

these records and suggests that there are chronological similarities between this human transition and the rise of greenhouse gases at a time when existing climatic patterns should have been dictating decreases and cooling temperatures. In effect, Ruddiman contends that the earth was due for another ice age some five thousand years ago, but human activities continue to delay its arrival. Moreover, he notes that subsequent drops in greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere can be linked to concomitant decline in human population as a result of disease (in fourteenth century Europe and a couple of centuries later in the Americas after European contact).

The book is instructive and refreshingly non-technical in its prose. It also offers insight to historians as to how they might think about scientific and environmental processes in the *longue durée* and draw on these materials to write history. Ruddiman's overriding argument is somewhat speculative, but the correlation between human agricultural practices and greenhouse gas emissions is striking and worthy of some consideration, particularly in their very accessible presentation in graphs and tables throughout this book. This is hardly the last word on human influences on climate, but it does complicate historical interpretations that indict the Industrial Revolution as the pivotal turning point in the rise of the current environmental crisis. Ruddiman also challenges his readers to be conscious of the role of human-ecological interactions in our histories. This is important: the take-away message is that not only are humans capable of changing the earth's climate, but also that we have been doing so for millennia. Given our contemporary industrial capacity, it raises some serious questions and concerns over the fragility of the physical environment and our relationship with it.

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Kathryn Hochstetler and Margaret Keck, *Greening Brazil: Environmental Activism in State and Society* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

Until the early 1980s the 'left' was largely 'red' but not 'green' in its concerns and politics—essentially ignoring the nature-society/development relation. However, United Nations Conferences in 1972 and 1992 placed the environment at the centre of agenda at the level of both theory and practice. These conferences stimulated a global environmental movement and several rounds of environmental legislation by governments across the world in the search for a more sustainable form of national development. And, it would seem, the resulting environmental movement also stimulated greater environmental awareness on the left, leading to the formulation of various forms of left-critical analysis and political activism—eco-Marxism, political ecology, eco-feminism, etc. In retrospect it is possible to divide the environmental left into two categories: a dominant stream oriented towards

progressive environmental reform, equity, social democracy and a greener approach to public action combining government and citizen participation, and a much narrower but yet virulent activism oriented towards radical change and viewing capitalism rather than technology-legislation-resource management as the fundamental source of the growing environmental crisis. This division on the left is also manifest in the anti-globalization movement, divided as it is between the opponents of neoliberal globalization and opponents of capitalism and imperialism—and between proponents of ‘another world’ (of human capitalism and ethical globalization) and a socialist systemic alternative.

The book under review is written in the more dominant left tradition of progressive reform—connecting with the current anti-globalization movement in what Walden Bello has defined as ‘global social democracy’. In this reformist tradition, both authors have a well-established and solid well-deserved reputation for substantive intellectual work and environmental activism. This book builds on these contributions, with a close look at the developments in Brazil, which has been at the centre of diverse policy and political debates on the left in regard to the environment-society/development problematic.

In this context the authors, both students of political developments in Brazil, combine extensive participant observation with equally extensive interviews to align their research findings with the growing academic literature on what we might define broadly as the centre-left of environmental reform and anti-globalization in the social democratic tradition. Hochstetler and Keck in this connection argue that the impetus of environmental reform in Brazil arises from within the country and is not a reflex or product of the international movement or global activism. They identify three basic periods of environmental reform in Brazil: the 1950s to the early 1970s, which gave birth to conservation organizations, research institutions and the first state environmental agencies; the 1980s, when a re-democratization process gave rise to activist organizations on the social and political left, bringing together ‘red’ and ‘green’ concerns; and the 1990s to the present, a period that has seen the strengthening of a vibrant civil society and anti-globalization movement that brings together international and local activists and non-governmental organizations in the struggle to influence and change government policy regarding the environment.

Drawing on their previous scholarly work and on a literature that highlights the pivotal importance of environmental activism in the south, the authors trace Brazil’s complex environmental politics over time, from its mid-twentieth century conservationist beginnings to the contemporary development of a socio-environmentalism meant to address ecological destruction and social injustice simultaneously. The authors here argue that Brazilian environmentalism—and environmentalism in the global South generally—must take into account the way that domestic political processes shape environmental reform efforts.

