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00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:21,635

Can you guys see that? All right, so thanks, first of all, for having us here. Very big thank you to

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00:00:21,635 --> 00:00:27,169

Zdravka for organizing this and thank you everybody for coming out. What I am going

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00:00:27,169 --> 00:00:30,049

to talk about, I am going to talk about the environmental conflicts in the

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00:00:30,049 --> 00:00:35,590

neoliberal era and, in order, to talk about the environmental conflicts, let me

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00:00:35,590 --> 00:00:39,516

start by defining what/how I understand neoliberalism, right.

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00:00:39,516 --> 00:00:46,522

I understand neoliberalism as the relation of capitalism from a phase that

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00:00:46,522 --> 00:00:52,362

involves the state, right, where the state had a very heavy hand, in terms of

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00:00:52,362 --> 00:00:58,190

regulation, in terms of effective management - management of effective

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00:00:58,190 --> 00:01:02,914

demand, basically, so a lot of government spending. A phase that basically lasted

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00:01:02,914 --> 00:01:06,844

between the 1940s and the 1980s

everywhere

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00:01:06,844 --> 00:01:13,890

in the US and in Europe. Now, again, as Professor Henry said the specifics are

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00:01:13,890 --> 00:01:19,403

are different in every case, right, and the beginning of a new liberal era, the

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00:01:19,403 --> 00:01:22,519

actual imposition of the neoliberal project that might have been laid out in

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the 1920s or 30s, but at the time that a new liberal project went in full swing

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00:01:27,615 --> 00:01:34,100

comes, according to my analysis, in different phases in the 1970s 1980s,

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right. So we go to a period that is being characterized by the policies that have

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00:01:38,847 --> 00:01:42,183

been codified as the Washington Consensus, right. And some of these

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00:01:42,183 --> 00:01:45,850

policies are deregulation; fiscal discipline, so that the state cannot

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00:01:45,850 --> 00:01:50,018

actually play the same role that it played in the 1950s or 1960s;

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00:01:50,018 --> 00:01:56,850  
privatization, so the state should  
should let the market decide allocation

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00:01:56,850 --> 00:02:02,658  
of resources to its most effective than  
most efficient users; liberalisation, so

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00:02:02,658 --> 00:02:08,903  
impediments to free trade should be done  
away with; and creation of markets, so

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00:02:08,903 --> 00:02:13,654  
markets are being viewed of  
as an efficient way of making decisions

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00:02:13,654 --> 00:02:19,180  
so we need to create markets where  
markets are not in place. Now, I think that we

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00:02:19,180 --> 00:02:23,486  
need to make unnecessary supplement to  
this story. Why did this take place? Why

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00:02:23,486 --> 00:02:31,093  
did we switch from a state regulated model  
of capitalism to a neoliberal model of

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00:02:31,093 --> 00:02:36,966  
capitalism? And I think that we need to  
take into account the attack of capital

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00:02:36,966 --> 00:02:42,067  
against labor, right. What happens in the  
1970s, and as we are gonna see, is that

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00:02:42,067 --> 00:02:49,673  
profits were declining, so if we look at  
the profits - the profit rates in the U. S.

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00:02:49,673 --> 00:02:54,815  
between 1964 and 2001, you can  
see a steady decline of the profit rate

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00:02:54,815 --> 00:03:00,455  
between the 1960s and 1970s, right.  
This produces a problem for capital, so

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00:03:00,455 --> 00:03:04,825  
to some extent the way but we have to  
theorize the neoliberal

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00:03:04,825 --> 00:03:11,262  
counter-attack against labor is a way, is  
a project of recapturing profits, right,

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00:03:11,262 --> 00:03:16,639  
and resuscitating the the falling profit  
rates. How did this happen?

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00:03:16,639 --> 00:03:23,948  
This happened by, I don't know if you can  
see that, this is the labor share. This is

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00:03:23,948 --> 00:03:31,061  
the - (I don't know if we could dim the lights somehow)  
if you think of national income as a pie, right.

