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Abstract

This review essay discusses three recent books on the Green New Deal (GND), written, respectively, by Naomi Klein, Jeremy Rifkin, and Kate Aronoff and a few other democratic socialists. It argues that the New Deal offers a better model of how to envision the change required for deep carbonization than the vision of war mobilization after Pearl Harbor since it emphasizes not only the need for massive introduction of green technology but also the importance of broad social change constituting a just transition. The essay argues that the GND should be placed in a global context so that the adoption of the GND in the Global North would lead to much greater funding of green developments in the less industrialized countries of the Global South.

The Green New Deal: Promise and Limitations

Harry van der Linden

Under Discussion:

Kate Aronoff, Alyssa Battistoni, Daniel Aldana Cohen, and Thea Riofrancos,

A Planet to Win: Why We Need a Green New Deal. New York: Verso, 2019.

Pp. 194, \$19.95, paperback. ISBN 978-1-78873-831-6

Naomi Klein, *On Fire: The (Burning) Case for a Green New Deal*. New York: Simon
& Schuster, 2019. Pp. 309, hardcover, \$27.00. ISBN 978-1-9821-2991-0

Jeremy Rifkin, *The Green New Deal: Why the Fossil Fuel Civilization Will Collapse by 2028, and the Bold Economic Plan to Save Life on Earth*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2019. Pp. 290, \$27.99, hardcover. ISBN 978-1-250-25320-0

How can we imagine and conceptualize an effective response to the threat of disastrous climate change, one that would limit average global temperature increase to 1.5°C, and most definitely to 2 °C, above pre-industrial levels? A 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report maintains that an average global temperature increase of 1.5°C would have much less severe negative impacts than an increase of 2.0°C (beyond which climate change would gradually become catastrophic). The report also argues that this target of 1.5°C requires that global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions be reduced by 45% by 2030 (as compared to 2010 levels) and reach net zero by 2050.¹ So the question becomes: how can we practically envision how the United States (and other high emission countries) might come to adopt a very steep reduction in GHG emissions within 10 years and move toward complete decarbonization soon thereafter? Two visions have been foregrounded in recent years. The first one is that we should see combatting climate change as similar to waging war, notably, as analogous to the total mobilization of American society and industry in the Second World War in its contribution to the victory over fascism. The second, more currently prevailing, view is that we should see effective climate change mitigation as requiring a Green New Deal (GND) similar to the social and economic reconstruction of the New Deal aimed at overcoming the devastations of the economic collapse of 1929-33.

Bill McKibben argues for the war mobilization vision in a 2016 essay. He writes: “We’re under attack from climate change.... World War III is well and truly underway. And we are losing.... Carbon and methane are seizing physical territory, sowing havoc and panic, racking up casualties, and even destabilizing governments.... It’s not that global warming is *like* a world war. It *is* a world war.” He adds: “The question is, will we fight back? And if we do, can we

¹ See, IPCC, *Global Warming of 1.5°C*. The limit of 2°C increase in average global temperature requires 25% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2070.

actually defeat an enemy as powerful and inexorable as the laws of physics?”² For McKibben, we will only win the climate-change world war if the people mobilize as the American people did in response to fascism after Pearl Harbor. That involved a rapid and massive development of weapons industries; now we should respond by immediately creating on a massive scale solar panels and wind turbines.

The war analogy has some merit by signaling the great disruption of impending climate change and by stressing the urgency of addressing it through massive collective action. However, viewing “carbon and methane” as an enemy obscures the anthropogenic and political character of climate change and neglects the differences between the psychological and physical impacts of military attacks and those of climate change. Indeed, McKibben seems to indirectly acknowledge this latter point when he notes that one problem with the war on climate change is that there is no Pearl Harbor moment that might mobilize the people to fight in this war. At any rate, the more prevalent idea is not to claim explicitly that climate change is like a war, but only to argue that we need a war-like mobilization, as in World War II, to prevent catastrophe.³ One problem with this approach is that it emphasizes the massive development and introduction of green technologies as pivotal to avoiding climate catastrophe and neglects the broader issue of how capitalism’s focus on growth, profit maximization, and consumerism undermines effective

² McKibben, “A World at War.” I draw in this paragraph and the next one from my “Climate Change Mitigation and the U.N. Security Council,” 132-33. I discuss here also how war contributes to global warming, making McKibben’s notion of war against global warming a bit ironic.

