

# WHAT NOW FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE?

*Social Movement Strategies  
for the Final Year of  
Struggle over the Next  
Universal Climate Treaty*

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*Lima, Peru –  
December 5, 2014*

A report compiled from the ranks of  
climate justice advocates and groups, by the  
International Institute of Climate Action & Theory





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Report compiled from the ranks of climate justice advocates and groups  
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[www.iicat.org](http://www.iicat.org)

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### Objectives:

> *to increase climate justice participation* and influence both inside the UN's 2015 treaty process and outside, at the local frontlines of resistance to planet-killing twentieth-century fossil fuel development;

> *to put climate justice forces on the record*, on the eve of adoption of the next universal climate change treaty, which as currently unfolding promises to institute a neoliberal path toward global climate apartheid, defaunation, and ecocide at the hands of entrenched fossil fuel interests, both private corporations and state-owned oil, gas, and energy companies.

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COVER IMAGE: View from the Hilton International Hotel, Caracas, VZ. Richard Widick, 2006.



Seattle, 1999 — Copenhagen, 2009 — Durban, 2011

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## Problem

*The unfolding climate crisis is defined by constantly rising greenhouse gas emissions, accelerating climate change, and the ongoing failure of international/UN and domestic/state climate policy to:*

1) raise the ambition of agreed climate policy initiatives to the level that basic climate science indicates is required to limit average global temperature increase to 1.5° degrees Celsius (the Cochabamba target), not +2°C (the current UNFCCC target), and not +3 °C (the implicit Obama-Jinping target) – while acknowledging business as usual is already hurtling us toward a +4°C world (the number associated with the 2012 World Bank report Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4° World Must Be Avoided)<sup>1</sup>;

2) establish an environmentally and socially just and democratic international climate policy process that garners sufficient popular and civil society representation to reflect the true depth of long-term, inter-generational public/common interest; and

3) reflexively acknowledge the ongoing failure, over 20 years, of carbon trading schemes to raise the price of greenhouse pollution to anywhere near the level necessary to incentivize the dramatic shift to 100% renewables required by the UNFCCC's deep decarbonization mandate, and the related failure to adequately explore alternative approaches such as direct carbon taxation and public investment in renewable energy.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSCContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/12/20/000356161\\_20121220072749/Rendered/PDF/NonAsciiFileName0.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSCContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/12/20/000356161_20121220072749/Rendered/PDF/NonAsciiFileName0.pdf)

## Proposals

*Develop a coordinated “inside/outside” strategy for climate justice politics and social movements in relation to the UN climate talks, based, as we see it, on:*

1) *Encouraging and participating* in globally-oriented but locally-grounded scholarship, class and environmental politics, and *social movement struggles* linking organic, site-specific, bottom-up resistance campaigns against carbon mal-development, with simple messaging aimed at...

2) *forcing* developed, principal emitter states (namely, US, China and the European Union, and increasingly Brazil, Russia, India, Canada, Australia, and South Africa) to put forward strong domestic policy that enables and promotes higher ambition at the UN climate talks, especially as these concern the next universal climate treaty, both in its substance and in the ratification struggles to follow.

Concretely, 1 and 2 mean participating in local struggles; being the voices in local struggles that push for linkage across municipal, state, regional, and member state climate justice constituencies; arguing that now is the time for direct action civil disobedience against fossil fuel mal-development, and that the message of these civil disobedience campaigns must be globally focused, while explicitly aimed at developing home-state domestic political will to: a) put a global price on carbon (using regulation and taxes, not markets); b) raise ambition at the UN climate talks (i.e., raise the targets to indicate 50 percent collective reductions by 2025 and 95 percent by 2040); c) ramp up “additional” (i.e. not already counted or committed) and democratically accountable public financing of all the UNFCCC climate

funds (Green Climate Fund, Special Adaptation Fund, Loss and Damage Mechanism), and d) transform intellectual property rights to drive sustainable technology transfers.

3) *Creating* a Global Public Council on Environmental Economic Truth and Reconciliation (or some such-named entity) charged with open and transparent evaluation of UNFCCC participation, publication, and public commentary produced by corporations, civil society and social movements, and member state governments;<sup>2</sup>

4) *Mobilizing* support for and increasing the visibility of *public scholarship* in the service of climate justice politics, by means of critical analysis of:

a) the power and politics of the one percenters; i.e., elevation of class politics to the front of the environmental/climate justice agenda;

b) carbon markets and state subsidies to fossil fuel corporations and state oil companies;

c) the climate skepticism industry;

– for example, by raising the example of the Koch brothers to yet higher and more transparent visibility and using the case to publicize *the political malevolence of the one percent*.

5) *Globalizing* the university fossil fuel *divestment* movement in ways that recognize the need and right of the global South for

sustainable development and the well-being of peoples.

6) *Ideological Struggle* within the leadership of climate social movements in favor of neutralizing the forces of neoliberalism that are presently blocking domestic US climate policy and in general inhibiting ambition within the UN policy apparatus.

Concretely this means, a) In the US, arguing for constant *attack on Republican denialism* and the “climate lies” industry/funding apparatus (again the Koch example); b) again, developing *a climate truth commission/court*, wherein an independent body investigates the claims of the carbon capitalists and traders, evaluating the carbon markets and market-based solutions already instituted and or/planned by the UN; c) developing a left front within climate justice politics unified against false market-based solutions.

7) *Continuing to develop* climate justice philosophy, politics, and policy initiatives toward the horizon of global environmental and social justice, and away from global social and environmental apartheid.

*Basic principles of Climate Justice philosophy and politics*: all people – poor and rich – have an equal right to participate in climate politics at every scale, and to share the social wealth and security afforded by sustainable development, as dictated by the carbon budget afforded by the natural limits of planet earth, as determined by agreed climate science.

8) *Further development of Climate Justice as cultural politics* – this is the ongoing search for and production of new meanings and new ways of making and disseminating meaning; new definitions of wealth and well-being

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<sup>2</sup> For reference see the efforts of EcoEquity in this direction, their Climate Equity Reference Calculator, and Climate Equity Pledge Scorecard. See also Norden’s 2014 Report Equity and spectrum of commitments in the 2015 agreement.

(*buen vivir*; Ubuntu); new framings and understandings of how human-made laws produce markets that compel both state and private firms and corporations to externalize costs onto labor and environment; new ethics for a new planet marked forever more by climate change.

## Introduction

Richard Widick and John Foran

*Power concedes nothing without demand, demand achieves nothing without struggle, and this time, struggle will achieve nothing without conviction expressed in direct action civil disobedience aimed at preventing carbon mal-development.*

**Climate Deadline – Paris 2015.** The nations will adopt the next universal climate treaty. That treaty is now being written<sup>3</sup> for presentation as a draft text at the crucial South American COP in Lima, offering policy designs for limiting future global average maximum atmospheric warming to a stated maximum increase of no more than two degrees Celsius/3.6 degrees Fahrenheit (although science tells us that 1.5 degrees would be a lot less risky, and social science tells us that would be a herculean feat).

But the national contributions to the new treaty made so far suffer from lack of ambition, indicate ongoing policy deadlock and scandalously deficient finance for adaptation, and thus presage a future more likely defined by global average warming of four, six, or even ten degrees Celsius.

Will the new treaty aiming at two degrees, but likely to shoot higher, determine a path toward global climate apartheid, further separating the world's haves and have-nots

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<sup>3</sup> Read the **NEGOTIATING TEXT**, published by the UNFCCC at the conclusion of the Geneva Climate Change Conference on February 22, 2015:

[http://unfccc.int/files/bodies/awg/application/pdf/negotiating\\_text\\_12022015@2200.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/bodies/awg/application/pdf/negotiating_text_12022015@2200.pdf)

**Follow the National Submissions to the New Treaty** here:

<http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/SitePages/sessions.aspx?showOnlyCurrentCalls=1&populateData=1&expectedsubmissionfrom=Parties&focalBodies=ADP> ;

**Find the key documents** also archived and analyzed by the corporate group C2es here:

<http://www.c2es.org/international/negotiations/select-issues-submissions-adp-2014>.

into two great classes of climate winners and losers?

Or will it instead set a course toward Climate Justice and a more livable future for all of the world's children and their children, and of course the animal nations and ecologies on which all people depend for every kind of economic, cultural, and spiritual sustenance?

This IICAT report compiles and presents a range of strategy statements, analysis, and documents from advocates for the path toward justice and away from climate apartheid.<sup>4</sup>

Our principal purpose in producing this report is to address the hydra-headed specter of mutually reinforcing and viciously interconnected environmental, economic, and politico-military crises that are haunting the globe and inflicting massive harm on populations everywhere -- especially the poorest and most vulnerable in every country and region.

With the stakes so high, climate justice demands, on one hand, a massive re-making of both domestic and global climate governance and development policy, and, on the other, an even more massive transformation of everyday life and consumption habits, especially in the developed world, with a corresponding provision of the rights and requirements of life for all peoples and species.

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<sup>4</sup> We hope in the future to expand this range to include more and diverse voices, especially from women, the global south, and additional public sectors or interests. Please contact us with your feedback and with any proposal that you have for participation in this open-ended project.

**Hitherto demands alone have not been effective.**

The structural violence of today's fossil fuel-driven status quo against the 99 percent indicates the time is near when people will begin taking whatever actions are necessary.

We are entering the next stage of the climate wars, as evidenced, for example, in the tar sands, fracking, mountain-top coal removal, and fossil fuel divestment struggles of recent years in North America. In every case, defenders of these front lines are fighting their own battles against powerful opponents.

Meanwhile, in the less industrially developed world, largely in the global south, forests are cut down to send beef to McDonalds, workers are exploited to create the plastic junk that fills the oceans and garbage dumps of the world, indigenous peoples, peasants, and women and children everywhere see their lands taken. The species experience degradation of their environments and the wanton taking of their bodies, the rising seas encroach on the precious drinking water of small island states, and storms and droughts force populations out of their homes into uncertain journeys.

These campaigns and tragic transformations are postcards from one possible and unhappy future, in which business as usual pushes global warming over the tipping point into runaway climate change, and desperation forces peoples into motion, hopefully first of all into the streets, as was recently witnessed at the People's Climate Marches in New York City and around the world, and not toward violence.

\* \* \* \*

**Redistribution must become the principal demand and strategy for climate justice.**

As you will see in what follows, the unfolding climate crisis profoundly expresses the inequalities that the modern world economic (culture) system has delivered.

Inequality between and within nations has marched in step with the accumulation of obscene profits and wealth in the era of globalization, the origins of which are roughly contemporary with the dawning awareness of the climate crisis in the late 1980s. In 1999, the three wealthiest individuals in the world controlled assets equivalent to the GNPs of the 48 poorest countries on the planet. Today, the world's 85 richest individuals own more wealth than the bottom half of the planet's total population.<sup>5</sup>

Northern oil politics, militarism, and new forms of neo-colonial state-making further maintain and deepen this grotesque and inhumane inequality in today's political, economic, and environmental landscapes of struggle, and this must be recognized and foregrounded in climate justice politics.

**Concentrated wealth is the principal weapon of the one percent.**

The economic problem is one of maldistribution, not scarcity, and justice requires redistribution, and a long overdue check on wealth and privilege in the global North.

Tactically, the entrenched fossil fuel-inflated power of the global one percent, their free market fantasies, and their bought and paid for culture of deception and deceit must be

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<sup>5</sup> OXFAM Briefing Paper 178: *Working for the Few: Political Capture and Economic Inequality* (January 20, 2014), <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/unga14/oxfam.pdf>.



countered and dismantled. They are the ones who every day operate outside and above the law to maintain their edge. Theirs is the politics of criminality.

Russian “capitalism” is plutocratic. China openly argues the virtues of authoritarian state capitalism. US capitalism is in actuality more of a nanny-state socialism for the corporations. South Africa is a kind of proto-Stalinist industrial experiment. Welfarist versions of capitalism barely persist in Scandinavia and a few other places.

Meanwhile, in the twenty-year-old climate negotiations held under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), carbon trading and marketized programs and institutions of one variety or another have come to dominate the entire spectrum of initiatives from climate finance to loss and damage, ever since the grand deception perpetrated by Al Gore at the negotiations for the 1997 Kyoto Protocol first put on the table a basket of so-called “market solutions.”

Industry leaders and champions of this neoliberalization of climate policy continue to enthusiastically promote market solutions while papering over concrete evidence of their failure. A simple look at carbon trading prices indicates that the carbon markets are utterly incapable of fulfilling their official mandate of putting a price on carbon that would incentivize lower global emissions and stimulate demand and direct investment into renewables.

### **Climate Justice: One No, Many Yeses.**

Climate Justice advances a “great refusal” of the dominant myths guiding political economic activity in today’s world – that endless growth is environmentally

sustainable; that the “capitalisms” at work today can reduce inequality and deliver the material, cultural, and spiritual requirements for living well to the whole world; or that global ecology can be sustained as long as the belief reigns that the world’s flora and fauna exist solely for whatever reckless purpose private interests can dream up.

A deepened, more participatory democracy must therefore rise against the anarchy of what today is reductively called *capitalism*, but which might better be described as the litany of economic arrangements engineered according to the arbitrary rule of too often morally bankrupt authoritarian states and corrupt pseudo-democracies that too-largely serve as the lap-dogs of local, national, and global capital formations. The appropriate weapon to wield against them is the participatory politics of popular regulation and control, with the return of collective faith in governance measured out in proportion to the forced withdrawal of capital from the political arena (by which we mean, for example, that progressive campaign finance reform in the US is a prerequisite for reinvestment of faith in governance *for and by the people*, not the corporations).

Henceforth, the climate justice movement should use any and all the tools at its disposal to everywhere oppose *the planet-killing twentieth-century energy technologies advanced by the politicians, financiers, shareholders, and the apologists* of carbon-fueled mal-development. It is time for the social movements to rise to this occasion with conviction, expressed first of all in the practice of direct action civil disobedience at the front lines of planetary eco-defense, and, equally importantly, continue offering constructive alternatives to the status quo, business-as-usual economic, political, and

climate policies that are driving the unfolding climate crisis.

Along these lines, as we see it, the future of Climate Justice must begin with an honest look at the present moment.

Toward that end, we offer this report.

## **Is the Climate Justice Movement Ready to Scale-jump Our Politics?** **(No, not yet – but we'll need to, sooner than later, with Latin American counterpower)**

*Patrick Bond*

Global pessimism and local optimism have recently characterised Climate Justice (CJ) scale politics: *paralysis above, movement below*. It may be opportune to now re-assess global environmental governance as a site of struggle, one that has proven so frustrating over the past two decades.

It is time again to ask, specifically, can hundreds of successful episodes in which communities and workers resist greenhouse-gas generation (“Blockadia” is Naomi Klein’s term for the newly liberated spaces) or seed local post-carbon alternatives, now *accumulate into a power sufficient to shape climate negotiations?*

My answer is, unfortunately, *not yet*. We need to become much stronger and more coherent in rebuilding the CJ movement, once so full of hope, from 2007-09, but since then in the doldrums, even though individual, mostly disconnected activist initiatives have deserved enormous admiration, no more so than in the Americas.

In Lima, Peru, the twentieth annual United Nations “Conference of the Polluters” – “UN COP20” – comes on the heels of two world attention-grabbing policy events: a United Nations special summit in September just after a 400,000-strong Manhattan people’s march and Wall Street blockade, and the Washington-Beijing emissions-timetable deal in November.

The COP20 offers a chance to gauge the resulting balance of forces, especially in the

critical Andean countries where melting mountain glaciers and shrinking Amazonian jungles meet. Here, combinations of the world’s most radical conceptions of nature’s integrity (“Rights of Mother Earth,” *sumak kawsay* and *buen vivir*) combine with concrete struggles – some highly effective – to transcend the destruction of nature or its commodification.

In my experience, the world’s most visionary CJ, post-capitalist politics are fused when Ecuador’s Acción Ecológica eco-feminists find indigenous movement allies and solidarity activists across the world. The Quito NGO had long explored the question of the Global North’s “ecological debt” to the South and to the planet, but it was when oil drilling was proposed in the Yasuni National Park that the stakes were raised for both Acción Ecológica and the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities.

They lost the first rounds of the battle: first, shaming Germany and Norway into making payments to leave the oil in the soil (a total of \$5 billion was demanded, as a down payment on the North’s climate debt), and second, once the money was deemed insufficient, a national referendum to protect Yasuni (regardless of payments) was not treated fairly by Ecuador’s extractivist ruling class.

That struggle and others like it – e.g. Bolivia’s notorious proposed forest highway, TIPNIS – have forced onto the progressive agenda this uncomfortable dilemma: are the “pink” governments of Rafael Correa in Ecuador and Evo Morales in Bolivia – as well as of Nicolas Maduro in nearby Venezuela – capable of generating serious eco-socialist policies consistent with their leaders’ rhetoric? Or instead, are the new elites irretrievably petro-Keynesian, petro-Indigenous and petro-

Socialist, respectively, with radical climate politics foiled by their economies' carbon rentiers?

In Peru itself, the current regime of Ollanta Humala swept into power in 2011 on a pinkish electoral platform. Yet the mining sector has since boomed, with disastrous impacts in the highlands and Amazon alike.

Recall that in 2009, the Awajun and Wampis Peoples and the Interethnic Association for Development of the Peruvian Jungle (Aidesep) blockaded roads in Bagua, leading to a confrontation with the military that left 38 dead and 200 wounded. As Aidesep's leader Alberto Pizango put it, "Thanks to the Amazonian mobilizations I can say that today the indigenous agenda is not only inserted in the national level and within the State, but on the international level."

Yet Pizango and 52 others are in the midst of being prosecuted for that protest. And profiteers continue to apply pressure. To his credit, Peruvian Environment Minister Manuel Pulgar-Vidal admits that thanks to the threat of the "forestry market of carbon, people are losing trust and confidence around that mechanism. People are thinking that it can create conditions to lose their land."

Still, Pulgar-Vidal believes safeguards will be sufficient. At an Indonesian forest debate in May, he asked, "What kind of incentives can we create to bring the business sectors to the forest?" He praised Unilever as "a good example of how a private sector [firm] can play a more active role regarding the forest."

Expressing faith in the "green economy," Pulgar-Vidal continued, "What we need to do is to address the problem of the value of the carbon bond around the forest. The current prices are creating a lack of interest ... [and]

disincentives to have the business sector and the investor more close to the forestry sector."

This sort of vulgar-capitalist COP hosting is not a coincidence. The four preceding COPs, in Poland, Qatar, South Africa and Mexico, witnessed dominant local state actors co-presiding alongside UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretary Christiana Figueres. Following the power logic within their national power blocs, they *remained universally addicted to hydro-carbon exploitation*, with logical COP results.

Likewise, the UNFCCC appears addicted to market mechanisms as alleged solutions to climate chaos, even after the breakdown of the two main carbon trading schemes: in the European Union, which suffered a 90% price crash since 2008, and US where the Chicago Climate Exchange (self-interestedly promoted by Al Gore) suffered a fatal heart attack in 2011. Nevertheless, the UNFCCC and World Bank express high hopes for a new generation of carbon trading and offsets in California, a few major Chinese cities and a layer of middle-sized economies including South Korea, Brazil and South Africa.

In other words, ruling-class personalities still shape global climate politics far more than CJ activists, as witnessed in the futility with which the latter have attempted to influence the UN's Green Climate Fund. Between the coal, oil and mining barons who rule over recent COP hosts on the one hand, and a former carbon trader (Figueres) who rules the UNFCCC on the other, there has never been any possibility for getting the CJ perspective a seat at the global table.

In any case, each national delegation comes to each COP with the agenda of maximizing

the interests of its own corporations, which tend to prominently include those with industrial or fossil fuel assets and the need to emit more and more gases. A Conference of Polluters it will remain until that structural flaw is solved.

The COPs are also stymied because the US State Department's main negotiator, Todd Stern, looms over the proceedings like a smug vulture during a deadly drought. Thanks to Edward Snowden's revelations about Washington's surveillance capacity, we recently learned how Stern and US President Barack Obama cheated their way through the "Hopenhagen" climate summit in 2009 by listening in on the competition's cell phones, rendering hopeless a genuine deal that would enforce emission cuts.

And thanks also to Chelsea Manning and WikiLeaks providing us those 250 000 confidential State Department cables, we know that the weeks after the Copenhagen fiasco were spent by Stern and his colleagues cajoling, bullying and bribing so hard that they purchased (for a lousy \$50 million in aid) even the tough-sounding Maldives Island leadership whose famous scuba-gear-adorned underwater cabinet meeting stunt in late 2009 dramatized that sinking feeling.

As a result of our awareness about Washington's COP corruption, might the growing US climate activist community become sufficiently brave as to test their budding civil disobedience muscles neck-locking Stern and John Kerry? Could they, for example, prevent the US delegates from departing Washington for Lima? (Comrades, a timely blockade of the I-66 highway and Dulles Airport Access Road would do the trick.) And please add to that "no pasaran"

list the COPs' saboteurs from Ottawa, Canberra and Tokyo, too.

Still, such leaders and delegations are rarely much more than the personification of the class power wielded by leading fractions of capital over labour. It is in a structural critique of capitalist, patriarchal, racist-colonialist and anti-ecological *systems* that we annually find the COP elites sorely wanting.

Still, even if we can conclude ahead of time that the COP20 will break even NGO reformers' hearts, as have all others since Kyoto in 1997, this event is important. It serves CJ activists as a platform for highlighting Latin American struggles. It will also nurture the flowering activists who went to the CJ-oriented pre-COP prep-coms in Venezuela twice this year.

And it offers a warm-up protest – more fearsome to COP elites than tame Warsaw's or Durban's, we might safely predict – for the "big one" in Paris: the COP21. In August this year, French-based activists' prep meeting generated visions of shutting down Paris, and identifying a date in early December 2015 for a global mass protest and closure of educational institutions as the youth find their voices.

One reason we must continue investing political energies below and condemning elites above – i.e., not getting lulled into COP-reformism – is because more people are asking the question posed after Copenhagen in relation to the UNFCCC (as we did at Seattle in relation to the WTO in 1999): "fix it or nix it"?

After all, the World Bank and IMF are now regularly considered last-century institutions given their incapacities, and the US dollar is apparently being terminally weakened by the



Federal Reserve's printing-press dilution and by the coming liberalized yuan trade. Isn't the UN also destined, as Tariq Ali put it after the US-UK 2003 Iraq invasion was endorsed in the UN General Assembly, "to go the way of the League of Nations"?

The UNFCCC's irrelevance at the time of its greatest need and responsibility will be one of our descendants' most confounding puzzles. After Copenhagen, illusions promoted by stodgy Climate Action Network member groups under the slogan "Seal the Deal!" were dashed. As 350.org's Bill McKibben put it, the presidents of the US, Brazil, China, South Africa and India (the latter four termed BASIC) "wrecked the UN" by meeting separately and agreeing to eventually make merely voluntary commitments. Now add (Kyoto-reneging) Russia to the BASICs and, as the BRICS, the economic agenda signaled at their Fortaleza, Brazil summit in July this year boils down to financing infrastructure to ensure more rapid extraction, climate be damned.

Still, the insolence of the Obama Administration outshines the BRICS, when cutting another exclusive side deal so soon before Lima and Paris. This month's climate pact with China clarified to CJers how much more pressure is needed from below if we are to maintain warming below the 2 degrees threshold (not the Obama-Jinping 3+ degrees). Yet it reduces pressure to hammer out a genuinely binding global deal with sharp punishments for emissions violations, plus the needed annual climate debt payments of several hundred billion dollars from polluters to climate victims.

As a result, rising activist militancy is ever more vital, as the window for making the North's (and BRICS') massive emissions cuts

begins to close tight. Although probably too optimistic about what can be done at the COPs, John Foran is correct on all the other strategies. For example, he seeks movement below, e.g. from the US-based Climate Justice Alliance, Global Climate Convergence and System Change Not Climate Change networks that did such an impressive job radicalizing the previously prevailing (bland Avaaz) discourses at the People's Climate March in New York.

As miserable as the balance of forces appears in Lima, nevertheless all of us in the CJ community have been inspired by Andean activists: by the campaign against oil extraction from Yasuni, by the \$8.6 billion ecological debt battle against the legacy of oil spills by Texaco (now Chevron) nearby, and by the region's indigenous resistance to privatized trees in the form of Reducing Emissions through Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD). If REDD is a chosen battleground for the most advanced Latin American activists, then the worry is that, like the Cancun COP16 in 2010, men like Humala and Pulgar-Vidal will divide and rule civil society with patronage pay-offs.

The possibility of consolidating local initiatives into national and then global-scale struggle awaits a stronger sense of CJ strategies to prevent cooptation or brute repression. But since the heady days when 1980s-era IMF Riots gave way to mass social movement formations, to Zapatismo, to Brazil's Movement of Landless Workers, to leftist political parties and to other manifestations of progress, Latin Americans have been at the vanguard of the world's civilizing forces. They – and we – are not strong enough to change the balance of forces favouring climate injustice next month. But they do usually signal the way forward.

## **Fear and Loathing of Carbon Market Zombies: A Decade and Counting of Climate Justice Agitation**

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As early as 2000 European Union watchdog organizations cautioned against utilizing the three market based “solutions” inaugurated by the Kyoto Protocol—emissions trading, joint implementation (JI) and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). Referencing the troubles of carbon offsetting, enshrined in the Clean Development Mechanism more than a decade ago, the critics further admonished:

The hypothesis that such a scheme [as the clean development mechanism] will be efficient on the international level is also flawed. One must not forget the absolute impossibility of monitoring emissions from millions of sources spread all over the world, not to mention the lack of a binding regulatory system to enforce emissions limits.<sup>6</sup>

Representatives from the global south were even more bearish, to couch it in market terms. The Delhi based Centre for Science and the Environment affirmed, “The rush to make profits out of carbon-fixing engenders another kind of colonialism.”

Perhaps unsurprisingly, an emergent late 20<sup>th</sup> century class of would-be scholar-investors

preempted the critics two years earlier, opining that “implementation of activities [like offsetting] aimed to mitigate global greenhouse gas emissions is more cost-efficient in developing countries than in most of the industrialized world.”<sup>7</sup>

This is a crucial moment for the planet and social movements. After nearly two decades of persistent, catastrophic carbon market failures, and on the eve of the 2015 Paris round of multilateral climate talks, the EU-ETS is a zombie of its once beleaguered self.

The zombie-like status of the EU-ETS should not be taken lightly, nor as hyperbole.

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<sup>7</sup> Dutschke, M. and A. Michaelowa. (1998). Creation and Sharing of Credits through the Clean Development Mechanism Under the Kyoto Protocol. HWWA Discussion Paper 62. Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, Hamburg. The rise of the scholar-investor (or scientist-investor) is by no means rare in the scientific-capitalist driven circuitries of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). “Scientists” (although not officially called “scientist-investors” or “scholar-investors”) are given special access as an officially designated “stakeholder” class at UNFCCC negotiations. The “scientist” category, let alone the amalgam of “scientist-investors” or “scholar-investor” is an under-studied formation. Some (many?) UNFCCC registered “scientists” are also known to have investment or capital accumulation stakes in myriad aspects of the UNFCCC outcomes—including the Clean Development Mechanism projects. This is true of Michael Dutschke and Axel Michaelowa, cited above. Prior to serving as an IPCC, Working Group III “Lead author” (which subsequently resulted in his co-receipt of the Nobel prize with other IPCC lead authors) Dutschke was an “Auditor” for TUV-SUD one of the three largest validator-verifiers of Clean Development Mechanism Projects. Similarly Michaelowa, between 1997-2000, served on the advisory board of the World Bank’s AIJ-Programme—the pilot programme for CDM/JI investments. What is notably missing from many of the “scholarly” contribution of these authors (and others) are disclosures of their affiliations, especially where they have financial interest or stand to gain financially. To be clear, the authors herein, do not, for one second believe in the empty rants or claims of those denying the existence of climate change. On the contrary we believe climate change is indeed upon us, and for a variety of scientific reasons, maybe be unfolding in ways that are heretofore unstoppable. We do believe that “scientists” with investment (or professional) interests in the outcomes must disclose such ties.