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00:03:31,061 --> 00:03:39,128  
This would be telling us how much of that pie goes  
to labor and how much goes to capital. Now, one of the

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00:03:39,128 --> 00:03:45,334  
stylized facts that Nicholas Kaldor a  
famous economist describes for

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00:03:45,334 --> 00:03:51,842

capitalism is that the labor share is fairly constant, right. So the idea is

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00:03:51,842 --> 00:03:55,643

that the labor share is constant around two-thirds for long periods of time. Now,

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00:03:55,643 --> 00:04:07,817

if you look at the labor share between the 1940s and the 1980s, it would be fairly constant, right. After the 1980, the labor share, the part of the national income pie that is

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00:04:07,817 --> 00:04:14,466

that goes to workers, declines considerably. I think this is necessary if we want to understand what

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00:04:14,466 --> 00:04:21,338

is going on during the neoliberal phase. Now, my talk is about capital in the

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00:04:21,338 --> 00:04:26,298

environment. Why do we care about capital in the environment? And actually,

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00:04:26,298 --> 00:04:31,239

more importantly, why does capital care about the environment? And I am going to

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00:04:31,239 --> 00:04:35,358

make two claims here: the one is that we have to think about the interest, about

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00:04:35,358 --> 00:04:38,733

capital shows in the environment as part of the larger story of declining

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00:04:38,733 --> 00:04:44,015

profitability. If profit rates are going down over long periods of time, and this

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00:04:44,015 --> 00:04:48,675

is something that a lot of people have shown, including Panayiotis Manolakos

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00:04:48,675 --> 00:04:53,677

and Deepankar Basu are pursuing in a recent RRP paper, if profit

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opportunities become scarce, then capital needs to find new areas where it will

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00:04:58,011 --> 00:05:03,701

operate. And the second story is a story of legitimacy. Now, during the last thirty

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00:05:03,701 --> 00:05:09,411

years capitalism has not been operating very

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00:05:09,411 --> 00:05:13,463

successfully. I mean, let me... let me explain what I mean by that. Inequality

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00:05:13,463 --> 00:05:16,539

is growing. This is something that basically everybody knows today.

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00:05:16,539 --> 00:05:23,872

Unemployment is higher as a long term trend than it was in the 1950s and 1960s.

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00:05:23,872 --> 00:05:28,246

The wages have not been increasing and I think some people are going to talk

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00:05:28,246 --> 00:05:32,381

about that later. Now, we need to find

success stories. We need to find every

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00:05:32,381 --> 00:05:35,857

economic - every political system needs to be able to point to something to say,

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00:05:35,857 --> 00:05:43,125

"See, I did well," and to some extent, the environmental aspect provides with

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00:05:43,125 --> 00:05:46,552

capital both the profit opportunities and the legitimacy opportunities.

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00:05:46,552 --> 00:05:52,908

Now, this is a nice quote from some banker that is investing very heavily in

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00:05:52,908 --> 00:05:56,977

organic farming, lately, and what he basically says is I'm killing two birds

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00:05:56,977 --> 00:06:02,106

with one stone. You know, there's not very much profit opportunities around, and hey,

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00:06:02,106 --> 00:06:07,788

if I can do something that saves the planet, that's good for everybody. Now, let

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00:06:07,788 --> 00:06:12,481

me show you another thing - you know who that guy is on the left, right, this is -

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00:06:12,481 --> 00:06:15,797

and you can't see the pictures very well - this is Toms. This is the guy

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00:06:15,797 --> 00:06:20,482  
Blake Mycoskie, the founder of Tom's, this whole brand that, you know, you buy one

069  
00:06:20,482 --> 00:06:23,842  
pair of shoes and he gives one pair of shoes. Think about that

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00:06:23,842 --> 00:06:28,170  
and compare this with Foxconn. Compare this with the stories that we have heard

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00:06:28,170 --> 00:06:34,379  
lately about the conditions in Foxconn factories. Foxconn is a major apple

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00:06:34,379 --> 00:06:37,867  
supplier, right. About all the human rights violations and everything that's

073  
00:06:37,867 --> 00:06:42,252  
going on there. Now, if you see - if you see Toms as a brand, you don't think about

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00:06:42,252 --> 00:06:48,158  
factories, right. You think about how this is a capitalist who cares and that's

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00:06:48,158 --> 00:06:52,894  
important, because it shifts the focus from the labor conditions to something

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00:06:52,894 --> 00:06:56,900  
else, to something that makes capitalism friendly, to something that makes

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00:06:56,900 --> 00:07:07,944  
capitalism successful, to something that makes capitalism desirable. Now, all right.