³ Woodworth and Griffin, in *Unprecedented Climate Mobilization*, model their call for total climate change mobilization on the war mobilization against Japan and Germany (26-53) and also cite similar calls made in 2016 by Bernie Sanders, Jill Stein, and the Democratic Party Platform (39-41). A very recent appeal to the war mobilization model only is to be found in Drum, “We Need a Massive Climate War Effort,” emphasizing the need for green R&D.

climate change mitigation.⁴ Further, the war mobilization vision ignores the importance of ensuring that the transition toward a greener society is just, especially for people of marginalized and frontline communities. And this approach is too state-centered in terms of agency and fails to acknowledge that nationalism must be left behind. Averting climate catastrophe requires international solidarity and cooperation, including broad global support for the funding of green technology and adaptation measures in poorer economies.

So while it is plausible to cite the New Deal as an inspiration for how (American) society can and should embrace a deep decarbonization, it seems mistaken for proponents of the GND (including some of the authors addressed here) to adopt the war mobilization model as well.⁵ Let me discuss first some merits of the New Deal model, and address later a few weaknesses. Naomi Klein suggests a first strength in her Foreword to *A Planet to Win*: “[T]he original New Deal was rife with failings and exclusions. But it remains a useful touchstone for showing how every sector of life, from forestry to education to the arts to housing to electrification, can be transformed under the umbrella of a single, society-wide mission” (xiii). In other words, as a successful program for a green society, the GND, like the New Deal, must transform all aspects of society (industry, jobs, housing, transportation, recreation, etc.), while leaving behind the social shortcomings of the New Deal – notably, the exclusion or segregation of marginalized

⁴ Admittedly, there were changes in consumption for the sake of the war mobilization, but they were viewed as temporary and not meant to permanently modify and improve the social order. These changes were also promoted as a form of sacrifice and the language of sacrifice seems misguided with regard to transformations in consumption patterns necessary for the sake of climate change mitigation.

⁵ See Aronoff et al., *A Planet to Win*, 5, 22, 78-80 (where they approvingly cite McKibben’s “A World at War”). Even the Green New Deal resolution (see note 8, below) refers to the mobilization in WW II. Klein offers some solid arguments in support of the New Deal as inspiration for the GND, but nonetheless suggests in *On Fire* with regard to the New Deal and war mobilization models, and a third model of a Marshall Plan for averting climate disaster, that each has strengths and weaknesses and is “useful to study and invoke” (37). Bernie Sanders also appeals to the war mobilization in his current GND proposal. See Sanders, “The Green New Deal.”

groups. Moreover, like the New Deal, the GND inspires collective action through the scope of its aims. Klein continues: “[T]he Green New Deal has the capacity to mobilize a truly intersectional mass movement behind it – not despite its sweeping ambition, but precisely because of it.” And, unlike the war mobilization model, the GND is not inherently exclusionary: by the logic of its aims it calls for green social transformation everywhere.

In *On Fire*, Klein covers the GND in her introduction, epilogue, and two essays; the volume also includes 14 (modified) previously published articles and public talks from 2010 to 2018 on numerous political aspects of climate change. The GND essays discuss two other features of the New Deal that make it a relevant model. First, just as “left militancy” was pivotal in creating the progressive programs of the New Deal, so now the left must continue to push the GND in more radical directions (262-64). Second, the art projects of the New Deal, with ten thousands of artists involved, depicted both harsh reality and transformative utopian visions; likewise the GND, without denying our precarious situation, needs hopeful and action-inspiring art in a time of Hollywood favoring depictions of the future as social apocalypse (275-78).⁶ In *A Planet to Win*, Aronoff et al. add that the New Deal sets a model for creating more green and recreational spaces within our cities, and the Civilian Conservation Corps illustrates how to proceed with conservation, ecosystem restoration, and creating access to nature (84-86; 134-35). More broadly, Klein thinks that reference to past progressive struggles and events such as the New Deal reminds us that “[w]e are part of a long and complex collective story, one in which human beings are ... a work in progress, capable of deep change” (279).