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<sup>6</sup> Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO). (2000). Greenhouse market mania: UN climate talks corrupted by corporate pseudo-solutions. Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Johannes Teyssen, chief executive of Eon, the German energy group that is one of Europe's largest, firmly told an EU Commission-organized meeting of carbon market stakeholders in Brussels:

"Let's talk real. The ETS is bust, it's dead." Teyssen added, "I don't know a single person in the world that would invest a dime based on the ETS [price] signals."<sup>8</sup>

Just as the UN's clean development mechanism (CDM) announced its 7000<sup>th</sup> project in 2013, market watchers observed a new problem, the rise of "zombie" projects.

Speaking to Reuters Stefan Winter, deputy head of certification at the CDM auditing company Tuv Nord described the rise of "zombie" carbon projects, or those in which the company is "unable to contact the clients by phone or email." In 2013 TUV counted 150 such projects. Alexandre Kossoy, a senior financial specialist within the World Bank's Carbon Finance Unit, told Reuters matter-of-factly: "It's not surprising. We knew about it but ... we haven't measured how many because it would take months to go project by project."

No wonder then that a thing that seems to carry on everyday functions, as the EU-ETS does, but is simultaneously considered or known to be dead—or at least staffed by unknown and unreachable individuals—by some of the largest investors and actors in the EUETS space, seems apt for zombie classification.

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<sup>8</sup> See "How do we seize opportunities of the transition to a low carbonenergy system, while avoiding pitfalls on the way?" 2012. Presented at Energy Roadmap 2050 Conference. Speech available at: <http://webcast.ec.europa.eu/eutv/portal/archive.html?viewConference=14158>. Accessed 16 April 2012.

After the collapse of the Durban round of multilateral climate talks the Financial Times reported in February 2012, "The [EU-ETS] market has suffered other indignities in its brief history, from value added tax frauds worth billions of euros to the cybertheft of millions of permits from companies' electronic accounts. But, because it calls into question the fundamental workings of the market itself, the price slide may be its most serious affliction."<sup>9</sup>

While the EU-ETS has collapsed, European investors seem to be on a proverbial hunt for later-day-investor souls—both in Europe and abroad. Perhaps the most disturbing example of the hunt for living by proverbial carbon market zombies comes from finance capital's efforts across Africa. For over a half decade the Africa Carbon Forum, in particular, has been the go-to-place where cadres of predominantly European investors, buttressed by multilateral agencies, actively hunt for African counterparts to invest and participate in a space that some of the very same investors and organizers have firmly pronounced dead. As the UN describes it, the Africa Carbon Forum seeks "to support Africa's participation in global carbon markets and catalyze green investment opportunities." These are the crude, perhaps ruthless political economic forces of multilateral climate policy run wild, drawing institutions, civil servants and even civil society sympathizers from the global south generally and Africa in particular into "dead" markets—after the fact, and simultaneously into the science-investor-economists' upheld myths that emissions trading can appropriately address the present and future

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<sup>9</sup> Chaffin, Joshua. 2012. "Emissions trading: Cheap and dirty. Financial Times (UK): 13 February 2012.

crises of global warming, extreme weather events, and rising socio-economic and political repression from North to South. Alas, zombie markets are steeped in cultish praise or official multilateral agency endorsements—pending your vantage; they are also aggressively resisted by civil society movements, scrutinized by regulators and increasingly simply ignored by finance capital, media and growing numbers of large institutions.

### ***After Neoliberal Necromancy***

Proponents of the establishment of global carbon markets argue such markets can and should play a role in reducing carbon emissions to the degree necessary to stave off the harmful effects those emissions are having on the global climate and vulnerable communities across the globe.<sup>10</sup> Complicating matters further, global carbon market proponents also expect carbon markets to be key instruments capable of addressing and solving complex environmental *and* economic problems—simultaneously.<sup>11</sup> In effect the carbon market is charged (or burdened) with the dual mission of assisting developing nations to establish sustainable economies

while simultaneously reducing carbon emissions globally.

In its idealized neoliberal capitalist form, the global carbon market that some interlocutors desire exists at a transcendental level, and operates without workers and without geographic location. Jos Delbeke, the European Commission, Director General for Climate Action, describes the role of the state: 'Our role is to keep the regulatory structure as simple as possible and let the market play.' Such desires-as-edicts ignore the realities that define markets at various local to global scales. Carbon market advocates variously seek to create a global market system that is structured to privatize investment returns, while socializing risks, and have it be subject to minimal, if any, governmental regulation of labor, finance, and trade.<sup>12</sup> There is, however, within both trading schemes and offset projects a significant gap between the desires of traders and what is currently happening with regard to the development of policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. University of Cambridge economist Michael Grubb observes:

Having created a market-based mechanism to cut carbon a lot of people seem to expect it to behave in a non-market way and deliver poverty alleviation, deliver sustainable development co-benefits. But fundamentally, you create a market, it's

<sup>10</sup> Aldy, J. E. and R. N. Stavins (2007). *Architectures for agreement: addressing global climate change in the post-Kyoto world*. Cambridge; New York, Cambridge University Press; Figueres, C. (2000). *CDM: Theory and Reality*. Carbon Finance Conference. New York, NY, Center for Sustainable Development in the Americas; Tietenberg, T. H. (2006). *Emissions trading: principles and practice*. Washington, DC, Resources for the Future.

<sup>11</sup> Giddens, A. (2009). *The politics of climate change*. Cambridge; Malden, MA, Polity; Yamin, F., Ed. (2005). *Climate Change and Carbon Markets: A Handbook of Emissions Reduction Mechanisms*. London, UK, Earthscan; Ackerman, F. and E. A. Stanton (2010). *The Social Cost of Carbon*. Washington, DC, Economics for Equity and Environment; Ackerman, F. (2009). *Can we afford the future?: the economics of a warming world*. London, Zed Books.

<sup>12</sup> Harvey, D. (1993). "The Nature of Environment: The Dialectics of Social and Environmental Change." *The Socialist Register* 29; Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York, Oxford University Press; Labatt, S. and R. R. White (2007). *Carbon finance: the financial implications of climate change*. Hoboken, N.J., John Wiley & Sons; Smith, N. (1991). *Uneven development: Nature, capital, and the production of space*. Oxford, UK, B. Blackwell; McCarthy, J. and S. Prudham (2004). "Neoliberal Nature and the Nature of Neoliberalism." *Geoforum* 35: 275-283.

behaving the way markets do, it chases where are the most cost effective things, where can they make the most profits and I think that anyone who didn't expect a market instrument to behave in that way didn't understand what they were doing.<sup>13</sup>

The global reality is that the emissions market and its investors across the globe are finding that countries are developing a mismatch of policy proposals to address climate change and (energy consumption) that attempt to serve their national interest against the interest of global investors.<sup>14</sup> Some of those local solutions, as in the case of China, may not be ideal for those who wish to develop a global carbon market and its investors.<sup>15</sup> The risk level is tremendous and the possibility exists that financial returns are held to a minimum. This is especially strong at the local level where communities are resisting national reforms imposed by government elites and global institutions such as the World Bank.

Beyond hegemonic ideals, proponents of a global carbon market have turned time and again to the structure and (dys)function of the EU-ETS, which has been pedestalized by the global market proponents, *inter alia*. A key question is: How does one move beyond the abstract discussion about markets, specifically the EU-ETS, to better understand market (dys)function in a political economic context?

Careful examination of the EU-ETS reveals that this market is a series of markets operating in various geographical and

economic scales. It is remarkably small and is controlled by a small number of players with little competition among them to be found. A very small number of market actors control very large portions of overall market activity, in dollar terms and/or in terms of credit allocation. Over a decade this oligonomic configuration –a universe of few buyers and sellers that make markets amongst themselves— has had tremendously deleterious effects on overall competition in the market. Moreover, despite an expectation that the market would be organized and interconnected with the actors working in concert to assure market efficiencies, the EU-ETS actors involved tend to be working in completely different spheres and scales, with some projects being funded through private financing, some being funded through state support and some finding their financial support through institutional investors, and even via elaborate market schemes to consumers in “voluntary” markets, with all of the “market” working across a landscape of different national rules and uneven and differential state rules (e.g. China).

This cacophony of carbon market investors, wrapped in nested oligonomies with little to no regulatory oversight, is crisis prone, liquidity seeking and critically not serving its intended mandates of “combat[ing] climate change” and “reducing industrial greenhouse gas emissions cost-effectively.” In the present configuration carbon markets aid and abet climate catastrophe and help fester new, unanticipated ills. Even relatively staid organizations like the International Energy Agency (IEA) have argued that for large structural changes in energy production, like preventing new coal-fired power stations from being built, Europe needs to seek options beyond its carbon market. IEA

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<sup>13</sup> See: [www.cop17carbonmarkets.com](http://www.cop17carbonmarkets.com).

<sup>14</sup> Harvey, D. (2006). *Spaces of global capitalism: [towards a theory of uneven geographical development]*. London, Verso.

<sup>15</sup> Allan, A. (2010) UN Turns Up Heat on Chinese CDM. Pointcarbon News



analysts believe the EU-ETS cannot facilitate the end of coal within a decade.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Resistance is Fertile***

It is little wonder then that many activists and observers have dubbed the whole carbon market effort a “false solution.” Over the decade arc way many organizations across a multitude of spaces and venues have arisen to articulate civil society resistance to zombie carbon markets on the grounds that markets neither reduce emissions, nor deliver climate justice—but indeed exacerbate injustice.

In regional contexts like California, for example, communities have actively resisted the creation of the market provisions in general and the cap and trade system specifically promulgated by the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. One group, aptly named: A.I.R or the Association of Irrigated Residents, filed suit against the California Air Resources Board (ARB). While A.I.R. ultimately lost, the San Francisco Superior Court did issue a temporary injunction preventing the ARB from conducting any further work on its cap-and-trade program.

2014 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Durban Group for Climate Justice –“an international network of independent organizations, individuals and people's movements who reject the approach to climate change promoted by polluting corporations, financiers, northern governments and economists.” Since its 2004 inception the Durban Group has been a

“platform for discussion and analysis of climate justice,” and they “engage in regular advocacy in favour of real not false solutions to the crisis.”

This past September, more than 400,000 individuals largely tied and drawn together by North American environmental social movement organizations came together in New York—while they did not explicitly target false solutions from markets, the gathering underscored the critical role citizens and social movements can and do play to bring about forward thinking climate policies that demand aggressive state action, in lieu of market malaise, ultimately delivering climate justice.

As I’ve argued elsewhere: “The demands for climate justice are thus a subset of a wider set of discussions and demands for environmental justice. These demands are not just positions against authority, *anti-positions* “against power,” per se. To the contrary, the demand for climate justice is an expression of hope—indeed, desire and love—and a demand for objectives rooted in collective decision-making that are well beyond the provisional scope of power as presently conceived. The climate justice movement is therefore one of liberation as well as economic and ideological sovereignty. Prophetically, the struggle for climate justice dares to demand changing the world without reproducing hierarchical state or market power as it is currently known. In this way, it holds both a threat against hegemonic doxa and a novel promise of liberation.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Carr, M. and S. Bakewell. 2013. “EU Should Move Beyond Carbon Market to Shut Coal, IEA Says.” Bloomberg (<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-06-10/eu-should-move-beyond-carbon-market-to-shut-coal-power-iea-says.html>).

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<sup>17</sup> See: Dorsey, M. 2007. Climate Knowledge and Power: Tales of Skeptic Tanks, Weather Gods, and Sagas for Climate (In)justice. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 18(2), p. 20.

# What Now for Climate Justice?

## Re-Imagining Radical Climate Justice

John Foran

*Note to readers:* if you want to skip the discussion of the climate crisis itself, feel free to leap ahead in this essay to the point where you want to start!

### Introduction

The science is in: climate change is here now, not in the future,<sup>18</sup> and it is already having devastating effects on people's lives.<sup>19</sup> That's the bad news.

Even worse, the massive social, economic, and political inequalities already generated by neoliberal capitalism would seem to set the social and natural worlds on a collision course which global elites cannot win even on their own terms without destroying the basis for all human life. To put it bluntly, the climate crisis is perilous, our 500 year-old economic system cannot see us through it safely, the window for resolving this dilemma is closing, and the forces arrayed against us are strong, very strong.

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*My thanks to Corrie Ellis and Richard Widick for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.*

<sup>18</sup> IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change], "Summary for Policymakers," pp. 1-28 in *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis*. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, edited by T.F. Stocker, D. Qin, G.-K. Plattner, M. Tignor, S.K. Allen, J. Boschung, A. Nauels, Y. Xia, V. Bex, and P.M. Midgley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), [http://www.climatechange2013.org/images/report/WG1AR5\\_SPM\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.climatechange2013.org/images/report/WG1AR5_SPM_FINAL.pdf)[http://www.climatechange2013.org/images/report/WG1AR5\\_SPM\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.climatechange2013.org/images/report/WG1AR5_SPM_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> IPCC, "Summary for Policymakers," pp. 1-44 in *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*, Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, edited by Christopher B. Field et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), [http://www.ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/images/uploads/IPCC\\_WG2AR5\\_SPM\\_Approved.pdf](http://www.ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/images/uploads/IPCC_WG2AR5_SPM_Approved.pdf)

The good news is that there's a global climate justice movement which is growing in numbers, reach, strength, and inventiveness. This movement is impossible to encompass easily, because it consists of literally thousands of organizations at every scale – community, city, bio/region, nation, and global – interlinked in a vast network of networks.<sup>20</sup> This essay will trace some of its activities, asking where the major points of impact lie at the moment, and what strategic decisions must be faced moving forward.

The global climate justice movement is growing steadily, but it is still far too weak to win – at least for the moment. Yet without such a movement, we are literally cooked. Climate justice forces knows this, and stopping the elites from destroying humanity's future prospects is their agenda. It should also be the agenda of every activist and concerned citizen on the planet.

The twelve months between the December 2014 Lima COP 20, and the fateful COP 21 in Paris at the end of 2015 must be the year that we scale up our efforts toward the end of mounting irresistible pressure of all kinds on our governments and on the corporations, banks, and all the other institutions of neoliberal capitalism that they serve, *forcing them* to take the decisive steps we all need and want, such as adoption of a fair and binding global climate treaty that will set a course for sustainable post-capitalist societies free of structured violence and run democratically by the ninety-nine percent.

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<sup>20</sup> Paul Hawken makes the claim that the movement organizations number in the thousands: *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw It Coming* (New York: Viking, 2007). For a partial, annotated list of some of the key climate justice movements and resources of which I am aware, see "The Global Justice Movement On-line" at [www.iicat.org](http://www.iicat.org)

To achieve these ends, we will need to assemble the greatest social movement the world has ever.

## An Earth in Crisis

The present moment and the foreseeable future are defined by a *triple crisis*, consisting of

- economic precariousness and increasingly unequal access to well-being (*el buen vivir*<sup>21</sup>) in the age of neoliberal capitalist globalization and profound economic crisis;
- despite this, and indeed because of it, there has been a corresponding waning of public confidence in political institutions (the “democratic deficit”);
- and cultures where endemic violence is embedded in everyday life, from sexual assault to militarism and global warfare.

These are now bound together and exacerbated by the worst crisis of all, the wild card of climate chaos. And all of this would seem to auger a perfect storm of crisis.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Buen vivir* (literally, “living well”), in its largest sense means living in harmony with other people and nature, and is often contrasted with the neoliberal notion of consuming more to live better. This *Quechua* and *Aymara* indigenous concept has been inscribed in the Ecuadoran constitution.

<sup>22</sup> Even the climate science community is starting to realize that the natural sciences cannot by themselves tell us how to reduce emissions. That this is an eminently political and economic issue is suggested by the observation that “The scenarios presented here underscore the perils of global pathways that enable diverse stressors – cultural polarization, geopolitical fissures, environmental degradation, persistent poverty, and economic instability – to reinforce and amplify each other”: Paul D. Raskin, “Global Scenarios: Background Review for the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.” *Ecosystems* 8 (2005): 133–42, doi:10.1007/s10021-004-0074-2, page 141, cited by in Fiacha O’Dowda, “Future in the Anthropocene: An Inquiry into Relationships between Climate and Society in Global Future

This triple crisis makes climate change a “wicked” problem, defined as one that is

difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize. The term “wicked” is used to denote resistance to resolution, rather than evil.

Moreover, because of complex interdependencies, the effort to solve one aspect of a wicked problem may reveal or create other problems.... Classic examples of wicked problems include economic, environmental, and political issues. A problem whose solution requires a great number of people to change their mindsets and behavior is likely to be a wicked problem.<sup>23</sup>

For Kelly Levin and her colleagues, most social problems are wicked in the above sense. Climate change, on the other hand, is a *super* wicked problem, characterized by four features: 1) time is running out, 2) those seeking to end the problem (humans, and more precisely, global elites) are also causing it, 3) it is a global collective action problem overseen by at best a weak central authority (as anyone who has ever witnessed a U.N.

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Scenarios and the Intergovernmental Panel in Climate Change,” M.A. thesis, Erasmus Mundus (August 2014), 16. O’Dowda’s thesis breaks new ground in our understanding of the limitations of the IPCC’s efforts to bring a social scientific perspective into its modeling. To be sure, future scenarios are meaningless without taking into account their economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions; the question is how best to do so.

<sup>23</sup> The Australian Public Service Commission, “Tackling Wicked Problems: A Public Policy Perspective” (October 25, 2007). The term apparently originated in social planning, and was first introduced by Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber in their 1973 article “Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning,” *Policy Sciences* 4: 155–169.

climate summit can attest). This leads to the fourth obstacle:

Partly as a result of the above three features, super wicked problems generate a situation in which the public and decision makers, even in the face of overwhelming evidence of the risks of significant or even catastrophic impacts from inaction, make decisions that disregard this information and reflect very short time horizons. It is this very feature that has frustrated so many climate policy advocates. This phenomenon is analogous to smokers who, while they know the high probability of significant health problems and even death, make a decision to smoke based on immediate gratification. This characteristic is especially pernicious because although it is known that negative effects will occur (such as respiration challenges for the smoker) and that there is a high risk of catastrophic events (such as a heart attack or lung cancer), the precise consequences are never certain for any one individual.<sup>24</sup>

The interdependency of the several crises besetting us is significant; it means that holism is needed in confronting the climate crisis, and that the many intersecting struggles that call for justice must somehow be approached together. The upside of dealing with such a complex crisis is that making progress in any sphere of it can

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<sup>24</sup> Kelly Levin, Benjamin Cashore, Steven Bernstein and Graeme Auld, "Overcoming the Tragedy of Super Wicked Problems: Constraining our Future Selves to Ameliorate Global Climate Change," *Policy Sciences* 45 (2) (June 2012): 123-152.

change the equation for the better in others, and that synergies among movements can emerge when they form strong alliances.

In December 2015, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC] convenes the COP 21 meetings (the Conference of the Parties, in this case the twenty-first annual U.N. climate summit) in Paris to finalize the global climate treaty it has been working on for several years. The goal is to find ways to prevent earth from warming more than two degrees Celsius since 1800. This target was set by climate scientists more than a decade ago and agreed by the governments of the world at COP 15 in Copenhagen in 2009 to be a threshold which must be respected: passing it will likely plunge humanity into increasingly unlivable conditions (it is now increasingly realized that the even more difficult target of 1.5 degrees Celsius should be the Rubicon that must not be passed).<sup>25</sup> The treaty under negotiation may therefore represent one of the last best chances to contain the disruptive climate change that is coming our way and to preserve some dignity for individuals and societies. Every year that passes without action closes the vise more tightly on efforts to avert these scenarios.

But for years now at the COP, a protracted stalemate has been playing out, aptly characterized by the subtitle of a book by activist scholar Patrick Bond, published when COP 17 came to his home town of Durban in

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<sup>25</sup> The gravity of the situation is well sketched out in Kevin Anderson "Climate Change Going Beyond Dangerous – Brutal Numbers and Tenuous Hope," *What Next? Climate, Development and Equity*, edited by Niclas Hållström, special issue of *Development Dialogue* 61 (September 2012): 16-40, [http://www.whatnext.org/resources/Publications/Volume-III/Single-articles/wnv3\\_andersson\\_144.pdf](http://www.whatnext.org/resources/Publications/Volume-III/Single-articles/wnv3_andersson_144.pdf)

2011: “Paralysis Above.”<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, the power of the corporations, banks, and free market-oriented private sector in general, so evident at the November 2013 COP 19 in Warsaw, has become that much greater.<sup>27</sup> The stubborn conflict between the interests of the global North and global South – with economic powerhouses China, India, and Brazil now lodged in between – remains as intractable as ever in an irreconcilable stand-off that makes the chances of finding pathways to a less than 2 degrees Celsius world look vanishingly small.

Humanity’s future, then, looks increasingly set to be a race. In lane one stand the corporations and nation state driving climate change and its effects to the limit. In lane two stand the climate justice movement and its nation-state and popular allies who seek to check those effects, halt the rate of increase in greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming, and then rapidly reverse the trend downward. They try to do this through a variety of means: defeating the economic and political one percent at the ballot box, in the streets, at places of work and consumption, and in the very carbon-saturated culture and media in which we live, work, and dream.

## Two Observations

I’d like to make two observations, which are not self-evident and which may challenge

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<sup>9</sup> Patrick Bond, *Politics of Climate Justice: Paralysis Above, Movement Below* (Durban: University of KwaZulu Natal Press, 2012).

<sup>27</sup> See the “Open letter calling for rules to protect the integrity of climate policy-making from vested corporate interests” (November 21, 2013) signed by dozens of climate organizations at the Warsaw COP 19: <http://corporateeurope.org/blog/open-letter-calling-rules-protect-integrity-climate-policy-making-vested-corporate-interests>.

some readers’ assumptions and understandings: 1) the climate crisis is far more profound and daunting than most of us realize; and 2) the planet cannot stay below the bottom-line warming target of 2 degrees (let alone 1.5 degrees) Celsius under capitalism as we know it.

Let’s take a brief look at each of these claims.

### ***The climate crisis is far more profound and daunting than most of us realize***

We are surrounded by bad climate news, whether it’s extreme weather events of all kinds or the latest scientific reports. Given this, one suspects that things are worse than even those of us who follow all of this know. Indeed the global scientific community and the UNFCCC itself have an inkling of this: “[T]hese days, it is what we don’t know that is the most worrying – because you can’t properly prepare for what you can’t foresee.”<sup>28</sup>

In his powerful essay, “Global Warming’s Terrifying New Math,” prominent U.S. climate activist Bill McKibben argues that to have a reasonable chance to stay under a two-degrees Celsius temperature rise in this century, we can only burn a given amount of fossil fuels (as he points out, in this case, “reasonable” means four chances in five, or “somewhat worse odds than playing Russian roulette with a six-shooter”). The science tells us that this means the world’s largest fossil-fuel producing corporations and countries must be compelled to leave 80 percent of their proven reserves (and thus their actual value) in the ground. This is the

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<sup>28</sup> This quote is found in O’Dowda, “Future in the Anthropocene,” 12-13, citing “The Science,” accessed July 20, 2014, [https://unfccc.int/essential\\_background/the\\_science/items/6064.php](https://unfccc.int/essential_background/the_science/items/6064.php)



inescapable physical logic of salvaging a livable planet for future generations.<sup>29</sup>

In 2012, at the time of writing, McKibben estimated the cap for maximum atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at 565 gigatons as the upper limit for staying at or below a 2 degrees Celsius temperature rise. With annual global emissions currently running around 34 gigatons a year, and rising about three percent per annum, this cap is roughly equal to a fourteen-year supply – till about 2026 – if “business as usual” trends of economic production and growth continue.<sup>30</sup> The terrifying part, of course, is that the estimate that the world’s already proven reserves of fossil fuels exceeds McKibben’s cap by five times. In other words, the richest corporations in the history of the world would have to forego four-fifths of their future earnings – by some estimates, an astronomical \$20 trillion.<sup>31</sup> But instead, they are currently spending over \$600 billion a year trying to discover *new* sources of fossil fuels – fracking, tar sands, deep-water drilling, Arctic oil, mountain-top removal – while each year the amount we can afford to burn decreases.

Radical climate scientists Kevin Anderson and Alice Bows of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research in Manchester, England, are

doing what more scientists need to do: like McKibben, they are not only analyzing the climate problem, but are mobilizing their knowledge to identify the larger political problem that underlies it.<sup>32</sup> Anderson and Bows communicated this mission in the subtitle to their well-attended side event running parallel to last November’s COP 19 UN climate summit in Warsaw, Poland: “Global Carbon Budget 2013: Rising emissions and a radical plan for 2 degrees.”<sup>33</sup> The event included a sobering presentation of numbers, only slightly different from McKibben’s, which would allow us to emit another 1,000 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> for a *66 percent chance* of staying under two degrees. According to these assumptions, we have roughly twenty years left of business as usual before we exceed the limit (but now put *two* bullets in the gun while playing Russian roulette with the planet).

What makes Anderson and Bows true heroes within the climate science community, however, is their bold articulation of the policy implications of our predicament. They argue that we need to avoid 4 degrees *at all cost* (as even the World Bank now agrees),<sup>34</sup> and that the global North needs to cut 70 percent of its emissions *over the next decade*. As they noted, “we’re not short of capital, just the initiative and courage.” More

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<sup>29</sup> Bill McKibben, “Global Warming’s Terrifying New Math: Three simple numbers that add up to global catastrophe - and that make clear who the real enemy is,” *Rolling Stone* (July 19, 2012),

<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719>

<sup>30</sup> My thanks to Eknath and Chetan Ghate, who calculated the 13.68 year supply (starting with 2012). The formula is  $565 = (t=1 \text{ to } t=x) \{34 \cdot (1.03)^t\}$  where  $x$  is the number of years that it takes for the right hand side to reach 565.

<sup>31</sup> “John Fullerton, a former managing director at JP Morgan who now runs the Capital Institute, calculates that at today’s market value, those 2,795 gigatons of carbon emissions are worth about \$27 trillion”: McKibben, “Global Warming’s Terrifying New Math.”

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<sup>32</sup> Anderson “Climate Change Going Beyond Dangerous – Brutal Numbers and Tenuous Hope.”

<sup>33</sup> This account is from my field notes; on what the Warsaw COP means for the global climate justice movement see John Foran, “‘¡Volveremos!/We Will Return’: The State of Play for the Global Climate Justice Movement at the 2013 Warsaw UN Climate Summit COP 19,” *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements* 6 (1) (May 2014).

<sup>34</sup> World Bank, *Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4° World Must Be Avoided*. A Report for the World Bank by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Climate Analytics (November 2012), [http://climatechange.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/Turn\\_Down\\_the\\_heat\\_Why\\_a\\_4\\_degree\\_centrigrade\\_warmer\\_world\\_must\\_be\\_avoided.pdf](http://climatechange.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/Turn_Down_the_heat_Why_a_4_degree_centrigrade_warmer_world_must_be_avoided.pdf)

damning are the political consequences that Anderson drew just before the COP 19 talks: “Today, after two decades of bluff and lies, the remaining 2 degrees Celsius budget demands revolutionary change to the political and economic hegemony.”<sup>35</sup> In an interview during the talks, Anderson said: “I’m really stunned there is no sense of urgency here,” pointing out that leadership, courage, innovative thinking, engaged people, and difficult choices are ultimately needed to appropriately deal with climate change.<sup>36</sup>

Following from this, the question the global climate justice movement confronts is: What are the corresponding *social and political* implications of McKibben’s argument? In other words, just how *do we* keep warming in the 1.5-2 degree range, with the might of the world’s largest corporations and richest governments united in suicidal lockstep against us?

