

DOI:10.5937/IIZS25360D

GREEN NEW DEAL FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Edi Daruši¹

¹Zrenjaninin gymnasium, Zrenjanin, Serbia

e-mail: edidarusi@gmail.com

Abstract: Technological fixes, the purchase of green products, and the organization of emission trading schemes merely postpone the transformation of the existing socio-economic reality. If green technological innovations are driven primarily by the maximization of profit, it is unlikely that they will lead to the resolution of global climate change. In fact, the use of more benign technologies only means that humanity will continue along the same path that has already led to civilizational decline. Hence, a Green New Deal for climate change is necessary—an alternative vision of political, social, and economic thinking that will enable a synthesis of recovery from the current recession and substantial investments in renewable energy sources and a sustainable economy based on them. Confronting global climate change will disrupt all the rules of the free market game, rebuild the public sphere, redirect privatization, reduce consumption, reintroduce long-term planning, and impose regulations to control and tax corporations.

Key words: neoliberal capitalism, ideology, entrepreneurial state, Green New Deal

INTRODUCTION

The global neoliberal system is failing. Civilization as we know it is doomed to collapse, as ecological catastrophes, such as global flooding, threaten the very foundations of civilization itself. **"We must notice that the objective victory of global capitalism is a destructive, aggressive practice,"** writes Alain Badiou [1].

Nature has become the object of unlimited, total exploitation because boundless imperialism is never satisfied. Humanity's dominion over planet Earth has no precedent in previous epochs of Nature's history, in which other animals represented the highest forms of life. Their appetites were limited to their survival needs. However, Max Horkheimer argues that greed is not inherent to the human species but emerges within the values of capitalist society. As he writes, **"Man's greed to extend his power over the two infinities, the microcosm and the universe, does not arise directly from his own nature, but from the structure of society. The totalitarian assault of the human race on everything that lies beyond itself derives more from interhuman relations than from innate human qualities"** [2]. Paradoxically, through the exponential growth of our freedoms and powers, that is, **"our growing capacity to transform the nature around us even to the point of destabilizing the basic geological foundations of life"** [3], we in fact limit our freedoms, a phenomenon made evident by the consequences of global warming.

State mechanisms lie at the very core of capital reproduction, ensuring its uninterrupted accumulation through expropriation via educational, ecological, social, economic, legal, and other mechanisms. Therefore, resistance to global neoliberal capitalism cannot occur within the framework of the existing late-capitalist consumer culture.

Nevertheless, despite the global triumph of capitalism, many trends signal the deep, advanced disintegration of the system. The neoliberal economic cycle, initiated in the 1970s and exemplified by Yanis Varoufakis' concept of the Global Minotaur, which drove the global economy into financial collapse in 2008, is unraveling. According to Žižek, Marx was correct regarding the "final crisis" of capitalism, which we have now entered: **"In broad daylight, capitalism openly disintegrates and transforms into something else. We fail to perceive this ongoing transformation due to our immersion in ideology"** [3].

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The primary question addressed in this study is the inadequacy of the neoliberal capitalist framework in effectively confronting climate change. Addressing this issue requires a fundamental transformation of social and economic policies, alongside the mobilization of global collective efforts to ensure a sustainable future. In light of the identified problem, the following research objectives have been formulated:

1. To critically assess the neoliberal capitalist ideological system and its systemic shortcomings in providing effective responses to the challenges posed by climate change.
2. To evaluate alternative economic models, with particular attention to the concept of the "Green New Deal" as a sustainable framework for facilitating the green transition and promoting sustainable development.
3. To propose comprehensive strategies and policies aimed at transforming the economy toward sustainable practices, including the transition to renewable energy sources, the development of sustainable infrastructure, and the adoption of environmentally responsible practices.
4. To identify key stakeholders and formulate recommendations to foster long-term collaboration among governmental institutions, the private sector, civil society, and international organizations in response to the climate crisis.

The Green New Deal

"We are moving toward a society that will ultimately be completely different from today."
Anthony Giddens [4]

Given the scale of the global climate crisis we face, minimal taxation of polluters or market-based regulation of carbon emissions is insufficient in the context of transforming the entire economy. Individual decisions regarding personal consumption will not make a significant contribution when considering the magnitude of changes required. Free-market capitalism, as an economic system of unlimited consumption and environmental depletion, is the epicenter of the climate crisis. It is necessary to draw historical parallels with the *Marshall Plan* (The Marshall Plan was inaugurated in June 1947, with a rationale that aligns closely with the theoretical views expressed at the beginning of the 18th century by the Italian mercantilist Serra, according to whom the production of raw materials and industrial goods is subject to different laws.) or Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, as they remind us of times when humanity was capable of thinking on such large-scale socio-economic changes: **"This means a return to economic planning based on collective priorities rather than corporate profitability"** [5].

