

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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Protesters mark the first Earth Day in Washington, D.C., on April 22, 1970 | National Park Service

BUILDING FOR POWER

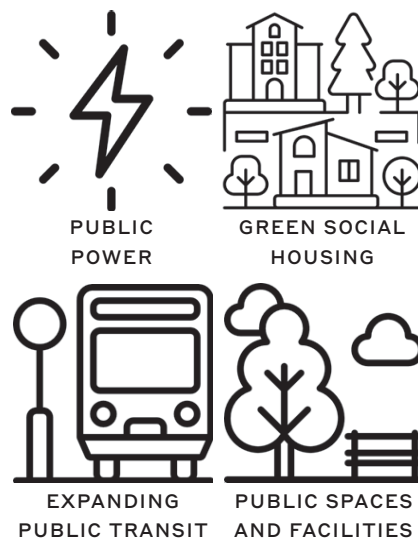
BY MATTHEW HAUGEN

The first Earth Day took place in 1970, mobilizing more than 20 million people around the United States to demand action to protect the environment. Back then, the day was a series of protests, activism, and teach-ins with a more radical bent than the sanitized and corporatized versions we often see today. It was born out of—and further propelled—an increasing awareness of the breadth and depth of pollution and ecological degradation pervading the country. Thanks in part to this organizing, the federal government soon created the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and passed landmark environmental protection bills that, although far from sufficient, serve as bulwarks to this day.

A significant portion of the financial and organizational backing for the first Earth Day was provided by the United Auto Workers (UAW). To some, an auto workers union may

seem like a surprising backer for a radical environmental event. But Walter Reuther, the president of the UAW at the time, understood that struggles for labor and environmental justice are inextricable. Workers have ecological interests as well as

STRATEGIC AREAS OF WORK FOR THE BUILDING FOR POWER CAMPAIGN



economic ones, and we have to fight collectively to protect and expand both of them against the capitalist interests trying to destroy them both.

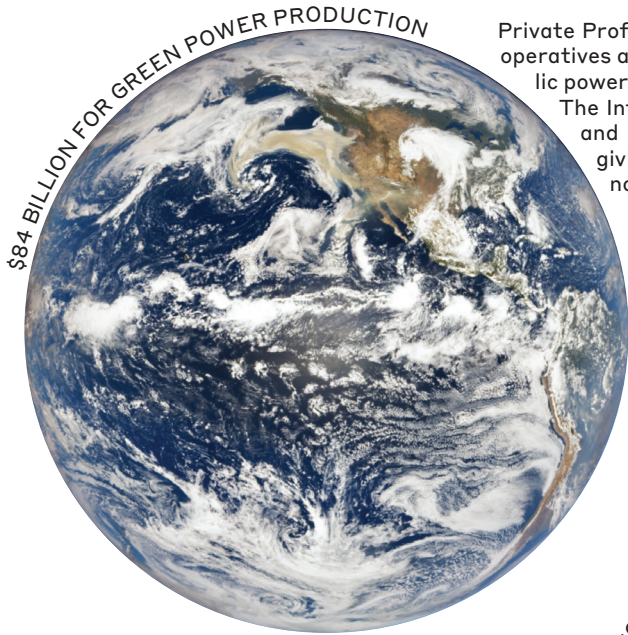
This idea animates DSA's fight for a radical Green New Deal today. As in 1970, there is accelerating awareness and activism around the urgent environmental problems we face. The old injustices have, in many cases, intensified, and we now face climate and biodiversity crises on global and epochal scales. As socialists, we understand that the profit motive and private property ownership inherent to capitalism both drive ecological degradation and prevent requisite action from being taken to stop it.

Drastic changes are coming. What forms these social and physical transitions take—who is helped or harmed, whether our biosphere is repaired or further degraded—are up for grabs. This is the fundamental political terrain of the 21st century.