The idea of a “Green New Deal” has been articulated in various ways for more than a decade: Thomas L. Friedman might be the first one who called for a Green New Deal in a *New York Times* column in 2007; a group of British environmentalists drafted a GND in 2008; soon the notion was picked up and given different content by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the German Green Party, and more recently by the US Green Party (see Rifkin, 47-50).⁷ The GND came to the mainstream in the United States in late 2018 with its

⁶ Klein offers the short film *Message from the Future* as an example of inspiring GND art.

⁷ See also Pettifor, *The Case for the Green New Deal*, 1-5. Pettifor was a member of the British GND group and discusses differences between the British proposal and the recent American version of the GND. The main difference between the two is the focus of the first half of her

promotion by the Sunrise Movement, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and other progressive Democratic Party politicians. Representative Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Ed Markey introduced the GND as a joint resolution into the House and Senate in February 2019; the Senate promptly rejected it, and House action has been limited to referrals to (sub) committees.⁸

The basic features of the GND articulated in the House resolution are the following: The United States, thanks to its advanced technology, can play “a leading role” in the reduction of GHG emissions and should do so because it has disproportionately contributed to the total amount of GHG in the atmosphere. Thus the United States should exceed the global requirements for keeping global warming within 1.5°C and adopt a 10 year mobilization plan toward net zero GHG emissions. More specifically, this plan requires that all power demand be met through renewable zero-emissions sources, and that industry and manufacturing be decarbonized “as much as technologically feasible.” Infrastructure, including power grids, and housing must be upgraded to maximize green energy efficiency, and the transportation sector must turn to net-zero vehicles, affordable public transit, and high-speed rail. For the sake of a just and feasible transition, but also as goals in their own right, the GND mobilization must provide economic security, including the creation of millions of “high-wage jobs,” paid family and medical leave, and retirement security; labor rights and protections; healthcare for all; housing security; food security, and clean air and water; accessible education and training, including higher education; and a pollution-free environment and recreational access to nature. The GND should also work to reduce the impact of climate change on especially vulnerable frontline communities, and make the United States “the international leader on climate action,” promoting international exchange of green technology and expertise and “help[ing] other countries achieve a Green New Deal.” Last, the adoption and elaboration of the GND (for which no target date is set) must proceed on basis of consultation and collaboration with many groups

book: The British version emphasized the importance “for society to regain public authority over the national and international monetary system” (15). Like Aronoff et al., Pettifor argues for a more radical GND than the one introduced in Congress.

⁸ See House Resolution 109 (introduced into the Senate as Senate Resolution 59). Nonetheless, around 100 representatives and a dozen senators have cosponsored the resolution (as of March, 2020) and hundreds of civil society groups have expressed support.

in society (academia, business, unions, civil society organizations) and commit to investments that provide the public with “appropriate ownership stakes,” benefit marginalized communities and family farms, and ensure a “commercial environment free from unfair competition and domination by domestic or international monopolies.”

Before introducing the GND resolution in Congress, Ocasio-Cortez had unsuccessfully called for a bipartisan Select Committee for a Green New Deal with the authority to develop a detailed GND plan (on basis of wide input) and draft legislation by early 2020.⁹ The strategy now is to fight for a Democratic Congress and White House in the 2020 elections and then push with the help of a massive green movement for the adoption of the GND. How, when, and by whom policy details will be elaborated is not clear. But what is clear is that the fossil fuel industry will fight this agenda. According to Rifkin’s *The Green New Deal*, however, such resistance is doomed to failure since market forces will lead to the collapse of the fossil fuel industry.

