

In this *Age of Stupid*, replacing Capitalism is the only sensible option.

THE AGE OF STUPID

Capitalism is stupid, and there's a new film that says so. *The Age of Stupid* is about the very real threat of catastrophic climate change, but it doesn't stop there. The driven exploitation of natural resources and human beings in the pursuit of profit for a few is powerfully depicted in an inventive and captivating docudrama.

Directed by Franny Armstrong who made the *McLibel* film that championed the successful fight against *McDonalds*, *The Age of Stupid* stars *Brassed Off*'s Pete Postlethwaite who, at the film's premier, threatened Ed Milliband, Government Secretary for Energy and Climate Change, and damned the stupidity of this Government in going ahead with the Kingsnorth Power Station and Heathrow expansion.

Using current scientific predictions and recent extreme weather events, the film charts the course towards climate chaos, dramatic climate shift and ultimately the destruction of the global economy and most life on the planet - in around 50 years time at the rate we're going. Sound's extreme?



These are all the most recent predictions accepted by the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change, rubbishing the UK Government targets of a slow drive towards an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050. Recent extreme weather events, from Hurricane Katrina that devastated New Orleans to the Bush Fires destroying towns in Western Australia, are expected to become almost daily occurrences by 2020.

The Antarctic ice shelves are melting, the Amazon is ceasing to store CO₂, the oceans are almost at capacity leaving CO₂ nowhere to go but the atmosphere. Global warming is accelerating, whilst UK emissions have been reduced by just 1% over the last 15 years. Too little. Too late?

The film opens in 2055, when London is under water, Vegas under sand, Sydney on fire and the Taj Mahal is in ruins. Pete Postlethwaite is "The Archivist" who lives in a tower off Norway scanning old news videos to find out why it was that people in 2009 did nothing to stop the catastrophes that were staring them in the face. He offers us the privilege of hindsight with anger and sadness.



This is the vehicle for 6 real-life documentaries filmed over the last 4 years. There is the French mountain guide who has witnessed the swift erosion of the glacier on Mont Blanc,

losing more than 180 feet in his lifetime; a capitalist entrepreneur hell-bent on setting up a low-budget airline to get everyone out of India's public trains and "into the sky", and a British wind-energy developer losing the fight against wealthy locals protesting against a wind farm proposal.

The film is a forceful attack on the System, with deeply moving video commentary. One traces the destruction of an Iraqi family through the eyes of two displaced and orphaned children, traumatised as a result of the illegal War for Oil. It pulls no punches. Another shows the devastation by Shell Oil of huge swathes of western Nigeria, where millions are left in a wrecked local economy, drinking brown sludge for water, catching small polluted fish where once there were shoals, and suffering debilitating illnesses while waiting for a premature death.

There is also hope. People are fighting back: a Nigerian woman struggling to learn medicine to help her dying community; the Iraqi children are reunited with their older brother, released from prison as a result of international protests; the French villagers block the Mont Blanc tunnel on bicycles, protesting against road expansion and the stupid trail of articulated lorries taking French milk to Italy to be made into yoghurt to be driven back to France to be packed in plastic containers, to be driven to British supermarkets.

Finally we are not allowed to escape the class nature of this rotten system. The wealthy entrepreneur launches his first cheap flight while screaming at his cabin crew, abusing them as if they are his slaves. The victorious Lady with land in Northamptonshire and Scotland, patronises the journalist and describes herself as an environmentalist as she squeals with glee at stopping a windfarm near her land. Inequality of Power and Human Rights is a constant theme through the film. Clearly, injustice is the product of Capitalism.

The Film launches a new campaign to build mass protests, seeking to mobilise all *Not Stupid* people, including the 11 million members of environmental organisations and trade unions in the lead-up to the historic and crucial inter-governmental climate talks in Copenhagen in December 2009. We want to see the largest ever demonstration in London on 5th December, and then on to Copenhagen in Denmark for an international protest on 12th December.

At the end of the film, Postlethwaite's character asks, did we choose to commit mass suicide?

Where there is hope, human beings are not suicidal, but we may be getting punch-drunk with the range of threats we face. We need to face-up to the fact that things cannot continue as they have been. We can't allow the continued development of fossil fuels, we can't allow the growth of air travel, and we can't look to false saviours of nuclear power or philanthropic capitalists. We must reduce global carbon emissions but we are not in control of Governments or Corporations who create them.

Our demand is for a global equalisation of resources and a massive reduction by the West to allow the rest of the world access to resources. As the film concludes, The Copenhagen Conference may well be the last chance for world leaders to make vital decisions for the future of humanity. Global pressure from below may just convince them in time, but it looks more like we have to overthrow this stupid, disgusting Capitalist system before those who run it condemn us *all* to death.

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The Age of Stupid is being shown at selected Vue cinemas across the UK, and released on DVD on 22nd June 2009.

Find out more about the Copenhagen Protests at www.Campaigncc.org.uk

Article extracts first published in *Socialist Worker*, 28th March 2009 www.socialistworker.co.uk