

S-2: Kate Soper

(Professor emerita of Philosophy, London Metropolitan University)

Saturday 15 October, 12.00–13.00, Z-salen

"Marxism, critique and climate change"

The presumption of talk about the 'Anthropocene' is that climate change has somehow inevitably followed from human productivity activity. To adopt a Marxist perspective is to insist, on the contrary, that it is the outcome of capitalist production and consumption – in other words, of a historically specific *form* of wealth production, and one that has proved highly dystopian in both human and environmental terms. In my talk I shall argue that the excellent Historical Materialist account of the causes of climate change provided in recent studies requires an equally de-naturalising assault upon the ideas of progress and human well-being associated with the agendas of global capitalism. What, I shall ask, has Marxism to offer an alternative politics of prosperity? How can it best encourage transition to a post-capitalist and ecologically benign future?

With introduction by Andreas Malm.

*Kate Soper has published widely on Marxism, environmental philosophy, ecocriticism, theory of needs and consumption, and cultural theory. More recent books include *What is Nature? Culture, Politics and the Non-Human* (Blackwell, 1995), *Citizenship and Consumption* (co-editor, Palgrave, 2007) and *The Politics and Pleasures of Consuming Differently* (co-editor, Palgrave, 2008). She has been a member of the editorial collectives of *Radical Philosophy* and *New Left Review* and a columnist for *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*. Her study on 'Alternative hedonism and the theory and politics of consumption' was funded in the ESRC/AHRC 'Cultures of Consumption' Programme (www.consume.bbk.ac.uk). She has participated since in a number of research projects on climate change and sustainable consumption, most recently as a Visiting Fellow at the Pufendorf Institute, Lund University, Sweden.*