

Climate & Capitalism

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Germany, Goldewin

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(Animal Climate Action)

Three questions

1. Climate change: social or conservation issue?
2. Why does capitalism not solve the climate crisis?
3. What can the Climate Justice Movement possibly achieve?

Two preliminaries

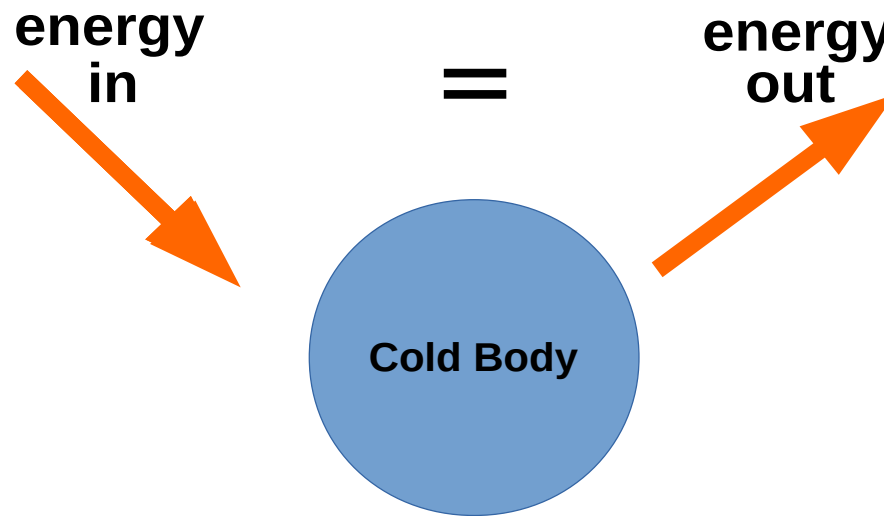
- 1.The science of man-made climate change
- 2.History of climate politics

More relevant questions:

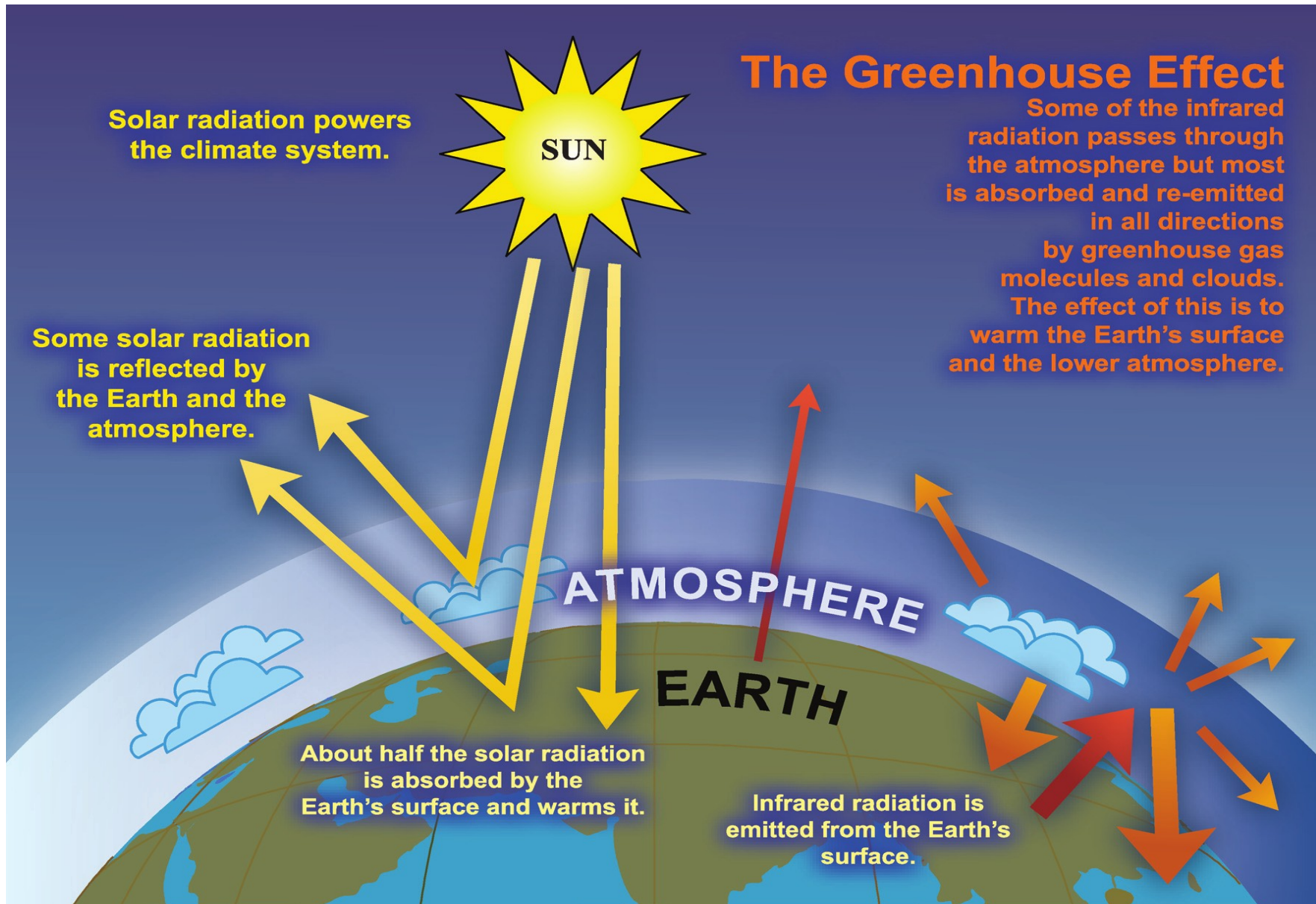
?

