw an exponential growth in bases and troops under Obama). But [here](#) - two links for general perusal - and [here](#).

(Hat tip to Jacob Levich for some of this).

The land grab is going to be enforced is the message here. These donors are investing. And alongside their investment runs the spectre of global fascism. Read these links and then consider if a state of emergency is not in the works. Of course, the bourgeoisie, the white bourgeoisie, are begging for such an emergency. The climate fear and its cultish response amid the liberal and leftist is resulting in a willingness, even a desire for, their own servitude. This is where someone is going to say, oh, conspiracy theory. But is it? Read those links. Consider the unthinking reflexive adoration of Greta and the kids. And then consider the history of capitalism, of neo-liberalism. Consider just the history over the last thirty years. Greta is not anti-capitalist. She has carefully never said capitalism is a system destroying the planet.

There is a critical pollution of land and water globally. Not just plastics, but Depleted Uranium and all the waste of military and digital technology. And from pesticides and various other industrial and agricultural chemicals. How many participants in any of the climate meetings were without brand new smart phones? I don't believe in our extinction. I do believe life is going to change, and to mitigate the suffering that comes from that change one must reject the advice of billionaires and celebrities. Change must stop being spearheaded by WHITE privilege and the western white ruling class.

Pollution is the most urgent crises I believe. Pollution from mining of ores, and rare earth minerals (leaving pollutants such as chromium, asbestos, arsenic, and cadmium) is on a scale hard to even imagine. Or the recycling of lead-based batteries, an under the radar but massive industry that pollutes with lead oxide and sulphuric acid. Tanneries have always been an infernal and accursed industry, and pollute with chromium and soda ash, as well as large amounts of solid waste, all of which is usually contaminated with chromium. Lead smelting, which is centered in the poorest countries and which releases iron, limestone, pyrite and zinc. This is not even to touch on pesticides, or the dye industry. And then we come to the military. In particular the U.S. military. The levels of pollution are nearly Biblical in dimension and scale.

Producing more hazardous waste than the five largest U.S. chemical companies combined, the U.S. Department of Defense has left its toxic legacy throughout the world in the form of depleted uranium, oil, jet fuel, pesticides, defoliants like Agent Orange and lead, among others. In 2014, the former head of the Pentagon's environmental program told Newsweek that her office has to contend with 39,000 contaminated areas spread across 19 million acres just in the U.S. alone. U.S. military bases, both domestic and foreign, consistently rank among some of the most polluted places in the world, as perchlorate and other components of jet and rocket fuel contaminate sources of drinking water, aquifers and soil. Hundreds of military bases can be found on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) list of Superfund sites, which qualify for clean-up grants from the government. Almost 900 of the



nearly 1,200 Superfund sites in the U.S. are abandoned military facilities or sites that otherwise support military needs, not counting the military bases themselves.

- Whitney Webb, Eco Watch, May 2017

Contemporary capitalism is coercive at every level. The privilege of white westerners is stunningly absent from all critiques I see relating to climate change. David Attenborough has a far larger carbon footprint (to the power of ten) than a Somali sheep herder. And yet that herder is being subtly cast as a threat to global survival. The new focus on global warming (and the de-emphasizing of pollution) is the real threat to survival. For the new green capitalists the intention is to further plunder. The new corporate Green raiders want to privatize nature.

Across the world, "green grabbing" – the appropriation of land and resources for environmental ends – is an emerging process of deep and growing significance. The vigorous debate on "land grabbing" already highlights instances where "green" credentials are called upon to justify appropriations of land for food or fuel – as where large tracts of land are acquired not just for "more efficient farming" or "food security", but also to "alleviate pressure on forests". In other cases, however, environmental green agendas are the core drivers and goals of grabs – whether linked to biodiversity conservation, biocarbon sequestration, biofuels, ecosystem services, ecotourism or "offsets" related to any and all of these. In some cases these involve the wholesale alienation of land, and in others the restructuring of rules and authority in the access, use and management of resources that may have profoundly alienating effects. Green grabbing builds on well-known histories of colonial and neo-colonial resource alienation in the name of the environment – whether for parks, forest reserves or to halt assumed destructive local practices.

- James Fairhead, Melissa Leach & Ian Scoones, "Green Grabbing: a new appropriation of nature?", The Journal of Peasant Studies, 2012

[quote][quote]When is a contract "voluntary"? The answer is, probably never.

