

Global warming drives new world heat records in first week of July

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July 3, 4 and 5 were the three hottest days in recorded human history, according to data from the Climate Reanalyzer from the University of Maine. The institute reported that the average global temperature on Monday (the temperature over the entire surface of the Earth, averaged over 24 hours) spiked to 17.01 degrees Celsius (62.61 Fahrenheit) on Monday and to 17.18 degrees Celsius (62.92F) on Tuesday and Wednesday. Both temperatures shatter the previous record from August 14, 2016 of 16.92 degrees Celsius (62.45F).

Data from the Copernicus Climate Change Service, operated by the European Union, recorded the same new highs. Using slightly different metrics, Copernicus reported a record high of 16.88 degrees Celsius (62.38F) on Monday and 17.03 degrees Celsius (62.65F) on Tuesday, breaking past the previous August 2016 high of 16.80 degrees Celsius (62.24F).

While the data from both are preliminary and will be confirmed in the coming weeks and months, they are a stark warning that Earth is heating up and that human-induced climate change is accelerating. This past June has already been noted as the hottest month on record, and the hottest days of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, the rest of July and the whole of August, are yet to come.

The overall warming is this year further compounded by El Niño, a band of warm water that irregularly emerges in the Pacific Ocean and which causes warmer temperatures during the months or years it persists. It is predicted that the current cycle will continue to warm the Northern Hemisphere through winter 2023-24.

The reports from both climate monitors reaffirm what has been known for decades, that the anarchic nature of capitalist production releases billions of tons of greenhouse gases into Earth's atmosphere each year, trapping more and more heat and causing increasingly

horrific ecological disasters. Temperatures globally began to rise sharply at the turn of the 19th century, largely ushered in by the mass use of coal to power trains and later the first coal-fired power stations. It was noted as early as 1912 that burning coal, and the resultant carbon dioxide, "tends to make the air a more effective blanket for the earth and to raise its temperature."

And though global temperatures stabilized in the mid-20th century, a second, even steeper, climb in global temperatures began in the 1970s, one which continues to this day.

To give some sense of just how much energy is involved in even slight changes in Earth's average surface temperature, one can compare how much solar energy is trapped by greenhouse gases on our planet now as compared to 1750, before the industrial revolution and the emergence of capitalism globally. Since then, temperatures have risen about 1.2 degrees Celsius (2.2F), and the atmosphere now absorbs an extra 3.22 watts per square meter across Earth's entire surface compared to 273 years ago.

The amount of extra energy captured in the atmosphere is equivalent to detonating a one megaton nuclear warhead *every ten seconds*. It is the devil's metronome.

The impacts of climate change just this year have already been devastating. Temperatures in China have been so high that carp being farmed in Guangxi province were "burned to death" while still in water, according to a report in *South of China Today*. In India, at least 44 people have died from soaring temperatures, and the true number is likely far higher. And heat waves in Mexico have resulted in at least 112 deaths this year alone.

Rising global average temperatures are also linked to

the historic burning of Canada's forests this year, which have blanketed large parts of Canada and the United States with ash and other particulates for days on end. Air pollution is one of the leading causes of deaths globally; Our World in Data reported that just under 6.7 million people died as a consequence of outdoor and indoor air pollution in 2019, nearly 12 percent of all deaths globally. Wildfires, especially those now taking place, and the massive wildfire seasons around the world that have emerged in the past two decades, are a major contributor to these deaths.

The nationwide flooding in Pakistan last year was another example of the advanced nature of the climate crisis. Rainfall over the most impacted provinces, Sindh and Balochistan, was 75 percent higher than what it would have been without global warming, according to a report from World Weather Attribution. The record rainfall, combined with rapidly melting glaciers in the Himalayas, produced walls of water that killed more than 1,700 people, a third of them children and youth, and destroyed 2.2 million homes, drowned 4.4 million acres of crops and left 8 million men, women and children permanently displaced. The total cost in economic terms was \$40 billion and, at the height of the floods, a third of the country was under water.

And that is to say nothing of the extended droughts, more powerful hurricanes, increasingly frigid polar vortexes and numerous other extreme weather events that have become commonplace over the past 20 years.

The colossal impact of climate change has even given rise to a special category of "climate refugees." According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), an average of 21.5 million humans are displaced each year as a result of climate change-related disasters. The agency estimates that there will be 1.2 billion such refugees by 2050, the vast majority from the poorest regions of the world. And unlike those who fall under the formal definition of a refugee, established in 1951, those who are forced from their homes by large-scale environmental events have little to no legal recourse to avoid persecution or to settle in other countries.

The scale of the crisis makes any solution necessarily global. Air obeys no customs checkpoints, nor does water care for maritime sovereignty. Yet even in the face of such vast human misery, world capitalist rulers, divided into rival nation-states, see climate change only as a way to fight over "carbon credits" and set up "loss

and damage" funds. In other words, the bourgeoisie, which has had more than a century to learn about and abate this ongoing and increasingly catastrophic problem, is developing new forms of financial speculation and carrying out increasingly empty token gestures.

The real solution is a turn to the working class, those most devastated by climate change and at the same time a powerful and inherently global social force. Just as the strike by dockworkers in Canada must be unified across national borders with UPS drivers in the US, teachers in Britain, workers across South Korea, and the mass protests in France, the fight to end and reverse global warming must be international in scope.

And such a struggle must be political. It is not enough to develop the technological instruments to end the ecological catastrophe; capitalism itself must be abolished, along with the class of exploiters that benefit from it, as the working class carries out world socialist revolution.



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