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Ecosocialism

Manifesto for an Ecosocialist Revolution: Possible consequences in the Philippines

- Features -

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Presentations of the Fourth International [Manifesto for an ecosocialist revolution - Break with capitalist growth](#) at a discussion for scholars and leaders, activists of social movements and political organizations, co-organized by IIRE-Philippines and Partido Manggagawa. in September 2025 by Daniel Tanuro [Manifesto for an Ecosocialist Revolution: Possible consequences in the Philippines](#)” below and Maral Jefroudi “[Introduction to the Manifesto for an Ecosocialist Revolution: Work Less, Live Better](#)”.

At its last world congress, the Fourth International adopted a document entitled “[Manifesto for an ecosocialist revolution - Break with capitalist growth](#)”. The aim of this lecture is not to enter into the details of this text, but rather to present the problems it addresses. As a conclusion, I will suggest some elements for a possible concretization within the framework of the Philippines.



Slums and skyscrapers on the seafront in Manila

Starting point: the huge threat of the “ecological crisis”

The starting point is the so-called “global ecological crisis”. In our opinion, this crisis confronts us to a situation of existential threat without any historical precedent, not only in the history of capitalism, but also in the history of the humankind.

The scientists identify nine parameters for the human sustainability on the planet Earth:

1. The climate change (manly due to the atmospheric concentration in CO₂, mainly due to the combustion of fossil fuels);
2. The biodiversity loss (the rhythm of this loss is presently higher than when the dinosaurs disappeared, 60 million years ago);
3. The air pollution by particles (cause of numerous respiratory diseases);
4. The poisoning of the ecosystems by «new chemical entities » (radioactive nucleids, pesticides, PFAS... mostly carcinogen, some of which accumulate because they cannot - or can only very slowly - be destroyed naturally);

5. The land use change and the degradation of soils (deforestation, erosion, nutrients loss, destruction of the wetlands...);
6. The acidification of the oceans (hence the death of the coral reefs, hotspots of biodiversity);
7. The fresh water resources;
8. The perturbation of the Nitrogen and Phosphorus cycles (the overuse of nitrates and phosphates in the agriculture causes a phenomenon known as eutrophication: excessive algae growth depletes the water's dissolved oxygen)
9. The state of the stratospheric Ozone layer (that protects us from the UV rays).

For each of these parameters, the scientists determined a «boundary » of sustainability. The boundary is not a strict limit but its crossing means we enter a dangerous, unsustainable zone. Fifteen years ago, the researchers estimated three boundaries had been crossed: CO₂, biodiversity and Nitrogen). At the moment, they estimate seven boundaries have been crossed. The only indicator that evolved positively is the state of the Ozone layer (because adequate, non-neoliberal measures, have been taken - for specific reasons that won't be developed here). No clear boundary has been determined yet for the air pollution by particles.

It boils down to read this list of parameters to understand that the so-called «ecological crisis » is also a huge social crisis with enormous possible consequences. These consequences are well known, especially in your country: more violent typhoons, more heavy rainfalls, more droughts, more heatwaves, more landslides, more coastal and river flooding, sea level rise, etc. All these phenomena are worsening and will continue worsening if nothing changes.

If one puts aside the Ozone layer, the other questions are very intertwined, and climate change plays a central role in the whole. Global warming accelerates the biodiversity loss, the burning of fossil fuels is a major cause of air pollution by particles, oceans acidification results from the growing atmospheric concentration in CO₂, deforestation is the second source of CO₂ emissions, nitrates in excess degrades in a potent greenhouse gas (nitrous oxide), pesticides and PFAS are products of the fossil (petrochemical) industry...

Scientists have been warning for decades for a catastrophe, but the governments did nothing - or nearly nothing. Today, some heads of state, like Trump and Millei, openly deny the reality. Others take measures that are grossly insufficient, ineffective, and can even worsen the situation; moreover, at the moment, they question them in name of the competitiveness.

As a result of this attitude, the catastrophe is no longer a possibility. In fact, we have entered the catastrophe, and it is growing faster and faster. If nothing changes, if an emergency plan is not applied, it will be out of control. The physical state of the Earth will change, and no reversal will be possible. The catastrophe will become a cataclysm, comparable to the one that caused the end of the dinosaurs. According to some recent research, a succession of «positive retroactions » starting at 2°C of warming might suffice to push the planet on this irreversible path.