Rifkin’s book barely addresses the GND as proposed in Congress; instead, he updates his idea of the “Third Industrial Revolution” as a green revolution and apparently assumes that this covers the main features of the GND. The First Industrial Revolution was centered on coal and technologies such as rail and steam-powered printing; the Second Industrial Revolution came with cheap oil, internal combustion vehicles, the highway system, centralized electricity generation, radio and television. The Third Industrial Revolution centers on the internet, renewable energy, and internet-mediated technology, including autonomous and shared electric vehicles, energy efficient homes monitored by sensors, and an electric grid fed by decentralized solar and wind energy production. Rifkin discusses green developments in the energy consumption of the internet (52-55), electricity production (55-73), transportation (74-85), the building sector (85-92), and the often neglected agriculture and food sector (95-99). These sectors make up a large part of total GHG emissions in the United States, but the decoupling from fossil fuel in each of them is either moderately slow (in the case of electricity production)

⁹ See Ocasio-Cortez, “Draft Text.” House Democrats created instead a Climate Crisis committee without a GND mandate in January 2019.

or painfully slow (as with transportation).¹⁰ Rifkin, however, thinks that soon these green developments will greatly accelerate. He predicts that we will see the beginning of the end of the “fossil fuel civilization” by 2028, perhaps even several years sooner (102-35; 222). The “creative destructiveness” of the market will bring about this profound transformation: Solar and wind are increasingly cheaper than gas and oil, and the price of electricity storage is rapidly declining. Thus, the market share of solar and wind will continue to grow – solar and wind supplied 6 % of global electricity in 2017 (111) – and lead to an absolute and accelerating decline in the use of fossil fuels no later than by 2028. Rifkin writes: “Let’s be clear that this Great Disruption is occurring, in large part, because the marketplace is speaking” (9). To be sure, divestment decisions by global pension funds, cities, universities, and the like, may hasten the process, but these decisions are not exclusively moral in character and significantly depend on considerations of financial risk and profit (139-65). And so, “with this disruption, the market is a guardian angel looking over humanity” (222).

Rifkin’s view about the imminent collapse of the fossil fuel industry assumes that this industry cannot successfully obstruct or delay its own demise. Rifkin recognizes the problem of huge “stranded assets” as a motivator to keep the fossil fuels burning and notes that quite a few countries, including very poor countries, are dependent on fossil fuel revenues (131), but he does not explain why flooding the market with cheap oil and gas would not delay the dominance of solar and wind. Moreover, oil and gas rich states may make it very costly both politically and economically for their own societies to transition to renewables. It may also be noted that oil companies seek to extend their dominance by promoting carbon capture and sequestration (including injecting CO₂ in aging oilfields),¹¹ and economic growth may continue to absorb much of the potential GHG emission reduction of renewables. In short, Rifkin’s trust in the market is misguided, and radical action that goes beyond small steps like ending fuel subsidies and imposing a modest carbon tax seems necessary. The GND resolution is silent with regard to any measures against fossil fuel companies, but Aronoff et al. argue that it may indeed be

¹⁰ Transportation produces 29% of American GHG emissions, electricity 28%, the building sector 12%, and agriculture 9% (figures for 2017). Industry produces the final 22% of the emissions. See EPA, “Sources.”

¹¹ See Ball, “Big Oil’s Hail Mary.”

necessary to bring these companies under public ownership (by buying the majority of their shares) and then rapidly diminish their output (54-55).¹² This would also facilitate the planning of green employment for “stranded” fossil fuel workers. Additionally, we should consider prosecuting fossil fuel executives for crimes against humanity (60-63).

Rifkin fails to discuss the industrial sector and its GHG emissions, as if it were not necessary to produce solar panels, wind turbines, efficient home appliances, green buildings materials, electric cars, storage batteries, etc. The direct emissions of the industrial sector counts for 22% of the GHG in the United States, including fossil fuel burning and emissions released by chemical reactions; indirect emissions through the use of electric power add about 7%. Extractions of materials for green technology involve GHG emissions and other environmental damage. Aronoff et al. discuss in some detail the environmental and social repercussions of lithium mining in Chile, including water pollution, huge water use (since lithium is found in brine underneath salt flats), diminished biodiversity, and violated Indigenous territorial rights (146-53). Similar concerns apply to other rare earth metals used in batteries, solar panels, and wind turbines. For example, the Democratic Republic of Congo is the largest supplier of cobalt (a key component of electric car batteries) and its mines use child labor on a large scale. The challenge is how to avoid in the greening of American society what has been called “eco-coloniality” or the “deepening [of] extractivism in the name of preventing climate change” (151). Some suggestions for how to “decolonize renewable energy” are improved extraction