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00:07:07,944 --> 00:07:13,883

Now, what are the cases of environmental conflict that I would like to talk about - climate change, agriculture and

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00:07:13,883 --> 00:07:18,848

food, and, at the end, I want to talk a little bit about austerity, in case you haven't noticed I'm Greek, so

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00:07:18,848 --> 00:07:25,079

I'll talk about Greece, a little bit. Now, regarding climate change, I'm sure you've heard of

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00:07:25,079 --> 00:07:28,558

the Kyoto Protocol, right?

It's an international agreement that

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00:07:28,558 --> 00:07:33,726

basically tries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by around 5%

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00:07:33,726 --> 00:07:40,206

compared to the 1990s. Now, how is that being done? According to a Kyoto Protocol,

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00:07:40,206 --> 00:07:46,143

the industrialists, which by the way was signed by around 119 countries, 38

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00:07:46,143 --> 00:07:50,980

industrialized countries are being given concrete targets, right. They're being

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00:07:50,980 --> 00:07:56,190

given concrete emissions targets which are being given compared to what they

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00:07:56,190 --> 00:08:01,156

were emitting in the 1990s.  
Now, after that after these targets the

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00:08:01,156 --> 00:08:07,640

Kyoto Protocol is basically creating a  
system of permits, so every country is

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00:08:07,640 --> 00:08:12,177

being given the according number of  
permits and then they can trade these

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00:08:12,177 --> 00:08:18,539

permits and conduct the emissions  
reduction whenever and wherever this is

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00:08:18,539 --> 00:08:23,250

more cost-effective, right. So if it's  
expensive for me to reduce my emissions

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00:08:23,250 --> 00:08:28,655

I will buy a permit from somewhere else.  
You know, from the Netherlands, where it

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00:08:28,655 --> 00:08:32,864

might be easier for them to reduce their  
emissions and then they will have some

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00:08:32,864 --> 00:08:37,099

permit that they are going to sell to  
now. This is part of the Kyoto Protocol

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00:08:37,099 --> 00:08:42,341

mechanism. Another amendment to the  
Kyoto Protocol is what is being called the

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00:08:42,341 --> 00:08:47,208

Clean Development Mechanism. Now, the  
initial system creates a set number of

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00:08:47,208 --> 00:08:52,111

permits, right, but the flexible mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol allow

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00:08:52,111 --> 00:08:58,004

countries to create new permits from where there are none. How do they do that?

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00:08:58,004 --> 00:09:02,566

They allow countries and they allow companies to go out in the developing

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00:09:02,566 --> 00:09:08,837

world and conduct projects, participate in projects, that allow these developing

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00:09:08,837 --> 00:09:15,439

nations to reduce their emissions. Now, there's a lot of assumptions there, and

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00:09:15,439 --> 00:09:19,520

I'm going to come back to that later, but the idea here is that in addition to the

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00:09:19,520 --> 00:09:23,580

number of permits that you are allocated when you start, you can create new

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00:09:23,580 --> 00:09:28,951

permits by going to Brazil or going to India and participating in some project

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00:09:28,951 --> 00:09:36,022

and helping them, you know, install a clean coal factory. Something that is

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00:09:36,022 --> 00:09:41,227

going to help them be better off than

what they would have been before, right.

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00:09:41,227 --> 00:09:48,684

What are the implications of the Kyoto Protocol? First of all, the first a very

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00:09:48,684 --> 00:09:54,879

clear implication is that we privatize the atmospheric commons, right. If we think

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00:09:54,879 --> 00:09:59,846

of the earth having an absorptive capacity of greenhouse gases, what the

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00:09:59,846 --> 00:10:05,156

Kyoto Protocol does, is it privatized is that, it makes very clear the property

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00:10:05,156 --> 00:10:09,028

rights and who owns what, and who has the right to emit and who doesn't.

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00:10:09,028 --> 00:10:16,696

Now, why is that interesting? And why is that problematic?

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00:10:16,696 --> 00:10:20,668

This is problematic because the way that the Kyoto Protocol was

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00:10:20,668 --> 00:10:25,734

implemented, it bases their allowances and it bases the number of permits

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00:10:25,734 --> 00:10:32,133

according to what different countries were emitting in the 1990s, in 1990. Now,

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00:10:32,133 --> 00:10:36,792

what's the clear implication of that? It rewards historic emitters, if you were

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00:10:36,792 --> 00:10:40,622

the US and you were emitting a lot well you are being told that you have to

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00:10:40,622 --> 00:10:44,919

reduce how much you emit, but basically you are given a target that is

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00:10:44,919 --> 00:10:47,902

very close to how much you were emitting in 1990.