Although they are not responsible, the poor are the main victims, especially in the poorest countries. At the moment, according to the IPCC (AR6, workgroup 2, full report), three quarters of the global harvested areas experience yield losses induced by meteorological drought; 3-3.5 billion people are heavily impacted by climate change; four billion people experience severe water scarcity for at least part of the year. Most of these people are poor in the poorest countries. The very existence of these people is at risk.

A prominent climatologist, former cochair of the IPCC workgroup one, said recently in an interview: at the present rhythm, we are heading to a 4°C increase of the global average temperature in the coming decades. Nobody knows exactly what the Earth would look like in this situation, but one thing is absolutely certain: such a hot planet could not support the life of 8 billion humans; probably, it could only support half that number.

The most basic common sense should dictate urgently taking drastic measures of social and ecological justice. Why is it that they are not taken? What is it that is stronger than the basic common sense, stronger than the collective survival instinct? The answer is crystal clear: the race for profit, which inevitably entails producing ever more commodities at an ever-lower cost, hence creating ever more social inequalities and discriminations.

The simple truth is capitalism is a productivist system, and this productivism is a destructivism. Social capitalism does not exist. Green capitalism does not exist, for the same reason. We must try to get rid of this absurd system. If not, it will crush the popular classes, and possibly break the humankind and the nature of which it is part

A revolution - a global social, ecological, feminist, anticolonialist revolution is objectively necessary. This is the starting point of our Manifesto.

A renewed global historical perspective

This starting point is not new. But it implies a renewed global historical perspective. In the Communist manifesto, Marx and Engels wrote that the proletariat must take political power "to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible". This is no longer an option globally. Even a stationary economy is no longer an option. Globally, the fact that the boundaries of sustainability have been crossed means that capitalism has brought us too far. We have to go back, period. Increasing the productive forces is what capitalism does. We have to decrease them globally. In other words, degrowth is objectively necessary. Degrowth is not a project of society - ecosocialism is our project. It is not a demand. It is a constraint that we must take into account in the transition to another society.

This global degrowth perspective seems completely at odds with the situation in a country like the Philippines and other poor countries. Indeed, a huge amount of social needs remains unsatisfied. A quarter of the population does not have enough food. You need to develop the education system, the health system, a distribution system providing drinkable water to all, and so on.

These needs are fully legitimate. Nobody can deny them, they must be satisfied. Obviously, this entails a certain kind of economic growth. Cement is needed to build decent houses for everybody. Energy is needed to produce this cement. Capabilities are needed to face all these challenges, in the interest of the poor.

In other words, humankind can only cope with the social-ecological crisis by respecting the fundamental principle of the "common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities" enshrined in the UNFCCC. The developed countries are responsible for the crisis, they have to pay for it. They have the capabilities; they have to transfer them. They must reduce their emissions by 15% per year. This is only possible by the means of a radical economic degrowth, that takes into account the poor in these countries, too.

But the degrowth challenge concerns the poor countries, too. Indeed, the "common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities principle" does not mean that these countries can follow the pattern of development followed by the developed countries.

This pattern was based - and is still based - on fossil fuels and agribusiness. The global ruling class and the capitalist "elites" in the global South claim this extractivist pattern will permit even the poorest countries to catch up the most developed countries. This is totally untrue. The truth is, if poor countries continue applying this pattern of "development" - like China does - it will worsen the catastrophe supported by the poor, including accelerating the transformation of the catastrophe into a cataclysm. One understands immediately this is not a reasonable

perspective!

Consequences for the poorest countries

This brings our Manifesto to an important conclusion. Quote: “The discourse of ‘the South catching up the North’ is a chimera, a smokescreen to conceal the continuation of capitalist and imperialist exploitation, which widens inequalities. With the increase in ecological disasters, this discourse is losing all credibility. (...) Now is not the time for ‘catching up’ but for planetary sharing (...) To satisfy their needs, the people in dominated countries need a development model radically opposed to the imperialist and productivist one, a model that prioritizes public services for the mass of the population, and not the production of goods for the world market. This anticapitalist and anti-imperialist model expropriates the monopolies in the sectors of finance, mining, energy, agribusiness, and socializes them under democratic control.”

The Manifesto goes further. It differentiates the so-called “emerging” countries and the poorer countries like the Philippines, that emit yearly on average 1.4tCO₂/capita (less than the average emissions per capita needed globally to respect the Paris agreement).