### ***The planet cannot stay below 2 degrees Celsius under capitalism as we know it***

Here we come to the economic bedrock of the current situation named by Naomi Klein in the title of her important new book: *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*.<sup>37</sup> Neoliberal capitalism is undergoing multiple crises, mostly the effects

of its “normal” operations. In the last twenty years, the rampant privatization of public goods and services have generated obscene inequality and unparalleled concentrations of wealth and power: while just 90 corporations and fossil-fuel exporting countries are responsible for fully two-thirds of all the carbon emissions discharged since the dawn of the industrial revolution, so the richest 85 individuals in the world now possess as much wealth as the poorest half of humanity – 3.5 billion people.<sup>38</sup> To this we may add what Rob Nixon refers to as the “slow violence” of resource depletion and the violence and militarism that accompany the attempt of the United States to secure its primacy in the world system by massive spending to fight wars and maintain military bases that give it the capacity to do so all over the world. Combined, and with climate change now in the ascendant, these look like the ultimate, irresolvable (whether on capitalism’s terms, or in terms of a livable future) final contradictions of capitalism.

Because its economic logic is based on literally endless growth, which requires ever-rising demands on the planet’s finite natural resources, capitalism will become unviable as resources are increasingly depleted, overworked, or made scarce by the impacts of climate change. The problem in the

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<sup>35</sup> Renfrey Clarke, “The New Revolutionaries: Climate Scientists Demand Radical Change” (January 9, 2014), <http://climateandcapitalism.com/2014/01/09/climate-scientists-become-revolutionaries/>

<sup>36</sup> Anderson is quoted in Stephen Leahy, “South Scores 11th-Hour Win on Climate Loss and Damage” (November 2013), [www.ipsnews.net/2013/11/south-scores-11th-hour-win-on-climate-loss-and-damage/](http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/11/south-scores-11th-hour-win-on-climate-loss-and-damage/)

<sup>37</sup> Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014). A pdf of the book can be found here. I have reviewed it here: “Reflections on Naomi Klein’s ‘This Changes Everything’” (November 30, 2014), <http://climateandcapitalism.com/2014/11/30/reflections-naomi-kleins-changes-everything/>

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<sup>38</sup> Graeme Wearden, “Oxfam: 85 richest people as wealthy as poorest half of the world,” *The Guardian* (January 20, 2014), <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/jan/20/oxfam-85-richest-people-half-of-the-world>; the original study is by Oxfam 2014. In 1999, the United Nations Development Program reported “The net worth of the world’s 200 richest people increased from \$440 billion to more than \$1 trillion in just the four years from 1994 to 1998. The assets of the three richest people were more than the combined GNP of the 48 least developed countries”: UNDP *Human Development Report: Globalization with a Human Face* (New York: UNDP, 1999), 36-37, quoted in Vijay Prasad, *The Poorer Nations: A Possible History of the Global South* (London: Verso, 2014), 234.

medium-term future of capitalism (e.g. the next 25-50 years) is that the natural resource base necessary for producing what humans require to survive will no longer be dependable. While some excellent advocates of sustainable development, notably British ecological economist and University of Surrey professor Tim Jackson,<sup>39</sup> have advanced the important idea that an ecologically-guided “degrowth” economy is a solution to this contradiction, what’s missing is a convincing case that this could be delivered under the political economy of capitalism as we know it.

Naomi Klein puts it this way:

The bottom line is what matters here: our economic system and our planetary system are now at war. Or, more accurately, our economy is at war with many forms of life on earth, including human life. What the climate needs in order to avoid collapse is a contraction in humanity’s use of resources; what our economic model demands to avoid collapse is unfettered expansion. Only one of these sets of rules can be changed, and it’s not the laws of nature.<sup>40</sup>

Nor does it appear realistic that capitalism can be radically reformed, even with all the political will in the world (currently conspicuous by its absence) in the necessary time frame (by 2050), by which point climate science tells us the vast majority of emissions must have ended.

Australian journalist Renfrey Clarke asks a most pertinent question: “What is it about

capitalism that the system willfully pursues strategies that look certain to bring about its own demise?”

The answer lies in the fact that while an unaddressed climate crisis will be lethal to capitalism, the solutions to the crisis also promise to bring the system down – and sooner. The capitalists’ dilemma becomes clearer if we list some of the key measures required....:

- Material and financial resources need to be reoriented, in a concerted way, from the pursuit of maximum profit toward achieving rapid declines in greenhouse gas emissions.

- This reorientation of the economy will need to include a large element of direct state spending, structured around long-term planning and backed by tightening regulation. Schemes such as carbon pricing cannot play more than a limited, subsidiary role.

- To keep mass living standards at the highest levels consistent with these measures, and ensure popular support, the main costs of the reorientation need to be levied on the wealthy.<sup>41</sup>

He concludes “Can anyone imagine the world’s capitalist elites agreeing to such measures, except perhaps under the most extreme popular pressure?” and closes by quoting Noam Chomsky: “In the moral

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<sup>39</sup> Tim Jackson, *Prosperity without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet* (Oxford: Earthscan, 2011), <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/unga13/prosperity.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> Klein, *This Changes Everything*, 21.

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<sup>41</sup> Renfrey Clarke, “Climate Change: Evidence of the Death-wish of Capitalism” (April 26, 2014), <https://www.greenleft.org.au/node/56313>

calculus of capitalism, greater profits in the next quarter outweigh the fate of your grandchildren.”<sup>42</sup>

Of course, both the depth of the current crisis, and the central role played by the climate disruption that exacerbates it, suggest that our activism around climate change may be one of the keys to moving beyond capitalism in our lifetime.

It seems increasingly evident that *only a strong and vigorous climate justice movement on a global scale has the capacity to force governments to stand up to the economic and political forces of carbon capitalism to agree to the treaty and take the other actions needed to keep the planet under the dangerous threshold of 2 degrees Celsius.*

### **The Trajectory of the Global Climate Justice Movement**

Let’s consider the historical arc of this movement so far. One dividing line straddles the end of 2009, when the COP 15 climate summit met in Copenhagen amidst great public fanfare and media attention in anticipation of a deal on climate. The global climate justice movement had announced its existence two years before, at the COP 13 meeting in Bali in 2007, when the radical network Climate Justice Now! formed, and attracted to it some formidable forces. These included the international peasant movement Via Campesina, the youthful young climate justice radicals who started Camp for Climate Action in the U.K., Jubilee South and the intellectuals around Third World Network and Focus on the Global South, Friends of the

Earth International [FOEI], the Durban Group for Climate Justice, and many others perhaps just outside it, among them the indispensable Bill McKibben and a rising 350.org.

In Copenhagen, climate justice advocates and activists had support inside the negotiation halls, as well as outside on the streets, where 100,000 people marched for the planet. Their allies included Mohamed Nasheed of the Maldives and much of the 40-plus member strong Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS); Bolivian president Evo Morales, Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez and the ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance) left-of-center countries of Latin America’s Pink Tide; and a less radical but important part of the Global North, most notably the European Union, led by Gordon Brown in the UK, Germany, and some of the Scandinavian governments.

When the United States and China, the world’s two biggest emitters of greenhouse gases, failed to find any common ground, the talks collapsed. In reality, neither they nor any of the other large emitting countries were willing to significantly curb the burning of fossil fuels on which their economies ran. With the economic collapse that triggered the Great Recession in the same year, the balance of forces shifted decisively away from the positions of AOSIS and ALBA, while the EU aligned itself more and more with the rest of the global North.

### **Building a Radical Climate Justice Movement**

But the second part of the subtitle of Bond’s book was “Movement Below,” and in fact the global climate justice movement regrouped and built new momentum in Cochabamba, Bolivia in April 2009 to deliver a magnificent manifesto, “The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth.” Many activists,

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<sup>42</sup> Javier Sethness, “Noam Chomsky: Ecology, Ethics, Anarchism,” *Truthout* (April 3, 2014), <http://truthout.org/news/item/22819-noam-chomsky-ecology-ethics-anarchism>

from Bond himself to McKibben, and many organizations from 350.org to FOEI have withdrawn energy from what they see as a hopelessly compromised process in the COPs, and put it instead into local and national-level campaigns and building networked global coalitions. These have brought us some of the epic struggles of recent years, from the many-sided battle over the Keystone pipeline to the ongoing movements against fracking sprouting across the United States to the community fight to stop the expansion of the port in south Durban, South Africa into the largest on the continent.

Alongside these struggles a new front inside and around the COP has emerged in the form of a strengthened and newly powerful global *youth* climate justice movement, which has been blossoming from one COP to the next. This movement is also active in many local campaigns. They've mounted the fossil free divestment campaigns in the U.S. and the UK, are playing an important role in the epic battle against the Keystone XL pipeline in Canada and the U.S. alongside a revitalized Canadian indigenous movement led by Idle No More, and have energized the anti-fracking movement in California and elsewhere. They have brought to the movement a new generation influenced by the moment of Occupy and other movements with a strong emphasis on consensus decision-making and non-hierarchical organizational structures (a process known as "horizontalism"). Additionally, they've brought along some new and not-so-new ways of organizing that have real promise: Power Shift, social media of all kinds, and vast reserves of imagination, energy, openness,

and hope. In a word, they are *re-imagining climate justice*.<sup>43</sup>

The time has never been more urgent for "assembling the biggest social movement the world has ever seen" to combat "the biggest crisis humanity has ever faced" (to paraphrase Bill McKibben). Consider the following: parts of the radical left are turning their attention to climate change, while the radical climate justice movement is turning its attention to anti-capitalist politics. At the same time, the Big Green environmental organizations (especially the Sierra Club), the mainstream global climate justice movement (such as CAN, the Climate Action Network, which publishes the indispensable Eco daily briefings at the COP), and the biggest climate social movement organization (350.org) are all moving in more radical directions. The same can be said of climate science in general (the directness of the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report, among others) and particular climate scientists such as Kevin Anderson, Alice Bows, Michael Mann, or James Hansen. Finally, there is an enormous push coming up from young people, and from indigenous forces on all of these levels.

## The Present Moment

The question that the global climate justice movement is now asking is what are the prospects for synergy and movement building among all the forces fighting for the climate in one way or another? What are the ways forward?

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<sup>24</sup> "Re-Imagining Climate Justice" is the name given to a gathering of the movement in Santa Barbara, California, in May 2014 in which I played a role ([www.climatejusticeproject.com](http://www.climatejusticeproject.com)); see Summer Gray's video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GpJpbnMjiYs>

It's past time for the movement to engage all hands in a major re-think moving forward. As Paul Wapner, has put it: "The scarcest resource these days ... is the ability to unleash the mind, heart, and spirit to envision, entertain, and develop unorthodox possibilities.... Imagination, in this sense, is not a flight of fancy but closer to what C. Wright Mills understands as the ability to grasp a larger arc of collective experience and interpret its meaning for the choices we face. This involves disciplined inspiration, creativity, and ingenuity that can help us cognitively and emotionally enter into alternative futures."<sup>44</sup> This is not to accuse anyone of lack of imagination – far from it. I take it as a call to mobilize our brilliant creativity and unleash our radical imaginations to work together with new resolve and joy.

And so, I offer here a few of the many, many possibilities (I am *not* saying I support all of these; they are offered here only for discussion):

*At the COP:* go to a majority vote on the treaty. What if, say, 120 countries ratified a treaty covering more than 50 percent of the world population and/or emissions? Might this force the United States, China, the EU, the BRICs to join later? What if there were ways to incentivize one or more of these big emitters to join the "majority"? What if – for the sake of argument – we were to accept Obama's latest proposal to avoid the non-starter of ratification of a binding treaty by the U.S. Senate by negotiating non-binding pledges only?<sup>45</sup> Conversely, it's conceivable (if not likely) that a "big two" (China and the

U.S.) or "three or four" (with the E.U. or India, etc.) could broker a deal. Whether it would be a *good* deal is another question and hurdle to surmount. In any case, it's time to abandon the fruitless search for consensus among irreconcilable visions of the future, some of which are counter-productive, if not genocidal, and which allows climate criminals like the current governments of Canada, Saudi Arabia, Australia, or Poland to obstruct, dilute, and veto the necessary treaty provisions. No longer should one or two recalcitrant parties possess the power to hold hostage humanity's future.

*The Social Pre-COP.* In terms of the build-up to the COP 21 in Paris, we may note a number of developments, starting with the intriguing Venezuelan initiative to hold two "Social Pre-COP" gatherings in 2014 focused on youth, indigenous peoples, and various movement capacity building gatherings. As Venezuela's lead negotiator Claudia Salerno put it in announcing it at the 2013 Warsaw COP 19, "A situation of madness requires a little craziness," adding, "We are not afraid to fail.... [There is] nothing to lose, and maybe a lot to gain." At the first of these in mid-July those present issued the Margarita Declaration, a 13-page manifesto which concluded: "We need to create our own dreams, forget the perverse developmentalist dream, and find inspiration in ourselves. We need to share a new narrative based on our own experiences."<sup>46</sup> A second Social Pre-COP is scheduled for November 4-7 in Caracas.

*The Global Climate Convergence and System Change Not Climate Change.* Another major new campaign, in the United States, is the

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<sup>44</sup> Paul Wapner, book description for *Reimagining Climate Change*, informal communication, summer 2014.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Ben Adler, "Obama has a Plan for Getting around Senate Opposition to a Climate Treaty" (August 27, 2014).

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<sup>46</sup> The Margarita Declaration on Climate Change, Margarita Island, Social PreCOP Preparatory Meeting, Venezuela (July 18, 2014): *Changing the system, not the climate*. This manifesto is also found in the Appendix to our Report.

Global Climate Convergence, which proclaims “People, Planet, Peace over Profits” and is seeking to build “collaboration across national borders and fronts of struggle to harness the transformative power we already possess as a thousand separate movements springing up across the planet.” The basic idea is to create a lasting collaboration between climate activism and other forms of social justice, including progressive labor, indigenous organizing, and the fledgling ecosocialist movement in the United States, and ultimately, no doubt, beyond. Convened by Jill Stein, 2012 presidential candidate of the Green Party of the United States, this call resonates with the formation of the new U.S. ecosocialist organization System Change Not Climate Change), which aims at shifting the momentum of the climate justice movement in an anti-capitalist direction by starting “a far-ranging discussion within society: can stopping climate change be compatible with an economic system that is flooded with fossil fuel profits? Can we create a safe and healthy planet for all human beings while simultaneously allowing ever-expanding resource extraction, endless growth, and the massive inequalities that come along with it?”

*The People’s Climate March.* Meanwhile, the faltering momentum for a global climate deal received a strong new push at the People’s Climate March attended by some 400,000 people in New York City on September 21, 2014, an event which may well be seen in future histories as the turning point in the evolution of a strong North American climate justice movement.<sup>47</sup> When U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convened a special Climate Summit 2014: Catalyzing Action with the charge: “This Summit is meant to be a

solutions summit, not a negotiating session. I have invited all Heads of State and Government, along with leaders from business and finance, local government and civil society. I am asking all who come to bring bold and new announcements and action. I am asking them to bring their big ideas,”<sup>48</sup> very little happened inside the UN but a lot happened on the outside: the multiple workshops, gatherings, and public events in the days leading up to the march, the unprecedented, massive, diverse climate march itself, the “Flood Wall Street” direct action of the following day, and the countless initiatives that are bound to emerge from the thousands of people who saw their commitment grow and their possibilities for action widen as a result of their participation.

An important agenda item for this gathering might be the development of a *people’s plan for radical emissions reductions* (I propose some tentative first thoughts on this in an appendix to this essay. Just as Ban had hoped to kickstart a UN process that is driven by stalemate from above, the global climate justice movement is building fresh momentum from below as it strives to find the ways to bring into full flowering the biggest social movement the world has ever seen.

### What Now? Thinking Forward

What follows from our observations to this point? I offer a few ideas for discussion here as a contribution to the global process of figuring out how to move forward.

*Our movement should aim beyond capitalism*

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<sup>47</sup> See <http://peoplesclimatemarch.org/> and <http://systemchangenotclimatechange.org/event/ny-sept-19-ny-climate-convergence-2014-09-19-211500>

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<sup>48</sup> Ban Ki-moon, “Big Idea 2014: The Year for Climate Action” (December 11, 2013), <http://www.un.org/climatechange/blog/2013/12/11/big-idea-2014-the-year-for-climate-action/>



It seems to me that the only real systemic “solution” to the crisis is a *radical anti-capitalist climate justice movement capable of decisively cutting emissions in a just way*. This movement, or convergence and confluence of many movements, has to be a broad anti-capitalist movement, and it has to get there in the relatively medium term (the next 25-50 years, or by 2040 to 2065). In the short term (from now out 10-15 years, or from 2015 to 2025 or 2030), the task is to build a broad radical climate justice movement everywhere we can, preparing a new generation for the longer anti-capitalist project of deep social transformation.

We also have to learn more about how to build social movements and, perhaps, a totally new and different kind of political party (we need much speculation about this), because the two together might succeed where individually they have not. This is the central thesis of another project I am working on that surveys radical social movements in the twenty-first century, contrasting them with the social revolutions that tried to shape positive social transformation in the twentieth.<sup>49</sup> We need to learn our own *power* and how to use it wisely to transcend the polarizing debate between the horizontalism of Occupy and efforts to transform societies by bringing progressive political forces to state power.

Our politics within that movement have to be informed by our anti-capitalism, and positively, we need to do some thinking about what to call our vision of a post-

capitalist future, what it will look like, and, of course, how to get there on schedule.

### *Going global*

One approach to understanding the current state of play would be a country by country analysis of the top ten emitting nations: their climate profile, their political situation, the state of their civil society (suffering? unemployed? worries about what?), and the strength of their climate justice movement. From here one could try to work out a regional analysis of this kind as well, as a prelude to a global analysis.

This kind of detailed analysis is far beyond the scope of what I can do here. No matter how it would look, it seems clear that we need to strengthen and make connections within and between such places as:

- North America – the U.S. and Canada, because these constitute, respectively, the biggest problem country in the world, and one of the dirtiest rich countries (along with Australia). The fronts are the battle against the tar sands and Keystone pipeline, the fossil fuel divestment movement, and the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of local environmental justice struggles. The New York City People’s Climate March in September 2014 is evidence that we are in the first stages of building a big, powerful new radical climate justice movement including, among others, 350.org, SCNCC, the Green Party of the USA, the Climate Justice Alliance/Our Power campaign, the Cowboy and Indian Alliance, the Indigenous Environmental Network, Idle No More, the Climate Action Network, Sierra Club, the youth climate justice movement, PowerShift, Occupy, indymedia and climate bloggers and websites, churches,

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<sup>49</sup> The arguments are sketched in a preliminary fashion in John Foran, “Beyond Insurgency to Radical Social Change: The New Situation,” *Studies in Social Justice* 8 (1) (2014): 5-25.

universities, the huge numbers of communities on the front lines where all kinds of environmental and climate justice grassroots work is happening, progressive unions, feminists, anti-racists, and anarchists.

■ The European Union and Europe more generally – the U.K., Germany, Scandinavia, along with others, such as the short-lived Green-Left experiment in Iceland – have led the global North’s governments in the direction along which they need to go much further: renewable energy, green building, attractive public transportation networks, and so on. To get the global North on board for a just climate treaty will require strong leadership from the EU, or at least a few key European countries, to push for *deep* and legally binding cuts, a good deal beyond anything proposed so far from that quarter. This, in turn, requires progressive, accountable political parties in power, and to achieve *that* requires strong national-level climate justice movements.

■ The BASIC countries

-- Brazil: one could imagine the Movement of Landless Workers (MST) and a radicalized Workers Party – the governing PT, if it can be done, or if not, perhaps progressive members of the PT joining to form an ecologically minded party with the independent left or perhaps the Green Party -- might fuse into something new.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> In the first round of the October 6, 2014 presidential elections, incumbent Dilma Yousef polled 41 percent (43 million votes), right-winger Aécio Neves 34 percent (35 million), and Green candidate Marina Silva 21 percent (22 million), suggesting that such a new type of party might one day be viable. Disappointingly, Silva backed Neves in the runoff, suggesting just how much work needs to be done.

-- India: The impressive half-century of sustainable social democratic society established in Kerala contains the seeds of a better development model that should be studied more widely.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, the new Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, was actually in New York the day of the U.N. climate summit, but didn’t attend.<sup>52</sup>

-- China: The contradictions of China’s breakneck industrial growth have caused countless local pushbacks from communities which are suffering the effects of pollution and poisoning of their land and water; the same is true of wildcat labor strikes. Both trends are increasingly eliciting new climate change policy from the government, well aware of the paradoxes of its relatively recent emergence as the single greatest contributor to emissions and simultaneously the world’s greatest consumer of coal and producer of solar power.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, according to a Pew Research poll, China and the U.S. are virtually tied as the most poorly educated populations in climate change (although

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<sup>51</sup> Though dated, the best overview of Kerala remains Richard W. Franke and Barbara H. Chasin, *Kerala: Radical Reform as Development in an Indian State* (San Francisco: The Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1994). ).

<sup>52</sup> A key text on climate politics in India is Praful Bidwai’s *The Politics of Climate Change and the Global Crisis: Mortgaging Our Future* (Orient Blackswan, 2011). For recent pieces on the new government of prime minister Narendra Modi, see Carl Pope, “What American Environmentalists Can Learn From Prime Minister Modi” (October 3, 2014); Ben Adler, “Yoga could be an answer to climate change, says India’s prime minister” (October 1, 2014); and Siddhartha Deb, “What Is India? Why India’s boom years have been a bust” (September 16, 2014).

<sup>53</sup> Good recent journalism on China includes Jaeah Lee and James West, “China’s coal addiction threatens the planet — but can it handle a natural gas revolution?” (September 18, 2014); Alexander Reid Ross, “China: Mass protests challenge polluters” (April 7, 2014); James West, “China just got serious about global warming. Now we’re really out of excuses.” (September 6, 2014); and especially Jeff Goodell, “China, the Climate and the Fate of the Planet” (September 15, 2014).

with the average American's carbon footprint still three times greater than the average citizen of China, it's clear whose ignorance is more damaging).

-- South Africa – a socialist and ecological alternative must be found to the anti-democratic extractivist political economy of the ruling African National Congress (ANC), and there are particularly strong climate justice movements inside the country such as the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance.<sup>54</sup>

#### ■ Latin America

-- Despite numerous problems and the heavy contradictions of being based on extractive industries, the three most radical "Pink Tide" countries – Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela – have put forth the idea of trying to create a new kind of democratic "socialism for the twenty-first century" and, in the first two, the indigenous idea of "buen vivir" already inscribed into the constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia, giving hope that we may see the first instances of an "ecosocialism for the twenty-first century" in the coming decade.

-- An even longer-lived indigenous experiment with deep democracy has been pioneered by the Zapatistas in Chiapas, and offers further clues of what a twenty-first century ecosocialism (regardless of what it is called) might look like.

#### ■ Africa and the Middle East

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<sup>54</sup> See John Vidal, "South Africa's 'cancer alley' residents face new threat from port development" (April 28, 2014), <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/apr/28/south-africa-cancer-alley-port-development>

-- Africa, one of the centers of gravity for climate disruption and chaos, is home to the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance – PACJA – a network formed in 2008 and now numbering over 1,000 organizations of farmers, religious organizations, NGOs, and others with "a common goal of promoting and advocating for Pro-poor, climate-friendly and equity-based responses to climate change."<sup>55</sup>

-- The COP 18 meetings in Doha, Qatar, were the occasion for the emergence of the Arab Youth Climate Justice Movement (AYCM), whose activists are now organizing in fifteen countries. The AYCM has been very active with the global youth climate justice movement at subsequent COPs and is building national movements across North Africa and the Middle East from the ground up. Among their approaches is to view the climate crisis as "an opportunity to create a more sustainable, prosperous, meaningful, just, and fair world."<sup>56</sup>

-- Finally, it should be noted that Tunisia, the only Arab Spring country which has established a reasonably well-functioning representative democracy, re-wrote its constitution after the fall of the dictator, Ben Ali, to include reference to fighting climate change.<sup>57</sup>

#### ■ Oceania and the "small" island states

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<sup>55</sup> See their website at <http://pacja.org/about-us/acja.org/about-us/>

<sup>56</sup> The AYCM maintains a strong presence at <https://www.facebook.com/AYCMENA/info>

<sup>57</sup> John Upton, Tunisia's new constitution calls for climate protection (February 4, 2014), [http://grist.org/news/tunisia-new-constitution-calls-for-climate-protection/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=Daily%2520Feb%25204&utm\\_campaign=daily](http://grist.org/news/tunisia-new-constitution-calls-for-climate-protection/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Daily%2520Feb%25204&utm_campaign=daily)

-- The loss of climate hero Mohamed Nasheed in the 2013 election in his country has set back the global cause for climate justice enormously. He and his Minister of the Environment, Mohamed Aslam, were among the most far-sighted and eloquent voices on behalf of Oceania and all small island states everywhere.<sup>58</sup>

-- In their place, we have a variety of initiatives, from Tuvalu, Nauru, and elsewhere, as well as the new voice of Marshallese poet Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, who delivered the greatest speech at the UN special summit convened by Ban Ki-moon.<sup>59</sup>

### **Principles, practices, dreams, and hope: constructing vibrant political cultures of opposition and creation**

Conceptually, the concepts of *political cultures of opposition* and *creation* have helped me think about the problem of how strong social movements are born.<sup>60</sup> None of the revolutions of the twentieth century was made without powerful political cultures of opposition capable of bringing diverse social groups to the side of a movement for deep social change, as happened in the Mexican, Russian, Chinese, Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Iranian revolutions. These political cultures drew on people's experiences and emotions and were expressed in complex mixtures of popular, everyday ways of expressing grievances – fairness, justice, dignity, or

freedom – and more consciously articulated radical ideologies such as socialism and liberation theology. The most effective revolutionary movements of history have found ways to tap into whatever political cultures emerge in their society, often through the creation of a common goal such as “the regime must step down” or “the foreign powers must leave.” The forging of a strong and vibrant political culture of opposition is thus an accomplishment, carried through by the actions of many people, and, like revolutions themselves, such cultures are relatively rare in human history.

In the twenty-first century, the nature of movements for what we might now call radical social change (rather than revolution) has itself changed, as activists, reformers, dreamers, and revolutionaries globally have more often pursued nonviolent paths to a better world, intending to live and act as they would like that world to be. That is, the ends of justice are no longer held to justify the means of violence, but the means of non-violent resistance reflect and guarantee the ends that they seek. In this, they embody and illustrate the virtues of prefigurative politics and in particular, horizontalist ways to realize them. I call these positive, alternative visions “political cultures of *creation*.”<sup>61</sup> Movements become even stronger, when to a widely felt culture of opposition and resistance, they add a positive vision of a better world, an alternative to strive for to improve or replace

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<sup>58</sup> See Summer Gray and John Foran, “Climate Injustice: The Real History of the Maldives,” *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 58 (September 2014), <http://berkeleyjournal.org/2014/09/climate-injustice-the-real-history-of-the-maldives/>

<sup>59</sup> The speech can be heard at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4fdxXo4tnY#t=403>

<sup>60</sup> John Foran, “Global Affinities: The New Cultures of Resistance behind the Arab Spring,” pp. 45-71 in Mehran Kamrava, editor, *The Evolving Ruling Bargain in the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

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<sup>61</sup> Foran, “Beyond Insurgency to Radical Social Change.”

what exists. In this sense, some of the differences between old and new movements for radical social change seem to include the attempt to get away from the hierarchical organizations that made the great revolutions and move in the direction of more horizontal, deeply democratic relations among participants; the expressive power of using popular idioms more than ideological discourses; the growing use of nonviolence; the building of coalitions as networks of movements and organizations to include diverse outlooks; and the salience of political cultures of creation alongside political cultures of opposition and resistance.