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00:10:47,902 --> 00:10:52,699

Same with Europe, same with most, you know, like European developed countries.

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00:10:52,699 --> 00:10:57,843

Now, the second very important distribution of consequence of the Kyoto

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00:10:57,843 --> 00:11:04,331

Protocol is that it creates windfall profits for capitalists. In what way? Now,

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00:11:04,331 --> 00:11:11,077

let me first say, that it's a misconception that capital is always

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00:11:11,077 --> 00:11:14,548

hostile to regulation. It is a misconception that capital is always

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00:11:14,548 --> 00:11:20,127

hostile to climate change regulation. You're actually going to find a lot of

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00:11:20,127 --> 00:11:25,128  
sectors that are very, very much in favor  
of climate change regulation. The most

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00:11:25,128 --> 00:11:31,400  
prominent sector is insurance. If you  
google any insurance company, it's very

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00:11:31,400 --> 00:11:35,965  
likely that you are going to find some  
report on climate change. The Association

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00:11:35,965 --> 00:11:39,911  
of Britain's British Insurers, Swiss  
Array, Allianz,

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00:11:39,911 --> 00:11:44,138  
they all have reports where basically  
they say we have to do something about

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00:11:44,138 --> 00:11:49,164  
climate change. Why? Well, because their  
profits decline because of extreme

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00:11:49,164 --> 00:11:55,185  
climate phenomenon, right. So they are  
very much in favor of doing something

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00:11:55,185 --> 00:12:02,162  
for climate change. Now what about other  
sectors? How are you going to convince BP

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00:12:02,162 --> 00:12:08,405  
or sell... by the way BP for 10 years was  
basically saying that BP stands for

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00:12:08,405 --> 00:12:13,445  
beyond petroleum, not for British  
Petroleum. I mean, it sounds ridiculous

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00:12:13,445 --> 00:12:17,446

now, but that's a different story.

How are you going to convince them? How

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00:12:17,446 --> 00:12:20,202

are you going to convince them to

participate in that? Well, you're going to

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00:12:20,202 --> 00:12:25,522

give them these permits for free, right,

which is the process that we call

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00:12:25,522 --> 00:12:29,794

grandfathering. Like your grandfather

would give you a gift for free, right, so

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00:12:29,794 --> 00:12:34,378

the state basically goes in and says I

am going... I want you to participate in

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00:12:34,378 --> 00:12:38,536

this project. Why don't I give you these

permits for free? The distributional

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00:12:38,536 --> 00:12:43,625

impact of this is very clear. Now,

consumers, workers would have to pay

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00:12:43,625 --> 00:12:48,437

higher costs of this regulation, but

firms are being given windfall profits.

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00:12:48,437 --> 00:12:53,787

Now, a second problem with a way that the

Kyoto Protocol and the European Union

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00:12:53,787 --> 00:13:00,163

emissions trading system is what is often dubbed as hot air. Now,

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00:13:00,163 --> 00:13:06,853

a system like that... I mean, let alone the whole ideological and moral and ethical

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00:13:06,853 --> 00:13:11,236

issue of whether we should privatize and whether we should have a market for

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00:13:11,236 --> 00:13:16,268

pollution for permits, right. If you want to have a market, you need to do it well,

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00:13:16,268 --> 00:13:21,877

right. And these markets collapse if you issue two larger number of permits. If

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00:13:21,877 --> 00:13:28,285

permits are floating around, why would you conduct any emissions reduction? Now,

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00:13:28,285 --> 00:13:33,356

I'm going to show you later that, but this is a very large problem of the way

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00:13:33,356 --> 00:13:37,562

that the emissions trading schemes have been operated and have run over the last

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00:13:37,562 --> 00:13:43,235

5-6 years, right. What's the reason? The way that these systems basically

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00:13:43,235 --> 00:13:49,024

tied the number of permits to what different countries were emitting in

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00:13:49,024 --> 00:13:55,040

1990, meant that countries whose economies collapsed in the 1990s now have a large

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00:13:55,040 --> 00:14:00,884

number of permits just floating around. So, Eastern Europe right now Bulgaria,

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00:14:00,884 --> 00:14:05,524

Russia, and other countries in the Eastern Europe, which basically, who

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00:14:05,524 --> 00:14:11,704

experienced large shocks after 1990, have large number of unused permits, so these