Quote: “Especially in the poorer countries, the necessity to meet the needs of the population will require increased material production and energy consumption over a period of time. Within the framework of the alternative development model and other international exchanges, the contribution of these countries to global ecosocialist degrowth and respect for ecological balances will consist of:

- Imposing just reparation on imperialist countries.
- Cancelling the conspicuous consumption of the parasitical elite
- Fighting ecocidal megaprojects inspired by neoliberal capitalist policies, such as giant pipelines, pharaonic mining projects, new airports, offshore oil wells, large hydroelectric dams and immense tourist infrastructures appropriating natural and cultural heritage for the benefit of the rich.
- Ecological agrarian reform to substitute industrialized agro-business.
- Refusing the destruction of biomes by breeders, palm oil planters, agribusiness in general and the mining industry, “forest compensation” (REDD and REDD+ projects) as well as “fishing agreements” which offer fishery resources to industrial fishing multinationals, etc.”

We have seen that this path of development (ecosocialist degrowth) is contradictory with the productivist approach of the Communist Manifesto. But it is not at all contradictory with Marxism. Indeed, Marx himself changed his mind. The Marx of the Communist Manifesto saw the emancipation of the exploited and oppressed as conditioned by the increase of the productive forces. Twenty years later, in *Capital*, Marx sees the emancipation (“the only possible freedom”) as conditioned by the rational management of the exchange of matter between the humankind and the rest of nature. He is no longer a productivist nor an admirer of the technology in general. On the opposite, he denounces the alliance between the agribusiness and the great industry which “ruins the two sources of all wealth - the nature and the labourer”. And that’s not the last word of his evolution. At the end of his life, in his letter to the Russian populist Vera Zasulich, Marx clearly states that the “rural commune”, where it exists, and in alliance with the working class of the developed countries, makes it possible to build up a socialist society without passing through capitalism. This last development of his thought is of huge importance today, particularly in the light of the struggles of the indigenous people. So, we consider our Manifesto as an extension and a deepening of Marx’s continuous evolution.

A renewed Transitional Programme: women, farmers, indigenous peoples

The new, anti-productivist, perspective of the Manifesto implies an effort to renew our programme, that is to say our vision of the world we are fighting for, our demands and our strategy. I cannot develop all these aspects in detail. The world we are fighting for is the subject of the important chapter two of our document. It is built on the idea that, once the fundamental needs are democratically satisfied, being is more important than having. As for the transitional demands forming a bridge towards the new society, we remain faithful to the method outlined by Leon Trotsky and fully assume the demands he put forward, such as the expropriation of large capitalist groups, the reduction of working hours, workers' control, etc. But we broaden the scope.

We broaden the scope because we consider all the social movements as being part of the class struggle. Quote: "The class struggle is not a cold abstraction. "The real movement that abolishes the current state of things" (Marx) defines it and designates its actors. The struggles of women, LGBTQI people, oppressed peoples, racialized peoples, migrants, peasants and indigenous peoples for their rights are not simply adjacent to the struggles of workers against the exploitation of labour by the bosses. They are part of the living class struggle. They are part of it because capitalism needs the patriarchal oppression of women to maximize surplus value and ensure social reproduction at a lower cost; needs the discrimination against LGBTQI people to validate patriarchy; needs structural racism to justify the looting of the periphery by the centre; needs inhuman "asylum policies" to regulate the industrial reserve army; needs to submit the peasantry to the dictates of junk food-producing agribusiness to compress the price of labour power; and needs to eliminate the respectful relationship that human communities still maintain within themselves and with nature, to replace it with its individualistic ideology of domination, which transforms the collective into an automaton and the living into dead things."

The Manifesto gives a central place to the feminist demands. Women take care more than men. The reasons are discussed among feminists: is it due to their nature, or to patriarchal oppression? We think patriarchal oppression is the key factor, but that's not the point here. The point is that "to take care" is what we urgently need to fight against the ecosocial catastrophe: indeed, we need to take care of people and of nature.

To take care implies recognizing the central importance of the social reproduction compared to production. This importance can only increase in the context of the necessary turn to a just, ecosocialist degrowth. Today, it is not by chance that the right, the far right and the reactionary forces in general fiercely attack the women's rights, in particular their right to control their own body, their own reproductive capacities. Virilism and machism are used and encouraged by the far right as weapons of domination on the women. This domination on women is part of a broader reactionary project of domination on society and appropriation of nature by capital. Ultimately, the growing violence against women (and against the LGBT+) is an expression of the fact that the ruling class is determined to defend its system of exploitation of people and nature by all means necessary.

