

Climate Conference End with Little Agreed

The COP26 global climate summit lasted for two weeks in Glasgow, UK. It brought together nearly 200 nations in order to agree to emission targets so the planet doesn't reach tipping point. The summit brought together nearly 200 leaders who are being asked to targets to cut emissions by 2030. There has been growing urgency about the state of the world from pollution to waste, droughts to the poisoning of the world's waters, something needs to be done as we are destroying the planet. But after weeks of discussions the participants agreed to come back in a year's time and discuss everything all over again, a phase down rather than a phase out of coal. The mere mention of fossil reduction is being presented as an achievement.

Ever since its establishment in 1998 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has led the solution to the climate issue. Its various conferences have been held and attended by both developed and developing countries. The position of the IPCC and many scientists is that the average temperature of the Earth is rising. The contribution of greenhouse gases emitted by human societies via the combustion of fossil fuels is the problem.

The solution to these environmental problems focuses on gradually reducing emissions by moving away from fossil fuels to green sources. The G20 summit prior to the COP26 gathering saw a number of nations propose how they plan to reduce the use of fossil energy and move to Green renewable sources. There are numerous challenges for this to be achieved beyond most nations not sticking to their emission reduction commitments. Whole industries have been built upon fossil energy from automobiles, petrochemicals, agriculture, plastics, cement, steel, electronics and many others. China's economic miracle is built upon its use of its immense Coal reserves and even today Coal still provides 60% of its electricity. The left see the abandonment of fossil fuels as the solution to the environmental problems the world faces. The extreme environmentalists argue the ban of fossil fuels and are concerned about nuclear energy and argue people should stop eating meat.

The opposition to this, which is usually found on the right of the political spectrum is global warming is somewhere between highly speculative and "the greatest hoax," to quote from the title of a book on the subject by Senator James Inhofe, a Republican with significant influence on climate matters. They believe environmentalists use the specter of catastrophic climate change to pursue an agenda of their own, one that places nature over the needs of people, forces the switch from fossil fuels to alternative energy sources, and tends toward "big-government intervention." They argue that science does not show conclusively that climate change warrants the policies being currently pursued. Some on the right also believe changing the environment back is not economically feasible. They also assert that attempts to address climate change, such as caps on greenhouse-gas emissions, could cause more economic harm than their environmental good. Whilst others see the only solution is new technology that could replace the energy sources we use

today. They just need around 50-100 years to invent such technology. The opposition to turning green is predicated on keeping the global economy the way it is and not making the drastic changes the left advocate.

Even if the climate was not changed there is a huge problem, which is all man-made. The pollution spewed into the air, the waste poured every year into the world's rivers and oceans. The waste from consumption, the obesity epidemic, the clearing of forests to make way for cities, these are all man-made disasters that we face here and now. The contamination of drinking water due to chemical pollutants from factories, fertilizer run-off from farming, and sewage. Heavy metals, harmful chemicals, microplastics, and even radioactive isotopes are harmful pollutants. All these problems are with us irrespective of the situation with the environment.

The COP26 summit did not address the lifestyles people are living. Perpetual economic growth, consumerism, debt and spending and material wealth is the system that Capitalism promotes and is the dominate ideology for much of the world. This issue requires systemic change, as many of the causes lie in the global Capitalist system, but no one is currently proposing a solution that addresses endemic consumerism that fuels the demand for material goods, which drives pollution as well as economic growth. The focus on emission targets ignores the need to manage demand for material products in a capitalist system that clearly has no intention to challenge consumerism and an endless quest for economic growth. The international negotiations about targets are about powerful nations competing to act in their own interests - each trying to achieve an outcome in negotiations that favours itself.

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Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Adnan Khan