

ECOPOLITICS PODCAST EPISODE 3.3: How Do We Confront Capitalism's Excesses? Between Revolution and Reform.

Additional Pedagogical Resources

Summary: *“How do we confront capitalism’s ecological record?” In today's episode, we tackle this question with help from Dianne Saxe, President of SaxeFacts, and Deputy Leader of the Green Party of Ontario and Matt Huber, Professor in the Department of Geography and the Environment at Syracuse University. From two unique perspectives -- that of an environmental lawyer and a Marxist Geographer -- we dig into the ways in which capitalism is implicated in climate change, and how capitalistic forces might be influenced for the betterment of people and planet.*

Key Takeaways

- There is considerable debate on how, or if, climate change may be addressed in a capitalist system. One of the core objectives of capitalism is to maximize profits. In many cases, this rewards capitalists at the expense of both people and the planet. As Dr. Huber argues, “there's overwhelming evidence that if capitalists are left to their own devices, they're just going to keep trying to make money and ignore the ecological repercussions.” (17:47-18:38).
- Global finance plays a critical role in sustaining the fossil fuel sector and resource extraction around the world, but it can also play an important role in fomenting ecological transition. As Dr. Saxe notes, “the financial institutions can do without the fossil fuel companies, but the fossil fuel companies cannot do without the financial institutions” (21:15-21:46).
- Although capitalism is a large and complex system, there remains an important role for eco-citizens to play in organizing their communities. For example, mobilizing divestment campaigns through one’s bank or pension fund, or engaging in political action to increase government regulation over capital.

Discussion Questions

- Do you think capitalism and ecological sustainability are compatible?
- What do you think is the role of the government in achieving a balance of private profits and environmental protection? To what extent do governments currently play this role?
- What do you think is the role of the global financial sector, such as the banking institutions or pension plans, in mitigating the climate crisis and loss of biodiversity? Might it be better at helping to address one of these crises than the other? Why?
- Do you think it is possible for people to influence capitalism, or do you think that capitalism influences us as eco-citizens?

Learn more about our Guests

Dr. Matthew Huber

- Follow Matt on twitter <https://twitter.com/Matthuber78>
- Learn more about Matt's work at <https://www.maxwell.syr.edu/geo/Huber, Matthew T />

Select articles, books, projects, and videos

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Dr. Dianne Saxe

- Learn more about Dianne Saxe's work at <https://saxefacts.com>

Select articles, books, projects, and videos

- Listen to the Green Economy Heroes Climate Podcast <https://saxefacts.com/climate-podcast/>
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- Read more about the journal *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*
<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rcns20/current>
- Learn more about Engine No. 1 and their campaign <https://engine1.com>
- Learn more about *Growth, Degrowth, and Agrowth* in Season 2, Episode 11 of the Ecopolitics Podcast
<https://www.ecopoliticspodcast.ca/episode-2-11-growth-degrowth-agrowth/>

Learn more about Community Organization, Democracy, and Climate Action

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Learn more about Consumption, Production, Capitalism, and Climate Change

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