¹² How to enforce reduced use of fossil fuel is a central topic of Cox, *The Green New Deal and Beyond*. This book offers a valuable contribution to the radical analysis of the GND, but it appeared after the completion of this review essay. Cox argues that we should pursue “an annual mandatory reduction in the supply of each fuel” so that “[i]f the target is, say, to emancipate ourselves from fossil fuels within twenty years, then oil, natural gas, and coal extraction will each have to be reduced by 5 percent of the amount that was extracted in the year before the reduction begins” (97). On his account, such a schema would require a nationalization of fossil fuel industries (101), a transitioning toward a low energy economy (84), rationing of electricity use (103), and reduced consumption of the top one-third income earners (109). As later will become clear, I share Cox’s general view that the GND offers an implausible picture of how quickly and effectively renewables can lead to deep decarbonization.

technology, strengthening local autonomy (at extraction sites) through international solidarity networks, and reducing demand through improved recycling, repairing things (rather than throwing them away), and reducing consumption (153-63). Aronoff et al. add that the resources for building a decarbonized world must be shared and, therefore, “we should be flexible about how much clean energy infrastructure we ultimately build here in the United States. We’re not the only ones making the decisions” (159).

Should we not also be flexible about how fast we try to move toward 100% renewable energy production and net zero emissions? Whether it is technologically feasible to reach these goals within 10 years (without drastic reductions and interruptions in consumption and economic activity), as the GND resolution demands, is contested, especially if one would exclude nuclear power and carbon capture technology. The GND resolution is silent on these exclusions, while Aronoff et al. want to keep safe existing nuclear power plants and are skeptical about industrial carbon capture (28). But aside from technological feasibility, we must ask if the ten-year framework is in fact economically, socially, and environmentally defensible. Both Klein (285-86) and Aronoff et al. (19) argue that asserting the short timeframe is needed to prevent procrastination and to avoid the risks of serious delay, but they do not address the costs of a very rapid transition. The short timeframe increases the danger of maintaining “eco-coloniality” and leaves us with the environmental and economic costs of having to dispose of countless still functional fossil-fuel cars (only 2% of currently newly purchased cars are electric and the average lifespan of combustion engine cars is at least 13 years) and fossil-fuel home appliances, including heating and cooling. Similar concerns can be raised with regard to commercial trucks and heating and cooling in commercial buildings. Rapid and large-scale new construction might come with significant GHG emissions caused by the production of cement, the scope of which will depend on how soon the production will move toward becoming carbon neutral.¹³ Also, the

¹³ Currently cement production causes as much as 8% of global CO₂ emissions. Aronoff et al. provide no timeline, but they think that present production can quickly become carbon neutral and next switch to carbon-absorbing concrete (122-23). A more somber assessment is offered by the Transition Cement Initiative, a collaboration of European research institutes dedicated to decarbonizing cement. It is noted on their home page that GHG emissions in the industry have not decreased in the last decade and that in order to “escape the current mitigation deadlock,

GND seems to demand participatory planning and impact studies of infrastructure changes, such as the introduction of extensive public transit and high-speed rail, and these processes might need to be cut short under the GND mobilization plan.

Accordingly, the GND would be stronger if it would adhere to the two following guidelines. First, more emphasis should be placed on the proposal of Aronoff et al. to raise taxes on wealth, inheritance, and high incomes so as to reduce luxury spending: not surprisingly, the wealthiest households have by far the largest carbon footprints (25; see also Klein, 265). Thus GHG emissions can be reduced without incurring all the various costs of rapidly building a green economy. The New Deal aimed at economic growth, while the GND should (but does not) explicitly reject this focus. Relatedly, the GND proposes many new jobs with very low or zero carbon footprints, such as in healthcare, childcare, and education, and their implementation should not be delayed but possibly be foregrounded. Second, extending the GND timeframe can be justified on environmental, economic, and social grounds provided that this would not slow down – or even would lead to more rapid – decarbonization consistent with the 1.5°C limit in a global perspective.¹⁴ This condition can be met by sharply increasing the funding of green

efforts to develop breakthrough technologies must be intensified significantly.” See Cement Transition Industry, homepage.