What might go into a radical political culture of climate justice? On the level of emotions, we would perhaps do well to cultivate what Gustavo Esteva has termed “joyful militancy:”

We are suggesting that a useful way to think about radical politics is through the lens of joy and sadness.... Joy means letting the world in and letting oneself into the world: being vulnerable, compassionate, experimental, creative, and embracing uncertainty. Sadness means creating boundaries, making distinctions, comparing, making plans, and so on....

All movements, spaces, collectives, and individuals have elements of joy and sadness: they’re bound together, they help and hinder each other, and they’re constantly shifting and changing. We often need good boundaries to create radical spaces in an oppressive world, we need to make plans and

be open to changing them and changing ourselves.

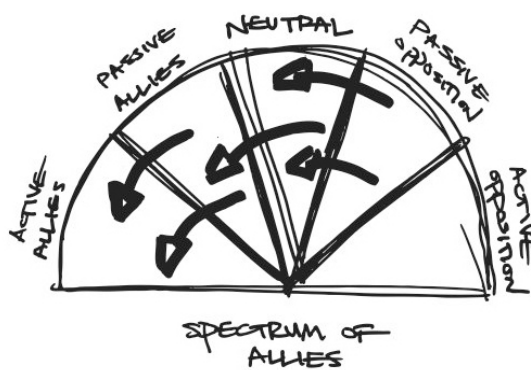
Our suspicion, or feeling, or hunch, or experience is that there is too much sadness and not enough joy in a lot of radical movements and spaces today. There is a lot of energy and investment in thinking intellectually, making distinctions, closure, and creating boundaries, and we think that is squeezing out possibilities for conviviality, creativity, and kindness....

However—and this is REALLY important to us—while we are making a distinction here, we are not trying to construct a simple binary. We’re calling joy and sadness an “ecology” because there are always elements of both in our movements.... Furthermore, this is less about individuals and their identifications and more about collective spaces, desires, and movements.

We are arguing that “sad militancy” is hegemonic: that it predominates in many radical spaces today, squeezing out possibilities for conviviality and friendship. We’re trying to offer up a conception of “joyful militancy” based on spaces, movements, thinkers, and doers who have inspired us, but there’s no formula or guidebook. Even more importantly, we really don’t want to suggest a new set of norms that should govern or police people into behaving a certain way: that would be an utter failure. We hope joyful militancy can remain loose and

vague, while offering up some ideas that are inspiring and useful to think through.<sup>62</sup>

Similarly, it might be important to cultivate new languages and ways of being together; here, one might think of the whole Occupy repertoire, so well captured in the book and website, *Beautiful Trouble*. Or the “meme projects” – Patrick Reinsborough and Doyle Canning’s handbook, *Re:imagining Change: An Introduction to Story-based Strategy*;



Occupy’s “We ... are... the 99 percent!” Or drawing from the history of our own movement, that simple profound slogan “System Change, Not Climate Change,” so evocative and powerful (and very astutely chosen by the new North American network of the same name). In all of this, “activism,” creativity, and love are the prominent, and youth movements everywhere are inventing and carrying the new political cultures of creation.

As for new ideas about building alliances, one idea that lots of people are finding illuminating is “the spectrum of allies and opponents model”:

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62 Gustavo Esteva, “The Ecology of Joy in Our Radical Movements and Spaces,” <http://earthlingopinion.wordpress.com/2014/07/31/the-ecology-of-joy-in-our-radical-movements-and-spaces/>

Veronika Libao explains the idea this way:

The most important thing this movement has to realize in order to accomplish its goal is the fact that it can never convince everyone, and that is completely fine....The “spectrum of allies” model avoids wasting valuable energy in convincing those in active opposition. Instead, it focuses on shifting those in a passive opposition to neutral, those in a neutral position to passive allies, and passive allies to active allies (as shown in the diagram). As disheartening it is to know that there are those who openly choose to ignore climate change, there are plenty of others who devote their lives to ensuring that those people don’t ruin the planet for all of us.<sup>63</sup>

The key is to unlock ways to bring together increasingly radical, increasingly broad forces together, to multiply our impact and networks exponentially, learn to build the bridges, and generate the new ideas we need.

### The Briefest of Conclusions

What everyone brings to the table in the struggle for global climate justice has value. The movements for climate justice around the world need all hands on deck, now and for as far as anyone can see into the future.

This is the challenge the global climate justice movement faces now.

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63 Veronika Libao, “The Cheapening of Our Lives: Consumerism and its Inevitable Link to Climate Change,” a paper for Sociology 134GJ: Global Justice Movements, UC Santa Barbara (Summer 2014), where this image is from. The “Spectrum of Allies” was presented to us by United Kingdom Youth Climate Coalition members Fatima Ibrahim and Louisa Casson.

## **Appendix:**

### **Some Principles for Radical Emissions Reduction based on Climate Justice**

1. The target should be 1.5 degrees Celsius, not 2 degrees.
2. The burning of fossil fuels for energy has to be rolled back decisively and quickly. This might mean, for example, cuts of ten percent a year starting immediately (or one percent, then increasing by two percent per year till we reach 10 percent in 2020, and ten percent a year thereafter till we approach zero emissions by 2030. The sooner we start on this path, the better.
3. The global South – and indeed all peoples – have a “right to sustainable development.” From this it follows that there has to be massive redistribution of technology and funds from North to South – for adaptation, for emissions reductions, for meeting the basic needs of every human on the planet, for the loss and damages of extreme weather events already locked into Earth’s climate future.
4. The above should be agreed by every government on earth, in 2015, and if not then, we must step up our resistance exponentially until it is agreed. What this means should be thought about and discussed in the build-up to December 2015.

# Protecting Climate Policy from Dirty Energy Lobbying: A Working Strategy Document

Pascoe Sabido

***This document attempts to show how we can use COP21 in Paris as an opportunity to lay the groundwork and build the political and public support for a mechanism at national, regional and UNFCCC levels to protect climate policy making from the dirty energy industry. It is intended as a basis for conversation, to be worked on and developed.***

## Problem

The influence of the dirty energy lobby is the greatest barrier to achieving climate policies to deliver a fair, just and sustainable world. They are preventing governments in the global north fulfilling their obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)<sup>64</sup>, holding back an equitable and ambitious deal at the international level. Through their influence, these same corporations – whose business model is responsible for the crisis we are facing – are profiting from the promotion of false solutions that worsen the crisis and generate huge profits.

## Current state of play

Dirty energy lobbying – and corporate influence in general – reached unprecedented levels at the last UNFCCC talks in Warsaw, COP19. There was a business-only pre-COP, multiple corporate

sponsors including dirty energy and heavily polluting industries, and a coal summit organised alongside the talks, attended by the UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres.<sup>65</sup> And in some UNFCCC institutions – like the Green Climate Fund – fossil fuel financiers are playing key roles advising and making recommendations for policy governing climate finance.<sup>66</sup> The extent to which the dirty energy industry was being listened to was further highlighted by more than 800 civil society observers prematurely walking out of the talks in protest, with t-shirts that read ‘polluters talk, we walk’. The next major moment in the talks is taking place in 2015 in Paris, COP21, where all countries are supposed to agree a treaty to govern the post-2020 climate regime. However, current expectations are very low, due to the recalcitrance of Northern governments and the power of the dirty energy lobby.

## Opportunity?

There is a big opportunity to use the events from now up to and including COP21 in Paris to ensure the dirty energy industry is not seen as an acceptable partner in making climate policy. The ultimate aim is to remove them altogether, end their access to our decision makers within our national and regional governments as well as the UNFCCC. Only by ending this cosy relationship and reclaiming climate policy making can the

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<sup>64</sup> The UNFCCC is the only inclusive multilateral space which also enshrines the top-down, rules-based approach alongside principles of equity (historical responsibility enshrined in the Annex I and non-Annex I system, common but differentiated responsibility, respective capabilities)

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<sup>65</sup> For an overview of the corporate capture of COP19, see Corporate Europe Observatory's blog written while in Warsaw, <http://corporateeurope.org/blog/warsaw-cop19-climate-blog>

<sup>66</sup> Bank of America is the “developed country” private sector active observer to the Green Climate Fund board, and XX companies are serving on the GCF's Private Sector Advisory Panel (PSAG), which is responsible for making recommendations to the GCF board on every thing from fiduciary standards to best practices on intermediation



UNFCCC deliver an equitable and ambitious deal for current and future generations.

It's been done before with the tobacco lobby – Article 5.3

Other UN bodies have faced similar challenges in addressing the undue influence of harmful industries and dealt with the situation effectively, such as the UN World Health Organisation (WHO). Article 5.3 of its global tobacco treaty, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), enshrines in international law the principle that the tobacco industry has no role in public health policymaking, due to the “fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry's interests and public health policy interests” and states that “Parties shall act to protect these policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry”.<sup>67</sup> Through a strong, Southern-led civil-society coalition working at national and international level, they managed to achieve this.

While tobacco and fossil fuels are very different, the principle of irreconcilable interests – between that of industry and that of the public – is the same. Equally, the role that industry has played in preventing legislation around both is very similar, with Big Energy taking many of its strategies directly from the Big Tobacco playbook:

- funding citizen front groups to provide legitimacy for continued dirty energy

solutions;

- manufacturing doubt around climate science via scientists and think tanks;
- litigation against countries working to address climate change;
- using corporate social responsibility activities to present a façade of action while their core business model remains the same;
- aggressive lobbying at all levels;
- infiltrating key government arenas at national, regional and international level
- creating public partnerships and voluntary solutions to avoid regulation

The tobacco precedent provides a very powerful, publicly-understandable, common-sense example which can be used further. The proposition that the UN, and the UNFCCC in particular, should take action to protect climate policy-making from the dirty energy lobby was already gaining ground in Warsaw, with more than 80 organisations signing onto an open letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres asking for such a measure in light of the evidence.<sup>68</sup> More events since then show a growing appetite:

- French climate organisations working together towards COP21 wrote to the three ministers responsible, calling on them to introduce a similar policy to Article 5.3 under the UNFCCC;<sup>69</sup>
- Approximately 300 organizations – most from the global south – penned a letter to

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<sup>67</sup> For more information see the short briefing [http://www.satuhassi.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Stop-Fossil-Fuels-Setting-the-Climate-Agenda\\_Briefing\\_Nov13-2.pdf](http://www.satuhassi.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Stop-Fossil-Fuels-Setting-the-Climate-Agenda_Briefing_Nov13-2.pdf) or the longer paper [http://www.satuhassi.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Stop-Fossil-Fuels-Setting-the-Climate-Agenda\\_Report\\_Dec2013\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.satuhassi.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Stop-Fossil-Fuels-Setting-the-Climate-Agenda_Report_Dec2013_FINAL.pdf)

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<sup>68</sup> See here for the English version <http://corporateeurope.org/blog/open-letter-calling-rules-protect-integrity-climate-policy-making-vested-corporate-interests>

<sup>69</sup> The letter was written by Attac France, Centre de recherche et d'information pour le développement (CRID) and Réseau Action Climat, with 15 other signatories, <http://france.attac.org/actus-et-medias/le-flux/article/climat-assez-de-discours-des-actes>

the board members of the Green Climate Fund demanding that dirty energy be kept out of the fund;

- As a result of the global campaign to stop corporate impunity, the UN Human Rights Council agreed to establish a working group into a legally-binding instrument over the operations of transnational corporations;
- Increasing numbers of organisations fighting corporate take-over in the shape of the US and EU global trade deals (TPP and TTIP);
- A large number of organisations surveyed by the Democracy Centre on priorities for the climate movement at COP20 in Lima will prioritise tackling corporate power.

**However, for a strategy to be successful in trying to reclaim climate policy and the UNFCCC from the dirty energy industries, while at the same time supporting an agenda of equity and ambition within it, certain sensitivities must be taken account of:**

- The principles of equity as outlined within the Convention (and contained within the Rio Declaration of 1992) have been under attack from Northern governments (particularly heavy polluters like the US and EU), as well as some Northern civil society groups who are keen to get any deal possible even if it means sacrificing equity, and thus ambition;<sup>70</sup>
- Many countries in the global South

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<sup>70</sup> Note: if equity is sacrificed, then so is ambition, as many countries in the global South who are already taking domestic actions – and who have been waiting since the signing of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 for climate leadership from Northern countries but not yet seen it – will not take on higher commitments without either the finance, technology or ambition that has been promised from Northern countries as development and poverty alleviation will be prioritized [very short, crude summary but there's far more nuance than that].

defending the principles of equity also have large state-owned fossil fuel interests and see cheap energy as key to the economic growth they see as necessary to address the impacts of climate change as well as poverty;

- Most countries in the global South will have far less capacity within the negotiations and may have their energy companies on their delegations, while Northern governments will have far more capacity and no need for them on delegations but will have fully consulted them beforehand;
- Parts of the climate justice movement have already rejected the UNFCCC space as it has failed to deliver and is technocratising the debate, distancing it from local struggles and playing into the hands of big business by focusing on accounting, measurements and markets rather than drivers;
- Most dirty energy lobbying takes place in the capitals, before negotiators and delegations arrive (although there is plenty of overt capture, from side events to sponsorship to parallel summits) and the UNFCCC is a symptom rather than a cause of the increasing proximity between the dirty energy industry and climate policy (although certain key personalities within the Secretariat and the UN are also driving this phenomenon);
- Paris 2015 is likely to be a disaster from a climate perspective, and an incredibly fraught and tense negotiation, with a huge battle over who is responsible for the failure (North or South);
- Fossil fuels are far more integral to local and global economies than tobacco (both the revenues and their use as a form of energy), and are seen as a tool for development by many countries in the global South in the absence of external

support (finance and technology to allow for an alternative development pathway).

**Therefore, taking these factors into consideration, the campaign must not:**

- Weaken the UNFCCC process itself any further, due to its unique character;
- Undermine the wider fight for equity and ambition by undermining Southern champions in an international space, thereby playing into the hands of the real climate criminals, Northern countries with historic responsibility and major fossil fuel interests and industries;<sup>71</sup>
- Be used as a campaign against Southern governments with fossil fuel interests, but rather empower all governments to increase their political control over said interests, rather than allowing them to set policy;
- Make overly-strong demands on the UNFCCC by Paris as they will not be met; instead demands must build after Paris, using it to rebuild momentum after potential failure;
- Allow demands to die in the UNFCCC; for example making a demand of the COP21 Presidency (François Hollande) also contributes to the French national campaign and can continue after;
- Exclude groups who do not work on the UNFCCC; therefore it should equally focus on national and regional levels and look to build a diverse coalition that will last far beyond Paris.

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<sup>71</sup> Talking to Southern climate justice groups, there is a view that they will hold their governments to account in national spaces, but want to refrain from attacking them within the UNFCCC as this plays into the hands of Northern countries who are attempting to move the climate regime towards an inequitable and unambitious outcome. There is also a question of legitimacy, and Southern groups, aware of national contexts, should be leading on this.

**How can we use COP21 in Paris as an opportunity to lay the groundwork and build the political and public support for an “Article 5.3” policy for the climate?**

#### Objectives

- *To create public acceptance that the dirty energy lobby has no place in climate policy making*
- *To have the dirty energy industry blamed for the failure of the talks due to their influence on the positions and politics of Northern governments*
- *To force the UNFCCC to reconsider its relationship with the dirty energy lobby*
- *To create external political acceptance outside of the UNFCCC that the dirty energy lobby has no place in climate policy making*
- *To build a strong, robust coalition to take this work forward after Paris*

#### Strategy up to and including COP21 in Paris

The main strategy will be a simple three-step strategy:

1. Name, shame and toxify the dirty energy lobby (climate criminals)
2. Expose/scandalise their close association with our political leaders and climate policy making (national/regional governments and UNFCCC)
3. Demand an end to the relationship

#### ***1. Name, shame and toxify the dirty energy lobby (climate criminals)***

Choose strategically relevant corporations (depending on the political moment – see below) and show their destructive impact (on the climate, communities and their environments), their refusal to take real action (and instead promote false solutions,

which they benefit from), and their close relationship to our political leaders/climate policy makers. This will be done through new research or re-packaging existing materials (and building on existing campaigns). Picking well-known iconic dirty energy corporations, who can act as exemplars for their industry, makes this stage far shorter, and means the public will be far readier to take the next step (undermining their legitimacy in climate policy).

- **Ban Ki-moon Summit:** the dirtiest, most obvious corporations to pledge (and those with the most contradictory pledges in relation to their core business)
- **COP20, Lima:** those operating in Latin America (*new research will be produced for this*)
- **COP21, Paris:** global, but relevant for the French context
- **National level:** those relevant to the struggles of local groups

## ***2. Expose/scandalise their close association with our political leaders and climate policy-making (national/regional governments and UNFCCC)***

This will be done through a simple demand for transparency around the interactions between our political leaders, their institutions and the chosen dirty energy corporation(s). Such a demand allows many groups of all persuasions to get behind it, as well as being difficult for a public institution and figure to argue with. It will be a dual-demand:

- Direct interactions, e.g. publicly disclosing all meetings (and minutes) and public encounters now and in the future with said dirty energy corporation(s); disclosing their funding of trips, visits or

public/private events, including non-financial contributions;

- Financial benefits received by the corporation, e.g. publicly disclosing all subsidies, tax-breaks, research funding and grants;

The political targets will be at international, national and regional level:

### *International level (UNFCCC)*

To avoid attacking the process itself, the campaign could use public figures as proxies, who can be held up as the guardians of the integrity of the process and of climate policy making, as well as drivers of the increasing corporate capture. Demands for transparency will be made of:

- **UNFCCC Secretariat (via Christiana Figueres, UNFCCC Executive-Secretary):** full disclosure of all interactions with selected dirty energy corporations on behalf of her and her secretariat. She is sensitive around maintaining a positive image, and in Warsaw was heavily criticised for choosing to speak at a coal summit organised alongside the climate talks, as well as choosing it instead of speaking at a youth conference (she was presented an ultimatum).
- **COP Presidency (via Ollanta Humala and then François Hollande, Peruvian and French Presidents respectively):** full disclosure of all interactions with selected dirty energy corporations on behalf of him and his COP Presidency team. Humala is being heavily criticised for new regulations in favour of extractive companies, while Hollande is championing nuclear energy.
- **Green Climate Fund (via Hélé Cheikhrouhou, Executive Director):** full disclosure of all interactions with selected dirty energy corporations on behalf of

her, her staff, GCF board members, committees and panels.

#### *National/Regional level*

A campaign tool kit could be provided for interested groups which can help add a national-level demand to local dirty energy struggles, whether in the global North or South, challenging the relationship between their governments and their dirty energy industries.<sup>72</sup> Making the link in early 2015 with the trade talks (TTIP/TAFTA, TPP) would also allow another dimension to show how our governments are handing over climate policy to corporations via mechanisms like the investor-to-state dispute settlement mechanism (date tbc).

However, to ensure this campaign compliments the fight for climate justice within the UNFCCC negotiations and maintains international pressure on those historically responsible for climate change (who are preventing us reaching a just, equitable and ambitious deal), the campaign coalition will collectively target specific Northern polluters and their close relationship to their dirty energy industries:

- **USA**
- **Canada**
- **Australia**
- **EU**

Demands of transparency regarding the interaction between these countries and dirty energy corporations will be made at strategic moments between now and Paris by both national-level groups and the coalition, providing the ammunition to scandalise the relationships and allow the third phase. These

will also expose how dirty energy corporations are influencing the positions of historic polluters and preventing a deal.

### **3. Demand an end to the close relationship**

As this campaign-plan aims to build public and political support for the need for a 5.3 for climate, an end to the relationship before Paris is unrealistic, but after the failure of Paris due to the dirty energy industry, these demands will be taken far more seriously. Combining the information revealed in phase two with the clear evidence of how harmful these dirty energy corporations are – as well as the strong example of tobacco – demands for an end to the cosy relationship can be made at all levels.

These demands will be made during 2015, with particular pressure as the COP21 approaches:

- **UNFCCC Secretariat (via Christiana Figueres):** Her and her staff refuse to meet the dirty energy lobby in the run-up to COP21; undertake a review of measures to protect her office and the UNFCCC (as a UN agency) from the undue and damaging influence of the dirty energy lobby (this includes the direct involvement of the dirty energy lobby within the talks)
- **COP Presidency (via François Hollande):** Him and his staff refuse to meet the dirty energy lobby in the run-up to COP21; undertake review of measures to protect his and all future COP Presidencies from the undue and damaging influence of the dirty energy lobby (this covers sponsorship and wider dirty energy involvement)
- *An additional demand to make for groups working on the inside could be that the*

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<sup>72</sup> Or groups who are fighting for clean-energy but see the power of the fossil fuel industry as blocking them

*selected corporations should simply not be allowed into the negotiations (contrasting with the expulsion of youth delegates at COP19)*

- *The possibility of a ‘resolution’ or some concrete demand that could be used to build on in the future (e.g. ‘the COP recognises the potentially damaging influence of dirty energy corporations on the decision making processes of governments and the UN on climate’). TBC*
- **Green Climate Fund (via Hélé Cheikhrouhou):** She and her staff refuse to meet the dirty energy lobby; undertake review of measures to protect the GCF from the undue and damaging influence of the dirty energy lobby (this covers sponsorship and wider dirty energy involvement)
- *Additional demand for climate finance groups: the GCF should not fund any dirty energy (particularly fossil fuel) projects, while fossil fuel company, association, or financier/funder cannot fill Private Sector Active Observer seats nor serve on GCF panels, committees or advisory groups*

**The campaign will also aim to attract governments who may be supportive at national level (e.g. a small island state dependent on fossil fuel imports)**

#### *National level*

National campaigns should demand their governments to a) end all interactions with relevant corporations and b) end all financial support. However, a more concrete demand would be asking for an action plan to show how they intend to protect national-level climate policy making from the undue and damaging influence of the dirty energy industry. However, each campaign will have different capacities, needs and demands.

Collectively, the coalition will make similar demands of Northern historical polluters.

***Outlined is just one option of how to deliver such a campaign and build public pressure. But through collective ownership and a diversity of strategies and tactics suited to local contexts, we will be able to end the cosy relationship between the dirty energy lobby and our politicians***

## New Movement Strategies

Jim Shultz

Editors' note: We provide here three articles that report and analyze the strategies of the global climate justice movement, written between August and November 2014 by Jim Shultz, founder and executive director of The Democracy Center and lives in Cochabamba, Bolivia. They are based in part on a much larger report, "Movement Strategies for Moving Mountains: Conversations with Activists Worldwide on How to Use Latin America's COP to Build Citizen Action on Climate," prepared by The Democracy Center. We are grateful to Jim, The Democracy Center, Yes! Magazine

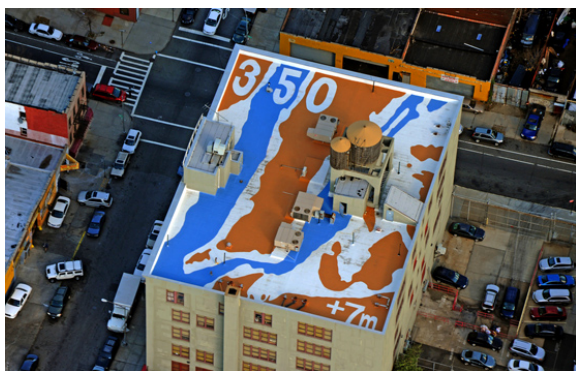
### Climate Comeback: A Grassroots Movement Steps Back Into the International Arena

*Three major international meetings about climate change are on the horizon. Is this the moment to fix the failures of Copenhagen?*

Jim Shultz

August 26, 2014

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/planet/climate-comeback-international-arena>



A roof in New York City shows a map of the five boroughs after a rise in sea levels. Photo by Molly Dilworth / Flickr.

The citizens' movement for action on the global climate crisis has, over time, developed a love-hate relationship with international campaigning. For years, people from all over the planet have joined together across national boundaries to address a crisis that knows no such boundaries.

The climate movement is stepping back into the international arena once again

The vision they created had an appeal that was both romantic and strategic at the same time. The high point for this "one planet, one people" activism was in 2009, when activists descended on the Danish capital of Copenhagen by the tens of thousands to push for action at the U.N.'s annual COP (Conference of the Parties) summit, with hopes for a global deal as serious and real as the climate threat itself (some activists dubbed the meeting "Hopenhagen").

Those activist hopes crashed, however, against the unchanged political realities of narrow national interest, powerful corporate resistance, complex issues, and a lack of political will. Many climate campaigners reacted by returning to their countries and focusing their energies instead on political battles closer to home, such as the fight over the Keystone XL pipeline in the U.S. and anti-fracking efforts in Europe. By the time the most recent COP negotiations were held in Warsaw last December, the process had become almost completely ignored by the larger public.

Now, in a three-step dance that begins on the streets of New York City in September, the climate movement is stepping back into the international arena once again. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, who has made climate change a main issue of his

tenure, has called the planet's heads of state and other "world leaders" to a special "Climate Week" summit aimed at increasing the pressure for coordinated international action.

Knowing what you want and knowing how to change the political equation are two different things.

Climate advocacy organizations in the U.S. have been mobilizing for months to seize the opportunity with plans for a massive march through the streets of Manhattan on September 21. In December, this renewed energy for international action will turn southward to Peru, where the COP negotiations will convene in the political shadow of melting Andean glaciers. Then in December of next year the COP negotiations will move to Paris for what is supposed to be the deadline for a new international climate accord. European activists are already meeting to organize a mobilization in the streets there to match or surpass the multitude expected in New York next month.

As the climate movement steps forward once again into the arena of international politics, it suffers no shortage of demands and proposals. Climate groups can offer up a diversity of ambitious and passionate plans for how to reduce humanity's use of fossil fuels, protect the world's forests, and move money from the rich countries that have caused the crisis to the poor ones least equipped to deal with what's coming.

But knowing what you want and knowing how to change the political equation to make that possible are two different things.

The Democracy Center recently interviewed more than 40 key climate activists from

across five continents to seek their views on how to use the Lima summit and these other global gatherings as an opportunity to alter the political winds around the climate crisis and make real action more possible. What we heard, from people ranging from local indigenous activists to staff at well-known NGOs, were three important strands of collective wisdom.

First, change the global narrative about the climate crisis. Climate activists have bounced for a decade from one way of talking about the crisis to another. We have heard about polar bears and sea rise, mutant storms and parts per billion of carbon in the atmosphere – none of it sufficiently connected to people's daily lives to gain hard and lasting traction.

But there are lessons from the grassroots about how to do better. In California, climate activists successfully fought back a political assault by the Koch brothers by talking about local fossil fuel plants and their connection to asthma among children. In South America the crisis is about water – the disappearance of it in some places causing drought and displacement, and too much of it in other places causing flooding and destruction. In Asia and Africa, people talk about climate's role in a worsening food crisis.

Getting real action on climate is about political power.

The common thread in the messages that are winning support is to speak locally and connect the climate crisis to real issues of life, survival, and the diminished and more dangerous planet we are getting ready to leave to our children and theirs. Just as important as the message is the moral authority of those who deliver it. "We can't talk about the impacts unless the main



message comes from the affected communities,” says Juan Carlos Soriano, a Peruvian activist with 350.org.

Second, use this trilogy of global actions to build the long-term power of the climate movement. Getting real action on climate is not just about raising consciousness; it is about political power and how the climate movement can build muscle.

In New York and Paris the focus will be on getting multitudes into the streets in the hope of convincing governments that they ignore a rising demand for action at their political peril. “What we most need to do as a movement is move the conversation and build power, not lobby global leaders,” observes Sean Sweeney of the Global Labor Institute.

In Latin America, Africa, and Asia that citizen power resides in long-established movements on the ground tied to indigenous rights, territorial rights, natural resources, and other battles that are now impacted by climate change. Sandwiched in between the higher profile, Northern-dominated events in New York and Paris, activists we spoke with said that the COP in Lima must stand out as the “COP of the South” and make the link between the climate crisis and these movements.

