TWENTY FEATURES, MECHANISMS, LIABILITIES of US CAPITALISM versus ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE, AND CORRECTIVES, REMEDIES. A Topical Guide to Breaking the Chains of Capitalism That Are Destroying the Climate. By Dick Bennett


Naomi Klein, *No Is Not Enough*. “…the culture of maximum extraction, of endless grabbing and disposing, has reached some kind of breaking point. Clearly, it is the culture itself that must be confronted now, and not policy by policy, but at the root” (262).

Klein, *This Changes Everything*. “The “real reason we are failing to rise to the climate moment is because the actions required directly challenge our reigning economic paradigm. Only when we identify these chains do we have a chance of breaking free” (63).

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What are the features of capitalism? Here are twenty:


**Capital accumulation**, Drive for personal *profit*, need for continuous growth

**Commodification**, turning everything into a product for sale

**Growth** essential to profit, exceeding natural boundaries, exhausting resources

**Over-Consumption** in developed countries

**Monopoly**, Consolidation, Purchase of or Merger with Competitors

**Massive Criminal Corporations**: Wells Fargo, Johnson & Johnson….

**Instability of Market System**

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Globalism

Absence of Left

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TWENTY FEATURES EXPANDED IN CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE


Climate: Drive for profit led to extraction from commons until CO2, warming, weather extremes, extinctions

Alternative: Attitude of equality of human, other species, air, soil; rejection of commodification as source of value,

Capital Accumulation, Drive for personal profit, need for continuous growth

Liabilities: inequality, poverty, accentuation of class gaps; as illust. by the 6th Extinction, capital accumulation destroys itself

Relevance to climate catastrophe: unequal economic adaptation to cc, particular vulnerability of the poor to cc consequences

Alternative: labor theory of value, altruism, equality, cooperation, welfare of all

Commodification

Liabilities: turning all the earth’s resources into capital even though they are finite; selfishness, gluttony, competitiveness, shortsightedness, using up resources as fast as possible for growth and profit

Climate catastrophe: disastrous pillage of the planet

Alternative: generosity, cooperation, long-range planning, affirmative government

Growth

Liabilities: exceeding the planetary boundaries, exhaustion of resources, 6th Great Extinction

Climate catastrophe: all other causes are exacerbated by endless growth
Alternative: Quality of Life not GDP as measure of success, *Why the GDP Is Not A Good Measure of A Nation's Well Being*...

**Consumption**

Liabilities: consumption as end itself, acquire even what you don’t need, individual obesity, diabetes;

Climate catastrophe: exhaustion of resources, carnivorism major cause of methane


**Monopoly**, Consolidation, Purchase of or Merger with Competitors

Liabilities: Ceaseless efforts to eliminate competition, monopoly goal to ensure *profit*. NADG (9-13-16). “Merger to Create Largest Fertilizer Firm.”

“Horizon Will buy Drugmaker for $80M.”

Climate Catastrophe: minimizing, marginalizing public influence in economic system, prices, quality

Alternative or corrective: strict anti-trust laws and enforcement; cooperation, co-ops, worker ownership

**Massive Criminal Corporations**

Liabilities: Too big to fail or prosecute and the public to pay; e.g., Exxon denial of climate change

Climate Catastrophe: destruction of the planet

Alternative, Corrective: Seize their assets to fund reduction of carbon emissions

**Instability of Market System**

Liabilities: Boom leading by overproduction to Bust, businesses destroyed, enormous economic and human waste, periodic crises encouraged by advertisement of over-accumulation compelling investors to seek foreign markets (excellent one-paragraph summary of Boom and Bust in *Creating an Ecological Society* p. 339 footnote #9).

Climate Catastrophe: Periodic implosion of people’s savings and investments when money needed for mitigation and adaptation

Alternative: cooperatives, close government watch of Wall Street

**Advertising**, Inducing Consumption, Creating Needs,

Liabilities: culture of deception, society of deceit, persistent subversion of truth and trust: (Valera promoting its “clean” gasoline)

Climate catastrophe: chief mechanism of exhaustion of resources by consumption

Alternative: strict government oversight of lying about products, critical thinking education K-12.

**Hostility to the Commons**

Liabilities: If there is to be profit, the commons should be unregulated: government protections of the public’s land should be minimal, and therefore
growth, commodification, consumption, capital accumulation, monopoly should be free of hindrances.

Climate Catastrophe: The Commons is a bulwark against commercial exploitation and therefore of warming; for example the national forests. The Resilient Federal forests Act of 2017 backed by the timber industry would eliminate thorough assessments of deforestation, reduce management requirements, would fast-track more cuttings, limit judicial restraining orders, and more.

Alternative: Preservation and expansion all public ownership (parks, monuments, etc.).

Hostility to Organized Workers, Unions

Liabilities: Workers’ solidarity interferes with owner profit, capital accumulation, monopoly.

Climate Catastrophe: Unions are another bulwark against unregulated owners who would trash workers and nature and the planet.

Alternative:

Work Precariousness, Danger:

Liabilities: The casualisation of work is no aberration of capitalism. It is the logical outcome of a system based on profit.

Climate Change: Injury at work will increase as money decreases for regulation and oversight decrease on account of wars and warming.

Alternatives: Fully active OSHA

Hostility to Government Oversight

Liabilities: abandonment of affirmative government, the only power strong enough to control corporate abuses

Climate Catastrophe: dismantling of government regulatory agencies intended to assist and protect the people (Nader’s Unsafe at Any Speed)

Alternative: return to concept of affirmative government of, by, and for the people

Hostility to Taxes

Liabilities: enfeebling even elimination of the institutions of civilization in health, education, and so on, that require financial support

Climate Catastrophe: all estimates of what will be needed for mitigation and adaptation reach trillions of dollars

Alternative: a just tax system that minimizes gaps between the rich and the poor (definition of just is fair)

INEQUALITY inevitably large gaps between rich an poor

GDP as Measurement of Economic Success

Liabilities: gives false assessment of real needs of society

Climate catastrophe: GDP measurement encourages growth

Alternative: Quality of Life as measure of national success
WARS and IMPERIALISM for RESOURCES, SPACE

Liabilities: ecocide/ecological warfare, extractionism rampant, enormous waste of nations’ resources and treasuries; incalculable suffering by death and relocation of all species,

Climate Catastrophe: resource wars destroy entire nations; e.g. Syria 2016, incalculable cost of restoration

Alternative: conversion of military to civilian needs, abolition of nuclear weapons, prosecution of all war criminals or at the least public confession.

WASTE (see Advertising)

Liabilities: “…today’s monopoly-finance capitalism is a system built on waste. The larger part of production is squandered on negative (or specifically capitalist) use values, in such forms as military spending; marketing expenditures; and the inefficiencies, including planned obsolescence, built into every product.”

Climate Catastrophe: production and consumption of useless commodities increase CO2.

Alternative: Because marketing induces people to buy things they would not otherwise purchase, here’s where we can cut without decreasing the quality of life.

GLOBALISM

Liabilities: Today, global sales account for half the revenue of the S&P 500. Consequently, the consuming public is not the highest priority it was following WWII.

Climate Catastrophe:

Alternative:

ABSENCE OF THE LEFT

Liabilities: Early in the last century a genuine socialist movement awakened the populace to democratic, equalitarian reforms. Today, the plutocrats have little to fear from an organized opponent.

Climate Catastrophe:

Alternative:

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