The science of climate change

Basic thermodynamics



Greenhouse effect



Greenhouse gases

Source*

Coal
25%

11.4%

5.0%

3.8%

3.7%

Natural Gas
19%

7.7%

4.4%

2.4%

3.7%

3.5%

Oil
21%

13.5%

Waste
0.4%

6.3%

5.6%

4.9%

14.7%

2.9%

Direct
emissions
34.6%

Sector

Industry
29%

Non-metallic minerals 6.0%

Iron and steel 4.8%

Chemical and petrochemical 4.3%

Non-ferrous metals 1.4%

Food and tobacco 1.1%

Paper, pulp and printing 1.0%

Other industries 10.5%

Residential Buildings
11%

Commercial/Public Buildings & Services
7%

Transport
15%

Road 10.5%

Aviation 1.5%

Others 2.6%

Agriculture
7%

Livestock and manure 5.5%

Agricultural Energy Use 1.4%

Energy Supply
13%

Energy industry own use & losses 8.3%

Coal Mining 1.8%

Oil and gas extraction, refining and processing 3.1%

Land Use
Change
15%

Agricultural soils 4.4%

Waste 3%

Deforestation/Afforestation and Land Use CO₂ 10.3%

Landfills 1.3%

Waste water & others 1.6%

Greenhouse gas

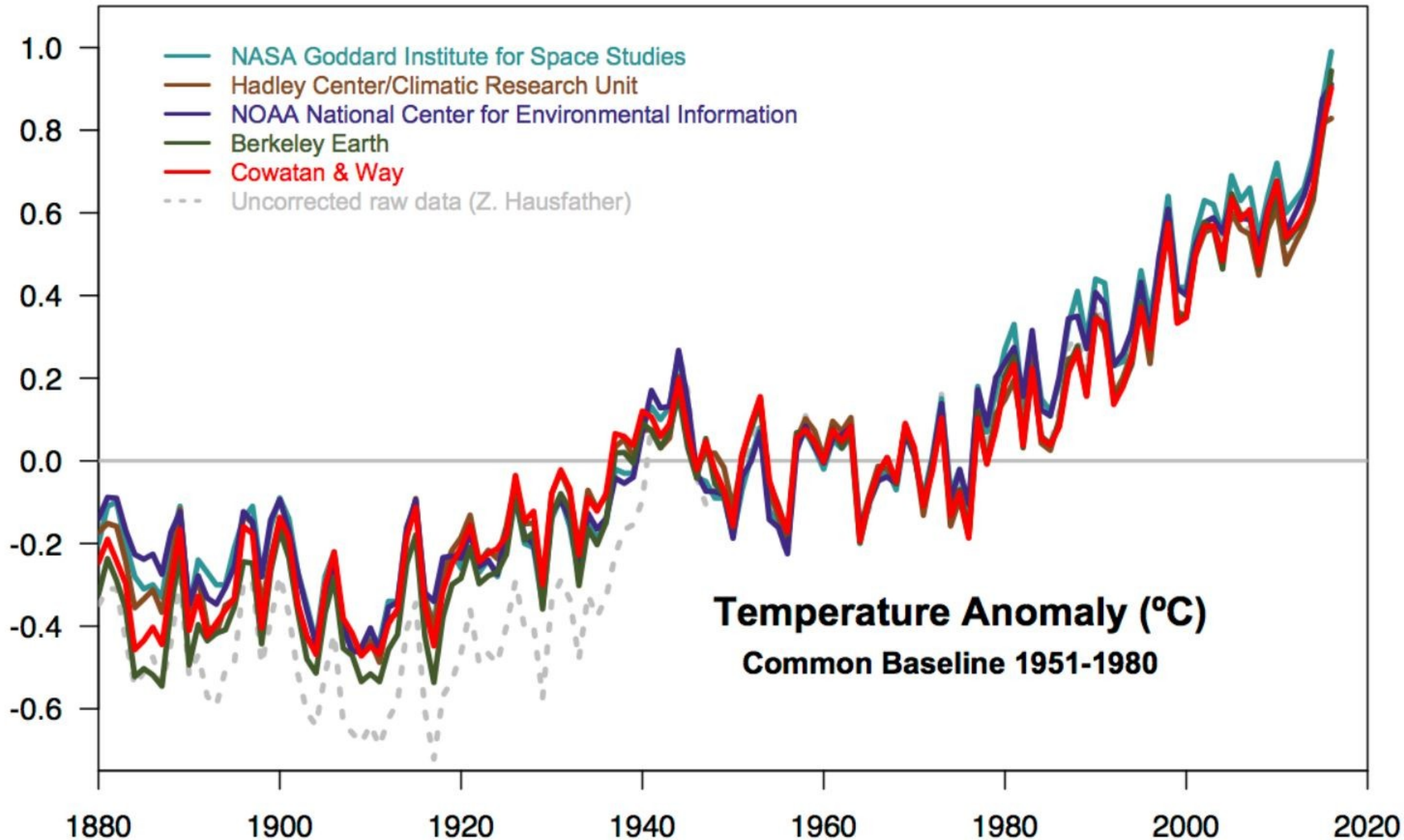
CO₂
76%

CH₄
15%

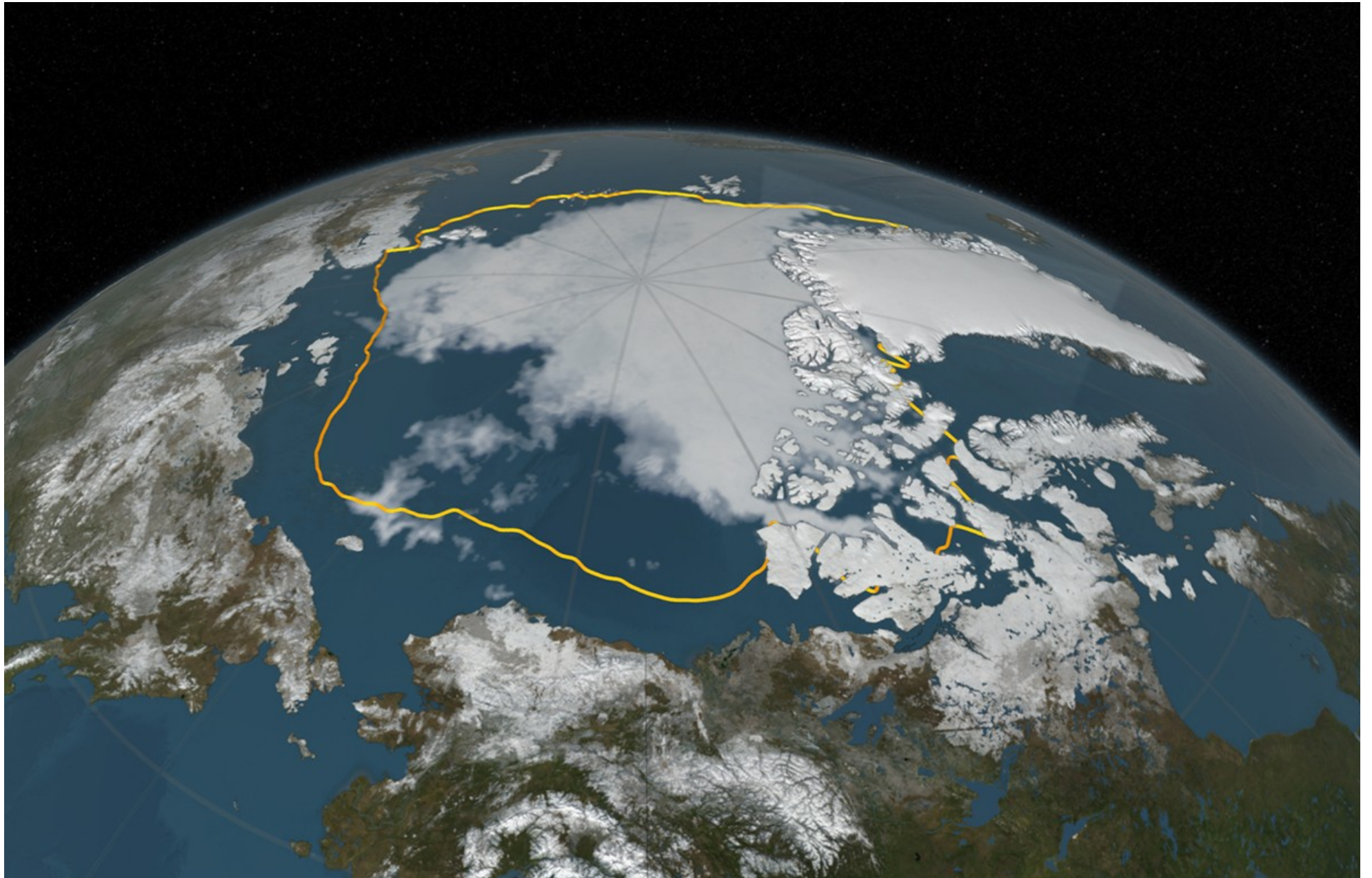
N₂O
7%

HFCs & PFCs
2%

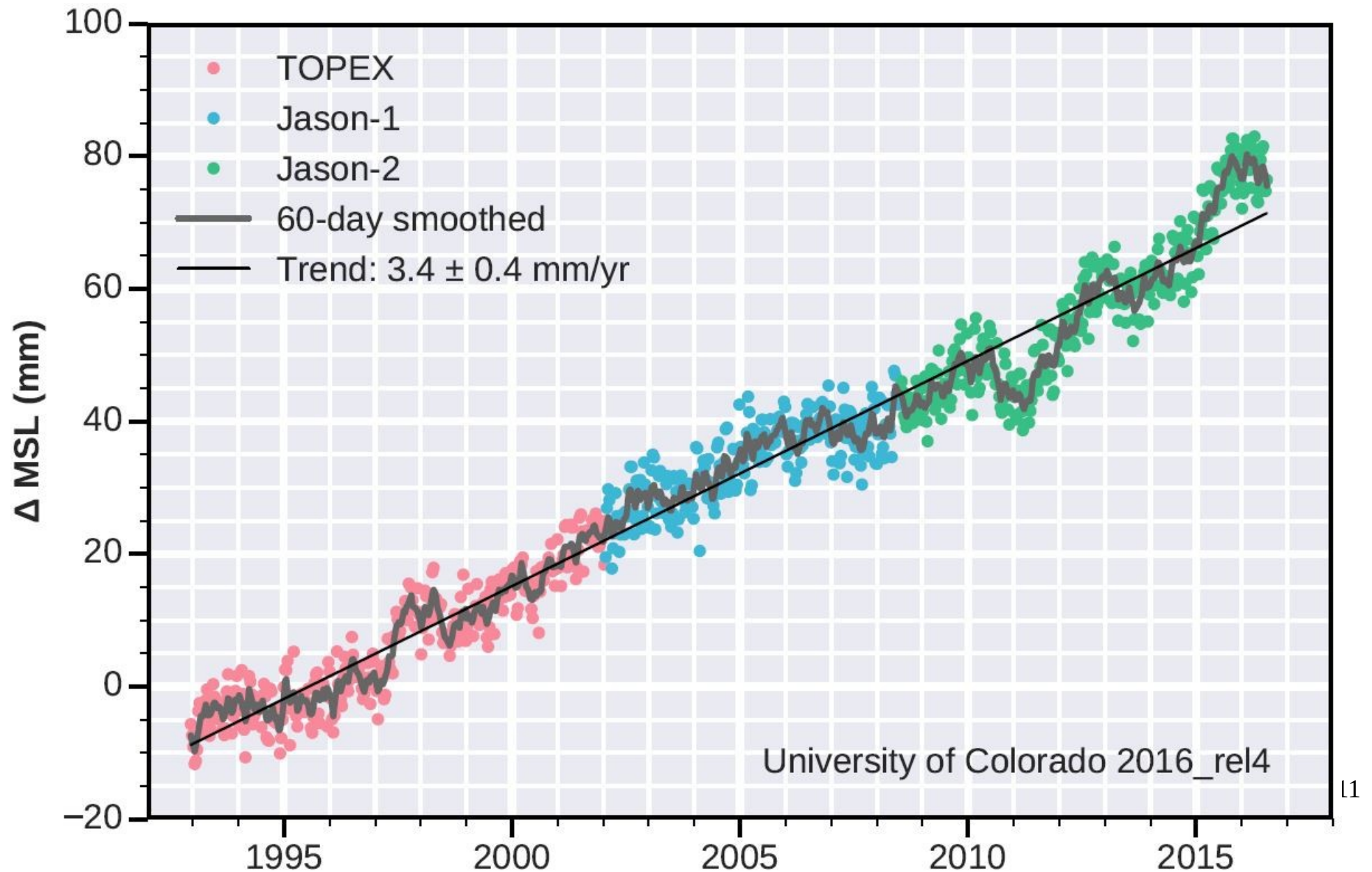
Effects on mean temperature



Effects on arctic sea



Effects on sea level



Predictions

- Hotter summers (bad for warm regions)
- Increase of unpredictable weather extremes
- Draughts and water scarcity regions
- Floods

Consequences for human life

- Cumulative stress for agricultural systems
- Areas become uninhabitable
- Paradox: Coping with Consequences of Climate Change requires more energy which might in turn accelerate Climate Change

History of climate politics

History of climate politics