“The local struggles seem to be in compartmentalized spaces that don’t connect to this big issue that affects absolutely everything. One of the challenges is to connect the local struggles and demands with activism on climate change,” says Elizabeth Peredo Beltran, a well-regarded climate leader in Bolivia.

The path through New York, Lima, and Paris offers a chance to engage new communities.

Third, directly confront the powers and forces blocking serious action on the climate crisis. Fossil fuel companies, international agribusiness, automobile manufacturers, and other corporate interests have a huge stake in international climate negotiations and have used their political muscle to embed themselves in the U.N.’s COP process.

During the meeting in Warsaw last year, the Corporate Europe Observatory documented all kinds of techniques used by these corporations to become official sponsors of global climate negotiations the way they might make themselves sponsors of the Olympics or World Cup. Corporations furnished government negotiators with everything from free cars and drivers to logo-embazoned drinking cups, all the while pushing their agendas on issues such as coal capture technology and corporate-driven carbon markets.

Activists say it is urgent to put a spotlight on this corporate capture of the negotiations and on the false solutions corporations have used their access to promote. “We need to go in with an offensive strategy and communicate the message that the negotiations are focusing on the wrong issues – the real solutions are about redesigning the economy,” says Nathan Thanki of the European group Earth in Brackets.

Sun Tzu wrote in *The Art of War* that “strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory and tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.” It is good news in the world of climate activism that movements and organizations are taking up anew the

demand for serious action at the international level.

While it is highly doubtful that countries like the U.S., China, India, and others would ever bind their domestic policies to a global agreement, international action can increase the pressure on these governments to act. As with all successful citizen movements, that begins with building a solid, committed, and mobilized base among those already committed to action.

But the climate movement must also win support from the corners of citizenry that are not yet engaged and not yet persuaded behind a common agenda for what needs to be done.

The path through New York, Lima, and Paris offers a chance to do that – if we speak about the crisis in a way that connects with people, if we use every opportunity to gather as a chance to build power and not just blow off steam, and if we unmask, challenge, and undermine the larger forces that stand in the way.

With so much at stake for the generations who will follow us on this planet, it is essential that the next round of global climate action be something far more than just “the noise before defeat.”

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## International Climate Activism: The Second Coming

Jim Shultz

August 29, 2014

<http://democracyctr.org/news/international-climate-activism-the-second-coming/>

*The Democracy Center has just released our report on the first phase of a project looking at the opportunities which renewed energy in international negotiations – and renewed activist energies – can provide for strategy-building within the climate movement.*

A version of this article was also published in Yes! Magazine

The citizen movement for action on the global climate crisis has, over time, developed a love-hate relationship with international campaigning. For years the vision of people from all over the planet joining together across national boundaries to address a crisis that knows no such boundaries had an appeal that was both romantic and strategic at the same time. The high point for this ‘one planet, one people’ activism was in 2009 in Copenhagen when activists descended on the Danish capital by the tens of thousands to push for action at the UN’s annual COP (Conference of the Parties) summit, with hopes for a global deal as serious and real as the climate threat (some activists dubbed the meeting “Hopenhagen”).



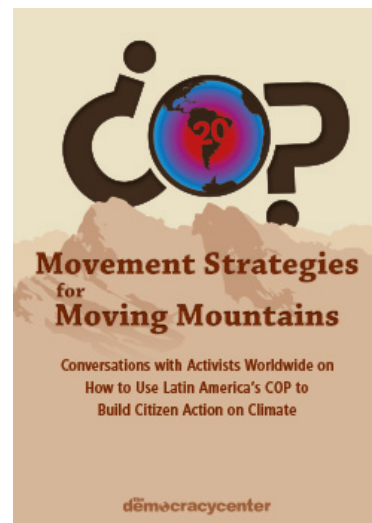
Demonstrators against the Keystone XL pipeline in front of the White House

Those activist hopes crashed, however, against the unchanged political realities of narrow national interest, powerful corporate resistance, complex issues, and a lack of political will. Many climate campaigners reacted by returning to their countries and focusing their energies instead on political battles closer to home, such as the fight over the Keystone pipeline in the U.S. and anti-fracking efforts in Europe. By the time the most recent COP negotiations were held in Warsaw last December, the process had become almost completely ignored by the larger public.

Now, in a three-step dance that begins on the streets of New York in September, the climate movement is stepping hard back into the international arena once again. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who has made climate change a main issue of his tenure, has called the planet's heads of state and other "world leaders" to a special Climate Week summit aimed at increasing the pressure for coordinated international action. Climate advocacy organizations in the U.S. have been mobilizing for months to seize the opportunity with plans for a massive march through the streets of Manhattan on September 21. In December this renewed energy for international action will turn southward to Peru, where the COP negotiations will convene in the political shadow of melting Andean glaciers. Then in December of next year the COP negotiations will move to Paris for what is supposed to be the deadline for a new international climate accord. European activists are already meeting to organize a mobilization in the streets there to match or surpass the multitude expected in at the UN next month.

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suffers no shortage of demands and proposals. Climate groups can offer up a diversity of ambitious and passionate plans for how to reduce humanity's use of fossil fuels, protect the world's forests, and move money from the rich countries that have caused the crisis to the poor ones least equipped to deal with what's coming. But knowing what you want and knowing how to change the political equation to make that possible are two different things.



The Democracy Center recently interviewed more than forty key climate activists from across five continents to seek their views on how to use the Lima summit and these other global gatherings as an opportunity to alter the political winds around the climate crisis and make real action more possible. What we heard, from people ranging from local indigenous activists to staff at well-known NGOs, were three important strands of collective wisdom.

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none of it sufficiently connected to people's daily lives to gain hard and lasting traction. But there are lessons from the grassroots about how to do better. In California, climate activists successfully fought back a political assault by the Koch brothers by talking about local fossil fuel plants and their connection to child asthma. In South America the crisis is about water – the disappearance of it in some places causing drought and displacement, and too much of it in other places causing flooding and destruction. In Asia and Africa people talk about climate's role in a worsening food crisis. The common thread in the messages that are winning support is to speak locally and connect the climate crisis to real issues of life, survival, and the diminished and more dangerous planet we are getting ready to leave to our children and theirs. Just as important as the message is the moral authority of those who deliver it. "We can't talk about the impacts unless the main message comes from the affected communities," says Juan Carlos Soriano, a Peruvian activist with 350.org.

Second, use this trilogy of global actions to build the long-term power of the climate movement. Getting real action on climate is not just about raising consciousness, it is about political power and how the climate movement can build muscle. In New York and Paris the focus will be on getting multitudes into the streets in the hope of convincing governments that they ignore a rising demand for action at their political peril. "What we most need to do as a movement is move the conversation and build power, not lobby global leaders," observes Sean Sweeney of the Global Labor Institute. In Latin America, Africa and Asia that citizen power resides in long-established movements on the ground tied to indigenous rights, territorial rights, natural resources, and other battles

that are now impacted by climate change. Sandwiched in between the higher profile, Northern-dominated events in New York and Paris, activists we spoke with said that the COP in Lima must stand out as the 'COP of the South' and make the link between the climate crisis and these movements. "The local struggles seem to be in compartmentalized spaces that don't connect to this big issue that affects absolutely everything. One of the challenges is to connect the local struggles and demands with activism on climate change," says Elizabeth Peredo Beltran, a well-regarded climate leader in Bolivia.

Third, directly confront the powers and forces blocking serious action on the climate crisis. Fossil fuel companies, international agribusiness, car makers and other corporate interests have a huge stake in international climate negotiations and have used their political muscle to embed themselves in the UN's COP negotiations process. During the COP meeting in Warsaw last year the Corporate Europe Observatory documented all kinds of techniques used by these corporations to become official sponsors of global climate negotiations the way they might make themselves official sponsors of the Olympics or World Cup. Corporations furnished government negotiators with everything from free cars and drivers to logo-emblazoned drinking cups, all the while pushing their agendas on issues such as coal capture technology and corporate-driven carbon markets. Activists say it is urgent to put a spotlight on this corporate capture of the UN negotiations and on the false solutions being promoted by these corporations using the access they've gained. "We need to go in with an offensive strategy and communicate the message that the negotiations are focusing on the wrong issues

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Sun Tzu wrote in ‘The Art of War’, “Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory and tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.” It is good news in the world of climate activism that movements and organizations are taking up anew the demand for serious action at the international level. While it is highly doubtful that countries like the U.S., China, India and others would ever bind their domestic policies to a global agreement; international action can increase the pressure on these governments to act. As with all successful citizen movements, that begins with building a solid, committed, and mobilized base among those already committed to action, a based being mobilized now into the streets. But the climate movement must also win support from the corners of citizenry that are not yet engaged and not yet persuaded behind a common agenda for what needs to be done.

The path through New York, Lima and Paris offers a chance to do that – if we speak about the crisis in a way that connects with people, if we use every opportunity to gather as a chance to build power and not just blow off steam, and if we unmask, challenge, and undermine the larger forces that stand in the way. With so much at stake for the generations who will follow us on this planet, it is essential that the next round of global climate action be something far more than just “the noise before defeat.”

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## Time for a New Containment Strategy? What Climate Marchers Can Learn from the Cold War

Jim Shultz

September 29, 2014

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/climate-in-our-hands/time-for-a-new-containment-strategy-what-the-climate-movement-cold-war>

The leading strategies in the climate justice movement already resemble the Cold War policies of containment, roll-back, and isolation. But can they wear down the political power of the fossil fuel industry?

*This story is part of the Climate In Our Hands collaboration between Truthout and YES! Magazine.*

More than 400,000 people jammed the streets of Manhattan on September 21, drawn from all parts by the magnetic force of the People’s Climate March. From Times



At the People's Climate March in New York City. Photo by Stephen D. Melkisetian / Flickr.

Square to the upper reaches of Central Park West, a 40-block sea of humanity joined under banners that demanded action, named the responsible, and articulated the solutions. Most moving of all were those that expressed the fears and hopes of the children who drew

and carried them. For those fortunate enough to be there, it was a deeply empowering experience.

The People's March was not about demands that lacked the power to force action.

That said, Climate Week in New York – the march, the special U.N. summit that catalyzed it, and the swirl of side events surrounding both – was about far more than a one-time gathering of the masses. Its true value lay in the millions of conversations it spawned among the citizens who committed their presence to the battle. Some of these conversations came in organized forums but most were spontaneous, between strangers on the street or old friends reunited around a table. It was in these conversations that people dug for deeper insight into the challenge we face and where we go now as a movement.

Many of those conversations were about hope.

Just hours off my long plane ride to New York from Bolivia, I stood before an auditorium of students at Brooklyn College, young people who spoke of the future with fear and concern. Many of them had their introduction to the climate issue during Hurricane Sandy, an experience of vulnerability still fresh in their minds.

Finding hope may be more essential on climate than on any other crisis we face. War, genocide, disease, and injustice – dire as they are – have “off switches” that history has shown us before. Barbarians fall, governments make peace, vaccines are discovered.

We don't know if the climate crisis has an off switch, even if we do muster powerful global citizen action. “Let's be honest,” said a woman in the audience at one of the forums where I spoke. “It is OK for us to be here just to recharge our batteries for the battles ahead.”

A basic principle that is both big enough to make a difference and simple to understand: “Leave it in the ground.”

I saw that hope over and over again in small ways: in Christina, the young muralist I met on a corner in SoHo, painting a banner for the march. I saw it in Raymond, an engineer from Alaska who flew to New York to participate in the first political action of his life. “It seemed like an opportunity to do something,” he told me. In our large numbers, we saw glimpses of a people rising and we need that.

But there were many, many other conversations about what must come after the March, about goals, power, tactics, and the missing connection between each of those: strategy. I heard familiar criticisms of the March. Michael Dorsey, a 20-year veteran of U.N. and NGO work who spoke on a panel alongside me, chastised 350.org leader Bill McKibben as he listened to us, saying the weekend's action lacked a clear message beyond “Do something!”

“Brother Bill,” he said, “I will not march with you tomorrow. I will not join in a march that has no demands.”

But the People's Climate March was not about demands that lacked the power to force action. It was about building a base for action wide enough to connect Brooklyn families pushing strollers to the anti-

capitalists who got arrested at Flood Wall Street the next day.

I have been in gatherings like this one before: the People's Climate Summit in Bolivia in 2010; the activist assembly at Rio 20 in 2012; and others. I am continually amazed at the energy invested – and wasted – in these spaces as the movement's intellectuals polish theories that no one outside the movement understands; as the various coalitions polish their passionate declarations that no one will read.

Absent always is genuine debate about how we make any of it actually happen. And in this way the debates around the People's Climate March seemed, for the most part, no different.

Finding hope may be more essential on climate than on any other crisis we face.

On Sunday evening people gathered in gaggles to take stock of what they had just been a part of. I had the fortune to have that after-march conversation over Chinese take-out in the Harlem apartment of someone who has written extensively about these kinds of questions for many decades: City University of New York professor Frances Fox Piven.

An avid scholar of (and participant in) people's movements since the 1960s, Piven listened and then offered a simple truth that has run through every key social movement of the past hundred years: Persuasion through words is not enough. We have to find the levers of real power, and then reach and seize them. Marching en masse alongside Central Park and blocking lower Broadway the next day may have raised our voices, but

it brought neither shudders nor changes of course on Wall Street or in the U.N. assembly.

But among the many who gathered in New York this past week, among the activists who carry the fight forward, there is a good deal of solid thinking about how we move from inspiration to real strategy.

Around the world, there is a gathering around a basic principle that is both big enough to make a difference and simple to understand: "Leave the oil, gas, and coal in the ground."

Over cheap Mexican food at a sticky table in Brooklyn, I listened to my old friend and fearless activist Antonia Juhasz. She began battling the oil industry years before the practice came into vogue, writing widely read books and getting arrested at a Chevron shareholder meeting in Texas. She had just returned from a submarine trip to the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico to witness the destruction of the sea floor wrought by BP's spilled oil.

As she spoke about the People's Climate March, I began to recognize a strategy that was old and familiar: containment.

For five decades, this was the geopolitical strategy that the U.S. aimed at Soviet Communism – don't let it spread, roll it back where you can, and support those actions that will hasten its collapsing of its own weight.

Even if we have not articulated it as such, that is our strategy today against the threat of fossil fuels. The battles against fracking are about containing the spread of the drilling. The battles against existing coal plants are about rolling it back. The battles for divestment are aimed at making the industry

a political pariah, akin to tobacco, to diminish its political clout. The hope is that the move toward energy and transportation alternatives, combined with divestment, will loosen fossil fuels' grip over the political and economic territory the industry holds now, and hasten its collapse.

The march's true value lay in the millions of conversations it spawned.

We also know that our political clout against the industry is strongest closest to our communities, and that those are the battlefields we must drag the fight to. Victories against the Koch brothers in California, against fracking efforts in New York, and others show us what strategy and victory look like.

As I stood in the crowd during the march, I heard a chorus of unfamiliar voices chanting my name. "Hey Jim, we came, we came!" A group of the students I had spoken to days earlier at Brooklyn College had heeded my pleas and had given up their precious Sunday to join the march. They were all smiles as they walked.

This is where hope comes from. This is what the People's Climate March was really about. Now we must make sure that the march does not end on Eleventh Avenue, where we all went our separate ways, but that it continues on across continents and countries in a way that can go beyond talking about our fears, demands, and dreams to also make a serious difference.

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## Integrate and Escalate

Nathan Thanki

*What strategies and tactics should the climate justice movement adopt, **both inside and outside the U.N. negotiations** (known as the COP, or Conference of the Parties), to **create maximum pushback** against the status quo of unfettered carbon-fuelled capitalism, and to ensure that the United Nations' next universal **climate treaty**, to be adopted at the COP 21 Paris talks in December 2015, leads the world away from its current destination of global climate apartheid and **toward climate justice**?*

These are not new questions and neither are my answers. I don't assume to have the experience or intelligence to be able to outline any grand strategies to achieve climate justice, but I will humbly offer some ideas (the list is definitely not exhaustive) that may contribute to getting us on the way.

### Integrate and escalate with other struggles

For being such a cross-cutting issue, climate change is oddly isolated and most of the people from mainstream groups that self-identify as being part of a climate [justice] movement have become stranded in the increasingly apolitical, click-bait work of online "communications," or in the obscure depths of national or international policy. I don't say this to denigrate this work – it is essential and somebody must do it – but just to question if the compartmentalization of activism and further specialization within climate change activism has led us to lose sight of the bigger picture.

One thing many who organize around climate change have pointed out is that apart from during extreme weather events, it is very hard to make climate change (the abstract concept) real for people in a way that will radicalize and mobilize them. We need to ask: what issues do radicalize and mobilize

people? Of those issues, which ones are really the same fight as the climate fight, and which ones are struggles in need of solidarity and support? In my mind, the best way forward for the climate movement is to connect with the struggles that matter to people: land, food, energy, extraction, water, health, transport, development, or some combination of many issues. This doesn't mean adopting the bad-ally habits of doing things like showing up at Ferguson shouting about climate change.<sup>73</sup> Nobody wants that. That isn't helpful. What it does mean is a lot of hard, humble, solidarity work. Many groups are of course already doing this and more connections between struggles are being made every day – my point is that this needs to become the norm rather than the exception. At least in the English-speaking world, the Right have gained so much ground in recent years. A climate [justice] movement that doesn't recognize this as a major problem and work to push back against a common enemy will fail to achieve any of its objectives.

### Use diversity as strength

Part of the reason that right-wing ideology has taken over the mainstream is that while it presents a broadly united front, the left is utterly fractured. That's not news to anyone, I know, but then why do we remain so? Stuart Hall talked about the need to foster an ability to live with difference. To work together through our differences for a common cause. We seem to be finding that difficult. Instead of building our counter-cultures and constructing a new cultural hegemony (that is negotiated) we are caught in a cycle of

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<sup>73</sup> Just want to be really clear that Deirdre Smith's piece for 350 was a really good articulation of *how* racism and climate justice are connected. It can be done, but doing it wrong is worse than not trying at all.

imperialistic activism forcing groups to maintain at all costs their independence to such an extent that a common platform or agenda becomes impossible. Why, for example, do we spend a lot of time dismissing each other's work? Why is US organizing culture the dominant one? Among groups that do climate justice work there are many approaches, but sadly rather than treating, for example, Keystone, the WTO, GMOs, the Green Climate Fund and fracking as different fronts of the same war we treat them as unrelated or competing projects. That's not to say we shouldn't recognize the different utility of each to movement building (most people are turned on by stopping a new extractive project rather than by incremental gains in international law) just that we should treat them all as part of the same overall struggle.

### **Be pragmatic and idealistic at the same time**

In spite of all the cynicism, I actually think many activists are highly idealistic. To the point of it being a burden on them, their work, and any hopes of building a popular movement for climate justice. If we're to have any hope of doing that, we'll need to leave behind some of our notions of ideological purity. At the very least we need to envision the way forward to achieving our objectives – including all the milestones to getting there. For example, the People's Climate March in September 2014 was not perfect. I think everyone centrally involved would freely admit that. But some of the public criticism of the mobilization was totally unhelpful – especially as it came merely days beforehand and from people who had not tried to collaborate with the organizers in order to better the message/route/whatever else they had issue with in the preceding months. The final word was that 400,000

were on the streets of New York for climate change. Some of them lacked a sharp analysis about the root causes of the crisis, but I saw many people who were clearly protesting neoliberal capitalism. You can have all the analysis you like and spend all your time cynically blogging away, but unless you're actually doing something in the real world as well, you appear to me to be an attention seeker more concerned with their own ego than with actually building bridges and the type of movements needed. In my mind, there's no contradiction in having ideals that are not lived up to but which you constantly strive for. The old chestnut "don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good" rings true.

### **Get over the EGO and NGO politics**

As mentioned, a huge drag on movement building is the prevalence of some massive egos and the persistence of NGO in-fighting over brand recognition and funding. Of course egos exist in any movement, the personal is always political, and as humans we are not purely logical (thankfully). But our inability to overcome or at least live with certain differences of opinion, our inclination to get personal when things get heated, and the pressure to advance brands rather than the overall movement all stand in the way of ever achieving climate justice.

As a species we seem to have a thing for leaders. In the climate movement(s), the urge for memes and trends leads us to splashing certain people's faces and words all over the internet, but then we get annoyed and jealous when they are identified by the media as leaders or spokespeople. Leaders, especially charismatic ones, can be useful – to a point. Within the movement(s) we have to recognize and exploit the strategic potential of having spokespeople and leaders, but

everyone should remember that they are propelled into that role by the movement in order to serve the movement.

**The best way to undermine false solutions is proposing real ones**

I'm not one for the "if you don't have the solution you should just keep quiet" attitude which is often used to dismiss dissent, but I do think that not having solutions – clear and compelling solutions – is bad strategy. For one, it makes resisting the false solutions that much harder. It allows the cleverer corporate agents a drop of undeserved legitimacy as they muddy the water.

In terms of the 2015 treaty, what possible outcomes could be anything even approaching good for climate justice? What real solutions stand a chance? I suspect there's an array of different opinions, but that most of them hold little to no hope of anything good coming out of 2015. Even the most deluded negotiators would probably struggle to say that Paris will deliver us climate justice or a plan to get it.

But there are still many things to fight for (both to advance and to prevent). Agreeing on that point, though basic, would be a start. In terms of how the 2015 deal is framed, my vote goes for advocating a "fairshares" approach that sees us set a Global Budget in line with science to keep us below 1.5 degrees warming that is then portioned out according to a balance of responsibility (cumulative, per capita, discounting survival emissions) with capacity (using the right indicators to ensure real equity, including a high income threshold). Countries unable to stay within their fair share would have to pay, and climate finance to support developing countries stay within their fair share would

also been a key component. The work of the Stockholm Environment Institute and others to develop such an approach helps us have something both idealistic and possible – the technical proposal is there, we have to make it accessible, popular, and well messaged.

Overall I'm fairly restrained in my optimism about the possibility of a global popular social movement for climate justice. The forces of evil are strong and the forces of good fragmented. But this is not a struggle with a guaranteed outcome either way. And while it continues, we can always find ways to make success more likely.

## The Evolution of Climate Justice

*Brian Tokar*

Climate justice has emerged over more than a decade now as a political sensibility, a scientific understanding, and an organizing agenda, focused on the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis on vulnerable peoples and the failure of conventional, corporate-driven solutions.

The multiple meanings of climate justice roughly correspond to the differing geographic locations of its key proponents: An initial impetus came from indigenous and other land-based peoples, mainly in the global South, who have raised crucial demands at the UN and other settings since the early 2000s around their communities' unique vulnerability to climate disruptions. Advocates for racial and environmental justice in the US have added additional dimensions, including a link to the legacies of the civil rights movement, an understanding of the effects of climate change on marginalized urban communities, and essential links to other justice-based movements around food, healthcare, transportation, etc. Explicitly anticapitalist formations, mainly in the US and Europe, have brought an added critical dimension, focused on the systemic roots of the crisis and the many corporate-driven false solutions, including nuclear power, biomass incineration and biofuels, and the emergence of carbon markets.

All three sectors are also challenging the largest US expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure since the economic boom years of the 1950s. With fossil fuels now coming from increasingly extreme sources, the impacts of this new infrastructure on affected

communities are immediate and often devastating.

For some years now, people engaged with all these approaches have tried to figure out how to work together. The international Climate Justice Now network has become divided around the question of how much to engage in the official UN climate negotiations. A fledgling Mobilization for Climate Justice in the US in 2009-'10 fell short in engaging the leadership of community-based environmental justice activists. The current Climate Justice Alliance is significantly led by people of color groups, but seems reluctant to engage activists outside of its core networks and best-organized locales. Rising Tide is organizing direct actions against extreme energy all over the continent but is limited in its ability to speak for the movement as a whole.

So how to move forward from here? The global justice movement, which dramatically challenged the major international financial institutions during the late 1990s-early 2000s sought to revive the long-standing left libertarian vision of a broad-ranging "movement of movements," organized from below and bringing together a diversity of voices into an organic whole, representing far more than the sum of its disparate parts. But that movement's appeal was limited by its youth and by "summit-hopping" strategies that embraced community-based movements more in rhetoric than in praxis. The Occupy movement did a better job for a time, but a mix of state repression and internal problems limited its potential. How can the climate justice movement succeed where these earlier efforts fell short?

The still-emerging climate justice movement has many unique qualities that suggest it can

make a much broader contribution. It links a uniquely urgent environmental focus to a sharp critique of the economic and political system. It brings demands for racial justice and human rights explicitly into environmental organizing, an element increasingly embraced by climate organizers from many backgrounds and various organizations. It offers a direct and compelling challenge to an especially destructive new wave of resource extraction, and looks to indigenous values, among other inspirations, as a source of post-capitalist solutions.

One additional set of actors has not yet become fully engaged in climate justice, but needs to be part of our story: that is the various efforts toward local solutions to the climate crisis. That includes people who are localizing their food systems, greening their cities and towns, and sometimes creating community-owned energy alternatives. Today these efforts often lack the essential critical dimension that's inherent to climate justice, making various experiments more prone to cooptation and absorption into the capitalist market. But that is beginning to change, from explicitly justice-centered urban farming projects to some nonprofit green jobs programs focused on weatherizing homes. These efforts can help us link our resistance to a community-centered future vision, and to the potential for a democratic confederation-from-below of communities that might help us transcend the limits of localism. These experiments can also keep us focused on the essential promise that another world is still possible, and that we can live a better quality of life with less energy consumption and more resilient communities.

We don't yet have a clear picture of the new organizing models that can genuinely bring

together all these disparate elements. The September 2014 System Change Convergence and People's Climate March in New York City, followed by several days of actions and educational events with a specific climate justice focus, helped strengthen the movement's sense of political and organizational vision, and demonstrated the broad appeal of a justice- and liberation-centered approach to climate activism. But the next steps remain uncertain, with the right wing dominance of mainstream US and European politics systematically obstructing any policy measures that might accurately reflect the urgency of the situation. We know the coming decades' climate changes will be disruptive and difficult, but our actions may still help prevent them from becoming catastrophic and extreme. This will only come to pass, however, if we keep our eyes on the prize and create new ways to work together.

## Stop Accepting Climate Change, Get Active: Global Activism and Global Negotiations

Emily Williams

We've probably all heard of the *Five Stages of Climate Grief*.<sup>74</sup> It has its roots in the *Five Stages of Grief*, and refers to the emotional processing our society uses to cope with climate change.

First you are in **denial**. You deny that the earth is warming, you deny the severity of climate change, and you deny that current human activities could cause it.

Next, you become **angry** that corporations and government have allowed for and financed such reckless exploitation, creating climate chaos; or you are angry that environmentalists are demanding that people change their habits and give up their comforts for the polar bears.

Next, you **bargain**. We trade scientific fact for political gain, trade carbon credits for a few more years of uncontrolled burning, and trade our logical minds for a monopolized media that will tell us that the science isn't that serious and we will all be ok.

When one of our cities is devastated by a superstorm or plagued by drought, we enter into **depression**.

And so, grudgingly, we enter into **acceptance**. Acceptance is when we acknowledge the science and explore solutions.... But will we really ever accept?

Acceptance assumes that if we understand climate science and are given enough time to move through the *five stages*, our institutions

will ultimately collaborate to implement solutions that will mitigate, and help adapt to, this crisis. However, if acceptance is enough to enact change, a climate denier would not be poised to be head of the Senate Environment and Public Works committee, our government would not continue subsidizing the fossil fuel industry, and the fossil fuel industry itself would invest its money and infrastructure in renewable technology development, accepting that we must leave 80% of reserves in the ground.<sup>75</sup> In the *five stages*, there is no mention activism. However, the climate crisis needs more than acceptance. If we are to see meaningful action on climate change, we cannot wait for these stages to play out; civil society needs to pave the way<sup>76</sup>.