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00:14:11,704 --> 00:14:19,368

basically compromise the effectiveness of the entire system. Now the last thing, regarding clean development mechanism, there's many

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00:14:19,368 --> 00:14:23,639

cases where it's being documented that these projects are not just innocent

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00:14:23,639 --> 00:14:28,579

projects, right. There's many cases that is clearly documented that in order for

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00:14:28,579 --> 00:14:34,650

these projects to run, the local communities have to be evicted, right. So,

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00:14:34,650 --> 00:14:41,424

aside from that, it's very... the environmental benefits are questionable, to say

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00:14:41,424 --> 00:14:47,866

the least, right. Why? Because the capability mechanism is very

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00:14:47,866 --> 00:14:54,937

liberal in what allows to be considered a project that reduces emissions. Now if

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00:14:54,937 --> 00:15:01,680

you go to Brazil and you install a clean coal factory, clean coal utility plant,

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00:15:01,680 --> 00:15:07,584

that can be considered as emissions reduction. Why? Even though you're looking

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00:15:07,584 --> 00:15:12,223

in Brazil for 20 or 30 years to be you know operating with coal, you are

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00:15:12,223 --> 00:15:16,925

basically are considered as doing something better that would... would be the

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00:15:16,925 --> 00:15:21,096

business-as-usual scenario. The last thing is that we don't have verification

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00:15:21,096 --> 00:15:26,403

mechanisms, right. So verification mechanisms are very, very... are not up to

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00:15:26,403 --> 00:15:31,074

the task, basically, and the World Bank which is a major funder, a major

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00:15:31,074 --> 00:15:35,907

facilitator of this project, basically, thinks that verification mechanisms are

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00:15:35,907 --> 00:15:40,515

not necessary, because the market with its ability to discern effective from

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00:15:40,516 --> 00:15:46,083

non effective is going to weed out those projects that are real versus those that are not.

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00:15:46,083 --> 00:15:54,067

Now let me show you something regarding the hot air. These are the allowance prices for CO2 reductions and you can see that

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00:15:54,067 --> 00:16:02,407

the allowance prices are collapsing right now, right. If you look at the dotted line, (I don't know if you can see it here)

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00:16:02,407 --> 00:16:15,789

the dotted line starts around \$30 in 2007, and is around \$5, actually not quite... \$5 in 2012. Right now, you can buy an emissions

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00:16:15,789 --> 00:16:23,558

reduction unit for seven cents. Now, if you can buy the equivalent of a ton of

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00:16:23,558 --> 00:16:29,653

CO2 reductions for seven cents why would you ever perform these reductions

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00:16:29,653 --> 00:16:41,113

anywhere, so this system is basically not working. Let me go to a second case and let me talk about

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00:16:41,113 --> 00:16:49,355

agriculture and food which is another contested area, right. And we all know about the

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00:16:49,355 --> 00:16:53,780  
Green Revolution and the dominance of  
industrial agriculture after World War II

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00:16:53,780 --> 00:16:58,619  
and I'm sure most of you have noticed  
or noticed the food riots that

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00:16:58,619 --> 00:17:03,558  
happened around the world in 2007 and  
2008, right. And these food riots were

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00:17:03,558 --> 00:17:08,955  
the result of the increased food prices  
as a result of speculation in food markets,

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00:17:08,955 --> 00:17:13,298  
right. We're in a period of low interest  
rates, so if you want to make money,

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00:17:13,298 --> 00:17:19,348  
you have to find commodities to speculate  
on. And food commodities are a good case

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00:17:19,348 --> 00:17:26,332  
of that. Now, at the same time, I don't  
know if people noticed or people have

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00:17:26,332 --> 00:17:28,205  
heard about where land grabs in Africa.

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00:17:28,205 --> 00:17:38,935  
Right now, we have... I don't know how to call it,  
it's basically an attempt to recolonize

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00:17:38,935 --> 00:17:42,536  
Africa assumptions, like different  
countries and different companies are

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00:17:42,536 --> 00:17:48,088

trying to get land in Africa, right. And the idea would be that this is where you

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00:17:48,088 --> 00:17:50,104

would be able to produce food in the future.

