

Where has Green Capitalism got us?

Speakers:

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- Samuel Martin-Sosa (Ecologists in Action, Spain)
- Juanjo Alvarez

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More information on the panel:

<https://climaximo.wordpress.com/2018/12/09/onde-e-que-nos-trouxe-o-capitalismo-verde/>

False solutions, new business areas and guaranteed profits: capitalism paints itself “green” to pursue its march towards profit and accumulation at the expense of the degradation of the environment.

Samuel Martin-Sosa

The green economy is the old system trying to reinvent itself, presenting itself as the solution to the problems it creates. The green economy continues to be extractivist and anthropocentric. While it works as a gigantic financial sphere, it is sustained by natural resources. The green economy, which

quantifies natural capital in financial values, recognises the constant losses of this capital on an astronomical scale. It is necessary to demystify the premise that what is held in common doesn't have is unjustifiable, since it has no market value, in the way the green economy conceptualises it. The capitalist economy does not recognise the reality of the exclusion it causes in the most vulnerable communities, which are in a great measure the closest to and most respectful of ecosystems.

The fallacy goes so far as to assert that it is possible to dissociate economic growth from the finite nature of resources. But the economy has limits, in the efficiency of processes and the finite nature of resources, just as there are physical laws of thermodynamics. Technology can never solve the finite nature of resources. There are technological limits in its development and we meet limits without a solution. What is the thought and discourse of capital faced with this? It comes down to the belief that something will be invented to solve the problems. The belief in a technological solution to guarantee the capitalist system. Climatic changes have sociological problems and power relations at the bottom, but until now the narrative of a technological miracle prevails. **This idea that a technological solution will permit growth without affecting resources leads to a paralysis of responsibility. This ignores the political dimension of technology, who controls, develops and applies technology, eliminating the subject and mystifying this solution.** The outcome of this was to arrive at the belief that limitations don't exist when we live them without solution.

Manuel Garí Ramos

The noun capitalism and the adjective green? This appears before the eruption of populists throughout the world. We have to pay attention to this connection. Could it be that there is an intention to maintain the mystification of capitalism? The more success capitalism has, the more the crisis intensifies. This is why **the choice of green is a desperate solution of last resort**. And in the end it's carrying on business as usual. To mercantalise nature and leave regulation to the market. This perpetuates the accumulation of advanced capitalism,

1st myth: what capitalism seeks is to try to convince us that it is the only rational way to manage nature.

2nd myth: dematerialisation of the economy, covering the damage with an acceptable cloak while the use of natural resources and extractivism intensifies, leaving sustainability behind.

3rd myth: growth is infinite because this is the solution to the problem and not its original cause. Inverting the logic of the resolution of the capitalist system's contradictions. Forgetting a fundamental problem of the world economy, the delocalisation of production and waste, covering up geographical asymmetries.

4th myth: that the prices of resources modify attitudes to them. It is not corroborated by ecological taxation, which does not modify behaviours.

5th myth: of the technological solution, which isn't worth the effort of repeating.

There is a real failure in the objectives of carbon and the saving of resources, which could be described as capitalism's right to destruction and pollution in its advance in the direction of its version of green.

Juanjo Alvarez

I'm presenting a more subjective observation on the problems of green capitalism, asking why solutions aren't presented faced with the elephant in the room?

The new populists are also against green capitalism. Why attack it? They intend in this way to carry on with business without limits. As the solutions aren't profitable and are useless to capitalism, they will not be adopted.

Knowing from the outset that it's over 40 years that this was already a problem, because socially there are necessary slow mechanisms of organisation and mobilisation, which allows the presentation and implementation of a solution, because there is not an alternative social mobilisation of the masses? We are heading in the direction of collapse. There are limitations of behaviour and holistic perception of the problems, which impede a response with the necessary urgency, without recourse to collapses political positions, recognising the incapability of modifying behaviours and changing societies anticipating conflicts. Faced with this, green capitalism comes to mobilise objectives in the medium term, reinforcing the difficulty and safeguarding for itself the material means and mechanisms of presenting and mercantilising solutions.

Demarcating between change of system vs. technological

solution vs. environmental catastrophe, it is the last which seems most possible. Green capitalism hides the catastrophe with the fantasy of a technological solution. This is an ideological macro-project of capturing the imagination. So it is necessary to organise for the conflict with the failure of traditional and green capitalism, which still holds power.

Green capitalism is going to confront questions of territory and landscape, which are dear to environmentalists and which allow an advantage since the social project is in ruins in these territories. If it isn't recuperated by the left it will be used by the right. The same will happen for identity and community: if this is not understood as a class formation, then it will be exploited by the right with a refusal of the other. **We have to think of conflicts as strategic struggles, in times of conflict there have to be strategic solutions which allow these collective subjects to have a reformative representation, or rather, a revolutionary one, so that in the conflict it is not the fascist solution that has the capacity to mobilise these communities.** That is the struggle from now on.