

Duquesne University

Duquesne Scholarship Collection

Hallowed Secularism

The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian
Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly
Excellence and Professor of Law

11-9-2014

November 9, 2014: How Destructive Is Capitalism?

Bruce Ledewitz

Duquesne University, ledewitz@duq.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism>



Part of the [Constitutional Law Commons](#), and the [Law and Philosophy Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2014). November 9, 2014: How Destructive Is Capitalism?. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/881>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly Excellence and Professor of Law at Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hallowed Secularism by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact beharyr@duq.edu.

Title: How Destructive Is Capitalism?

Date: 2014-11-09T08:05:00.001-05:00

11/9/2014—It is of course absurd to imagine a non-capitalist economy. After all, what is the alternative? China? Russia? Those are not economic systems at all. They are simply systems of occasional political interference with market forms in the name of the self-interest of powerful elites. So, it is frustrating when the philosopher Martin Heidegger criticizes our prevailing way of life in favor of something else. But it is never clear what the something else is or could be. This is not a criticism of Heidegger. He is not a social mechanic. Nevertheless, it is important to remember just how destructive capitalism is. For only in that way will any kind of change ever take place. By destructive, I am not referring to the recent tendency of the world economy to bubbles and to serious recessions. Capitalism is not even producing the results that it promises for poor people and for the world in general. Just ask Europe. But I suppose those problems can be addressed. I am referring to the way in which capitalism makes us complicit in our own destruction – something Lenin would have recognized in an instant. Here is an example. Alaska is a red State. It elected a Republican senator last Tuesday. But I heard a report on NPR that I do not believe reflects any bias by the network. The story interviewed water resource and utility officials. They deal with the effects of global warming everyday. Those effects in Alaska are very clear and very destructive. The permafrost is melting. No one denies what is happening. No one denies that humans are causing it. These officials are in no sense deniers of global warming. Yet at the same time, because Alaska is so dependent economically on fossil fuel extraction, there is absolutely no support for serious efforts to reduce or halt global warming by holding down greenhouse gas emissions. So Alaska is spending time and money dealing with the consequences. Not only is this a trap, everyone caught in it knows that it is a trap. Everyone knows that global warming is harming Alaska. But market realities are such that absolutely nothing can be done about it. This is the consequence of capitalism. And it is more irrational and more dictatorial than any religion has ever been.