

From Climate Crisis to Climate Culling

Dis-Ecologies of Snuff Capital

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We have entered a period which I have taken to calling snuff capitalism—accumulation by elimination. Capital has moved past the mere accumulation by dispossession that David Harvey has written about extensively. Beyond dispossession, which Harvey argues clears routes for capital circulation, capital has moved to eliminate anything and everything that might pose a drain on accumulation (anything that might “waste” a penny for capital). This includes even minimal social spending that might support poor and unemployed working-class people, such as social housing, unemployment benefits, welfare, health care, etc. Increasingly it involves eliminating the poor and unemployed themselves—those deemed by capital to be useless to production or consumption—as through assisted suicide and elimination of supports for drug users (safe supply, harm reduction) or unhoused people such that the expected outcome is most likely death. It can include removal of health and safety protections for workers (in industries where capital believes those workers can be readily replaced). War, of course, remains a key means for capital to kill people.

Capitalist eliminationism also includes active pursuit of ecocide. This is occurring through the elimination of regulations on industry, opening previously protected natural spaces for extraction, conversion of land into pesticide wastelands for industrial farming, mining of the seas and oceans, etc. We see numerous examples, such as the Trump regime’s plans to open pristine areas for oil drilling, as in the Arctic. Perversely, the United States government has formed a committee that has the power to decide when extinction is acceptable. The Endangered Species Committee—colloquially known as the God Squad—was created under the Endangered Species Act. It can exempt projects from law when protecting a species interferes with major economic interests. After three decades without meeting, the committee recently approved drilling in the Gulf of Mexico that could lead to extinction of the critically endangered Rice’s whale (only 51 of which are still alive).

Ecocidal eliminationism also includes new wars and occupations. The recently launched Israel-US war on Iran is causing immense ecological crises in addition to the thousands of people murdered in the imperialist assault. I will address this in detail in an upcoming article.

Climate crises provide opportunities for eliminationism on mass scales at accelerated pace. For capital, it is a low-cost way for clearing away human and natural obstacles to accumulation. And it allows them to do so in a way that permits them to make claims of blamelessness (as opposed to wars for example).

Most of the people and places most severely impacted by climate crises are poor—excluded from production and consumption for capital by regimes of enforced scarcity. While reasonable people would view this as an atrocity, and reason to more quickly address climate destruction, for capital it is a boon—and reason to allow, or even encourage, climate crises to occur, and occur more precipitously.

Entire regions and areas are designated for culling. Mike Davis refers to national sacrifice zones, “using this term to think about the ecological disaster to which certain regions of the US have been relegated, since neither these spaces nor their inhabitants are considered to be productive elements of the capitalist system.” (Sayak Valencia, 2018, *Gore Capitalism*. South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), p. 182)

Accelerating Past the Point...

There are more and more indications that some of the world's tipping points, such as drastic changes to ocean currents, could be breached in a future that is no longer very distant. Today's rate of global warming—more than 1.3 degrees C (2.3 degrees F) in only the last hundred years—is already completely unprecedented in human history.

And it is only getting worse. Global warming is accelerating, going from 1.4 to 1.6 degrees C in 2023 to two degrees C and rising by the 2030s. It could blow past two degrees before the end of the century. New research published in March 2026 in *Geophysical Research Letters*, finds that the rate of global warming has accelerated since 2015, even after accounting for other phenomena such as volcanic eruptions, solar radiation and natural variability, “with faster warming over the last 10+ years than during any previous decade.”

Wall Street analysts are already anticipating a world that has warmed at least 3 degrees, an eventuality that would render parts of the world uninhabitable and cause widespread economic devastation. Most aspects of our current society, from logistics to infrastructure to food systems, are unsuited to withstand such shocks.

But that devastation, ecological and economic, would of course be borne almost entirely by the poor working class and peasantry. Snuff capital is not only fine with this, it is planning for it. Capital envisions its own flourishing in a world of protected enclaves with robots for labor, military protections, and circulation among those who remain with enough wealth to purchase.

A study published in March 2026 in *Environmental Research: Health* finds that one-third of the world's population now resides in areas where heat severely limits activity. Climate breakdown is reducing the amount of time that people can safely go about their daily lives. On average, people over 65 now experience approximately 900 hours each year when heat severely restricts safe outdoor activity. This is compared with 600 hours in 1950. This means they are losing the equivalent of more than a month of daytime hours. Rising temperatures are making it increasingly difficult even for many young, otherwise healthy adults to do basic physical activities, such as housework or walking up stairs during daylight hours at the height of the summer.

As is the case under capitalism, those worst impacted are working-class people and peasants and those in poorer countries or regions. Precisely those who are far less responsible for climate breakdown than wealthy consumers. And precisely those whom capital has determined are unneeded for production or consumption.

In some tropical and subtropical regions, heat now restricts outdoor activity for older adults for between one-quarter and one-third of the year. Among the most severe outcomes are found in south Asia (Pakistan, Bangladesh, India) and parts of west Africa (Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Djibouti and Niger).

Accelerating Extraction, Clearing Obstacles

Liberal democracies are swiftly reorienting away from even minimal climate policies and redoubling efforts to advance extractive industries and projects—domestically through neocolonial initiatives in settler colonial nations like Canada and abroad through renewed imperialist adventures.

