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Climate Change

COP15 is dead! Long live the movement!

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The climate summit is over and the Danish presidency must be left with a bitter taste on their lips. What was called the meeting to save the world have been a complete failure. Even towards the end negotiations where going on about a document, that would have allowed a concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere almost twice the level that have been recommended by science - threatening global rises in temperature of at least 3Â° C. Obviously a scandalous conclusion for millions of people as well as countless bio-systems and species.

The negotiation have been marked by the exclusion of critical voices inside the negotiations and police repression against protesters on the outside. While it's clear to everyone, who have been following the negotiations, that it's the industrialized, Western countries, that bears the largest historical and present responsibility for climate change, the western negotiators have tried to maintain the right to be the only ones to present the texts for negotiations, meanwhile all their energy have been used for bullying the unsatisfied governments.

Obviously it is hard to see what is negotiated behind closed doors, and we must protest, that the world cannot see what the real negotiations are about and the kind of underhand tricks are being employed. But we get an idea about the negotiations, when we hear, that the African nations are being accused of 'standing with the bowl in their hand'. This racist behavior is an expression of the neocolonial ghost that lingers over the negotiations. Nonetheless we need to make perfectly clear to ourselves, that there are also class differences in the global South and that a simple transfer of money to a lot of the affected countries would mean the transfer of money to the pockets of the political and economic upper classes in these countries. This problem can only be overcome through systemic solutions, such as the abolition of intellectual property rights, negation of the current debt and the transfer of political and economic power to the South.

Large corporations have, with the support of their respective governments, decided to use the current levels of emissions as the outset for creating a just deal, or to rephrase it: They are prepared to make the enormous social and economic inequality that governs this world, as a picture of how the future should look like. This is both dangerous and unacceptable to the populations of the global South.

It is this disgusting attitude that reflects itself, when the police is used against delegates trying to exit negotiations to discuss indigenous rights and climate justice with unionists, farmers and other activists struggling for climate justice. In general we can say, that the danish government, with the silent accept of the UN leadership, have used the summit to undermine democratic rights and to install new standards for police repression of critical voices.

Just as with changes in the climate, an authoritarian state also presents itself slowly and and unnoticeable. Terror laws, 'hoodlum'-packages, phone bugging, surveillance, extended use of plainclothes cops and actual police provocations have, in the specific situation, been key to criminalize opposition to the summit and its agenda. But in the larger scale of things the police strategy, as shown during the summit, poses a serious threat to civil rights, to the freedom of speech and to the right to protest in Denmark. But it is not only a threat to the Danish movements, but to all social movements, and it marks a dangerous precedent for state behavior at future summits.

Nonetheless we can conclude, that an inspiring movement have been born in Copenhagen. So far the climate negotiations have been dominated by big NGO's and organizations attempting to perform 'progressive lobbying'. But the 12th of December demonstration proved, that climate changes have become an issue, that compels thousands of people to take the streets in one of the largest demonstrations in danish history and one of the largest ever on the

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issue of climate change. Many of the people, who took to the streets on the 12th did so under slogans critical of the system such as 'Planet - Not Profit', slogans, that had been chosen after an internet vote and in this way expresses a growing critique of the profit based and -oriented society.

Through the alliance between Climate Justice Now! and Climate Justice Action it was possible to unite forces on the streets with forces inside the summit walls. Furthermore it was shown possible to unite people with very diverse political and organizational backgrounds in the demands of 'Climate Justice' and 'System Change'. It's an enormous victory, that this movement held onto its code of action and did not let itself be provoked by the police. We have seen this discipline and commitment repeated in prisoner-solidarity actions all over Europe.

The movement is still young and weak, but it's international. On a minimal, but radical, program containing demands such as leaving fossil fuels in the ground and recognition of climate debt, thousands of activists from social movements have found a common foothold. Two main tasks are left in Denmark:

– The first task is to continue the solidarity work with those innocently jailed. They need all kinds of support and they need to know, that there are forces supporting them, who stands ready to help. This work must be tied to a direct attack on the governments 'law-and-order' policies, which now threatens to undermine democratic rights. Its a task of the leftwing to include workers unions i this defense of democratic rights.

– The other task is to use the experiences from the climate summit in the building of a Danish movement. The experiences of the 12th is still present in thousands of Danes, and these people lack responses after a failed summit. This reply exists. After the 16th the organizers called for 'Peoples Assemblies' everywhere - in schools, in workplaces and in local communities and Klimaforum have presented a quite radical text, as the conclusion to the alternative summit. These initiatives must be supported. Beyond this a systemic climate critique must be rooted in actual Danish struggles, the relationship to Danish nature and the development of local Danish production.

It is imperative, that Socialist Youth Front and the Red/Green Alliance commits themselves to these struggles.

Political Bureau of SAP, 20. December 2009