### Where are we trying to get to?

Let's talk about 2 degrees Celsius. The Copenhagen Accord set the target, stating that governments recognize "that the increase in global temperature should be below 2 degrees Celsius." But what does 2 degrees entail? Was it in fact science that arrived at the 2 degree target as a safe limit? Ultimately, 2 degrees is a political concept; most climate research shows little confidence in 2 degrees as a safe limit.<sup>77</sup> The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) – a contingent of more than forty nations at the COP – has listed 1.5 degrees of warming as a safer limit that will help avoid the worst catastrophes.<sup>78</sup> Yet it is hard to put an upper limit on how much warming is "ok"; no matter how small,

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<sup>75</sup> <http://www.carbontracker.org/>

<sup>76</sup> <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2012/09/04/791221/the-six-stages-of-climate-grief/>

<sup>77</sup>

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/03/141001-two-degrees-global-warming-climate-science/>

<sup>78</sup> <http://aosis.org/small-islands-call-for-research-on-survival-threshold/>

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<sup>74</sup> <http://www.climatetoday.org/?p=2173>

any changes in the climate will have repercussions. Already, at 0.8 degrees of warming, we are seeing changes in our climate and adverse impacts on our society occurring at an alarming rate. A 2 degree limit leaves island states underwater, or at least inhabitable. Representatives from African nations and Pacific Island nations stated that by signing onto the accord, they would be signing a “suicide pact.”<sup>79</sup> By agreeing to this political limit, our governments have already sold out the Global South, committing one of the worst and largest-scale injustices.

However, to illustrate just how hard it will be to stay within even 2 degrees, we need to understand the carbon gap. The carbon gap is the difference between the rates of emissions we need to stay under to achieve climate stability versus our actual rate of emissions. Closing this gap would mean achieving a modicum of climate stability. However, our current rate of emissions is not slowing, and the gap widens<sup>80</sup>.

Kevin Anderson, Deputy Director of the Tyndall Centre, outlined the global emissions cuts we need to make if we are to stay below 2 degrees.<sup>81</sup> Anderson’s plan not only closes the gap, but factors in climate justice. Granting non-Annex 1 countries (or developing countries) a carbon budget so that they may continue to develop and phase away from fossil fuels, Anderson details that the wealthy nations of Annex 1 need to cut 70% of their emissions in 10 years. To put that figure in perspective, by 2023 the U.S. would have to cut the equivalent of all the emission from the electricity, transportation,

and agriculture sectors.<sup>82</sup> In November 2014, the United States and China reached a “historic agreement”, committing the nations to certain emissions cuts and peaks in emissions – the United States would decrease its emissions by 26-28% of 2005 levels by 2025; China would peak its emissions in 2030 with 20% of its electricity pledged to come from non-fossil fuel sources.<sup>83</sup> This agreement is historic in that it was not mandatory, and it was made by two of the most powerful countries in the climate negotiations. However, this agreement is non-binding, and translates to a 10% emissions cut from the base year scientists use. So can we succeed in reducing our emissions to stay below 2 degrees? It’s not impossible, but ambitious and extremely difficult, especially if there isn’t financial support and regulatory pressure to enable the transition.

### **Climate activism as a tool to reach our goal**

If we are to ensure that our *five stages of climate grief* result in ambitious action instead of a numb acceptance of the horrors that are to occur, we have to rethink how we as civil society engage to catalyze ambitious action. Civil society is responsible for the agreement that the US and China reached last week; civil society pushed, and in the wake of the Republican Party’s sweep of the 2014 midterm elections, U.S. President Barack Obama chose to take a stand and leave his legacy as an actor on climate. We now know that the administration listens to us; this past week, Obama addressed the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative and said “the issue of

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<sup>79</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/southern-crossroads/2014/sep/09/new-york-climate-summit-two-degrees-warming-policy-disaster>

<sup>80</sup> <http://shrinkthatfootprint.com/mind-the-carbon-gap>

<sup>81</sup> <http://climatenorthernireland.org.uk/cmsfiles/resources/Presentations/What-Next.pdf>

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<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/sources.html>

<sup>83</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jamie-henn/fossil-fuel-divestment\\_b\\_6147234.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jamie-henn/fossil-fuel-divestment_b_6147234.html)

climate change is a perfect example of why young people have to lead.”<sup>84</sup> But if we are to see a more ambitious agreement and achieve significant action on climate change that adheres to the severity of the crisis, and if we are to achieve climate justice, we need to push harder.

Nations will not make progress if their civil societies do not push them. No matter how much we hope, our governments’ negotiators will never author a treaty of which we would be proud unless there is sufficient pressure coming from their own people to push them in the right direction. Despite being seemingly easy targets, negotiators at the COP have relatively little freedom to make the decisions they want to see. At COP 19 in Warsaw, Trigg Talley – the U.S. Senior State Department Negotiator – told me flat out that he wished he could do more to effect change at the COP, but unfortunately his hands were tied and he lost faith in the process a long time ago. Now whether Mr. Talley was being honest or if he was just trying to escape my badgering, we do not know. What we do know though is that these negotiators, despite being visible and easily accessible by civil society at the COP, will not make the changes we want to see unless they are told to do so by their superiors.

That means that we need to mobilize. Especially now that there is only one year between Lima and COP 21 in Paris, we need to mobilize even more, grow stronger, and build a people’s movement that can effectively push our governments to enter into that conference with the kind of ambition that would make us proud. So let’s

take a look at how one campaign – divestment – manages to do that.

## **Fossil Fuel Divestment and the Road to 2015**

We’ve heard a lot about divestment over the past few years: Bill McKibben became an unlikely rock star overnight with the *Do The Math* tour, the campaign spread to new continents making it an international effort, and the Rockefellers – the family that made its fortune from oil – chose to divest. Divestment gives a face to the crisis, allowing people to rally around a target and feel empowered to take their futures into their own hands, therefore democratizing the issue of climate change. Divestment has the power to change the public perception of the fossil fuel industry. It points to the culprit and organizes the masses to demand that their institutions – their campuses, businesses, churches, or cities – refuse to profit from that industry. When enough institutions divest, it creates a tipping point where people become passionate about the issue and put enough pressure on their elected officials to start representing their needs instead of the desires of oil barons.

Divestment also frees up finance, forcing institutions and our government to shift finances away from the industry that’s launching us over the edge and instead begin to finance and build the low-carbon, just economy we need. This is the reinvestment side of the campaign, and it goes far beyond moving that money into renewable technology development. When we divest, we can reinvest in communities – in their resilience and in community-owned energy generation – and in radical and innovative solutions. The campaign works with both yin and yang: it identifies that which is harmful, denounces it, and calls upon society

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<sup>84</sup> <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2014/11/14/obama-to-youth-on-climate-change-old-people-theyve-created-a-mess/>



to denounce it as well; but it also identifies the real solutions, and financially and ideologically supports those solutions by investing in them.

There are a fair number of critiques of divestment – that it’s too symbolic and draws attention from what really works (on-the-ground resistance); that it is an elitist campaign and excludes those who are the most marginalized by the climate movement and those who are most affected by the industry, both in the U.S. and abroad; and that isn’t radical if folks like Tom Steyer can hop on board to perpetuate the same old capitalist, exploitative, immoral system.<sup>85</sup> A lot of those critiques have validity, and like most campaigns, the divestment campaign has made many mistakes and still has a lot to learn before reaching its effective potential. But it learns from its mistakes, and therefore creates a platform on which many related campaigns can converge into a global movement.

So what is the role of divestment in national and international politics? Divestment is local – it’s implemented at the local level, and has direct local repercussions. Yet its ability to influence the public opinion on climate change gives it a global scope. It is a solidarity campaign that allows institutions to take a stand and commit to the transition to a low-carbon and just future, standing on the side of future generations and those most disproportionately impacted by both climate change and the extractive economy. It commits to invest in the solutions that the Global South so desperately need. This shift impacts negotiations. When enough institutions in a country divest, it begins to change the climate and discourse around

climate change and the fossil fuel economy. It ultimately shifts the political atmosphere of the country and puts pressure on governments to go into the negotiations with a few more bargaining chips. When our campuses, states, foundations, and other institutions divest in the United States, it will give Obama the go-ahead and the political backing to offer more at the UN.

### **It’s up to us**

Divestment, and every other campaign that focuses on local and grassroots action, shifts systems and create tipping points. Civil rights, women’s rights, and democracy were all won by local, grassroots actions and narratives. They have the power to create a peoples’ movement that creates the political backing (or pressure) that allows for (or forces) governments to enact changes that work for the people over profit. But no one else is going to create this change. If we want to see change, it’s up to us.

It is unlikely that any agreement reached in Paris will manage to “lead the world away from its current destination of global climate apartheid and toward climate justice.” To accomplish that, we would need to build the largest movement ever in the history of humanity, and most likely experience many devastating natural disasters that have a severe negative impact on the global economy. That movement would have to be built in six months to give time to the heads of state to design a treaty that would sufficiently respond to the threats of climate change, mitigate emissions as ambitiously as possible, and finance extreme adaptation to reduce the level of damage that will be experienced by the Global South. It is unlikely to happen. What can happen, however, is that between now and Paris, we can begin to

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<sup>85</sup> <http://www.energyjustice.net/content/fossil-fuel-divestment-how-evolve-campaign-beyond-its-shortcomings>

build that movement and be ready to launch the biggest, most diverse, and most radical movement the world has ever seen in Paris when the final decision is made. We can launch that movement on the last day of COP 21. We will still fail the Global South and condemn many, many lives, but we can still save some.

Many in our society have moved through all five stages of grief, and hang in an uneasy balance of acceptance and denial as they anxiously place hope in the status quo's ability to make the changes necessary. But it's time to stop accepting and start acting. If we want to see global change, we need a global movement – and that movement needs to come from the grassroots, be led by those most disproportionately impacted, and create the solutions that our generation needs.

Let's get active, very active, *now*.

## **Vision, Hope, and Power:**

### **A Contribution to the Discussion**

*Leehi Yona*

What a loaded question. When I was first asked to answer it, I struggled. I see and interact with climate change from many points of view – as a community organizer, as a budding climate scientist, as a policymaker-in-training, as an amateur sociologist, as an American student, as an Israeli, as a Canadian, as a representative of future generations. How could I possibly condense these viewpoints into two pages?

If I could pull some key thoughts, I'd break it down into these nine words: vision, outrage, hope, humanity, storytelling, celebration, interaction, mobilization, and power. These thoughts by no means encapsulate all I have to say about this question, but it brings to light some short, important personal realizations I've had in my climate justice work.

#### *Vision*

What is a vision? A vision is the broader imagination, the future we can see within our grasp. A vision is boldly optimistic, ambitious, dream-like. Of course, our vision is vitally important in determining our decisions. Above all, we need to be driven by a vision, not a goal. This understanding is crucial. Our motivations for our work – the things that govern what we do – should be huge, and hopeful, and even unrealistic at first. That is fine, because they are visions – they shouldn't be solutions that would work within the systems we currently have, but solutions that transcend beyond these very systems. They should be wildly idealistic, because even the most idealistic of visions have been achieved in history with a little faith.

#### *Outrage*

Where is the outrage? Seriously, where is it? We need more outrage! We need to convey the urgency of this problem, the way we feel it sink a heavy weight onto our hearts. We need to make others – particularly those in power – feel the suffering, feel the heartbreak, feel the injustice, feel the outrage that global warming stirs. The time has passed to temper our anger; we cannot and should not subdue our burning fire that energizes us to find the solutions to this climate challenge.

#### *Hope*

This outrage cannot survive without hope. We cannot exist without hope. And we need even more than just hope to solve a problem as monstrous as the one we are facing – we need extravagant hope, the unwavering and fervent belief that we will rise to the occasion and find a solution to the climate crisis. Yes, we can be critical (we must), yes, we must have outrage – but we must never lose sight of our vision, lose sight of hope. To do so, to allow our cynicism and pessimism to consume us, would be condemning ourselves to failure by default. We must couple our urgency with active hope.

#### *Humanity*

We must remember that climate change has a human face. Global warming is not about rising sea levels and extreme weather events – it's about Ula who lives in the Maldives and doesn't know where her children will live, Olivia who lives in a First Nations community and doesn't know what's in her drinking water – it's about these people on the front lines.

Acknowledging our shared humanity when speaking about climate change is also about acknowledging that some communities are disproportionately affected by climate change compared to others. This particularly includes communities of lower socioeconomic status, people of colour, and women. We need to make sure that these voices are amplified within our movement, so that the most common face speaking about climate change isn't that of affluent white men. Let's bring more humanity into our movement by striving to have a real anti-oppression model of leadership.

### *Storytelling and Power*

This humanity is why we need storytelling. Numbers and data don't really work when it comes to motivating people to act on climate change – but the stories of those suffering climate injustices do.

An important element to acknowledge when it comes to climate change is the third dimension of power. This dimension of power is one that isn't directly exerted upon a person, one wherein consciousness is manipulated. The third dimension of power here is one that is exerted upon us by broken systems of governance and fossil fuel companies that make us believe that sweeping change isn't possible or feasible when it comes to climate action. But this isn't true. We do have the power to change things – we must re-write the narrative we're being given, the narrative that is being told. Storytelling is vital.

Chee Yoke Ling of Third World Network once told me that youth have the power to bring the future into the present. We must do this through storytelling. We need this framing to

bypass the human exemptionalism that is wreaking havoc on climate progress.

### *Celebration*

I cannot stress this enough. Celebrate! Celebrate every little accomplishment worth celebrating. Celebrate your colleagues, celebrate your volunteers, and most importantly, celebrate yourselves and the collective work you are all doing. We rarely celebrate in this movement – we move forward too quickly. As soon as we've finished a march, as we've done whatever needs to be done – we move on to the next task at hand. We rarely celebrate the beautiful thing we've just done. Of course, this behaviour makes sense, considering the urgency of climate change – but it is *unsustainable*!

Celebrate!

### *Interaction*

When we're working on effecting positive change, it's important to nurture our relationships with each other, and with nature. Many of us may lose sight of this. Think about it: for those of you working on organizing this march, what did you spend most of your time doing? You were most likely, just as I was, glued to your computer, to social media, to various screens that disconnect us both from each other and from the very planet we're trying to save. That needs to change. We need more direct, face-to-face interactions and conversations with the people who matter – with everyone.

### *Mobilization*

There are frequently such marches and rallies that take place... yet usually, the end outcome is that people go home and after a

few days ask themselves, “Well, now what?” Now, we must mobilize! Too often such gatherings are plagued by a lack of concrete demands or next steps. Let’s make sure our demands and asks are clear.

### *Power*

As I mentioned earlier, power dynamics are entirely at play when it comes to global warming inaction. We must recognize these sources of disempowerment and target them directly to shift it back to the people.

Like I said, these words do not encompass all I have to say – but I do believe that they can bring us closer to building the movement we need for real climate justice.

## **APPENDIX:**

### ***Climate Justice Manifestos***

Editors' note: we have assembled this by no means comprehensive list of climate justice manifestos so that the movement can see some of its own demands evolve over time. Many of these manifestos have been drawn from the website of the Centre for Civil Society, University of KwaZulu-Natal:

<http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/default.asp?4,80,5,2381>, which we gratefully acknowledge.

At the CCS website, Patrick Bond “defines” climate justice as “the fusion of social and environmental justice philosophies, political practices and projects aiming to both redefine and redistribute wealth and to transform socio-economic relations, grounded in a political-ecological praxis (analysis-activism) that seeks root causes and proposes and implements genuine solutions to the climate crisis.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> See also <http://climate-justice.info/resources/cj-statements/>

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## **Durban Group for Climate Justice, Durban, October 2004**

### **“The Durban Declaration on Carbon Trading”**

As representatives of people’s movements and independent organisations, we reject the claim that carbon trading will halt the climate crisis. This crisis has been caused more than anything else by the mining of fossil fuels and the release of their carbon to the oceans, air, soil and living things.

This excessive burning of fossil fuels is now jeopardising Earth’s ability to maintain a liveable climate.

Governments, export credit agencies, corporations and international financial institutions continue to support and finance fossil fuel exploration, extraction and other activities that worsen global warming, such as forest degradation and destruction on a massive scale, while dedicating only token sums to renewable energy. It is particularly disturbing that the World Bank has recently defied the recommendation of its own Extractive Industries Review which calls for the phasing out of World Bank financing for coal, oil and gas extraction.

We denounce the further delays in ending fossil fuel extraction that are being caused by corporate, government and United Nations’ attempts to construct a ‘carbon market’, including a market trading in ‘carbon sinks.’

History has seen attempts to commodify land, food, labour, forests, water, genes and ideas. Carbon trading follows in the footsteps of this

history and turns the earth’s carbon-cycling capacity into property to be bought or sold in a global market. Through this process of creating a new commodity – carbon – the Earth’s ability and capacity to support a climate conducive to life and human societies is now passing into the same corporate hands that are destroying the climate.

People around the world need to be made aware of this commodification and privatisation and actively intervene to ensure the protection of the Earth’s climate. Carbon trading will not contribute to achieving this protection of the Earth’s climate. It is a false solution which entrenches and magnifies social inequalities in many ways:

– The carbon market creates transferable rights to dump carbon in the air, oceans, soil and vegetation far in excess of the capacity of these systems to hold it. Billions of dollars worth of these rights are to be awarded free of charge to the biggest corporate emitters of greenhouse gases in the electric power, iron and steel, cement, pulp and paper, and other sectors in industrialised nations who have caused the climate crisis and already exploit these systems the most. Costs of future reductions in fossil fuel use are likely to fall disproportionately on the public sector, communities, indigenous peoples and individual taxpayers.

– The Kyoto Protocol’s Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), as well as many private sector trading schemes, encourage industrialised countries and their corporations to finance or create cheap carbon dumps such as large-scale tree plantations in the South as a lucrative alternative to reducing emissions in the North. Other CDM projects, such as

hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFC) -reduction schemes, focus on end-of pipe technologies and thus do nothing to reduce the impact of

- Fossil fuel industries' impacts on local communities. In addition, these projects dwarf the tiny volume of renewable energy projects which constitute the CDM's sustainable development window-dressing.

- Impacts from fossil-fuel industries and other greenhouse-gas producing industries such as displacement, pollution, or climate change, are already disproportionately felt by small island states, coastal peoples, indigenous peoples, local communities, fisherfolk, women, youth, poor people, elderly and marginalised communities. CDM projects intensify these impacts in several ways. First, they sanction continued exploration for, and extraction, refining and burning of fossil fuels. Second, by providing finance for private sector projects such as industrial tree plantations, they appropriate land, water and air already supporting the lives and livelihoods of local communities for new carbon dumps for Northern industries.

- The refusal to phase out the use of coal, oil and gas, which is further entrenched by carbon trading, is also causing more and more military conflicts around the world, magnifying social and environmental injustice. This in turn diverts vast resources to military budgets which could otherwise be utilised to support economies based on renewable energies and energy efficiency.

- In addition to these injustices, the internal weaknesses and contradictions of carbon trading are in fact likely to make global warming worse rather than 'mitigate' it. CDM projects, for instance, cannot be verified to be 'neutralising' any given quantity of fossil

fuel extraction and burning. Their claim to be able to do so is increasingly dangerous because it creates the illusion that consumption and production patterns, particularly in the North, can be maintained without harming the climate.

- In addition, because of the verification problem, as well as a lack of credible regulation, no one in the CDM market is likely to be sure what they are buying. Without a viable commodity to trade, the CDM market and similar private sector trading schemes are a total waste of time when the world has a critical climate crisis to address.

- In an absurd contradiction the World Bank facilitates these false, market-based approaches to climate change through its Prototype Carbon Fund, the BioCarbon Fund and the Community Development Carbon Fund at the same time it is promoting, on a far greater scale, the continued exploration for, and extraction and burning of fossil fuels – many of which are to ensure increased emissions of the North.

In conclusion, 'giving carbon a price' will not prove to be any more effective, democratic, or conducive to human welfare, than giving genes, forests, biodiversity or clean rivers a price.

We reaffirm that drastic reductions in emissions from fossil fuel use are a prerequisite if we are to avert the climate crisis. We affirm our responsibility to coming generations to seek real solutions that are viable and truly sustainable and that do not sacrifice marginalised communities. We therefore commit ourselves to help build a global grassroots movement for climate justice, mobilise communities around the world and pledge our solidarity with people opposing carbon trading on the ground.



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## **Climate Justice Now!**

### **“Founding Statement”**

### **Bali, December 14, 2007**

Peoples from social organizations and movements from across the globe brought the fight for social, ecological and gender justice into the negotiating rooms and onto the streets during the UN climate summit in Bali. Inside and outside the convention centre, activists demanded alternative policies and practices that protect livelihoods and the environment.

In dozens of side events, reports, impromptu protests and press conferences, the false solutions to climate change – such as carbon offsetting, carbon trading for forests, agrofuels, trade liberalization and privatization pushed by governments, financial institutions and multinational corporations – have been exposed.

Affected communities, Indigenous Peoples, women and peasant farmers called for real solutions to the climate crisis, solutions which have failed to capture the attention of political leaders. These genuine solutions include:

- Reduced consumption.
- Huge financial transfers from North to South based on historical responsibility and ecological debt for adaptation and mitigation costs paid for by redirecting military budgets, innovative taxes and debt cancellation.
- Leaving fossil fuels in the ground and investing in appropriate energy-efficiency and safe, clean and community-led renewable

energy.

- Rights based resource conservation that enforces Indigenous land rights and promotes peoples’ sovereignty over energy, forests, land and water.

- Sustainable family farming and peoples’ food sovereignty.

Inside the negotiations, the rich industrialized countries have put unjustifiable pressure on Southern governments to commit to emissions’ reductions.

At the same time, they have refused to live up to their own legal and moral obligations to radically cut emissions and support developing countries’ efforts to reduce emissions and adapt to climate impacts. Once again, the majority world is being forced to pay for the excesses of the minority.

Compared to the outcomes of the official negotiations, the major success of Bali is the momentum that has been built towards creating a diverse, global movement for climate justice. We will take our struggle forward not just in the talks, but on the ground and in the streets – Climate Justice Now!

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## **Climate Justice Alliance, February 2010**

### **“What does Climate Justice mean in Europe?”**

This discussion paper was drafted by a working group at the Climate Justice Alliance meeting in Amsterdam in February 2010. Its purpose is to collectively explore the concept of climate justice in the context of Europe. Through providing this discussion paper as both incomplete and unending, we hope it will be useful as a tool in linking the diverse struggles throughout Europe and elsewhere, and strengthen the collective movement towards our visions of the future.

In choosing Europe as the terrain of this discussion, we are not separating ourselves from those struggling elsewhere in the world. On the contrary, through asking what the basis of climate justice is in on our own doorstep, and discovering how we go about implementing it, we are fighting for a better world for all.

The abject failure of governments to provide a political solution to the climate crisis in Copenhagen was unsurprising to those who, from the outset, understood the UN as an institution whose interests lie in extending the legitimacy of global capitalism and the nation-state. Those who placed their hope in the COP15, due either to naivety or necessity, left with a sense of disbelief. More and more are now coming to the realisation that it is social movements, not governments, that have the power to make the necessary changes to solve the climate crisis.

Linking with social struggle. The solutions to systematic repression, exploitation, and the climate crisis are the same. Climate Justice means linking all struggles together that reject neoliberal markets and working towards a world that puts autonomous decision making power in the hands of the communities. We look towards a society which recognises our historical responsibilities and seeks to protect the global commons, both in terms of the climate and life itself. Solidarity. From the shanty towns of the Americas to the precariats of Europe, the global south is all of those, whether resisting or not, who suffer the impacts of the relationships of capital and domination. It is important to recognise that the marginalised in the geographic south are also the front line of the struggle for climate justice. Solidarity is the realisation of the common struggle. It is realising that the geography which divides us is insignificant compared to the strength of the values that hold us together – our shared affirmation of life and liberty in the face of exploitation and oppression. Solidarity means fighting for our own autonomy at the same time as we struggle against corporations and the relationships of capital that exploit people everywhere.

The EU. Europe, including the EU, is historically responsible for climate change and social and environmental exploitation world wide. The EU as a political institution serves only to extend the interests of the wealthy and the powerful. Its Lisbon Agenda, and the more recent 2020 Agenda, looks to increase the dominance of European based corporations and extend the rule of capital into every sphere of our lives. Its pursuit of the Emissions Trading Scheme has pioneered a system that serves only to profit from our ecological crises, its Bologna process turns

our universities into 'sausage factories', whilst the EU trade strategy looks to control access to natural resources and cheap labour for European corporations, continuing its historical legacy of colonialism through different methods. Overcoming institutions that override the autonomy of communities through tying us to capitalist growth is essential if we are to move towards an ecologically and socially just world.

**Food and Agriculture.** Climate Justice is closely linked to breaking the circle of industrialised agricultural production perpetuated through WTO and European policies. Speculation on food as an industrial commodity and the domination of long unsustainable production chains by international capital threatens the biosphere and the lives of billions of people. This attack on food sovereignty and the planet must be met with a social struggle for food production defined by the needs and rights of local communities. This means redefining, re-localising and re-appropriating the control of our food and agricultural systems through engaging and acting in solidarity with existing struggles.

**Military.** In Europe, as elsewhere, the military-industrial complex is one of the key actors in maintaining business as usual in the current dominant economic political system. Under the false promise of ensuring 'security' and in the 'war against terror', huge and ever increasing budgets are being spent on military and policing infrastructure. Often military ventures are thinly veiled attempts at securing access to foreign resources and ensuring vast profits for the arms industry. The real security threat we face cannot be addressed by armed force and social control. Social exclusion, poverty, loss of biodiversity, ecosystem collapse, and increasingly scarce

resources leading to an escalation in conflicts and resource wars, are posing a far bigger threat than the ghost of terror, or any other imaginary foe created to mask the social conflicts that exists within and between our societies. The struggle for climate justice is about highlighting another concept of sustainable 'human security', which a military and policing force will never be able to guarantee. In practice by resisting changes in our global systems, the military and police apparatus is endangering security, not increasing it.

**Migration.** Climate change is exacerbating factors which force people to migrate; lack of access to land or livelihood, failing agriculture, conflict and lack of access to water. The tiny proportion of those displaced who attempt the expensive and dangerous journey, are met with militarised border controls if they reach 'Fortress Europe.' Labelled 'illegals,' they are denied basic human rights and struggle to live in dignity, whilst providing a neat scapegoat for a range of social problems. The historical development of capital accumulation, colonialism and carbon emissions, means that Europe has a unique responsibility to act in solidarity with those who are displaced. In our free market system only those with certain papers such as an EU passport and capital and commodities are free to move around the world. Those seeking a better life or moving to survive are increasingly denied this option. As well as fighting for the conditions for people to be able to stay in their homes and communities, we must also defend the principle of freedom of movement for all as one key aspect of climate justice.

**Energy.** The need for constant economic growth also means an ever increasing thirst for energy. While there is sufficient energy in

Europe we see that despite producing more and more energy, due to inefficiency and inequality, millions of people in Europe do not have access to affordable energy and are unable to heat their homes. Moreover our energy policy within Europe directly results in huge amounts of dangerous waste (nuclear and other), and vast levels of emissions which are rapidly destabilising the global climate. We must ensure that everyone in Europe has access to sufficient levels of energy which is produced in a way that does not damage or endanger people or the environment. We need to radically transform our ways of producing, distributing and consuming energy. This means leaving fossil fuels in the ground, democratising means of production and changing our attitudes to energy consumption. Energy resources should be in the control of communities that use them, and this means challenging the power and ownership of energy companies.

Production and consumption. Europe has some of the highest concentrations of wealth in the world and consumes enormous amounts of resources, yet there are stark inequalities. Production and consumption should be based on values other than profit; this means changing the way we structure our social, economic and political relationships, and ensuring democratic control of the means of production. This will require expropriation and conversion not only of climate damaging companies and industries, but all spheres of life that operate according to the logic of capital. We need to challenge individualism in society and stop allowing ourselves to be defined as consumers, a de-humanising and restrictive identity. Social values must be based on human needs and not on ever increasing consumption, economic growth and competition.