The importance given to the indigenous people is another example of our renewed approach of the transitional programme. Even if they are a minority of the global population, the indigenous people bring the evidence that another relationship between humankind and the rest of nature is possible. Their witness is of huge ideological signification. Quote: "indigenous peoples and traditional communities are at the forefront of the struggle against the destructive domination of capitalism over their bodies and territories. In many regions, they are even the vanguard of new revolutionary movements of the subaltern classes. Therefore, we recognize that they are a fundamental part of the revolutionary subject of the 21st century."

For the same kind of reasons, the Manifesto also gives a great importance to the struggles and demands of the small peasants against agribusiness. Quote: "Proactive policies are needed to stop deforestation and replace agribusiness, industrial tree plantations and large-scale fishing with small farmer agroecology, ecoforestry and small-scale fishing respectively. (...) Farmers and fisherfolk must be properly compensated by the community, not only for their contribution to human food but also for their ecological contribution. (...) Food sovereignty, in line with the proposals of Via Campesina, is a key objective. It requires radical agrarian reform: the land should go to those who work it, especially women. Expropriation of big landowners and capitalist agribusiness who produce goods for the world

market. Distribution of land to peasants and landless peasants (families or cooperatives) for agro-biological production.”

A renewed strategy

A renewed programme logically implies a renewed strategy. The Manifesto breaks with the dogmatic vision of the class struggle as the action of an objectified/idealised industrial, mainly male, working class. Not only are the struggles of the women, the youth, the indigenous people, the small peasants, the migrants and the LGBT+ persons part of the class struggle, but they play a decisive role in certain circumstances. Look at Greta Thunberg sailing to cross the Atlantic and mobilizing a climate demonstration of 500.000 people in Montreal, or sailing through Gaza to break the blockade by Israel: by these actions, she is at the forefront of the class struggle!

Moreover, these struggles help combatting the productivist ideology within the working class. By the way, this point had been noticed by Lenin in his fight against the “workerism” and the “economicism” (in “What to do?”): “Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers only from without; that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers.” That’s why the Manifesto, in its last chapter, insists on the importance of a strategy based on the convergence and articulation of the struggles. It is not an easy path, because each social movement has its own rhythm and specificities. By the way, this is why it is crucially important to build political parties with members active in the different social movements.

An emergency plan for climate and social justice in the Philippines?

The Communist Manifesto was not an endpoint but a starting point of Marx and Engels’ thought.

The same is true for our Ecosocialist Manifesto, even if it has not got the same historical ambition, of course! Our Manifesto, actually, is nothing more than a diagnosis, a perspective arising from it, and a few strategic and programmatic guidelines. These guidelines have to be concretized and deepened at the level of the different countries and groups of countries.

According to the 2017 World risk report, Philippines is the third most vulnerable country to climate change. Not only will the poor be the main victims, but the disaster will create new poor and breed a spiral of disaster vulnerability and social inequalities. In this context, the concretization of the Manifesto might consist in elaborating something like an «Emergency plan for climate and social justice ». The ambition should be to address the main combined social and ecological problems taking into account the extreme urgency of a coherent, planned and immediate answer.

There is a well-known book by Eduardo Galeano entitled *The open veins of Latin America*. Actually, the veins of the Philippines are open too, for the same reasons: colonialism (though, by the same colonizer...) and imperialist plundering with the complicity of the corrupted local “elites”. The situation is even worse than that described by Galeano, because not only are your labour forces and natural resources being plundered, but, as a “return”, you are also bearing the brunt of the ecosocial catastrophe caused by the capitalist powers.

What might an emergency plan for climate and social justice look like? On basis of what we have seen and learned in the last few days, the heart of the alternative could be a radical land reform aimed at the generalization of agroecology - taking into account the rights of indigenous peoples and the protection of biodiversity. Twenty percent of the active population works in the agriculture, 60% in the (broadly informal) sector of the services. The question of

land is decisive to stop - and possibly reverse - the rural exodus, the unsustainable swelling of a megacity like Manila and its slums, the emigration of millions young people (mainly women) to the Gulf and other countries, and the health problems arising from the poisoning and destruction of the environment.