A crisis of this magnitude must change everything. A complete transformation of all national and global economies, which have already failed most people on this planet, must focus on climate imperatives: **"...some parts of the economy will have to grow, some shrink, and some disappear,"** asserts Naomi Klein [6]. The "Green New Deal" represents a vision of political, social, and economic thinking that will ensure a combination of recovery from the current recession and large-scale investment in renewable energy and the sustainable economy it enables. All free-market rules must be broken, the public sphere rebuilt, privatization redirected, consumption reduced, long-term planning reintroduced, and corporations regulated and taxed.

It is evident that, due to the demands for transforming every aspect of our economy, many powerful interests in the industrial and financial sectors would resist these changes. This primarily concerns multinational corporations that extract fossil fuels and have for many years funded misinformation campaigns regarding the reality of global climate change.

Mariana Mazzucato also agrees that addressing the climate crisis requires transforming the global economy. Innovative transformations will represent one of the greatest changes

humanities has ever attempted. However, it is necessary to shift from short-term profit-oriented thinking to achieving long-term results and profits: **"Industrial strategies do not only need different goals; they need missions"** [7]. Missions akin to the Apollo 11 mission, or a green transformation with Roosevelt-scale investments, are essential to combat climate change. National governments must take a fundamental role in ensuring a stable and consistent investment channel that aligns regulations and innovations with a green trajectory addressing climate change. As Mazzucato writes: **"The Green New Deal refers to the transformation of production, distribution, and consumption across the entire economy. It must be supported by long-term, careful financing capable of assuming risks and mobilizing diverse investors"** [7]. The green transformation itself primarily involves achieving a cross-sectoral innovation approach aimed at building a diversity of projects within the mission.

True solutions to the climate crisis are our greatest hope for building a fairer and more enlightened economic system that eliminates deep inequalities and transforms the public sphere by strictly controlling corporate power, emphasizes Naomi Klein, adding: **"...the scientifically proven reality of climate change must occupy a central place in the progressive narrative on the dangers of unlimited greed and the need for genuine alternatives"** [5]. Global warming has radically progressive consequences: **"...the collective survival of humanity depends on the immediate halting of (the ruling social structure - added D.E.)"** [8].

Cathedral Thinking of the Entrepreneurial State

"We are on the brink of mass extinction, and you are only talking about money and telling us fairy tales about eternal economic growth."

Greta Thunberg [9]

Although neoliberal proponents claim that democracy and economic development through free markets mutually reinforce each other - **"The market supports democracy, just as democracy should normally strengthen the market,"** asserts British journalist Martin Wolf - market mechanisms and democracy exclude one another. Democracy operates on the principle of "one person, one vote," whereas the market functions on the principle of "one dollar, one vote." Since democracy assigns equal weight to every individual regardless of wealth, it often undermines market logic.

Following Žižek's assertion that liberal-democratic institutional mechanisms are insufficient to regain control over capital - **"...there is a growing gap between the liberal-democratic institutions of parliamentary democracy and the logic of global financial capital, which increasingly escapes any form of democratic control..."** [10] - Mariana Mazzucato would agree. In her book *The Entrepreneurial State*, she warns that the problems facing neoliberal capitalist states today stem from forty years of weakening national governments' ability to manage economic, public, and industrial policies, driven by the neoliberal paradigm of market supremacy and the push for deregulation, which has marginalized government roles. Thus, **"...those who run global corporations...seek to manage the world as a single economic entity"** [11]. Hence, the need arises anew for **"...proper and effective management of social development"** [12].

The sluggish pace of the green transition demonstrates what happens when national governments leave urgent problems to the market and refrain from assuming their entrepreneurial role in society. Therefore, Giddens emphasizes that highly developed states must lead the way in turning **"...toward a low-carbon economy and introducing social reforms, in line with climate change. If they cannot do it, no one will"** [4].

Highly developed states must take the lead in reducing harmful gas emissions by shifting to a low-carbon economy and technologies, as well as in implementing necessary social reforms grounded in the concept of climate change. The state should encourage the creation of a creative environment that supports the diversity of social groups capable of developing long-term climate policies. Thus, the vision of the future arises through the synergy of economic, social, and political thinking: **"...as a response to climate change...we can expect a large**

number of technological innovations, and we should do everything to encourage them. Without such innovations, it is impossible to envision the end of our dependence on oil, natural gas, and coal, which are the primary sources of environmental pollution" [4].