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00:17:50,104 --> 00:17:57,019

Now, these projects are happening under the auspices of the World Bank and let

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00:17:57,019 --> 00:18:02,497

me say that they are questionable, to say the least. So, who has private property

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00:18:02,497 --> 00:18:07,029

rights? And what communities are selling off their land? Or, you know, is their land

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00:18:07,029 --> 00:18:11,725

being taken away from them? Is women's land being taken away from them? You know,

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00:18:11,725 --> 00:18:17,107

does everybody understand what is going on there? That's not very clear. The last

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00:18:17,107 --> 00:18:20,491

thing is something from the US, I don't know if you caught this two weeks ago,

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00:18:20,491 --> 00:18:26,363

the Monsanto Protection Act, where basically Congress passed the

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00:18:26,363 --> 00:18:30,456

Farmer Assurance Provision of House Resolution 933, which basically produce

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00:18:30,456 --> 00:18:35,591

is protecting companies that are producing genetically modified crops

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00:18:35,591 --> 00:18:41,231

from any future litigation against them for negative health risks and effects

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00:18:41,231 --> 00:18:45,180

that may be proven in the future, right. So, basically the Congress is protecting

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00:18:45,180 --> 00:18:51,040

its telling them "you're never going to get sued, right. If, I mean if, in the

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00:18:51,040 --> 00:18:54,957

future, we find out that there are negative health risks associated with

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00:18:54,957 --> 00:19:02,452

genetically modified crops, you are going to be covered. You are not going to be sued." Now,

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00:19:02,452 --> 00:19:06,876

what I would like to tell you, excuse me. What I would like to tell you about is

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00:19:06,876 --> 00:19:11,664

organic farming, right. And especially organic farming in Europe, because the

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00:19:11,664 --> 00:19:19,308

idea is that, first of all, that organic farming represents an anomaly to the

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00:19:19,308 --> 00:19:25,045

neoliberal ideal. Why? Over the last 20 years, European countries are subsidizing

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00:19:25,045 --> 00:19:29,327

farmers heavily to convince them to switch to organic farming. And this has

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00:19:29,327 --> 00:19:34,471

been very successful. You have countries that are operating with over 10%

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00:19:34,471 --> 00:19:39,724

of their land being transitioned to organic farming. So, Austria is around 14%,

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00:19:39,724 --> 00:19:43,471

Sweden's around 14%, other countries went from 0 to 10%

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00:19:43,471 --> 00:19:48,310

within 10 years. Now, the idea here is that, I mean part of it is...

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00:19:48,310 --> 00:19:53,471

part of it is associated with a different vision that Europeans like to think that

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00:19:54,471 --> 00:19:59,645

they have regarding their... their... their version of capitalism, right. They always,

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00:19:59,645 --> 00:20:04,079

you know, Europeans like to think that they are green capitalist as opposed to

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00:20:04,079 --> 00:20:07,689

the US, which is destructive capitalism. But that's a different story,

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00:20:07,689 --> 00:20:12,460

right. Again, it's considered and again it's associated with legitimacy, right.

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00:20:12,460 --> 00:20:18,506

It's about how our capitalism is better than yours. Now, this subsidies are an

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00:20:18,506 --> 00:20:23,803

anomaly in the neoliberal paradigm, right, because, at the same time that the

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00:20:23,803 --> 00:20:27,411

European Commission is going around the world telling African farmers not...

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00:20:27,411 --> 00:20:31,182

telling African governments not to subsidize their farmers. They are doing

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00:20:31,182 --> 00:20:35,249

the exact opposite. Now, they're green washing it and they say that this is something

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00:20:35,249 --> 00:20:38,650

that we're doing for environmental purposes and this is something that

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00:20:38,650 --> 00:20:44,342

we're doing because this type of organic farming confers other positive

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00:20:44,342 --> 00:20:51,435

externalities. It supports the small farm. It supports environmental benefits, but this is not quite the case.

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00:20:51,435 --> 00:20:59,906

Now, this is the average farm size in

hectares in 2000 and 2007 for different

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00:20:59,906 --> 00:21:05,272  
countries for conventional and for  
organic farms. And I apologize in advance,

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00:21:05,272 --> 00:21:09,539  
because you can't quite see the numbers,  
but the basic idea is that in most

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00:21:09,539 --> 00:21:15,239  
European countries, conventional farms  
are much larger... organic farms are much

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00:21:15,239 --> 00:21:20,494  
larger than conventional farms. In some  
cases the difference is just

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00:21:20,494 --> 00:21:23,899  
mind-blowing, like if you look at  
Bulgaria over there,

