

Twentieth Annual Historical Materialism Conference

9–12 November 2023, SOAS, Russell Square, Central London

Ecology and Climate Stream

Deadline for abstracts: Monday 12 June 2023

As the world teeters on the threshold of 1.5°C of global warming, the crisis intensifies, each season of disaster seemingly worse than the former. A rise in the prices of fossil fuels began towards the end of the pandemic and was subsequently supercharged by the invasion of Ukraine, leading to an unprecedented profit bonanza and a frenzy of investment in fresh oil and gas projects, at the very moment when these risked pushing the world across the threshold. How should the political economy of this late efflorescence of fossil fuels be understood? What are the links between them and the revival of inter-imperialist rivalry? How is the climate crisis articulated with the wars and other emergencies afflicting the world, in this conjuncture of so-called polycrisis? And, most importantly, what, if anything, can be done to break the curves?

In the one continent where the left retains the capacity to win state power, Latin America, the past year has seen a unique initiative from Colombia: a social formation deeply dependent on the export of oil and coal, now under a government determined to take it off fossil fuels. The reaction from forces of the right has been predictably ferocious. On the other hand, the light-left government of Mexico has again been accelerating its oil and gas production, attesting to the variety of left approaches to extractivism in general and fossil fuels in particular. What provisional balance sheets can be drawn from recent experiences of forces of the left in power? In Africa, some of the most aggressive fossil fuel expansion is unfolding, under the control of northern corporations: what does the landscape of resistance look like here? Asia has seen some of the worst climate disasters in the past year, but remains caught in a developmental trajectory predicated on the relentless growth of coal. What are the prospects for climate action on this continent?

Meanwhile, in the global North, the fledgling climate movement has begun to experiment with a wider range of tactics, while being subject to ever-more heavy-handed repression. What responses can it muster, and what are the prospects for its transformation into a mass movement? How shall recent episodes of intense confrontation – Cop City in Atlanta, Sainte-Soline in France – be regarded: as harbingers of escalation, or dying embers of past cycles of mobilisation? On the intellectual scene, the camps of degrowth and ecomodernism/Green New Deal have continued to clash, with diminishing analytical returns; there is a need for new departures in strategy, theory, even utopian thinking.

And above all this looms the threat of more high-octane capitalist measures for dealing with the crisis, ranging from hostile adaptation to spurious and potentially disastrous schemes for carbon dioxide removal and – the infamous last resort – solar geoengineering. How should progressive forces prepare to intervene in a world of such deepened catastrophe? But then again, climate is only one frontline in a bewildering landscape of ecological crises, spanning the gamut from mass extinction and factory farming to air pollution and ruptured biogeochemical cycles: what does a broader project of ecosocialism look like, one that dares to take these other issues fully into account? What venues exist for building alliances between climate activism and indigenous sovereignty, animal liberation, trade unions, anti-racist movements...?

These are some of the questions in which this year's ecology and climate stream at HM take an interest. We welcome papers on all of these and related questions, approached from the standpoint of an unmistakable, committed, creative and open-minded ecological Marxism.

We welcome submissions for panels and individual papers. Abstracts should be under 300 words, and submissions should indicate that it is for the "Ecology and Climate Stream."

The deadline for submissions is **Monday 12 June 2023**

To submit a paper or panel proposal visit:

<https://conference.historicalmaterialism.org/e/hm2023>

Please note that this is an in-person conference.