In her address to the European Parliament (April 16, 2019), Greta Thunberg stressed that combating climate change requires a far-reaching vision and determined action. "Cathedral thinking" is needed. In the twenty-first century, "cathedrals" must be built through innovations that incorporate equality, justice, and sustainability. A different type of private sector is required - one with which governments can interact. This entails restoring the public interest in economic policies so that they primarily aim to generate benefits for citizens and establish goals that matter to people, driven by concern for the common good rather than profit alone. The public interest must be central to corporate governance, taking into account the needs of all stakeholders. Governments, therefore, should not merely repair markets but create them, investing in capacity building, promoting industrial production, fostering public-private partnerships, and supporting research, development, and education.

An avant-garde of entrepreneurs is necessary to provide new ventures and technologies based on a vision of a low-carbon future.

Recycled Capitalism

"It is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism."

Mark Fisher [13]

Andreas Malm argues that the response to the global catastrophe is possible only within the capitalist state, since a workers' state will not be created overnight: **"It does not seem realistic that the dual power of democratic proletarian institutions will be realized anytime soon, or if ever. Waiting for this to happen would be both illusory and criminal, and therefore we must work within the grim bourgeois state, which, as always, is bound by the hands of capital" [14].**

Although the application of technological innovations in the "green transition" appears highly optimistic, people still serve the economy rather than the other way around. The very meaning of frugal resource use and sustainable development essentially lies in the maximization of resource exploitation. The heaps of waste left behind by consumerist consumption are, in fact, already designed by the logic of capitalism: **"The idea of total recycling (in which even the last remnants are reused) represents the ultimate capitalist dream. Even - or especially - when presented to preserve the Earth's natural balance. Another testament to capitalism's ability to appropriate ideologies that oppose it" [15].**

Thus, technological fixes, purchasing green products, and organizing emissions markets postpone the transformation of the existing socio-economic reality. If technological innovations are aimed at maximizing profit, it is unlikely that they will contribute meaningfully to solving global climate change. In fact, the use of 'benign' technologies will allow humanity to continue down the same path that has led to civilizational decline. Žižek warns that the fundamental mistake of Marx was his conclusion that a new, higher social order was possible, one that would not only preserve but also elevate and fully unleash the potential of the self-reinforcing spiral of productivity which, in capitalism, due to its inherent contradiction, repeatedly subverted society through destructive economic crises [16].

Therefore, Naomi Klein argues, a genuine transformation in the way the world is organized is required, a profound change in the fundamental principles of the economic system: **"...a serious discussion of the glaringly obvious roots of the climate crisis: globalization, deregulation, and the contemporary capitalist need for constant growth" [17].** Žižek also maintains that changing the capitalist system is necessary to truly effect change: **"...we must accept that nothing can be changed within the existing system...true change is not merely the overthrow of the old order, but, above all, the establishment of a new one" [3].**

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Despite the urgent need for immediate action on climate change, green campaigns remain largely isolated, lacking a unified, globally coordinated strategy. Similarly, the innovative technological sector is primarily profit-driven, without a clear green vision. The unification of humanity in a global environmental protection movement, a broader international initiative, or a Green New Deal, is currently not on the horizon.

CONCLUSION

"It seems that the impending ecological crisis provides a unique opportunity for the acceptance of a reconfigured version of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Slavoj Žižek [3]

The global system is not functioning. Numerous trends signal a deeply advanced disintegration of capitalism. Slavoj Žižek emphasizes that Marxism was correct regarding the "final crisis" of capitalism. According to Žižek, changes are already underway: **"...in broad daylight: capitalism openly disintegrates and transforms into something else. We do not perceive this ongoing transformation because we are immersed in ideology"** [3].

As Marv Waterstone points out, there exists a domain of concepts and categories within which the "common sense" of the masses is articulated: **"It is a pre-formed and self-evident field on which coherent ideologies and philosophies must compete for dominance, a foundation that new conceptions of the world must take into account, on which they must compete and transform if they wish to shape the masses' worldview and thereby become effective"** [18].

However, the supreme irony, Žižek argues, is that ideologies present themselves as their radical opposites, as radical critiques of ideological utopias: **"Every vision of another world is rejected as ideology"** [3]. Today, the dominant ideology is not a positive vision of a utopian future, but **"...cynical resignation, acceptance of what the 'world really is,' accompanied by the warning that even a slight change to the status quo leads to totalitarian chaos, Stalinism, and fascism"** [3]. Weak thought is at work, no longer striving in politics toward all-encompassing systems and global emancipatory projects. Alain Badiou, in this sense, stresses that the main function of ideological censorship is to crush hope, condemning any critical project as the opening of a path that ends in camps.