(Continued on page 3)

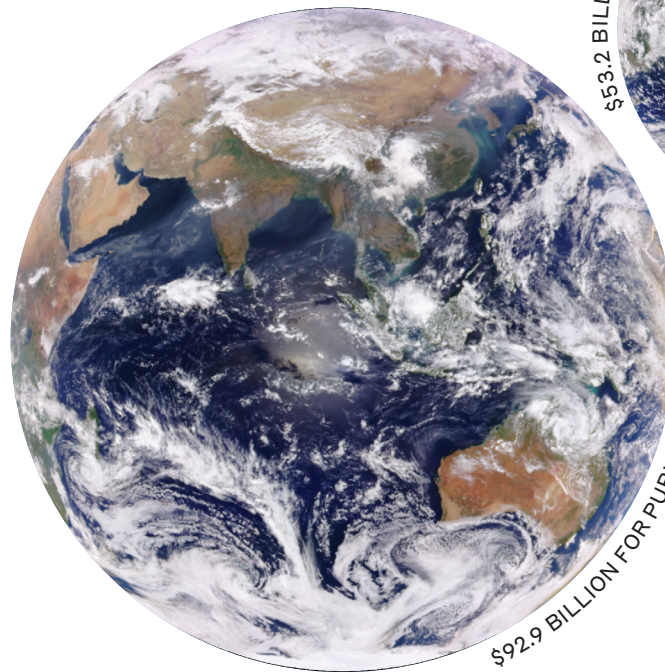
ANOTHER WORLD IS INEVITABLE

In the coming decades, a green transition will transform the global economy—or else. Green capitalists pretend this transition can be accomplished within the political and economic system that necessitated it. Everything will change, except the power held by the wealthy. A Green New Deal envisions a transition driven by and for the interests of the many, not the few. The climate provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act are no Green New Deal, but their huge investments provide the terrain for struggle between these two visions. DSA’s Building For Power campaign aims to win local battles to direct these and other green investments toward public goods, not private profits, across its four strategic areas: public power, green social housing, expanding public transit, and public spaces and facilities.

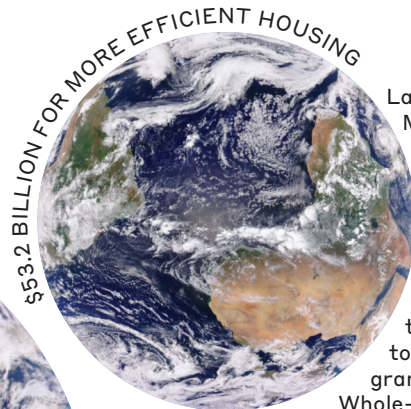


Private Profit vs. **Public Power**: Publicly owned utilities and rural electric cooperatives across the country are the fruit of a 20th century struggle for public power—and they are often heavily invested in that century’s technology. The Inflation Reduction Act extends important clean energy tax credits and makes co-ops and public utilities fully eligible for the first time, giving communities an opportunity to make sure a green transition is not an excuse to give up democratic control.

Palaces vs. **Public Space**: Both bills provide a variety of opportunities to invest in greening public facilities, along the lines of the the New Deals for Public Schools campaign, and to knit together more walkable, liveable communities, if local governments can be pushed to take advantage of the opportunity.



Teslas vs. **Public Transit**: While subsidies for private automobiles dominate the Inflation Reduction Act, \$108 billion in funding in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act represents a huge down payment toward a public transit system that meets the needs of communities and the planet.



Landlords vs. **Social Housing**: Many of the incentives for improved home energy efficiency in the Inflation Reduction Act benefit homeowners and landlords, rather than tenants. Intervening as these programs are implemented on the ground can increase the share of this funding going to working people through programs such as the Pennsylvania Whole-Home Repairs Program championed by DSA-affiliated state senator Nikil Saval, which became law at the end of last year.

RESOURCES

Committee	ecosocialists.dsausa.org
Public Power	bit.ly/prospect-power
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Active Transportation	bit.ly/r2t-active
Schools	bit.ly/k12ca-schools
Municipalities	bit.ly/loc-cities
Housing	bit.ly/nht-housing
Public Transit	bit.ly/apta-transit

Graphic by Adam Kaiser. Images of Earth from space were taken by NASA’s Earth Polychromatic Imaging Camera. In the top left-most image, tan-colored smoke from West Coast wildfires in 2020 is visible.

(Building for Power, cont. from page 1)

The resources flowing into cities and states continue to shape and reshape our political and physical infrastructure, often under the guise of climate action, as with the billions of dollars allocated for this purpose from the Inflation Reduction Act. Intervening on this terrain is a crucial opportunity to organize for the future we deserve: a society that values people and our planet instead of profit. This is why DSA's Green New Deal Campaign Commission recently launched our new campaign, Building for Power.