Climate Justice in Europe. Climate justice means recognising that the capitalist growth paradigm, which leads to over extraction, overproduction and overconsumption stands in deep contrast to the biophysical limits of the planet and the struggle for social justice. The historical legacy of European expansion/colonialism is a root cause of the current geopolitical inequalities, in which the global North is consuming the global South. Climate justice means addressing the inequalities that exist between and within countries, and replacing the economic and political systems that uphold them. The status quo is maintained through unequal exchange via unjust trade policies and unequal access to technological capacity. On a global level Europe is a centre of capital accumulation and thus socio-ecological exploitation of the South, however, internally in Europe there are huge inequalities in terms of race, gender and class. These are crucial issues that need to be addressed in the struggle for climate justice on a European level.

We hope that this discussion paper has helped to explore the concept of climate justice in the context of Europe, and we invite your comments to further this discussion. Fundamentally, we believe that we cannot prevent further global warming without addressing the way our societies are organised – the fight for climate justice and the fight for social justice are one and the same.

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## **World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, Cochabamba, April 2010**

### **“People's Agreement”**

**Today, our Mother Earth is wounded and the future of humanity is in danger.**

If global warming increases by more than 2 degrees Celsius, a situation that the “Copenhagen Accord” could lead to, there is a 50% probability that the damages caused to our Mother Earth will be completely irreversible. Between 20% and 30% of species would be in danger of disappearing. Large extensions of forest would be affected, droughts and floods would affect different regions of the planet, deserts would expand, and the melting of the polar ice caps and the glaciers in the Andes and Himalayas would worsen. Many island states would disappear, and Africa would suffer an increase in temperature of more than 3 degrees Celsius. Likewise, the production of food would diminish in the world, causing catastrophic impact on the survival of inhabitants from vast regions in the planet, and the number of people in the world suffering from hunger would increase dramatically, a figure that already exceeds 1.02 billion people.

The corporations and governments of the so-called “developed” countries, in complicity with a segment of the scientific community, have led us to discuss climate change as a problem limited to the rise in temperature without questioning the cause, which is the

capitalist system.

We confront the terminal crisis of a civilizing model that is patriarchal and based on the submission and destruction of human beings and nature that accelerated since the industrial revolution.

The capitalist system has imposed on us a logic of competition, progress and limitless growth. This regime of production and consumption seeks profit without limits, separating human beings from nature and imposing a logic of domination upon nature, transforming everything into commodities: water, earth, the human genome, ancestral cultures, biodiversity, justice, ethics, the rights of peoples, and life itself.

Under capitalism, Mother Earth is converted into a source of raw materials, and human beings into consumers and a means of production, into people that are seen as valuable only for what they own, and not for what they are.

Capitalism requires a powerful military industry for its processes of accumulation and imposition of control over territories and natural resources, suppressing the resistance of the peoples. It is an imperialist system of colonization of the planet.

Humanity confronts a great dilemma: to continue on the path of capitalism, depredation, and death, or to choose the path of harmony with nature and respect for life.

It is imperative that we forge a new system that restores harmony with nature and among human beings. And in order for there to be balance with nature, there must first be equity among human beings. We propose to

the peoples of the world the recovery, revalorization, and strengthening of the knowledge, wisdom, and ancestral practices of Indigenous Peoples, which are affirmed in the thought and practices of “Living Well,” recognizing Mother Earth as a living being with which we have an indivisible, interdependent, complementary and spiritual relationship. To face climate change, we must recognize Mother Earth as the source of life and forge a new system based on the principles of:

- Harmony and balance among all and with all things;
- Complementarity, solidarity, and equality;
- Collective well-being and the satisfaction of the basic necessities of all;
- People in harmony with nature;
- Recognition of human beings for what they are, not what they own;
- Elimination of all forms of colonialism, imperialism and interventionism;
- Peace among the peoples and with Mother Earth.

The model we support is not a model of limitless and destructive development. All countries need to produce the goods and services necessary to satisfy the fundamental needs of their populations, but by no means can they continue to follow the path of development that has led the richest countries to have an ecological footprint five times bigger than what the planet is able to support. Currently, the regenerative capacity of the planet has been already exceeded by more than 30 percent. If this pace of over-

exploitation of our Mother Earth continues, we will need two planets by the year 2030. In an interdependent system in which human beings are only one component, it is not possible to recognize rights only to the human part without provoking an imbalance in the system as a whole. To guarantee human rights and to restore harmony with nature, it is necessary to effectively recognize and apply the rights of Mother Earth. For this purpose, we propose the attached project for the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth, in which it's recorded that:

- The right to live and to exist;
- The right to be respected;
- The right to regenerate its bio-capacity and to continue its vital cycles and processes free of human alteration;
- The right to maintain their identity and integrity as differentiated beings, self-regulated and interrelated;
- The right to water as the source of life;
- The right to clean air;
- The right to comprehensive health;
- The right to be free of contamination and pollution, free of toxic and radioactive waste;
- The right to be free of alterations or modifications of its genetic structure in a manner that threatens its integrity or vital and healthy functioning;
- The right to prompt and full restoration for violations to the rights acknowledged in this Declaration caused by human activities.

The “shared vision” seeks to stabilize the concentrations of greenhouse gases to make effective the Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which states that “the stabilization of greenhouse gases concentrations in the atmosphere to a level that prevents dangerous anthropogenic inferences for the climate system.” Our vision is based on the principle of historical common but differentiated responsibilities, to demand the developed countries to commit with quantifiable goals of emission reduction that will allow to return the concentrations of greenhouse gases to 300 ppm, therefore the increase in the average world temperature to a maximum of one degree Celsius.

Emphasizing the need for urgent action to achieve this vision, and with the support of peoples, movements and countries, developed countries should commit to ambitious targets for reducing emissions that permit the achievement of short-term objectives, while maintaining our vision in favor of balance in the Earth’s climate system, in agreement with the ultimate objective of the Convention.

The “shared vision for long-term cooperative action” in climate change negotiations should not be reduced to defining the limit on temperature increases and the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, but must also incorporate in a balanced and integral manner measures regarding capacity building, production and consumption patterns, and other essential factors such as the acknowledging of the Rights of Mother Earth to establish harmony with nature.

Developed countries, as the main cause of climate change, in assuming their historical responsibility, must recognize and honor their

climate debt in all of its dimensions as the basis for a just, effective, and scientific solution to climate change. In this context, we demand that developed countries:

- Restore to developing countries the atmospheric space that is occupied by their greenhouse gas emissions. This implies the decolonization of the atmosphere through the reduction and absorption of their emissions;
- Assume the costs and technology transfer needs of developing countries arising from the loss of development opportunities due to living in a restricted atmospheric space;
- Assume responsibility for the hundreds of millions of people that will be forced to migrate due to the climate change caused by these countries, and eliminate their restrictive immigration policies, offering migrants a decent life with full human rights guarantees in their countries;
- Assume adaptation debt related to the impacts of climate change on developing countries by providing the means to prevent, minimize, and deal with damages arising from their excessive emissions;
- Honor these debts as part of a broader debt to Mother Earth by adopting and implementing the United Nations Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth.

The focus must not be only on financial compensation, but also on restorative justice, understood as the restitution of integrity to our Mother Earth and all its beings.

We deplore attempts by countries to annul the Kyoto Protocol, which is the sole legally binding instrument specific to the reduction

of greenhouse gas emissions by developed countries.

We inform the world that, despite their obligation to reduce emissions, developed countries have increased their emissions by 11.2% in the period from 1990 to 2007.

During that same period, due to unbridled consumption, the United States of America has increased its greenhouse gas emissions by 16.8%, reaching an average of 20 to 23 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per-person. This represents 9 times more than that of the average inhabitant of the "Third World," and 20 times more than that of the average inhabitant of Sub-Saharan Africa.

We categorically reject the illegitimate "Copenhagen Accord" that allows developed countries to offer insufficient reductions in greenhouse gases based in voluntary and individual commitments, violating the environmental integrity of Mother Earth and leading us toward an increase in global temperatures of around 4°C.

The next Conference on Climate Change to be held at the end of 2010 in Mexico should approve an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol for the second commitment period from 2013 to 2017 under which developed countries must agree to significant domestic emissions reductions of at least 50% based on 1990 levels, excluding carbon markets or other offset mechanisms that mask the failure of actual reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

We require first of all the establishment of a goal for the group of developed countries to achieve the assignment of individual commitments for each developed country under the framework of complementary

efforts among each one, maintaining in this way Kyoto Protocol as the route to emissions reductions.

The United States, as the only Annex 1 country on Earth that did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol, has a significant responsibility toward all peoples of the world to ratify this document and commit itself to respecting and complying with emissions reduction targets on a scale appropriate to the total size of its economy.

We the peoples have the equal right to be protected from the adverse effects of climate change and reject the notion of adaptation to climate change as understood as a resignation to impacts provoked by the historical emissions of developed countries, which themselves must adapt their modes of life and consumption in the face of this global emergency. We see it as imperative to confront the adverse effects of climate change, and consider adaptation to be a process rather than an imposition, as well as a tool that can serve to help offset those effects, demonstrating that it is possible to achieve harmony with nature under a different model for living.

It is necessary to construct an Adaptation Fund exclusively for addressing climate change as part of a financial mechanism that is managed in a sovereign, transparent, and equitable manner for all States. This Fund should assess the impacts and costs of climate change in developing countries and needs deriving from these impacts, and monitor support on the part of developed countries. It should also include a mechanism for compensation for current and future damages, loss of opportunities due to extreme and gradual climatic events, and additional costs that could present



themselves if our planet surpasses ecological thresholds, such as those impacts that present obstacles to “Living Well.”

The “Copenhagen Accord” imposed on developing countries by a few States, beyond simply offering insufficient resources, attempts as well to divide and create confrontation between peoples and to extort developing countries by placing conditions on access to adaptation and mitigation resources. We also assert as unacceptable the attempt in processes of international negotiation to classify developing countries for their vulnerability to climate change, generating disputes, inequalities and segregation among them.

The immense challenge humanity faces of stopping global warming and cooling the planet can only be achieved through a profound shift in agricultural practices toward the sustainable model of production used by indigenous and rural farming peoples, as well as other ancestral models and practices that contribute to solving the problem of agriculture and food sovereignty. This is understood as the right of peoples to control their own seeds, lands, water, and food production, thereby guaranteeing, through forms of production that are in harmony with Mother Earth and appropriate to local cultural contexts, access to sufficient, varied and nutritious foods in complementarity with Mother Earth and deepening the autonomous (participatory, communal and shared) production of every nation and people.

Climate change is now producing profound impacts on agriculture and the ways of life of indigenous peoples and farmers throughout the world, and these impacts will worsen in the future.

Agribusiness, through its social, economic, and cultural model of global capitalist production and its logic of producing food for the market and not to fulfill the right to proper nutrition, is one of the principal causes of climate change. Its technological, commercial, and political approach only serves to deepen the climate change crisis and increase hunger in the world. For this reason, we reject Free Trade Agreements and Association Agreements and all forms of the application of Intellectual Property Rights to life, current technological packages (agrochemicals, genetic modification) and those that offer false solutions (biofuels, geo-engineering, nanotechnology, etc.) that only exacerbate the current crisis.

We similarly denounce the way in which the capitalist model imposes mega-infrastructure projects and invades territories with extractive projects, water privatization, and militarized territories, expelling indigenous peoples from their lands, inhibiting food sovereignty and deepening socio-environmental crisis.

We demand recognition of the right of all peoples, living beings, and Mother Earth to have access to water, and we support the proposal of the Government of Bolivia to recognize water as a Fundamental Human Right.

The definition of forests used in the negotiations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which includes plantations, is unacceptable. Monoculture plantations are not forests. Therefore, we require a definition for negotiation purposes that recognizes the native forests, jungles and the diverse ecosystems on Earth.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples must be fully recognized, implemented and integrated in climate change negotiations. The best strategy and action to avoid deforestation and degradation and protect native forests and jungles is to recognize and guarantee collective rights to lands and territories, especially considering that most of the forests are located within the territories of indigenous peoples and nations and other traditional communities.

We condemn market mechanisms such as REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) and its versions + and + +, which are violating the sovereignty of peoples and their right to prior free and informed consent as well as the sovereignty of national States, the customs of Peoples, and the Rights of Nature.

Polluting countries have an obligation to carry out direct transfers of the economic and technological resources needed to pay for the restoration and maintenance of forests in favor of the peoples and indigenous ancestral organic structures. Compensation must be direct and in addition to the sources of funding promised by developed countries outside of the carbon market, and never serve as carbon offsets. We demand that countries stop actions on local forests based on market mechanisms and propose non-existent and conditional results. We call on governments to create a global program to restore native forests and jungles, managed and administered by the peoples, implementing forest seeds, fruit trees, and native flora. Governments should eliminate forest concessions and support the conservation of petroleum deposits in the ground and urgently stop the exploitation of

hydrocarbons in forestlands.

We call upon States to recognize, respect and guarantee the effective implementation of international human rights standards and the rights of indigenous peoples, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples under ILO Convention 169, among other relevant instruments in the negotiations, policies and measures used to meet the challenges posed by climate change. In particular, we call upon States to give legal recognition to claims over territories, lands and natural resources to enable and strengthen our traditional ways of life and contribute effectively to solving climate change.

We demand the full and effective implementation of the right to consultation, participation and prior, free and informed consent of indigenous peoples in all negotiation processes, and in the design and implementation of measures related to climate change.

Environmental degradation and climate change are currently reaching critical levels, and one of the main consequences of this is domestic and international migration. According to projections, there were already about 25 million climate migrants by 1995. Current estimates are around 50 million, and projections suggest that between 200 million and 1 billion people will become displaced by situations resulting from climate change by the year 2050.

Developed countries should assume responsibility for climate migrants, welcoming them into their territories and recognizing their fundamental rights through the signing of international conventions that provide for the definition of climate migrant

and require all States to abide by abide by determinations.

Establish an International Tribunal of Conscience to denounce, make visible, document, judge and punish violations of the rights of migrants, refugees and displaced persons within countries of origin, transit and destination, clearly identifying the responsibilities of States, companies and other agents.

Current funding directed toward developing countries for climate change and the proposal of the Copenhagen Accord are insignificant. In addition to Official Development Assistance and public sources, developed countries must commit to a new annual funding of at least 6% of GDP to tackle climate change in developing countries. This is viable considering that a similar amount is spent on national defense, and that 5 times more have been put forth to rescue failing banks and speculators, which raises serious questions about global priorities and political will. This funding should be direct and free of conditions, and should not interfere with the national sovereignty or self-determination of the most affected communities and groups.

In view of the inefficiency of the current mechanism, a new funding mechanism should be established at the 2010 Climate Change Conference in Mexico, functioning under the authority of the Conference of the Parties (COP) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and held accountable to it, with significant representation of developing countries, to ensure compliance with the funding commitments of Annex 1 countries.

It has been stated that developed countries significantly increased their emissions in the

period from 1990 to 2007, despite having stated that the reduction would be substantially supported by market mechanisms.

The carbon market has become a lucrative business, commodifying our Mother Earth. It is therefore not an alternative for tackle climate change, as it loots and ravages the land, water, and even life itself.

The recent financial crisis has demonstrated that the market is incapable of regulating the financial system, which is fragile and uncertain due to speculation and the emergence of intermediary brokers. Therefore, it would be totally irresponsible to leave in their hands the care and protection of human existence and of our Mother Earth.

We consider inadmissible that current negotiations propose the creation of new mechanisms that extend and promote the carbon market, for existing mechanisms have not resolved the problem of climate change nor led to real and direct actions to reduce greenhouse gases. It is necessary to demand fulfillment of the commitments assumed by developed countries under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change regarding development and technology transfer, and to reject the "technology showcase" proposed by developed countries that only markets technology. It is essential to establish guidelines in order to create a multilateral and multidisciplinary mechanism for participatory control, management, and evaluation of the exchange of technologies. These technologies must be useful, clean and socially sound. Likewise, it is fundamental to establish a fund for the financing and inventory of technologies that are appropriate and free of intellectual property

rights. Patents, in particular, should move from the hands of private monopolies to the public domain in order to promote accessibility and low costs.

Knowledge is universal, and should for no reason be the object of private property or private use, nor should its application in the form of technology. Developed countries have a responsibility to share their technology with developing countries, to build research centers in developing countries for the creation of technologies and innovations, and defend and promote their development and application for “living well.” The world must recover and re-learn ancestral principles and approaches from native peoples to stop the destruction of the planet, as well as promote ancestral practices, knowledge and spirituality to recuperate the capacity for “living well” in harmony with Mother Earth.

Considering the lack of political will on the part of developed countries to effectively comply with commitments and obligations assumed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, and given the lack of a legal international organism to guard against and sanction climate and environmental crimes that violate the Rights of Mother Earth and humanity, we demand the creation of an International Climate and Environmental Justice Tribunal that has the legal capacity to prevent, judge and penalize States, industries and people that by commission or omission contaminate and provoke climate change.

Supporting States that present claims at the International Climate and Environmental Justice Tribunal against developed countries that fail to comply with commitments under

the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol including commitments to reduce greenhouse gases.

We urge peoples to propose and promote deep reform within the United Nations, so that all member States comply with the decisions of the International Climate and Environmental Justice Tribunal.

The future of humanity is in danger, and we cannot allow a group of leaders from developed countries to decide for all countries as they tried unsuccessfully to do at the Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen. This decision concerns us all. Thus, it is essential to carry out a global referendum or popular consultation on climate change in which all are consulted regarding the following issues; the level of emission reductions on the part of developed countries and transnational corporations, financing to be offered by developed countries, the creation of an International Climate Justice Tribunal, the need for a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth, and the need to change the current capitalist system. The process of a global referendum or popular consultation will depend on process of preparation that ensures the successful development of the same.

In order to coordinate our international action and implement the results of this “Accord of the Peoples,” we call for the building of a Global People’s Movement for Mother Earth, which should be based on the principles of complementarity and respect for the diversity of origin and visions among its members, constituting a broad and democratic space for coordination and joint worldwide actions.

To this end, we adopt the attached global plan of action so that in Mexico, the developed countries listed in Annex 1 respect the existing legal framework and reduce their greenhouse gases emissions by 50%, and that the different proposals contained in this Agreement are adopted.

Finally, we agree to undertake a Second World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in 2011 as part of this process of building the Global People's Movement for Mother Earth and reacting to the outcomes of the Climate Change Conference to be held at the end of this year in Cancún, Mexico

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[i]. Durban Meeting Signatories: Carbon Trade Watch; Indigenous Environmental Network; Climate & Development Initiatives, Uganda; Coecoceiba-Amigos de la Tierra, Costa Rica; CORE Centre for Organisation Research & Education, Manipur, India; Delhi Forum, India; Earthlife Africa (ELA) eThekweni Branch, South Africa; FERN, EU; FASE-ES/Green Desert Network Brazil; Global Justice Ecology Project, USA; groundwork, South Africa; National Forum of Forest People And Forest Workers(NFFPFW), India; Patrick Bond, Professor, University of KwaZulu-Natal School of Development Studies, South Africa; O le Siosiomaga Society, Samoa; South Durban Community Alliance (SDCEA), South Africa; Sustainable Energy & Economy Network, USA; The Corner House, UK; Timberwatch Coalition, South Africa; World Rainforest Movement, Uruguay.

Supporting organisational signatories: 50 Years Is Enough: U.S. Network for Global Economic Justice, USA; Aficafiles, Canada;

Africa Groups of Sweden, Sweden; Alianza Verde, Honduras; Ambiente y Sociedad, Argentina; Angikar Bangladesh Foundation, Bangladesh; Anisa Colombia, Colombia; Asociacion Alternativa Ambiental, Spain; Asociacion Amigos Reserva Yaguaroundi, Argentina; Asociacion de Guardaparques Argentinos, Argentina; Asociación Ecologista Piuke, Argentina; Asociacion para la Defensa del Medio Ambiente del Noreste Santafesino, Argentina; Asociación San Francisco de Asís, Argentina; Association France Amerique Latine, France; Asociacion Lihue San Carlos de Barloche / Rio Negro, Argentina; Association pour un contrat mondial de l'eau, Comité de Seine Saint Denis, France; Associação Caeté – Cultura e Natureza, Brasil; Athlone Park Residents Association, South Africa; Austerville Clinic Committee, South Africa; Australian Greens, Australia; Auckland Rising Tide, New Zealand; BanglaPraxis, Bangladesh; Benjamin E. Mays Center, USA; Bluff Ridge Conservancy (BRC), South Africa; BOA, Venezuela; Boulder Environmental Activists Resource, Rocky Mountain; Peace and Justice Center, USA; The Bread of Life Development Foundation, Nigeria; CENSAT-Friends of the Earth Colombia, Colombia; Center for Economic Justice, USA; Centre for Environmental Justice, Sri Lanka; Center for Environmental Law and Community Rights Inc./; Friends of the Earth (PNG), Papua New Guinea; Center for Urban Transformation, USA; Centro de Derecho Ambiental y Promoción para el Desarrollo (CEDAPRODE), Nicaragua; Centro de Investigacion Cientifica de Yucatan A.C., Mexico; Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, USA; Christ the King Church Group, South Africa; Clairwood Ratepayers Association (CRA), South Africa; Cold Mountain, Cold Rivers, USA; Colectivo de Proyectos Alternativos de México (COPAL), Mexico; Colectivo MadreSelva, Guatemala; Comité de Análisis

'Ana Silvia Olán' de Sonsonate – CANASO, El Salvador; Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, USA; Community Health Cell, Bangalore, India; Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), Netherlands; C.P.E.M. Nº29-Ciencias Ambientales, Argentina; Del Consejo de Organizaciones de Médicos y Parteras Indígenas Tradicionales de Chiapas, Mexico; Enda América Latina, Colombia; ECOGRAIN, Spain; Ecoisla, Puerto Rico; EarthLink e.V.-The People & Nature Network, Germany; Ecological Society of the Philippines, Philippines; Ecologistas en Acción, Spain; Ecoportal.net, Argentina; ECOTERRA International; El Centro de Ecología y Excursionismo de la Universidad de Carabobo, Venezuela; Els Verds – Alternativa Verda, Spain; Environment Desk of Images Asia, Thailand; FASE Gurupá, Brasil; Forest Peoples Programme, UK; Foundation for Grassroots Initiatives in Africa, Ghana; Friends of the Earth International; Friends of the Earth Australia, Australia; Friends of the Siberian Forests, Russia; FSC-Brasil, Brasil; Fundación Argentina de Etoecología (FAE), Argentina; Fundación Los de Tilquiza, proyecto AGUAVERDE, Argentina; Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherche sur les Energies Renouvelables et l'Environnement (GERERE), Morocco; Gruppo di Volontariato Civile (GVC-Italia), oficina de Nicaragua, Nicaragua; House of Worship, South Africa; Indigenous Peoples' Biodiversity Network, Peru; InfoNature, Portugal; Infringement Festival, Canada; Iniciativa Arcolris de Ecología y Sociedad, Argentina; Iniciativa Radial, Argentina; Institute for Social Ecology Biotechnology Project, USA; Instituto Ecoar para Ciudadania, Brasil; Instituto Igaré, Brasil; International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Belgium; International Indian Treaty Council; Isipingo Environmental Committee (IEC), South Africa; Isipingo Ratepayers Association, South Africa; Jeunesse Horizon, Camerun; JKPP /Indonesian

Community Mapping Network, Indonesia; Joint Action Committee of Isipingo (JACI), South Africa; KVV Translations, Spain; LOKOJ, Bangladesh; London Rising Tide, UK; Malvarrosamedia, Spain; Mangrove Action Project (MAP), USA; Mano Verde, Colombia; Mercy International Justice Network, Kenya; Merebank Clinic Committee (MCC), South Africa; Movimiento por la Paz y el Ambiente, Argentina; Movimiento por los Derechos y la Consulta Ciudadana, Chile; Nicaragua Center for Community Action, USA; Nicaragua Network (US), USA; Nicaragua-US Friendship Office, USA; NOAH-Friends of the Earth Denmark, Denmark; Núcleo Amigos da Terra, Brasil; Ogoni Rescue Patriotic Fund, Nigeria; Oilwatch International, Ecuador; Oilwatch Africa, Nigeria; Organizacion Fraternal Negra Hondureña, Honduras; Parque Provincial Ernesto Tornquist, Argentina; Pacific Indigenous Peoples Environment Coalition (PIPEC), Aotearoa/New Zealand; Pesticides Action Network Latin America, Uruguay; Piedad Espinoza Trópico Verde, Guatemala; PovoAção, Brasil; Prideaux Consulting, USA; Projeto tudo Sobre Plantas – Jornal SOS Verde, Brasil; Public Citizen, USA; Rainforest Action Network, USA; Rainy River First Nations, Canada; Reclaim the Commons, USA; Red de Agricultura Orgánica de Misiones, Argentina; REDES-Amigos de la Tierra, Uruguay; Red Verde, Spain; Rettet den Regenwald, Germany; Rising Tide, UK; Sahabat Alam Malaysia /FOE-Malaysia, Malaysia; San Francisco Bay Area Jubilee Debt Cancellation Coalition, USA; Scottish Education and Action for Development, UK; S.G.Fiber, Pakistan; Silverglen Civic Association (SCA), South Africa; Sisters of the Holy Cross – Congregation Justice Committee, USA; Sobrevivencia, Friends of the Earth Paraguay, Paraguay; Sociedad Civil, Mexico; SOLJUSPAX, Philippines; Tebtebba Foundation, Philippines; The Sawmill River

Watershed Alliance, USA; TRAPESE – Take Radical Action Through Popular Education and Sustainable Everything, UK / Spain; Treasure Beach Environmental Forum (TBEF), South Africa; Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development, Uganda; Ujamaa Community Resource Trust (UCRT), Tanzania; UNICA, Nicaragua; Union Chrétienne pour l’Education et Développement des Déshérités (UCEDD), Burundi; Union Mexicana de Emprendedores Inios, A. C., Mexico; VALL DE CAN MASDEU, Spain; Wentworth Development Forum (WDF), South Africa; Western Nebraska Resources Council, USA; World Bank Boycott/Center for Economic Justice, USA; worldforests, UK; World Peace Prayer Society, USA.

[ii]. Carbon Trade Watch, Transnational Institute; Center for Environmental Concerns; Focus on the Global South; Freedom from Debt Coalition, Philippines; Friends of the Earth International; Gendercc – Women for Climate Justice, Global Forest Coalition; Global Justice Ecology Project; International Forum on Globalization; Kalikasan-Peoples Network for the Environment (Kalikasan-PNE); La Vía Campesina; members of the Durban Group for Climate Justice; Oilwatch; Pacific Indigenous Peoples Environment Coalition, Aotearoa/New Zealand; Sustainable Energy and Economy Network; The Indigenous Environmental Network; Third World Network; WALHI/ Friends of the Earth Indonesia; World Rainforest Movement.

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## **Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth, Cochabamba, April 27, 2010**

*This Declaration was adopted by the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, in Bolivia. The Bolivian government has submitted it to the United Nations for consideration.*

### **Preamble**

We, the peoples and nations of Earth:

*considering* that we are all part of Mother Earth, an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings with a common destiny;

*gratefully* acknowledging that Mother Earth is the source of life, nourishment and learning and provides everything we need to live well;

*recognizing* that the capitalist system and all forms of depredation, exploitation, abuse and contamination have caused great destruction, degradation and disruption of Mother Earth, putting life as we know it today at risk through phenomena such as climate change;

*convinced* that in an interdependent living community it is not possible to recognize the rights of only human beings without causing an imbalance within Mother Earth;

*affirming* that to guarantee human rights it is necessary to recognize and defend the rights of Mother Earth and all beings in her and that there are existing cultures, practices and laws that do so;

*conscious* of the urgency of taking decisive, collective action to transform structures and

systems that cause climate change and other threats to Mother Earth;

*proclaim* this Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth, and call on the General Assembly of the United Nation to adopt it, as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations of the world, and to the end that every individual and institution takes responsibility for promoting through teaching, education, and consciousness raising, respect for the rights recognized in this Declaration and ensure through prompt and progressive measures and mechanisms, national and international, their universal and effective recognition and observance among all peoples and States in the world.