Žižek, in *The Spirit of the Times*, writes: **"Today, however, the prevailing cynical functioning of ideology merely asserts: 'You must be stupid to see it' - what? Hope for radical change"** [3].

Is there then any hope for radical social transformation?

To achieve social change, a space for alternative critique is necessary, one that relies on the difference between what is and what ought to be. Critical pedagogy and critical thinking. "Being" and "ought" are not necessarily the same thing: **"...although the dominant common sense striving to preserve the status quo attempts to equate them, to make things be equivalent to the way things ought to be, it closes off the possibility of any alternative change"** [18].

Louis Althusser further noted that ideology is not a symbolic order externally imposed on reality, but rather our engagement with reality. The reproduction of society in its totality, as well as the reproduction of the conditions of production, according to Althusser, encompasses the educational system, culture, science, consumer mentality, and gender discourses [19]. Thus, the task is to produce a symbolic fiction that will **"...intervene in reality and thereby cause changes within it"** [16]. However, we cannot simply rid ourselves of ideological lenses; **"...theoretical work is necessary"** [3]. As Lenin also stated: **"Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement"** [20].

Faced with bad news, it is easy to succumb to the temptation of cynical indifference, believing that collective action is doomed from the start and that hope for effective change was merely an illusion. Yet, to **"...truly change things, we must accept that nothing can**

be genuinely changed within the existing system" [3]. Hence, strategic urgency is required, the work of non-systemic thinking that offers something new to transcend the domination of global capitalism. A massive reconstruction of social mechanisms is necessary to confront the damage wrought by capitalism. According to Félix Guattari, reforms will not come from the "top" through laws, decrees, or bureaucratic programs, but through the promotion of innovative practices, the emergence of alternative experiences focused on respecting singularity and autonomous creative subjectivity, appropriately connected to the rest of society [21].

REFERENCES

- [1] Badiou, Alain (2016). *Our Misery Comes from Afar – Our Evil Reaches Far*. Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga.
- [2] Horkheimer, Max (1989). *Eclipse of Reason*. Sarajevo: Logos.
- [3] Žižek, Slavoj (2019). *Like a Thief in Broad Daylight*. Belgrade: Laguna.
- [4] Giddens, Anthony (2010). *Climate Change and Politics*. Belgrade: Clio.
- [5] Klein, Naomi (2022). *The World in Flames*. Belgrade: FMK.
- [6] Klein, Naomi (2015). *Only Radical Solutions Remain*, <https://standard.rs/2015/02/16/naomi-klajn-ostala-su-nam-samo-radikalna-resenja/>
- [7] Mazzucato, Mariana (2022). *The Economy with a Mission*. Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga.
- [8] Klein, Naomi (2018). *It Is Not Enough to Say No*. Belgrade: SamizdatB92.
- [9] Gessen, Masha (2019). *Greta Thunberg as Anti-Trump*, <https://pescanik-net.webpkgcache.com/doc/-/s/pescanik.net/greta-tunberg-kao-anti-tramp>
- [10] Žižek, Slavoj (2014). *Alternative to Capitalism*, <https://pescanik.net/alternativa-kapitalizmu>
- [11] Barnett, R. & Mueller, R.E. (1974). *Global Reach: The Power of the Multinational Corporations*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- [12] Milačić, S. & Kostić, A. (2022). *Problems of Socio-Economic Development under Contemporary Globalization*, Economic Outlook/Ekonomski pogledi, 20(2).
- [13] Fisher, Mark (2022). *Capitalist Realism: Is There an Alternative*. Belgrade: FMK.
- [14] Malm, Andreas (2022). *Corona, Climate, Capitalism*. Belgrade: FMK.
- [15] Žižek, Slavoj (2024). *We Are All Biomass*, <https://pescanik.net/svi-smo-mi-biomasa/>
- [16] Žižek, Slavoj (2011). *In Defense of Lost Causes*. Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga.
- [17] Klein, Naomi (2011). *Capitalism vs The Climate*, <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/capitalism-vs-climate/>
- [18] Chomsky, Noam & Waterstone, Marv (2022). *Consequences of Capitalism*. Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga.
- [19] Althusser, Louis (2009). *Ideology and State Ideological Apparatuses*. Loznica: Karpos.
- [20] Lenin, V.I. (1949). *What Is to Be Done*. Belgrade: Kultura.
- [21] Guattari, Felix (2021). *The Three Ecologies*. Belgrade: FMK.