19th century

- Greenhouse effect and global warming hypothesized by scientists
- Climate Science still in its beginnings

History of climate politics

Since 1900

- Continuously growing knowledge about global climate and Greenhouse Effect.

Since 1970

- Environment becomes a topic for The Left and enters governmental bodies

History of climate politics

1972 Club of Rome *Limits to Growth*

- *Ecology from above*

1979 1st *World Climate Conference* in Geneva

- organized by the *World Meteorological Organization*
- basically scientific conference
- initiates the whole UN climate agenda

History of climate politics

1985 *Advisory Group on Greenhouse Gases*

- *International Council of Scientific Unions, the United Nations Environment Programm and the World Meteorological Organization*
- *Later replaced by IPCC*

History of climate politics

1988 1st IPCC Session in Geneva

- The U.S. government was the main force in forming the IPCC as an autonomous intergovernmental body in which *scientists took part both as experts on the science and as official representatives of their governments.*

(wikipedia)

- IPCC statements required consensus

History of climate politics

1992 *Rio-Conference*

- United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)
- Groundbreaking agreements concerning environmental protection achieved (for instance protection of biodiversity and forests).
- No satisfactory practical effects, though

History of climate politics

1995 COP1 in Berlin

1997 COP3 in Kyoto

- “Kyoto-Protocol” with binding agreements wrt. GG-emissions.
- US and Kanada abstain.
- In retrospect, emission targets far too weak.