We are helping chapters develop and execute their own local campaigns for GND-style legislation in four areas—public power, public transit, green social housing, and green public spaces—that offer opportunities to simultaneously build (or rebuild) the public sector and the labor movement as both a means and an end toward the just and sustainable world we seek. And these legislative campaigns also allow us to utilize and synergize the variety of tactics that DSA chapters have demonstrated to such great effect around the country in electoral, labor, tenant, and mutual aid organizing. Forging these chapter-level fights together

as part of a national campaign allows us to cohere our struggles and build a broader shared narrative that not only helps us win our local campaigns but builds the power to win larger struggles to come.

A radical Green New Deal starts with us—in our communities, our cities, our chapters, and our imaginations. Workers made the world. Now we'll save it! Go to ecosocialists.dsausa.org to get involved today. 🌹

MATTHEW HAUGEN is an environmental researcher and analyst who serves on DSA's Green New Deal Campaign Commission.



FROM THE
**NATIONAL
DIRECTOR**

**THE POWER OF
THE ROSE**

BY **MARIA SVART**

I recently read a piece by community organizer George Goehl about the power of ritual in organizing. It got me thinking about our own rituals and symbols. New members join all the time and, for so many, DSA becomes a place of refuge from the isolation and loneliness of life under capitalism and a place of collective action and power. What do our own rituals and symbols say about us?

First, we often greet each other with “comrade.” We truly are comrades in arms in the struggle for socialism and against the owning class that grinds working-class people to dust. Every day, we organize our friends, neighbors, and co-workers to link arms and keep fighting for justice. Our weapons are the clipboard, the bullhorn, and the picket sign.

Second, we've got red roses everywhere. Attend a DSA rally or mass meeting and you'll see roses on

banners, clothing, and jewelry. This is a global symbol of socialism, and in the United States historically has been used both by women's suffragists and striking women workers to demand not just the bread to survive, but the “roses” to thrive. Without capitalist hoarding, we could live in a world with more beauty and leisure time for all and the space to breathe and care for each other the way we deserve.

DSA's logo is a twist on the traditional socialist fist and rose. Two hands, black and white, clasp as they hold a red rose, symbolizing that multiracial solidarity is the only way to overcome the divide-and-conquer tactics used by the capitalist class to keep us fighting each other instead of uniting and using our true power.

Third, we always stop and ask ourselves, “What can we learn from this experience?” Meeting to debrief an action or campaign keeps us honest about whether we've actually won something and built more power, and if not, why not? Doing it collectively means we democratize the skill of strategic and critical thinking.

Finally, we close our national convention every two years by singing “The Internationale,” with fists in the

air. We adapt to different economic, political, and cultural realities than were faced by our forebears, but we are a global working class, and we are rooted in a long history of international worker solidarity and struggle. I look forward to singing alongside delegates at this summer's convention! 🌹

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FROM THE NATIONAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE

COUNTDOWN TO CONVENTION 2023

BY KRISTIAN HERNANDEZ

There are only a few months left until comrades from all over the country will come together in Chicago for our 2023 National Convention. From August 4-6, we'll debate, discuss, and vote on consequential political decisions for our organization.

Convention Dates —————
Early bird registration opens May 13 / Delegate elections continue through June 6

As a member who joined in 2016, this will be my fourth and our biggest convention yet. If you're undecided as to whether or not to run for delegate in your chapter, I encourage you to go for it! It's empowering to take part in the decision-making that orients DSA. Meeting comrades in person, after months of virtual collaboration, is incredibly fortifying. We'll have time to learn from each other and debrief about past and ongoing campaigns and organizing efforts.

We'll hear both from speakers fighting for socialism around the globe and

those strengthening our movement for socialism here at home. Most importantly, you'll leave with a sense of our national power and the work we have to do going forward. The size

of the crises we aim to fight against demands a mass organization.

Together we have all built DSA into one of the largest socialist organizations in decades, an organization that's independent, democratic, member-driven, and member-funded. The organization we love requires our time, care, and energy to keep alive the vision we fight for. We look forward to seeing many of you in Chicago this August! 🌹

KRISTIAN HERNANDEZ is chair of the National Political Committee.



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