- Jairus Banaji, Theory as History, March 22, 2010

There will never be environmentally friendly Capitalism. That is like creating de-hydrated water. The ruling class exists, it's not a conspiracy theory. They operate as a class, too. They share the same values, the same sensibility and in Europe and North America they are white. They act in accordance with their interests, which are very largely identical. The failure to understand this is the single greatest problem and defect in left discourse today.

In terms of relevance to the indigenous nations often referred to as the Fourth World, the rollouts from the COP21 gathering of UN member states, Wall Street-funded NGOs, and the global financial elite resemble colonial initiatives undertaken as a result of similar 19th Century gatherings to carve up the world for capitalism. Then, as now, indigenous territories and resources were targeted for expropriation through coercion, with Africa being a prime target.

- Jay Taber, Heart of Darkness, SI2, 2017

The Global Witness report said much of the persecution of land and environmental defenders is being driven by demand for the land and raw materials needed for products that consumers utilise every day, from food to mobile phones and jewelry. Also recording a high number of environment and land-related fatalities were Colombia with 24 deaths, India with 23, and Brazil at 20. Meanwhile, in Guatemala, a boom in private and foreign investment has seen large swaths of land handed out to plantation, mining and hydropower companies, ushering in a wave of forced and violent evictions, particularly in indigenous areas, the report



said. This has stirred fears of a return to the large-scale violence the country suffered 30 years ago. The report said Guatemala saw the sharpest increase in the percentage of murders with a five-fold rise. At least 16 people defending their land and the environment were killed there in 2018.

- Al Jazeera, 2019

In the Philippines nine farmers were murdered, likely ordered by the landowners of the sugar cane plantations. Not much has changed since colonialism. Global Witness notes that mining is the industry which has caused or ordered the most killings of indigenous activists. In Africa, in particular, mining corporations hire expensive private security firms (American, Israeli, or British) to keep the local population outside of not just the mine, but the area **around** the outside of the mine. Acacia Mining (a subsidiary of Barrick Gold) is notorious for beatings and rape, and for contamination from the massive mine at North Mara, Tanzania.

Here is a report from The Guardian's Jonathan Watts from this year...

The nearest general hospital in Tarime was treating five to eight cases of gunshot wounds from the mine every week from around 2010 to 2014, according to Dr Mark Nega, a former district medical officer. "I saw so many people shot and killed. Some had gunshot wounds in the back. I think they were trying to run away but they were shot from behind." Such killings were initially played down or denied. Journalists who tried to investigate found themselves harassed by police, or believed their stories had been spiked following pressure from state authorities.

After pressure from activists and lawyers, Acacia acknowledged 32 "trespasser-related" fatalities between 2014 and 2017. Of these, six died in confrontations with police at the mine.

International watchdog groups say at least 22 were killings by guards and police during the same period. Tanzanian opposition politicians have claimed 300 people have been killed since 1999.

For such a high number of violations to have occurred outside a conflict zone in a business context is shocking and exceptional, said Anneke van Woudenberg, the executive director of Raid, a UK corporate watchdog.

Class analysis is not conspiracy theory. Full stop. Class exists and is part of the hierarchical system of global capitalism. The so labeled "Climate Change" crisis - as it exists on the level of Green New Deal or Extinction Rebellion - has very little to do with protecting Nature. Global warming is a fact that humanity will have to adjust to and learn to live with. So much of the rhetoric and identifications that exist in the Greta narrative are driven by a subterranean belief in technology to fix any problem. Global warming can't be fixed. And there are enormous difficulties for the entire global population, really. Nature and planetary life move slowly, normally. It is western narcissism that demands things happen NOW. The planet is warming and the consequences will require big change. Critical change that must take place, especially regards pesticides and contaminated land. And changes in packaging, which means in many respect changes in how we eat. The incursion of technology into nearly every waking moment of the daily life of the Westerner has conditioned a populace, one that doesn't read, to see the acceleration of everything as natural. But it's not. Nature doesn't care about us. But humanity will have to care about Nature. And capitalism is not compatible with the direction those changes and care must take. Risking the direction for needed change by allowing capital investments to chart the course is a very dangerous idea.

War is always partly a war on Nature. But as I have said before, equality is the real green. The United States has erased the voice of the working class and the poor. But it is exactly those voices that have to be heard. The techno/scientific clergy are of a class, too. The bourgeois academic and



researcher are stamped by their class just as much as everyone else. I think that should be remembered.

Class analysis!