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00:21:23,899 --> 00:21:30,213  
the average organic farm is 84 hectares;  
the average conventional farm is 6

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00:21:30,213 --> 00:21:36,347  
hectares. In most cases, it's the same  
thing, Hungary - the average conventional

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00:21:36,347 --> 00:21:40,948  
farm is 6 hectares. By the way, if you  
want to convert this to acres, a hectare

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00:21:40,948 --> 00:21:46,315  
is 2.5 acres, right. So the average  
conventional farm is 6 hectares; the

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00:21:46,315 --> 00:21:52,990  
average organic farm is 350 hectares,  
right and the same pattern operates in

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00:21:52,990 --> 00:21:57,909  
most of Europe right. So, is this a new opportunity for

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00:21:57,909 --> 00:22:04,036  
capital? Yes, this is not organic - this is  
not an idyllic farming, this is not an

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00:22:04,036 --> 00:22:07,984  
organic farming, where you know you have  
a small farmer and he's like working

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00:22:07,984 --> 00:22:12,513  
with his father, you know, with his old  
father, and his grandmother, or something

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00:22:12,513 --> 00:22:17,151  
like that, plowing the land and, you know,  
like doing the type of organic farming

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00:22:17,151 --> 00:22:21,155  
that we associate with small and  
sustainable. This is industrial organic

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00:22:21,155 --> 00:22:25,692  
farming, which happens in the US by the  
way, right, but the Europeans always

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00:22:25,692 --> 00:22:28,999  
claimed that conventionalization of  
organic farming is not something that

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00:22:28,999 --> 00:22:34,343  
should bother them, that they are  
different. So, what we have here, again, we

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00:22:34,343 --> 00:22:38,416

have a movement of the organic, from an organic movement to an organic sector.

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00:22:38,416 --> 00:22:44,765

And organic goes from a movement to a set of guidelines, you know. Is this

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00:22:44,765 --> 00:22:51,328

organic? Can I use this fertilizer or not? At the same time, labor considerations

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00:22:51,328 --> 00:22:54,022

becomes secondary, to say the least.

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00:22:54,022 --> 00:23:00,623

Aside from the fact that we can see that organic farmers are utilizing less labor

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00:23:00,623 --> 00:23:07,160

per hectare, they are much larger both in terms of size and in terms of value and

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00:23:07,160 --> 00:23:13,108

we really don't have a sense of like what labor standards they are utilizing on these farms.

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00:23:13,108 --> 00:23:18,446

The last thing I'd like to talk about is the current environmental conflicts in Greece. Now,

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00:23:18,446 --> 00:23:24,249

some of the most visible cases of resistance towards austerity have been

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00:23:24,249 --> 00:23:29,474

waged around environmental struggles in Greece. We had the opposition against

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00:23:29,474 --> 00:23:36,268

the creation of a dump in Keratea suburb  
outside Athens, but the most important

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00:23:36,268 --> 00:23:41,233

case is the opposition to a gold mine  
expansion in Skouries. This is an area

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00:23:41,233 --> 00:23:46,274

in northern Greece where a Canadian  
company basically wants, to wants to set

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00:23:46,274 --> 00:23:52,829

up an open pit mine to extract gold in  
the middle of an old-growth forest. Now,

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00:23:52,829 --> 00:23:58,024

the company TSX estimates that  
they are going to generate 3,000 tons of

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00:23:58,024 --> 00:24:02,959

toxic dust per hour, right. This is an  
area that is aside from... the aside from the

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00:24:02,959 --> 00:24:07,721

aside from the.. from the forest,  
aside from the fact that

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00:24:07,721 --> 00:24:12,127

this is a pristine area, it's going to  
have very clear negative implications

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00:24:12,127 --> 00:24:16,271

for agriculture, for fisheries, and for  
the water, and the soil quality of the

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00:24:16,271 --> 00:24:22,135

residents who live there. Now, even before the establishment of the open pit mine,

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00:24:22,135 --> 00:24:28,425

even right now, the arsenic levels in water are 49,000 times above the legal

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00:24:28,425 --> 00:24:34,536

limit. The manganese levels are 2600 times above the

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00:24:34,536 --> 00:24:42,190

limit, right. And at the same time, this company is trying to establish a much

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00:24:42,190 --> 00:24:50,622

more heavy process. Now at the same time the state is effectively surrendering to capital,

