

CLIMATE
VANGUARD



An Ecosocialist Program: A First Take

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About Climate Vanguard

Climate Vanguard is a youth-led think tank empowering the youth climate movement to become a radical force of political-economic transformation.

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Introduction

Standing on the cusp of the 1.5°C guardrail, with emissions rising and nature vanishing, our task is to uproot capitalism and plant the seeds of ecosocialism. In other words, execute system change to avoid climate and ecological collapse.

Fulfilling this task requires rupture from capitalism. We cannot rapidly transform society through bourgeois electoral systems or incremental reforms. Nor can we build isolated alternatives while the world crumbles. The task is to face the system head on. And win.

The primary responsibility of the climate movement is to undertake realistic, principled actions to lead an ecosocialist mass movement with the collective capacity for ruptural transformation. With this context in mind, we present a program that outlines the policies to be implemented upon gaining power. This vision serves as a potent mobilisation tool, compelling the masses to step into action and organise for revolution.

To narrow the scope, this program is specifically directed at the European context – with the exclusion of Russia, which necessitates a more tailored approach. Even within the narrowed geography, we recognize that it makes large generalisations that don't fully account for sub-region particularities.

This program should not be read as prescriptive, but suggestive of the authors' vision alone. It is merely an initial probe that should be critically analysed and updated through feedback from the movement.

Moving through three central themes – democratise, decommodify, decolonise – this program offers a vision of society in transition. A society still wrestling with the capitalist scars of the old world while negotiating the emancipatory potential of the new. But it is a world of liberation and material improvement for the majority, all nested within planetary boundaries.

Recalling Lenin, *"in revolutionary times the limits of what is possible expand a thousandfold."*

Democratise the means of production

Over two centuries, fossil capitalism has poured the material foundation of society. In a matter of years, we must turn this material foundation to rubble and build something in its place. Already without historical precedent, we must take on this revolutionary task while managing the chaos of planetary destabilisation and the seething reaction of a capitalist class deprived of its life source.

Only a centralised democratic state has the means to transform society, absorb ecological shocks, and beat back revanchist ruling classes in the claustrophobic timeline left to prevent total earth systems collapse. Therefore, the ecosocialist movement, composed of the people's majority, must take power, cut the capitalist wires, and put the state on emergency footing against the root causes of climate and ecological breakdown.

Assuming the masses gain power, let us now outline the transformations that follow.

To execute the state's functions, community representatives are directly elected to the state, paid an equal living wage, and subject to a strict statute for recall as well as term limits. They are responsible for democratically planning the ecological transition and ensuring for effective, centralised coordination. Universal voting rights are guaranteed.

The first order of business is to democratise society by restoring the means of production to all. In the people's hands, we can produce for human and planetary needs, both advancing the material interests of the masses *and* healing our frayed connections with Earth.

In this process of democratisation, everyone has access to a purposeful, decent, self-organised job. Economic life is democratically planned in accordance with urgent ecological imperatives and a portion of labour output is appropriated to fund universal basic services.

The parochial definition of labour itself is expanded beyond waged work, acknowledging the central importance of the reproductive and metabolic labour that sustains humanity and nature. Without the imperative of producing for capital accumulation, the working week can be shrunk, freeing up time for recreation, exploration, and leisure. Together with guaranteed vacation, the spell of productivism is broken. We can finally re-discover our creative, curious, spiritual selves.

We are not promising utopia. We are offering the vision of a new world where everyone has an equal right to what they provide for society, not an equitable right attuned to the vagaries of different, and thus unequal, people. The latter will only come with the former's maturation and fruition.

Decommodify the ecological means of survival

Under capitalism, life is commodified. To access the means of survival, people need to sell their labour power to capitalists. People receive a wage, which can be used for rent, food, and energy, and the capitalists receive surplus value – the difference between a wage and the final market price of the commodity under production.

This economic arrangement has no parallel in history. Even in the most exploitative societies, the majority of people had some customary access to the means of survival, with land, far and above, the most important. But through a process of primitive accumulation, people's connection to the soil was severed.

Today, billions of people rely on the market for survival, a majority of which eke out an existence on less than \$5 per day. Not only are people alienated from the product of their labour through surplus value extraction, but they are alienated from *nature*, the very basis for human survival. With production and distribution decisions democratically distributed, the following needs are decommodified:

Energy: Zero-carbon energy becomes a universal basic service. The energy system is rapidly electrified and transmitted through a continental supergrid combining large-scale solar and wind with local, community-owned renewable energy. Rare Earth minerals, including lithium, nickel, and cobalt, necessary for renewable energy and battery infrastructure, are sourced through just supply chains in respect of labour and indigenous rights and deployed in compliance with planetary boundaries. A mass retrofit campaign insulates homes and installs ground-source heat pumps.

