

Some Closing Remarks: Learning  
from Environmental History to Make  
our World Habitable, Sustainable,  
and More Equal



## Attendance session

Which of the following best defines eco-socialism?

- A. A social relation and economic system in which workers collectively and democratically control the production of goods and services in accord with an ecological sensibility
- B. An economic system in which Amazon and other tech company workers decide how people will shop online and what they can purchase
- C. A set of policies that regulate capitalist production to deal with “externalities” and allow workers to go on strike for better wages.
- D. A and B
- E. A public-private partnership in which a new form of currency is used to fund infrastructure development and other economic ventures that employ renewable energy sources like solar and wind.

## **Environmental paradigms**

- Conquest
- Preservation/Conservation
- Modern environmentalism
- Environmental Justice
- Sustainability
  - Bruntland sustainability
  - Corporate sustainability/corporate environmentalism

## **Alternative worlds/proposals**

- Technological fixes
- Free market/corporate environmentalism
- Public-private partnerships
- Social democratic
- Eco-socialism

## Closing Remark I

**The Humanities and some social sciences: Question your reality, question your assumptions, interrogate what is often considered unchangeable**

History as antidote to the belief in an immutable world

Foreclosed and suppressed alternatives

History as weapon to question and interrogate why we have arrived  
To where we are today and whose interests are served by it

**News sources and critical perspectives:** The Guardian, New York Times, Washington Post, The Economist, Wall Street Journal. NACLA, China Dialogue, Democracy Now, Jacobin

**Organizations:** Natural Resource Defense Council, Greenpeace, 350org, Global Witness, Pesticide Action Network, Sunrise movement, Extinction Rebellion, Environmental Health Coalition (local)

## **Closing Remark II**

**Questioning reality is the first step to bringing about social and political change**

Myth: People in power benevolently bring us improvement. Or that technology alone can do so

## Closing Remark III

Speaking of interrogating our assumptions...what is “progress” anyway?

Progress has happened

The issue of equating progress with economic growth and  
Subjugation of some mythical “external” Nature

What would a genuine, inclusive, egalitarian and sustainable progress  
look like and how would it be achieved?

## **Closing Remark IV:**

**We are environment makers and changers. We produce “nature” as much as nature produces nature. No binary or opposition between humans and nature.**

The shortcomings of preservation

The shortcomings of corporate environmentalism

A new paradigm that joins environmental health, sustainability and Work/labor



## **Closing Remark V:**

**The task can seem daunting, but it's not impossible. I have presented you with a range of possibilities. My inclination is the following:**

We must take on powerful interests *collectively*

Revolutionize the way we think about humanity, as in and a part of nature

Foster and connect citizen struggles for a healthy environment  
And stable climate around the world.

This struggle is not separate from other social movements/struggles

Closing Remark VI:

**What is being done now that we can build on?**