¹⁴ Sanders’s GND proposal somewhat accords with this guideline. His GND argues for 100% renewable energy by 2030 but delays full decarbonization until 2050, leaving the United States with a 71% reduction in GHG emissions in 2030 (as compared to 2017 levels) rather than with full decarbonization as demanded by the GND resolution. To offset this, Sanders’s GND commits \$ 200 billion toward the Green Climate Fund (established by the UNFCCC) to assist less industrialized countries of the Global South to reduce emissions by 36% in 2030. See Sanders, “The Green New Deal.” This proposal is on the right track, but from a global perspective of seeking decarbonization it seems better, for example, to lower Sanders’s proposal of \$681 billion in grants for low or moderate income families and small businesses to get their old cars off the road (trade them in for American-made electric vehicles) and shift considerably more funds to the Green Climate Fund. What American policy would be optimal overall in reducing global emissions should ultimately be a matter of globally negotiated targets and timelines, justice considerations, and efficiency calculations made by experts in various fields.

developments in less industrialized countries of the Global South; these can often bypass rather than replace fossil-fuel based investments. Such developments might also be realizable on a smaller scale and so have the added benefit of comparatively lower GHG emissions in their production. To be sure, both Aronoff et al. (163) and the GND resolution also support funding climate change mitigation in the Global South, but my argument is that this should receive more emphasis in light of the costs of very rapidly discarding all assets with a considerable GHG footprint. This is not to deny that the United States and other high industrial countries have a special responsibility to address climate change in light of their disproportionate cumulative GHG emissions, leaving less room for future emissions by countries from the Global South. But one way of discharging this responsibility is to greatly increase the funding of green developments in the Global South. The duty can be further discharged by assisting the Global South in its climate change adaptation measures.

Rifkin holds that the GND can be realized within a “new social capitalism” (166). This involves “socially responsible investing” by private companies, federal and local government, and private and public pension funds. “Flipping Marx,” Rifkin argues that the tens of millions of participants in pension funds in the United States form “an army of little capitalists” with the potential to bring about the infrastructure of the Third Industrial Revolution (140-42). It will be a somewhat decentralized capitalism since Rifkin envisions millions of individuals and small businesses owning their own solar panels, wind turbines, and batteries that feed into the grid (181). This decentralization is another important way in which the New Deal and the GND differ (181; see also Klein, 39). The grid itself, and more broadly the digital infrastructure, will be publicly owned and controlled but be managed by private companies that can make profits as long as they meet performance standards (196-205). Rifkin is concerned with the dangers of “surveillance capitalism,” and thinks that this type of corporate-public partnership will avoid these dangers in the development of digitized homes, transportation, and cities (41).¹⁵

¹⁵ Rifkin seems to have held in his earlier work that the Third Industrial Revolution partly or even fully would leave behind capitalism. See Mann, “Toward A Postcapitalist Energy Commons and Beyond,” 637-41. She argues that Rifkin is guided by an “uncritical optimism” about how new forms of technology might lead to non-capitalist relations, neglecting the crucial role of collective action. On my account, his optimism about the market forcing the end of the