History of climate politics

2006 First *Climate Camp* in North Yorkshire

- in the vicinity of a power plant
- 38 arrests

2007 *Climate Justice Now!* founded

- During COP13 in Bali

Ever since growing grassroot & NGO activism

History of climate politics

2009 COP15 Copenhagen (“Joke'nhagen”)

- Negotiations fail without results
- Massive international grassroots mobilization (around 100.000 protesters)
- Direct actions (*Reclaim Power*)
- Massive police violence, mass protests

History of climate politics

2013 *COP17 Warsaw*

- NGOs leave conference as a sign of protest

2014 Peoples Climate March

- NGO-initiated but used by local groups
- 600.000 people, 156 countries

History of climate politics

2015 COP21 Paris

- “*Paris-agreement*” (keep GW \ll 2)
- positive response by the scientific community
- negative response by civil society
- Massive international grassroots activism
- About 600.000 protesters despite a *ban on public gatherings*.

History of climate politics

2016 Ende Gelände, Germany

- 3500-4000 activists
- Mass civil disobedience
- Directly targets coal industry
- Power plant output down to 25%
- About 1000 arrests
- In the heart of Europe

Three questions

1. Climate change: social or conservation issue?

social or conservation issue?

Consequences of climate change:

- Catastrophic for human life
- Unequally distributed

social or conservation issue?

Actors:

- Scientists have been the key drivers
- Environmentalists came later
- Social activists came later
- Conservationists play a marginal role
- Big capital is divided (Silikon valley against Oil)

social or conservation issue?

Strategies:

- Scientists have chosen to appeal to “policy makers”
 - despite their failure to deliver solutions
 - Are stuck in a capitalist economic paradigm
- Environmentalists: solutions developed for other problems
 - Renewable energy
- Many environmental struggles touch climate change issues (Standing Rock, “the” ZAD, Hambacher Forst)
- Social activists have not yet found a working strategy

social or conservation issue?

Debates:

- Climate protection vs. development
- *Climate Justice*:
 - who has to pay?
 - who is most vulnerable?
- *Degrowth*
 - De-industrialization: good or bad?
 - “Verzichtskultur” (“renunciation culture”)

Three questions

2. Why does capitalism not solve the climate crisis?

Climate & Capitalism

The basic fact:

- Although the legislative and executing processes (at Country and UN level) seem to function, they do not deliver results.
- Working solutions found at local and regional levels, when the parameters are favorable
 - Zero-energy communes
 - Stay at the level of Proof-of-Concept
 - Important CC-Causes untouched

Climate & Capitalism

Possible explanations:

1. Neoliberalism has weakened states/UN too much (Naomi Klein)
2. The capitalist imperative to grow (Degrowth)
3. Capitalism always externalizes costs
4. Military dominance is incompatible with climate protection

Three questions

3. What can the Climate Justice Movement possibly achieve?

Climate Movement

Status quo:

1. The climate movement in Europe is on the rise
2. Yet still not able to mobilize the masses
 - Conflicts with short-term material interests
3. What if the conflict with capitalist interests is absolute?

Important step:

- Form a bigger movement for System Change

Climate Movement

Attempting a broader mobilization:

- Connecting Movements Camp as part of a Climate Camp (2017 Rhineland)
- Degrowth Summer School as part of a Climate Camp (2017 Rhineland)
- Joined Camps with other movements (Hamburg 2009, Rhineland 2013)
- Joined Actions (EZB Blockade 2016, Blockades of Mass animal farming facilities)

Climate Movement

Challenges:

- Actors of change (“revolutionary subject”)
- Situations which allow for change (“revolutionary situation”)
- Persuasive solutions (post-capitalist economy)

Actors of change

- The power for change
 - Individuals / groups / segments of society which are still needed by the economy
 - A problem in a time of global joblessness!
- The will for change (“consciousness”)
 - Insights into the actual state of affairs
 - Stakes in the current state of affairs and privileges are a big obstacle
- A culture of collective organization
 - Example: Rural / indigenous communities
- Educated personell, skilled workers??

Situation of change

- Capitalism does not anymore meet expectations
 - War
 - Food scarcity
 - Breakdown of material production
- Weakness of the institutions of power
- A narrative that competes well with right-wing obscurantism and escape from reality
- Some believe that the post-capitalist world will be a post-catastrophic world

Persuasive solutions

- A post-capitalist economy which actually works
 - Water
 - Food
 - Housing
 - Health care
- Emancipatory character
 - Low levels of repression
 - Fullfillment
 - Classless society / economic and cultural equality