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00:24:50,622 --> 00:24:53,536

right, because we are talking about Greece, we are talking about a country

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00:24:53,536 --> 00:24:59,140

that is trying to attract investment at all costs, right. So environmental

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00:24:59,140 --> 00:25:04,579

considerations are becoming secondary. So the value of minerals, to give you an

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00:25:04,579 --> 00:25:11,486

idea, is estimated at 15.5 billion euros, and the government, not only

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00:25:11,486 --> 00:25:18,248

enable the transfer of this mine to the company for 11 million euros, but also

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00:25:18,248 --> 00:25:22,430  
then subsidize the company with another  
15 million euros, right. So you have a

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00:25:22,430 --> 00:25:27,541  
clear case where capital is basically  
getting from a cash-strapped

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00:25:27,541 --> 00:25:34,412  
state whatever it wants. At the same time,  
it's noteworthy that in a country that is

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00:25:34,412 --> 00:25:40,245  
being plagued by 27% of unemployment,  
the residents are saying no to that type of

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00:25:40,245 --> 00:25:44,451  
development. On the one hand, they're  
being blackmailed, right, because they're

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00:25:44,451 --> 00:25:48,149  
being told that if they want to get a  
job, they have to say yes to anything, but

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00:25:48,149 --> 00:25:52,798  
at the same time, you see a very, very  
strong resistance to that type of

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00:25:52,798 --> 00:25:57,168  
project, right. So, it's very clear that  
capital is going to reap the benefits

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00:25:57,168 --> 00:26:01,169  
and then capital is going to move on,  
right, and establish a different

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00:26:01,169 --> 00:26:06,445  
open-pit mine in Romania, or in northern  
Africa, or wherever it wants. But the

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00:26:06,445 --> 00:26:09,984

labor, the workers, and the local communities are the ones who are going

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00:26:09,984 --> 00:26:17,188

to stay there, so because of this reaction, we have seen a very increased

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00:26:17,188 --> 00:26:20,092

repression. I mean there's no other way of saying this,

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00:26:20,092 --> 00:26:27,162

I like basically, the state has sent in the special police units, right. And let me just show you a picture that I think captures that.

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00:26:27,162 --> 00:26:33,809

I don't know if you can see this the woman, you can't quite see it, this is an older woman,

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00:26:33,809 --> 00:26:42,897

basically, and I don't know how to describe him, and some sort of a cop - clothing

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00:26:42,897 --> 00:26:48,350

like body armor, right. So basically the state has sent in the special police units

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00:26:48,350 --> 00:26:52,722

to repress any sort of activity that would silence this type of investment.

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00:26:52,722 --> 00:26:59,062

It sent the police into the high school, because, it sent the police into

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00:26:59,062 --> 00:27:02,531

the high school to capture people  
who might be demonstrating against

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00:27:02,531 --> 00:27:07,834

imposition of this project. And it  
basically has a shut off the roads, I mean,

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00:27:07,834 --> 00:27:16,373

you cannot basically approach the place where  
the open pit mine is going to be set up. Now,  
where does this leave us, if we want to like...

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00:27:16,373 --> 00:27:22,851

I'm not gonna draw a conclusion,  
but I want to like open up the space for

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00:27:22,851 --> 00:27:27,487

discussions, understand. What I would like  
us to think about is that distributional

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00:27:27,487 --> 00:27:30,869

dimensions are at the core of  
environmental policies, environmental

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00:27:30,869 --> 00:27:36,230

conflicts. All of these cases are not cases  
that, you know like, we held our hands to

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00:27:36,230 --> 00:27:40,517

save the environment. There's something  
else going on; and distribution is at the

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00:27:40,517 --> 00:27:45,245

core of what we have to address; and what  
we have to think about. So, in the last 30

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00:27:45,245 --> 00:27:50,450

years, capital has penetrated new areas  
in search of profit and, at the same time,

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00:27:50,450 --> 00:27:55,421

it has attacked both labor, as we saw in the first slides, and local communities.

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00:27:55,421 --> 00:27:59,233

Now, the real challenge is how to articulate the struggles in a way that

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00:27:59,233 --> 00:28:04,717

are combining the labor struggle and the struggle of communities for quality of

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00:28:04,717 --> 00:28:08,509

life. And I think that this is an open discussion and, you know, like hopefully,

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00:28:08,509 --> 00:28:14,971

Taki will talk more about the role of movements, but I think this is an open

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00:28:14,971 --> 00:28:21,080

project. Thank you.