The challenges are enormous and should not be underestimated. They need structural responses. In my view, a radical, democratic land reform might be the central pillar of a plan answering to the basic needs in health, water, housing, sanitation and education.

As an example, let us take the threats to Manila and its region. They result from the combination of accumulating poverty (due to the capitalist mode of development) with accelerated ground subsidence (due to excessive pumping of the underground water), sea-level rise and increasing violence of the typhoons (both due to climate change). The “relative sea-level rise” sums the effects of global sea-level rise, storm surge and ground subsidence. Scientists estimate the relative sea-level rise in Manila Bay during the last century at 60cm (three times the global sea-level rise). It could equal 2.04 metres by 2050. Such a rise would inundate permanently 60-80 square kilometers in Metro Manila alone. Please note these figures do not include the growing risks of river flooding due to more frequent heavy rainfalls and bad land-use (deforestation, etc.)... nor the possible impacts of the (probable) dislocation of parts of the Antarctica ice caps!

A large proportion of the informal settlers live in the most vulnerable areas of Manila Bay. Millions of poor people are at risk, especially women, children and the elderly. Accommodation and dikes will not suffice to prevent the danger. On the opposite, such a business-as-usual answer could increase the danger (that is typically what the IPCC calls “maladaptation”: adaptation that increase the risks), especially if they are implemented technocratically, without democratic control and participation of the communities.

Relocation seems to be unavoidable. But relocation too must be organized socially and democratically. Very often, disasters are used by governments as a strategy to evict the poor. For so far I know, that seems to be the case in Manila. Following certain studies, 6,000 households have been relocated to areas that are devoid of access to basic needs, turning them into new slums. The last IPCC report mentions the fact that, in Manila, “fragmentation of urban infrastructure intended to promote climate resilience resulted as marginal reduction of vulnerability, the increased vulnerability of excluded communities more than offsetting the decreased vulnerability of more well-off communities”. The reason is political: “adaptation plans primarily assessed through the prism of economic/financial viability”.

Relocation and other adaptation measures are immediate demands needing a clear commitment to social justice, ecology and democracy. Relocation in particular implies planning, public ownership of the land, public enterprises to build decent houses in good urban environment, and popular control to prevent the corruption scandals. More broadly, relocation implies a model of development breaking with the different forms of extractivism (mining, agribusiness and industrial fishing) feeding bad, unequal under-development (the fact that Philippines is not self-sufficient in rice production speaks for itself). In other words, combatting the social-ecological threats requires measures that begin to encroach on capitalist rules.

A fight for political power

To raise the immediate urgent problems linking them to anticapitalist solutions was the transitional method applied by Lenin in his famous text [“The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It”](#). We all should reread it, it is a source of inspiration.

Such an emergency plan anchored in the main immediate ecosocial problems and threats could seem exaggerated

or unrealistic. But most probably, alas, the development of the catastrophe will show its pertinence and urgency in the eyes of a growing part of the population.

This development of the consciousness could be slower than in Russia between July and October 1917 (Lenin wrote «The Impending Catastrophe » in July). This is due to the fact that the rhythm of the ecosocial catastrophe is still relatively slow at the moment. But this rhythm is not linear, which means that a sudden acceleration is possible. We should sound the alarm vigorously.

In the case of sea level rise, as I said before, there is a very high probability of disintegration of a huge glacier in the Antarctica (the Totten glacier). Nobody knows when it will happen, but scientists consider it as unavoidable and it will provoke an immediate rise of the ocean level by at least 1.5 m...

To give two other examples: following the IPCC, due to global warming and the death of the coral reefs, the maximum fish catch potential of Philippines seas could lose 50% by 2050, compared to 2001-2010 levels; following the World Resource Institute, the country will endure a high degree of water shortage by 2040, with negative consequences especially in the agriculture (-10% rice yield by 1°C warming).

Of course, such an emergency plan for social and ecological justice is only possible if it is linked to a fight for the political power. In fact, the realization of the plan supposes a government based on the needs and mobilisation of the popular classes, breaking with the capitalist dogma's, the corruption, the extractivism and the dictatorship of finance capital.

Such a government could not easily resist imperialism if it remained isolated, but the great similarity of the situations in South east Asia (the situations of Jakarta and Ho Chi Minh Ville are very similar to that of Manila) permits to hope that an extension of the struggle to several countries would be possible.

Our greatest wish is that our Manifesto will encourage the left and the social movements to develop such an alternative and to unite around it.

October 2025

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