With decision making power transferred from fossil capitalists to the people, an immediate moratorium is placed on all new oil, gas, coal, and fossil hydrogen projects. Fossil fuel production and consumption is phased out by 2030 in line with 1.5°C decarbonization. Workers retool fossil infrastructure into a public utility of carbon waste management, sucking carbon out of the air and safely burying it underground.

Transport: Mass expansion of light rail, metro, bus, cycle infrastructure, and pedestrian routes. Regional public transport is free and accessible to all. Mass aviation is phased out and replaced with the rapid rollout of high speed rail.

Education: Free, high quality education from preschool through university is guaranteed for all. Places of education are a vital source of social reproduction – they ought to be treated as such. Robust mental health care, nutritious meals, ample time for play, nature connection, and student-teacher curricula co-creation replace competitive, bureaucratized capitalist education systems. Trade schools are fully funded to upskill an ecological workforce.

Food: Food provisions are means-tested, ensuring those in need have full access to regular, free, nutritious meals. The food production system is overhauled to produce for people, not profit. Agricultural corporations are broken up, crops are diversified, seeds decommodified, and diets relocalized to make the food system more resilient, isolating food shocks brought on by an overheated planet. In addition, the land freed from a plant-based transition gives way to land-back policies and large-scale rewilding. In the process, anti-speciesism and nature connection are fostered.

Housing: Having a home doesn't depend on money, status, or job. Everyone is guaranteed more than just a shelter, but a home – a comfortable space to rest, host friends, and be with family. Priority is placed on redistributing multiple homes and mass retrofit, as opposed to resource-intensive new builds.

Healthcare: Healthcare is a guaranteed universal human right. It is free for all and there are low barriers to access. Health services are expanded to appropriately address mental health challenges due to widespread feelings of loneliness and alienation experienced under (digital) capitalism. Areas traditionally neglected can be appropriately accounted for, including trans health, elder care, reproductive health, abortion, and addiction treatments.

Decolonise nature, society, and the economy

Imperialism and colonialism are twin forces that have enabled centuries of capital accumulation. We must decolonise nature, society and the economy.

I. Nature

Land is the oldest enclosure. Its privatisation has driven the degradation of nature and wealth inequality. In the people's hands, a program of public land-ownership is

implemented, converting large landholdings to community trusts. This process is critical in transforming capitalist social property relations that feed on exploitation and dominate people and planet.

Not only has land been enclosed, but the atmosphere has also been colonised by European fossil capitalism. A project of carbon drawdown is also under way, returning historic emissions back below fair share levels (understanding 350 ppm as the safe limit of atmospheric CO₂ concentration).

II. Society

Police and Prisons: The police were created in the late 18th and early 19th century to enable colonialism, slavery, and capitalism. They are not concerned with public safety, but with criminalising the symptoms (e.g. mental health illness, homelessness, poverty) of exploitative systems and cracking down on systemic resistance, most prominently labour and racial struggles.

Equally, prisons are part of the repressive colonial apparatus. They continue that legacy as a carceral colonisation of human bodies. No human being deserves to live in a cage, even for violent crime. Matching violence with violence only perpetuates systems of harm.

With a society full of social security and widespread, accessible healthcare services, police can be replaced by a new means of *collective* security rooted in harm reduction and care. The steady abolition of prison can also lay the seeds for a new society of common safety and wellbeing.

Borders: Migrant justice is central to reckoning with the long history of colonialism. The influx of migrants displaced by climate and ecological breakdown are welcomed and offered full rights, including a home, healthcare, education, and a guaranteed zero-carbon, unionised job.

Military: Imperial military forces are defunded, international bases shut down, and nuclear weapons disarmed.

Community: A process of decolonising capitalism's influence on social relations and community is under way. Social fear, anxiety and individualism – capitalism's social colonisation – is combated by large scale investment in public luxuries, including public parks, community theatres, leisure centres, and sports facilities. In addition, expanding the commons enables a rediscovery of collective belonging, safety, and purpose. To guide the process, accessible programs of community healing that help



address compounding systems of oppression, including racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, queerphobia, and transphobia are deployed.

III. Economy

Shifting power structures to serve people and planet means implementing a program of international economic decolonisation. Debts are cancelled and grant-based climate reparations are issued in line with historic responsibility and capacity to pay. Intellectual property rights are waived, enabling the transfer of low-carbon technologies that facilitate global mitigation and adaptation.

Conclusion

This is not *the* ecosocialist program – merely a synthesis of ideas to spark conversation. A real program will only come to be by going to the people, asking what they need, and creating a set of policies in accordance with their ecological material interests. As a start, we invite people to submit their thoughts in [this survey](#) and write counter proposals that enrich our inchoate efforts.

From the flames, we will smelt, cast, and forge the ecosocialist lantern as guide through our planetary twilight. Dawn awaits.

If you're interested in writing a response and publishing it, please email us at hq@climatevanguard.org.