One of the first acts of the new Liberal government of Canada, under Prime Minister and global banker Mark Carney, was the creation of a Major Projects Office to speed up approvals of economic developments. It started by fast-tracking 10 mega-projects, including two massive liquefied natural gas plants and an open-pit mine in British Columbia, a nuclear plant in Ontario, a Quebec shipping terminal, and wind power in Atlantic Canada. The government estimates that those developments alone are worth 116 billion Canadian dollars (US\$85 billion).

A great deal for capital, but this will come at great ecological cost. It will also come at devastating cost to Indigenous communities, whose lands will be opened up to extraction in violation of their rights and title and sustenance.

The British Columbia government (social democratic New Democratic Party) is joining the extractives push with its Infrastructure Projects Act (Bill 15), which gives the government new powers to exempt selected projects from existing rules. It would also remove opportunities for Indigenous-led environmental assessments and would cut the number of public comment periods and opportunities for consensus-seeking with First Nations by half.

Similar deregulation is, of course happening in the US. The “Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026,” sent to a House vote in the spring of 2026, is one such gift to agribusiness and pesticides companies. Section 10205 prevents consumers and farmers harmed by pesticides from suing companies over inadequate safety labeling. Section 10206 would overturn state and local laws protecting food safety. Section 10207 would repeal federal statutes created to protect people and animals from pesticides. Section 12006 would overturn animal welfare laws.

The Trump administration has also moved to expand domestic oil and gas production and reverse previous restrictions on drilling in the Alaska reserve. In March, the government held its largest-ever sale of oil and gas drilling rights in Alaska’s National Petroleum Reserve. More than \$163 million in winning bids were secured from industry giants including Repsol, Shell, ConocoPhillips and ExxonMobil.

In addition to pushing the fossil fuel developments that drive climate destruction, the area slated for drilling will negatively impact habitat for polar bears, caribou and migratory birds. This will lessen their chances for surviving climate crisis.

In April 2026, the US Bureau of Land Management announced plans to quadruple the amount of logging in the forests it manages. The agency plans to change management frameworks for areas designated as O&C Lands (named for the Oregon and California Railroad company that once owned them). The Bureau has its sights set on 2.5 million acres of forests across 17 counties throughout Oregon. Notably, this plan includes previously protected mature and old-growth forests. This is meant as a return to the days of clearcutting of old growth forests and unsustainable devastation of natural areas. It will also negatively impact rare species like coho salmon, marbled murrelets and northern spotted owls, and wipe out key habitat connectivity corridors.

The accelerationist planned culling eliminates the speed bump of a public hearing on the issue. Less than a month was allowed for written submissions only.

The Militarist Snuff Drive

The return to bare faced imperialism and military expansionism— from the US-Israel war on Iran to the invasion of Venezuela and US bombings of Ecuador—shows clearly the jettisoning of even the façade of concern for the environment or climate, much less planetary survival. It also

shows that the new era of capitalist culling will be undertaken with the most gusto and relish by capital's states.

Not only are militarism, imperialism and war the most surefire, tried and true, means of exterminating large masses of the working class quickly, the militarist ramp-up means certain devastation for the planet and an exacerbation of climate disaster.

And this occurs through all stages of militarism and war. From the ecological devastation of military production and waste, to the greenhouse gas emissions of military equipment and logistics and infrastructure, through to the eradication of entire ecosystems through acts of military deployment, and, of course, war itself.

Members of the working class and entire regions of the natural, and social, worlds will simply be wiped out. Deemed unusable. Written off, in the language of capitalist accounting.

Perhaps the most emblematic example of snuff capital's accumulation by elimination has been the genocide perpetrated by Israel in Gaza. Many were rightly shocked when Donald Trump announced his plans for a "riviera of the Middle East" last year, complete with an AI-generated vision of "Trump Gaza." But we need to be clear that this is profoundly, and perversely, snuff capital's vision of the future. Wiping out hundreds of thousands of people (who are deemed an obstacle to accumulation) for a golden Trump Gaza hotel where the US president and his capitalist sponsors can sip cocktails with Benjamin Netanyahu beside a pool.

Green New World, Not Green New Deals

The acceleration of ecocide (and democide and genocide) by capital and its states means that we too, the exploited and oppressed, must accelerate and escalate our struggles for the end of capitalism. Green New Deal talk is fantasy. Capital is in desperate accumulation mode. It's not bargaining, it's violently pursuing extraction, exploitation, extermination. We cannot entertain pipe dreams and lullabies by which we're marched to the slaughterhouse.

In terms of climate change, the damage may already be irreparable, even if we reduced emissions to zero today.

Sabotage, strikes, blockades, occupations, reclamations become pressing necessities. Militant alliances between rank-and-file workers and Indigenous land defenders are essential in these struggles. Some of these actions, on a too-small scale, were experimented with in resistance to the genocide in Gaza—port blockades, sabotage of arms manufacturers, etc. We need to scale them up and spread them. Rapid response networks and flying squads, which have been deployed by neighbors resisting ICE violence in some US cities, are also promising.

We need to actively and materially reclaim commons. The Earth is full with splendid gifts. As commons these gifts are anathema to capital. In enclosure they become private resources for accumulation. And they become imperiled—rendered as scarcity, dead commodities.

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