

## **Anti-Capitalist Environmentalism:**

We cannot address issues of the environment without addressing capitalism.

Historically, anti-capitalist traditions have not sufficiently addressed issues of the environment, and likewise, environmentalist politics have not sufficiently addressed the contradictions of capitalism.

Capitalism accelerates climate change and environmental destruction because a) consumption is based on 'economic growth' rather than actual needs b) production costs are externalized through pollution and waste c) economic systems operate in annual quarters where earth systems operate over geologic time.

Under capitalism, destructive industries are propped up for the benefit of the capitalist class.

The environment and the interests of working class people have often been framed in opposition to each other.

Since the working class must sell their labor to survive, many are made economically dependent on environmentally destructive industries.

The Trade Union Movement is not homogenous on questions of the environment.

Anti-capitalist environmental organizing means building collective power and addressing ignorance of environmental issues.

Only a united movement of the working class demanding public, democratic ownership of energy and transportation infrastructure can sufficiently address climate change.

The crisis of climate change and environmental degradation demands organizing and action that is pluralist, disciplined, long-term, and continuous.

Corporate, university, and state funding of environmental groups has the power to restrict our political mobilization.

Lifestyle choices are not sufficient to achieve environmental justice, and their overemphasis can alienate marginalized groups.

Some dangerous tendencies within environmental work include:

- Single-issue focus and separation from mass movements
- Insularity and clique-activism
- Hierarchy of leadership and elitism of activists
- Overemphasis on individual consumer and lifestyle choices
- Dependence on trendiness, marketing and 'the politics of spectacle'
- Greenwashing

The tendencies noted above risk alienating marginalized populations. The work of marginalized populations against environmental degradation has been among the most militant, successful, and valuable, such as the struggle against fracking in Elsipogtog.

## **Anti-Racist Environmentalism:**

Racially oppressed communities are disproportionately affected by climate change and environmental degradation.

Environmental racism is the act of locating pollution in Indigenous and racially marginalized communities.

Environmental racism is a distinct category of capitalist strategy and an example of how capitalist exploitation exacerbates racial oppression.

Environmental racism is not only a strategic capitalist intervention within countries, but also between countries.

We must address Canada's role in the environmental degradation of other countries.

## **Anti-Colonial Environmentalism:**

Indigenous struggle must be addressed on its own terms, but it must also be placed at the center of our struggles for climate and environmental justice.

Capitalist colonialism compels the theft of Indigenous land and resources, as well as the suppression of their communities.

Indigenous Nations have differing positions on environmental issues depending on their economic circumstances and geographic location.

The primitive accumulation of capital through the colonial theft of land is foundational to both current capitalist wealth and to state jurisdiction in Canada.

Indigenous land title and treaty rights create potential loopholes in state jurisdiction as well as obstacles to capitalist access to resources. This motivates a push toward the privatization of reserve land and their assimilation into capitalist, private land ownership structures.

The growth in production and consumption under capitalism also motivates capitalists to seek new areas of primitive accumulation through the privatization of land and natural resources on or near reserve land.

Indigenous communities are further disproportionately affected by pollution resulting from environmental racism due to the fact that they rely more than most on direct access and use of their natural environment for sustenance.

We live on and organize on lands where treaties, recognized (on paper) by the Canadian state, outline access to the land and its resources.

Control over how treaties are interpreted is concentrated almost exclusively in the hands of politicians, bureaucrats and legal agents of the Canadian state, and to a lesser extent the governmental bodies within Indigenous communities that are sanctioned by the Canadian state through the Indian Act.

It is imperative to honor leadership of Indigenous women and knowledge-keepers on issues of environmental justice.

The Eco-Justice Committee of Solidarity Halifax supports struggles against climate change and environmental destruction. We work from an understanding of capitalism, ongoing colonialism, and environmental racism.

Recognizing the failure of the Left to properly or effectively address issues of the environment, Solidarity Halifax proposes the following considerations for anti-capitalist organizing.

We expect these to constantly be a work in progress.

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We are organizing in the  
**Halifax Regional Municipality**  
and across Nova Scotia to create space  
for respectful  
**dialogue, debate, activism and  
education**

on alternatives to capitalism.  
Capitalism is an oppressive economic  
system that puts

**profits ahead of the needs of people**

and the planet. It is a system in  
which great wealth and power are  
concentrated in the hands of a few. To  
oppose capitalism is to

**demand something better**

for ourselves, our families, and our  
communities.

 SolidarityHalifax

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[www.solidarityhalifax.ca](http://www.solidarityhalifax.ca)



Guideposts for

# Environmental Organizing

against  
capitalism

**SOLIDARITY HALIFAX**