In retelling the story of Brazilian environmental activism Hochstetler

and Keck use a multi-level political analysis that encompasses institutions and individuals within the government—at national, state, and local levels—as well as the activists, interest groups and nongovernmental organizations that operate outside formal political channels but within ‘civil society’. In this connection they emphasize the importance of networks. Portraying a gradual process marked by periods of rapid advance, the authors show how political opportunities have arisen from political transformations such as the transition to democracy and from critical events, including the well-publicized murders of environmental activists in 1988 and 2004. However, rather than viewing (as many do) foreign governments and international organizations as the instigators of environmental policy change in Brazil, they see them as sources of leverage and support, with the agency of reform rooted in a complex of networks that link committed individuals in the government bureaucracy with activists in civil society. In the context of this argument they not only challenge the claim that environmentalism came to Brazil from abroad but also show how social networks and dedicated individuals in Brazil have influenced policy. In light of Brazil’s shaky legal system and mutable institutions, the authors argue that the greatest challenge of environmentalists is to get the government to act so as to close the gap between often well-formulated laws and substantive but divergent realities.

The book is important. It has several strengths, including a well-informed and closely studied portrait of Brazil’s environmental movement. This in itself is a valuable contribution. But the book also has limitations and some blindspots, both intellectual and political. These arise in part out of an analytical framework rooted in a reformist approach to change and in part from the fact that as political scientists they focus on political and policy dynamics to the virtual exclusion of social conditions and political forces rooted in the political economy of the country’s capitalist system. Thus, the authors overstate the agency of middle-class based ‘civil society’ organizations. Of course, a focus on the individual as the agency of change is a hallmark of liberal or social reformism, the tradition in which they think and write and do their research and analysis. Nevertheless, it leads to several disconnects in analysis, including the relationship of environmental activism to the broader popular movement concerned more with class issues. The authors’ analysis of these dynamics in the most recent history of environmentalism in Brazil—red and green connections on the left—is not as firm or as well conceived as their analysis of other issues. The authors could have focused more on the agency of social movements in the popular sector, and on the dynamics of the class struggle over land and other class disputes to make the connections between the red and the green on the Brazilian left.

It is an important book, notwithstanding its limitations. It is important because within these limitations it fills a large gap in the understanding of Brazil’s internal politics on environmental issues—politics with broader global implications. The major implication of the authors’ analysis for the left is that global

activism will not bring about a solution to the global environmental crisis. This requires action at the level of the state, which implies that the left has to understand and come to terms with not only the capital-labour relation in their own society but with the state itself as a repository of political power in effecting social and environmental change.

At the very least the book places activism at the centre of the agenda of analysis and politics. Despite several deficits at the level of leftist analysis and politics the book will likely stimulate further debate on the way forward. For this reason also the book is worth a critical reading.

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Robert Hunter, *The Greenpeace to Amchitka* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004).

The Greenpeace to Amchitka, written as a series of journal entries by recently-deceased Canadian environmentalist and author Robert Hunter, offers readers a first-hand account of the voyage that marked the entry of Greenpeace onto the stage of global environmental politics. In September of 1971, a handful of activists boarded the *Phyllis Cormack*, an eighty-foot fishing boat temporarily renamed the *Greenpeace* for the boat's journey from Vancouver to Amchitka, a small island in the Aleutians off the coast of Alaska where the US government was conducting a series of nuclear tests. Greenpeace's precursor, the Don't Make a Wave Committee, had conceived of the idea of establishing "a floating picket line" in the wake of large-scale protests against the last nuclear test at Amchitka in 1969 (167). Although the voyage of the *Greenpeace* successfully drew media attention to the issue of nuclear testing, due to a number of factors—news that the test had been delayed, difficulties encountered with U.S. customs regulations, and conflicts within the group on board about whether they meant actually to get in the way of the test or simply to elicit public support for their anti-nuclear cause—the *Greenpeace* never reached Amchitka, and the boat's crew arrived back in Vancouver a week before the bomb was detonated. Hunter, who would go on to become co-founder and first president of Greenpeace, admits that he wrote the majority of what resulted in this book with the conviction that the trip had been a failure: it had not stopped the test. But in the portion of his tale written in 2004, he states that in fact "the trip was a success beyond anybody's wildest dreams ... [T]he legacy of the voyage itself is not just a bunch of guys in a fishing boat, but the Greenpeace the entire world has come to love and hate" (236-7).

While the trip may have been a success (the nuclear program at Amchitka was cancelled shortly after the voyage of the *Greenpeace*), Hunter's account of the journey is not. He states that he originally wrote the story while "in terrible