The GND resolution quite generally demands that the green economy move toward more shared benefits and ownership, and Rifkin's "social capitalism" seems compatible with the GND in this regard. Aronoff et al. are more critical of the idea that a true green economy can be realized within capitalism. On their account, the two are in the final instance irreconcilable, but since the climate crisis must be addressed sooner than it will take to overthrow capitalism and realize socialism, we should try to make the GND as radical as possible (5).¹⁶ Crucially, they maintain that "[a]n *effective* Green New Deal is also a *radical* Green New Deal" (18). It is a GND that aims to motivate the 99 percent and to make the fundamental changes needed to avert climate catastrophe (18). The radical GND goes beyond the GND resolution in its policy details and proposes more far-reaching institutional change. We have already seen that the radical GND plans to cut off fossil fuel at the supply side (and not just at the demand side by such measures as a carbon tax and ending subsidies) by nationalizing the fossil fuel industry and then rapidly curtailing its production. And we have noted that the radical GND also places more emphasis on the international aspects of creating a carbon neutral economy. Aronoff et al. argue further that we should move toward a "public national grid," opposing "solar separatism" of the affluent and "geographically lucky" (108). Lastly, a radical GND will shorten the workweek with the benefit of a reduced carbon footprint (89-90) and aims generally for less consumption and reduced economic growth once the green revolution has been executed. These are steps that require moving beyond capitalism (30).

In addition to the fossil-fuel industry, the military presents a serious obstacle to the implementation of the GND, but this problem is only marginally addressed in Klein (35) and

fossil-fuel industry is uncritical in a similar fashion. Mann also discusses Rifkin's view that new technologies will hugely reduce production costs in society. Perhaps this explains his failure to discuss the GHG emissions of the industrial sector.

¹⁶ *A Planet to Win* is promoted by the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), and its authors have published on the climate crisis in left magazines such as *In These Times*, *Jacobin*, *Dissent*, and *The Nation*. Klein also argues in *On Fire* that capitalism and the green economy are incompatible (see, for example, the essay "Capitalism versus the Climate"), but she does not discuss here the GND from this angle. Neither Klein nor Aronoff et al. explain in any detail how a socialist mode of production might be conducive to averting the climate crisis.

Aronoff et al. (29). In fact the military is a great consumer of fossil fuels. Further, the military budget comprises more than 50% of discretionary federal spending, exhausting funds needed for the GND. Militarized research and development similarly crowds out green research and development. The military's history of resource interventions suggests another obstacle to a radical GND focused on international solidarity and resource autonomy.¹⁷ Add to these obstacles the impact of right-wing denialism, the rise of eco-fascism [discussed by Klein (40-49)], and the preference of many Democratic politicians for weak green proposals [rejected by Aronoff et al. as a faux GND (16-17)], and it becomes clear that the political challenges facing implementation of the GND are enormous.¹⁸ Aronoff et al. recognize the importance of building broad coalitions for the GND, stress the importance of union support (92-100), and discuss the need for climate strikes (175). But they also appeal to a facile left populism, suggesting that the people will come to recognize that the GND is in the interest of everyone but a very small group of powerful and rich people (18, 183). While they plausibly argue that politics as usual in the Global North will lead to eco-apartheid with border walls favored above green investments and

¹⁷ In *All Hell Breaking Loose*, Michael Klare discusses how the American military is preparing for climate conflict, seeks to reduce its carbon footprint, and takes adaptation measures to maintain its operability. Surprisingly, he does not address how this “greening” of the military still leaves the institution as mostly an obstacle to effective climate change mitigation.

¹⁸ This essay was written during the first month of the coronavirus lockdown in California and finalized during the first steps of its phasing-out. The long-term impact of this crisis on the political future of the GND is hard to assess since the health crisis itself is in flux. The huge stimulus and relief programs adopted by Congress may crowd out future financial support for the GND. Congress ignored green demands, including a proposal to rebuild the economy more along the lines of the GND rather than seeking a recovery of our fossil fuel economy. See “Green Stimulus: An Open Letter to Congress.” Thea Riofrancos, coauthor of *A Planet to Win*, was one of the 11 authors of the letter. Finally, the coronavirus pandemic shows how unprepared American society is for future climate disasters, but on a more encouraging note the pandemic may have some “climate friendly” impacts, such as an increase in remote work, a reduced work week, and greater recognition of the importance of public institutions and investments for human well-being.

the exclusion of millions of climate refugees (180-83), they oversimplify our possible futures and the struggle for climate justice by paraphrasing Karl Marx's famous claim about the proletariat: "The future is coming at us fast -- we still have the chance to shape it. We have nothing to lose, and a planet to win" (34).

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