### **Article 1. Mother Earth**

- (1) Mother Earth is a living being.
- (2) Mother Earth is a unique, indivisible, self-regulating community of interrelated beings that sustains, contains and reproduces all beings.
- (3) Each being is defined by its relationships as an integral part of Mother Earth.
- (4) The inherent rights of Mother Earth are inalienable in that they arise from the same source as existence.
- (5) Mother Earth and all beings are entitled to all the inherent rights recognized in this Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as may be made between organic and inorganic beings, species, origin, use to human beings, or any other status.
- (6) Just as human beings have human rights, all other beings also have rights which are specific to their species or kind and appropriate for their role and function within the communities within which they exist.
- (7) The rights of each being are limited by the rights of other beings and any conflict



between their rights must be resolved in a way that maintains the integrity, balance and health of Mother Earth.

## **Article 2. Inherent Rights of Mother Earth**

(1) Mother Earth and all beings of which she is composed have the following inherent rights:

- (a) the right to life and to exist;
  - (b) the right to be respected;
  - (c) the right to regenerate its bio-capacity and to continue its vital cycles and processes free from human disruptions;
  - (d) the right to maintain its identity and integrity as a distinct, self-regulating and interrelated being;
  - (e) the right to water as a source of life;
  - (f) the right to clean air;
  - (g) the right to integral health;
  - (h) the right to be free from contamination, pollution and toxic or radioactive waste;
  - (i) the right to not have its genetic structure modified or disrupted in a manner that threatens its integrity or vital and healthy functioning;
  - (j) the right to full and prompt restoration the violation of the rights recognized in this Declaration caused by human activities;
- (2) Each being has the right to a place and to play its role in Mother Earth for her harmonious functioning.
- (3) Every being has the right to wellbeing and to live free from torture or cruel treatment by human beings.

## **Article 3. Obligations of human beings to Mother Earth**

- (1) Every human being is responsible for respecting and living in harmony with Mother Earth.
- (2) Human beings, all States, and all public and private institutions must:

- (a) act in accordance with the rights and obligations recognized in this Declaration;
- (b) recognize and promote the full implementation and enforcement of the rights and obligations recognized in this Declaration;
- (c) promote and participate in learning, analysis, interpretation and communication about how to live in harmony with Mother Earth in accordance with this Declaration;
- (d) ensure that the pursuit of human wellbeing contributes to the wellbeing of Mother Earth, now and in the future;
- (e) establish and apply effective norms and laws for the defence, protection and conservation of the rights of Mother Earth;
- (f) respect, protect, conserve and where necessary, restore the integrity, of the vital ecological cycles, processes and balances of Mother Earth;
- (g) guarantee that the damages caused by human violations of the inherent rights recognized in this Declaration are rectified and that those responsible are held accountable for restoring the integrity and health of Mother Earth;
- (h) empower human beings and institutions to defend the rights of Mother Earth and of all beings;
- (i) establish precautionary and restrictive measures to prevent human activities from causing species extinction, the destruction of ecosystems or the disruption of ecological cycles;
- (j) guarantee peace and eliminate nuclear, chemical and biological weapons;
- (k) promote and support practices of respect for Mother Earth and all beings, in accordance with their own cultures, traditions and customs;
- (l) promote economic systems that are in harmony with Mother Earth and in accordance with the rights recognized in this Declaration.

#### **Article 4. Definitions**

(1) The term “being” includes ecosystems, natural communities, species and all other natural entities which exist as part of Mother Earth.

(2) Nothing in this Declaration restricts the recognition of other inherent rights of all beings or specified beings.

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## The Margarita Declaration on Climate Change

Preparatory Meeting, Venezuela, July 18, 2014, Margarita Island, Social PreCOP

*Changing the system, not the climate*

[http://www.precopsocial.org/sites/default/files/archivos/margarita\\_declaration\\_on\\_climate\\_change.pdf](http://www.precopsocial.org/sites/default/files/archivos/margarita_declaration_on_climate_change.pdf)

We, women and men representing social movements and organizations, gathered in Margarita Island from July 15th thru 18th, 2014, committed to the Good Living, in harmony with the ecosystems of the Earth as a way to counteract the current environmental crisis and the climate change, one of its most ferocious faces; concerned by the social dimension of this crisis that has been ignored for long, but filled with hope and faith in the creating powers of the peoples as the necessary driving force to achieve substantial changes in the system; salute and welcome the social processes that are being lived and constructed in various countries, communities and model societies.

*Whereas*, there is a social dimension of the climate change and an unalienable right of the peoples to be the protagonists in the construction of their own destinies;

*Whereas*, each country lives in a particular historic context within a complex world made up by diversity of experiences and visions from which transformational initiatives rise;

*Whereas*, the climate crisis results from unsustainable development systems that are

incompatible with the happiness of the peoples;

*Whereas*, the environment is a political issue and it is the duty of the governments and the multilateral system to hear the voices of the peoples;

*Whereas*, the peoples endure the consequences of the climate change, and are the ones who live and understand its social dimensions, and whereas they are the actors that have the moral strength and the creative capacity necessary to change course towards systems that are fair and sustainable enabling a lasting happiness in harmony with the cycles of nature;

*Whereas*, the developing countries are faced with various kinds of problems and endure more and major consequences of climate change than the developed countries;

### Hereby declare:

#### As to the **INTERGENERATIONAL EQUALITY AND RIGHTS OF THE FUTURE GENERATIONS**

*“Let us go to the future, let us bring it and sow it here”*

*Hugo Chávez*

1. “Men and women have become consumerist monsters that consume all the resources given by the Earth”. *Génesis Carmona, aged 11, elected representative of the Venezuelan Children Environment Movements.*

2. We must share our experiences from all over the world to understand and construct true solutions. Expressing solidarity to

comrades in other parts of the world means understanding their context, understanding their struggle for life, sovereignty and identity.

3. Change depends on the capacity of our generation to produce a counterculture, transform the consumption model into Good Living and global cooperative societies. We must generate a revolutionary counterculture. The task of youth is to open roads and generate cracks in a system that is unsustainable.

4. Youth must be politicized and empowered. Most importantly, youth must have the will and the capacity to transform things. We must change the system and begin to mobilize our best efforts. It is not an environmental issue alone; it is an issue that is deeply social, ethical, political and cultural.

5. We must change our perception of power and promote diverse and inclusive spaces, open to intercultural thinking. We must move from the discourse to a transforming action.

6. The world needs corrective actions before damages become irreversible. We denounce the lack of political will of the wealthiest countries.

7. Education must look like the society we dream of. It must be revolutionary and transform reality. If it cannot undertake such transformations, it does not work. Education and communication are the cornerstones for transformation.

8. The environmental issue must be a pillar in curricula. It is necessary to re-think the way how people are educated on environment and Climate Change. We need to open new spaces where the ultimate causes of the

environmental crisis are discussed. Youth need to promote such changes. The hegemonic system is frightened of peoples that are educated because they may call into question the structures power.

9. Colonialism continues to operate. Climate change occurs within a historic context where a group of countries based their development on practices generating the current environmental crisis, including Climate Change, while others suffer the worst consequences. The developed countries causing the Climate Change intend to side-track the discussion towards technological or market solutions, thus eluding their historic responsibilities.

10. The struggles of the South must be supported in the countries of the North. The wealthiest countries must commit themselves to finding a solution to the Climate Change. Youth in the North must exert pressure on their governments in that sense. There is not much time left, the global North must take on its historic responsibility and youth must exert pressure for this to happen.

11. We need to recover the notion of solidarity, understand the differences existing among the countries, their different historic contexts, the right to Good Living and also the responsibilities of development. Transition may not be restricted to a reduction of emissions. It has to be a fair transition guaranteeing that the peoples of the South will not be adversely affected.

12. We need to create our own dreams, forget the perverse developmentalist dream, and find inspiration in ourselves. We need to share a new narrative based on our own experiences. As to

## **BUEN VIVIR (GOOD AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING)**

### **Climate Ethics: Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capacities**

13. It is necessary to reach an alternative development model based on the principles of living in harmony with nature, guided by absolute and ecological sustainability limits, and the capacity of mother Earth as well; a fair, egalitarian model that constructs sustainable economies that moves us away from energy models based on fossil fuels and hazardous energies, that guarantees and recognizes the respect to Mother Earth, the rights of women, children, adolescents, gender diversity, the impoverished, the vulnerable minority groups and the original indigenous peoples – A fair and egalitarian model that fosters the peaceful coexistence of our peoples. We likewise want a society where the right of Mother Earth prevails over neoliberal policies, economic globalization and patriarchy, because without Mother Earth life does not exist.

14. The main sources for climate crisis are the political and economic systems commercializing and reifying nature and life, thus impoverishing spirituality and imposing consumerism and developmentalism that generate unequal regimes and exploitation of resources. This global crisis is exacerbated by unsustainable practices of exploitation and consumption by the developed countries and the elites of the developing countries.

We demand the leaders in the North not to continue such wicked practices that destroy the planet and demand the leaders in the South not to follow the development models in place in the North which lead to this

civilizing crisis. We urge them to construct an alternative path to achieve fair, egalitarian and sustainable societies and fair economies. For such purposes, it is required that the developed countries meet their moral and legal obligations, especially vis-à-vis vulnerable and marginalized countries and communities by lifting barriers such as intellectual property rights which prevent the attainment of the preservation of life over the planet and the salvation of human species. We likewise urge them to comply with the financial contribution and the transfer of safe and locally suitable technologies free from barriers such as intellectual property rights, strengthen capacities and embrace the principles set forth in the Climate Change Convention and in the Rio Earth Summit, especially as to the common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and the principles of precaution and gender equality.

15. According to scientific evidence, in order not to exceed 1.5 degrees increase of temperature, it becomes necessary not to produce 80% of the fossil fuel reserves known. For this purpose, the developed countries require to immediately reduce consumption and production of fossil fuels. Also, they need to recognize the rights of the developing countries that rely on the production of fossil fuels as a source of revenues. The developing countries require time for a fair transition to reduce their dependence on such activity, as the developed countries should provide unconditional assistance to the developing nations so that the latter may carry out such urgent transition.

16. We demand the change of the production and consumption patterns taking into account the historic responsibilities of the

emissions from nations and corporations and their cumulative nature, thus recognizing that the carbon atmospheric space is finite and needs to be equally distributed amongst the countries and their peoples.

17. The historically unequal overconsumption of the global emissions budget managed by mainstream corporations and economic systems has contributed to cause inequalities in terms of the capacities of the countries. Some key indicators to measure such disparity would be the national per capita emission of greenhouse effect gases since 1850, the distribution and size of the wealth and national income, and the technological resources owned by a country. Such indicators may be used to determine the fair portion of effort corresponding to each country (emissions budget) if the Earth limits are respected and if the historic responsibilities, the needs for sustainable development, the losses and damages caused by climate change and the need of technology transfer and financial support are recognized.

18. We demand the implementation of a Justice, Ethics and Moral Court on Climate Change, where humanity at large may file complaints against crimes related to this topic.

19. We reject any attempt to implement or promote dangerous and unethical solutions or responses to Climate Change, solutions whereby wealthy industrialized countries and corporations ultimately seek to use climate change as a means for profit. Some of such false responses, such as carbon production and soils, whereas the implementation of the “United Nations Program on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-

REDD)” and the production of agrofuels, have already caused seizure and fragmentation of lands.

#### As to the **Social Impact of Climate Change**

20. The environment is a political issue, which has to do with power, and therefore it is necessary that the peoples and the social movements are empowered and participate on the making of the decisions that affect them.

21. Risk management must have deep social and local roots, and include national, local and community-based risk alert, prevention and management systems as an essential part of the adaptation process.

22. Planning must be participative and lean towards a habitat (either urban or rural) constructed and managed by everybody to meet the needs of the inhabitants in their specific contexts of action.

23. It is necessary to generate structural changes in the mainstream production, distribution and consumption models that reject the commodification of nature as a solution to climate change.

24. We demand the repair of historic debts, and reject the financing proposals which do not bring about effective transformations for a sustainable solution.

25. Buen Vivir (Good Living) practices should be promoted: To feel good, live fully and stay in balance and harmony with the others, and respect the cycles of life and the Mother Earth.

26. We must promote territory participative management by fostering social dialogue and ensuring the participation of women in the decision-making and in the implementation of mitigation and adaptation mechanisms vis-à-vis climate change.

27. It is necessary to recover the ancestral technologies and promote the training and support of popular technology experts with the capacity to create new technologies which contribute to mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

28. Communities must have access to information on the Climate Change negotiations through strategies devised for such purposes.

29. We must include Climate Change as a topic in the curriculum at all levels and in the programs of all disciplines, focusing on the structural causes for climate change.

30. It is necessary to design strategies to guarantee social security of workers and the dialogue between them and the governments in the transition to a new economic model that respond to Climate Change problems.

31. Forms of penalization, penalties and repair mechanisms are necessary for crimes against nature. Violation of Human Rights need to be seen not only as a weapons use problem, but also as a result of other forms of aggression, such as the pollution of the Earth by the use of agrotoxics and the restriction of access to water.

32. Promote small-scale family farming without agrotoxics as an alternative economic model that guarantees good and healthy nourishment for the peoples.

As to

### **Social Participation in the Decision-making**

33. We must organize ourselves to guarantee life on the planet through a great world social movement. A change of attitude for a conscience of power keeping the peoples united becomes necessary. As organized peoples we can push for the transformation of the system.

34. We must guarantee compliance with the Convention, especially in the matter concerning the participation of the Social Movements and Organizations.

35. The current spaces need to be broadened, and new broad and permanent spaces for participation need to be created so that Social Movements and Organizations may contribute their proposals to guide the decisions in the negotiation process of the Convention.

36. It is necessary to establish nationwide information and full citizen participation mechanisms to be aware and include the vision of the peoples with regard to climate problems and promote transparency in the dissemination of information on the status of the negotiation of the Convention.

37. The accreditation and financing mechanisms for participation shall be revised and improved so that they do not constitute an obstacle that hinders effective participation of the Social Movements and Organization in the negotiation process of the Convention.

38. Transparency and access to relevant and adequate information in the processes associated with the participation of Social

Movements and Organizations in the Convention are to be guaranteed.

39. It is important to take into account diversity in the forms of social organization as basis to broaden their participation on the Convention.

40. We must propose the creation of a high-level committee to restructure the participation mechanisms in the Convention. It should include social movements and Non-Governmental Organizations and count on the participation of countries with significant experience on this issue.

41. We reject the interference of the corporations in the decisions of the United Nations Organizations to the prejudice of the rights of the Peoples and the sovereignty of the States.

42. Citizen consultation processes need to be established to guide the decision-making of each government within the Convention, such as national consultation referenda with a direct impact on the climate agreement.

43. We demand the UN the public dissemination and access to the sessions, meetings and negotiations with translation in the languages of the peoples.

44. Material conditions need to be guaranteed, such as time, space and the necessary resources for the mobilization and participation of social movements and organizations in the processes associated with the negotiations on climate change and binding topics within the UN.

45. It is necessary that the ancestral knowledge of the Peoples be deemed as equally important and valuable as scientific

knowledge for decision-making and for actions against climate change by the UN and by the governments.

46. We demand that the use of specialized language and the profusion of acronyms in the UN do not constitute exclusion mechanisms preventing the understanding of the climate negotiation process by the peoples of the world.

47. Synergies should be created between the governments and the Social Movements and Non-Governmental Organizations to promote the attendance of the latter to the work sessions and their coordinated participation on the decision making of the negotiation process.

As to  
**Fighting Climate Change: Direct Action for Transformation**

46. The structural causes for climate change are linked to the current capitalist hegemonic system. Fighting the climate change involves changing the system.

47. The change of the system must provide for a transformation of the economic, political, social and cultural systems at local, national, regional and global levels.

48. Education is a right of the peoples, a continuous process of fair, free, and transversal comprehensive training. Education is one of the fundamental driving forces for transformation and construction in diversity of the new women and men, for the Good Living and the respect of life and Mother Earth.

49. Education should be oriented to reflect value, create, raise awareness, coexist,



participate and act. When we speak of education to face the climate change, we speak of the main roots of such change and the historic and current responsibilities. We also speak of poverty, inequality and vulnerability of the peoples, especially the indigenous peoples and other historically excluded and victimized groups.

50. Social participation is a fundamental driving force for transformation. It is necessary to facilitate the integration of social movements and include the peoples and their organizations in the decision-making process at all levels.

51. Any transformation mechanism must include the principles of respect to life and human rights; sovereignty of the peoples, solidarity, fair transition and the recognition of the ecological limits and the rights of Mother Earth. It should also consider the common but differentiated responsibilities; the ancestral character of the indigenous peoples, the various forms and degrees of vulnerability of the countries and the peoples, especially the indigenous peoples and other historically excluded and victimized human groups.

52. We reject the implementation of false solutions to climate change, such as: carbon markets and other forms of privatization and commodification of life; geo-engineering, agrofuels productions, and measures favoring agribusiness and harming the production of food in an agro ecological manner, such as the use of transgenic seeds and agrottoxics, synthetic fertilizers and any other measure lessening the priority of the right to Good Living, health and the eradication of poverty enshrined in the Convention. We likewise reject the green economy, the intellectual

property rights; the mega water dam projects, monocultures and nuclear energy.

53. It is necessary to know and take into account the extraterritorial effects of climate solutions.

54. We propose the following actions to change the system:

- Transformation of the power relations and the decisionmaking systems for the construction of an anti-patriarchal people's power.

- Transformation of food production systems into agro ecological systems, thus ensuring food sovereignty and security and valuing knowledge, innovations, ancestral and traditional practices.

- Transformation of the energy production systems, eradicating dirty energies respecting the right of the peoples to fight poverty and keeping fair transition as a guiding principle.

- Transformation of the energy consumption patterns through education, regulations to large energy consumers and empowerment of the people over community-scaled systems of renewable energies production under control of the communities. Implement participative government of territory and city planning systems, thus ensuring fair and sustainable access to land and to urban services, as well as other means that are necessary to face the Climate Change impacts.

- Shift from an energy and materials profligate system to a cyclic system that emphasizes the eradication of the unsustainable exploitation of nature and

promotes reduction, reutilization and recycling of residues.

- o Ensure the financing by the developed countries to developing countries for such transformations, and for compensation and rehabilitation of the impacts of Climate Change. Financing must not be conditioned, and the management of the funds supplied shall be in the hands of the Peoples.

- o Create accessible mechanisms for the protection of the displaced people and the defenders of the environmental rights.

As to the  
**North-South Responsibilities: Commitments of the North to Promote Actions in the South**

55. The financing of mitigation and adaptation actions by the developed countries in the developing countries is a moral and legal obligation under the Convention by virtue of the historic responsibilities of the former. Funding must be reliable, predictable, sufficient and adequate.

56. All obligations of the countries in the North in relation to finance, technology transfer and support for the compensation of losses and damages should be legally binding under the Climate Change Convention.

57. Financing mechanisms must not respond to the logics of market supply and demand, but to compliance with responsibilities. It must be guaranteed that funds promote development and reach the most vulnerable communities.

58. Technology transfer from countries in the North to the South must promote the process

of appropriation, innovation and endogenous technology development. In this connection, it is essential to consider specific mechanisms to lift the barriers created by intellectual property rights. South-South technology transfer and cooperation need also to be promoted, and the value of the knowledge of the ancestral people and of the senior citizens as well.

59. Adaptation transcends the construction of infrastructure. Injustice, marginalization and social exclusion adversely impact on the vulnerability and the possibility to adapt. These aspects need to be considered in the Climate Change adaptation programs and in the financial mechanisms.

60. Loss and damages caused by Climate Change must be considered from the perspective of justice and human rights. The governments of the South must receive from the North the necessary funds to compensate loss and damages. South-South solidarity systems need to be endorsed. The experience of Venezuela's assistance to Caribbean countries and their massive housing programs constitute an example of solidarity vis-à-vis the loss and damages generated by climate change.

61. The military sector is one of the main consumers of fossil fuels and one of the largest gas-emission contributors in the planet. This needs to be included in the global discussions on Climate Change. The military sector shall be responsible and accountable.

62. Our task as civil society is to work for the transformation of our societies and the production and consumption systems which constitute the cause for climate change by generating new development paradigms determined by the peoples. Part of this task

needs to aim at influencing the national governments and international settings such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

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## A Zero Emissions Manifesto for the Climate Justice Movement

*Tom Weis, President, Climate Crisis Solutions*

*Rev. Lennox Yearwood, President and CEO, Hip Hop Caucus*

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<http://ecowatch.com/2014/09/03/zero-emissions-manifesto-climate-change/>

*“Zero emissions is an ambitious but achievable goal.”*

*—UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon*

Zero has become the most important number for humanity. Why?

Any chance of stabilizing the climate hinges on transitioning to zero greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as humanly possible. Simply slowing the rise of emissions will not work. For the first time, the world’s leading climate authority, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has embraced a goal of near zero greenhouse gas emissions or below.

Top military experts and government institutions like the U.S. Department of Defense and National Intelligence Council warn that climate destabilization threatens our national security, yet global emissions just keep going up. Leading biologists like E.O. Wilson warn that the sixth great extinction is now upon us, yet emissions keep going up.

By heating the globe at such a relentless rate, we are playing a deadly game of planetary Russian roulette. In the words of Michael

Mann, professor of meteorology at Penn State University: “There is no precedent for what we are doing to the atmosphere. It is an uncontrolled experiment.” If you believe your own eyes that climate chaos has already gone too far, the only logical response is to stop making things worse.

We are not suggesting ending the use of fossil fuels tomorrow. Decarbonizing our industries, homes, transportation, power generation and food production will take years of concerted effort and require every ounce of courage, ingenuity, patience and humility we possess. But intergenerational justice demands that we commit ourselves now as a nation to leading this green industrial revolution.

Some will no doubt call this goal unrealistic, saying it cannot be achieved, but they would underestimate the creative genius of the American people. What is unrealistic is thinking we can continue with business as usual and leave a habitable planet for our children. Americans are a supremely resourceful people with a long history of meeting, and exceeding, monumental challenges. While we have never faced anything as daunting as the global climate crisis, there are precedents for the U.S. overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds.

When destiny came knocking during World War II, we initially resisted, then answered by leading the allied forces to victory in three and a half short years.

It took a Civil War to end the scourge of slavery, and a monumental civil rights struggle to outlaw segregation, Jim Crow laws and discrimination, but we not only overcame, we elected a person of color as President of the United States.

When President John Kennedy boldly challenged America to land a man on the moon in less than a decade, our best and brightest responded by accomplishing this seemingly impossible task ahead of schedule.

It is now time for our generation to do something great.

### **Zero Emissions Bandwagon**

It may surprise you to learn that zero emissions has already been embraced as a goal by business leaders as well-known as Bill Gates, and world leaders as prominent as UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría; UN climate chief Christiana Figueres; Prince Charles; and former President Jimmy Carter, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu of The Elders.

Again, even the conservative, consensus-based IPCC supports near zero emissions or below, albeit on a year 2100 timeline that belies the urgency of their August draft report, which warns of “irreversible impacts” from continued emissions.

Major corporations, like Google, have embraced a zero carbon goal. Others like Microsoft and Deutsche Bank are moving in this direction by committing to net zero emissions, or carbon neutrality (using carbon offsets or carbon credits to balance out remaining emissions). 684 college and university presidents (and growing) have taken a similar climate neutrality pledge. And a fossil fuel divestment movement is picking up steam on college campuses (including Stanford University, Sydney University and historically black colleges and universities) and in houses of worship around the world.

Sweden, Iceland, Costa Rica and the Maldives are among the nations vying for carbon neutrality. Denmark is committed to becoming fossil fuel free, with Copenhagen seeking to become the world’s first carbon-neutral capital by 2025. In the U.S., cities like Austin and Boulder are striving for carbon neutrality, with San Francisco pledging to generate all of its electricity from renewables by 2020.

Scotland is on track to generate 100 percent of its electricity from renewables by 2020. The Philippines aims to shift the country’s fuel system to 100 percent renewables in ten years. The German state of Schleswig-Holstein is set to go 100 percent renewable this year. Munich’s goal is 100 percent renewables by 2025. The British Labour Party wants to decarbonize the UK’s electricity grid by 2030. And the island nation of Tokelau is already 100 percent renewable.

In stark contrast, neither the U.S. President, nor a single member of the U.S. Congress, has yet publicly called for a zero emissions goal for America.

### **2°C Wrong Target**

Just because the governments of the world accept 2° Celsius of heating above the preindustrial average as the agreed-upon target does not make it the right target. To the contrary, last December, preeminent climate scientist James Hansen and seventeen co-authors released a study in the scientific journal PLOS ONE revealing the UN-approved 2°C ceiling is based on politics, not science, and would unleash “disastrous consequences” beyond our control.

Dr. Hansen, economist Jeffrey Sachs, and others argue that “morality” demands a rapid

and dramatic cut in global carbon emissions to stay as close as possible to a 1°C ceiling (we are already at 0.85°C). Here's what they said about the urgency of dropping from the current level of 400 parts per million (a level not reached in at least 800,000 years) of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere to 350 parts per million (ppm), the level many consider the uppermost safe limit for civilization:

"It is instructive to see how fast atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> declines if fossil fuel emissions are instantly terminated. Halting emissions in 2015 causes CO<sub>2</sub> to decline to 350 ppm at century's end. A 20 year delay in halting emissions has CO<sub>2</sub> returning to 350 ppm at about 2300. With a 40 year delay, CO<sub>2</sub> does not return to 350 ppm until after 3000. These results show how difficult it is to get back to 350 ppm if emissions continue to grow for even a few decades."

We're obviously not going to achieve zero emissions by 2015. The point is we need to do it as soon as necessary to avoid catastrophe impacts from global climate change. Every day we delay buries us deeper in the climate hole.

### **Failure of Moral Leadership**

The United Nations, Congress and the White House are all failing in their moral obligation to stem the tide of this gathering storm.

The United Nations is not leading on this issue, as it must. Since 1990, when the IPCC issued its first report, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have increased by approximately sixty percent. Last year in Warsaw, after 19 successive sessions of the UN Conference of the Parties (COP) failed to achieve meaningful emissions reductions, labor and environmental groups

walked out after deciding governments were performing so poorly they could no longer legitimize the climate cop-out with their presence.

Congress is not leading on this issue, as it must. Since refusing to ratify the 1997 Kyoto protocol, the U.S. Congress has failed to enact any significant climate legislation. The closest they came was a Wall Street-friendly "cap and trade" bill passed by the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives in 2009. Described as an "unacceptable compromise" by Greenpeace and "a step backwards" by Friends of the Earth, it called for a modest 17 percent reduction of carbon emissions by 2020. Five years later, too few members of the Republican-controlled House of Representatives are even willing to admit humans are changing the climate.

The White House is not leading on this issue, as it must. The EPA's proposed rules to limit carbon pollution from existing coal-fired power plants are a step in the right direction, but President Obama's widely heralded "climate action plan" will be more PR than plan, with no chance of stabilizing the climate, unless the White House takes bold action. In fact, the administration's attempt to please all during this climate crisis with its all-of-the-above energy strategy promises more climate chaos by promoting natural gas fracking; mountaintop removal mining; deepwater and Arctic oil drilling; tar sands mining; and deafening seismic oil and gas exploration off the Atlantic coast. That the President has not yet denounced a scheme as "absurdly reckless" as Keystone XL's northern leg speaks volumes.

Even the renewable energy industry is not leading on this issue, as it must. Four years after it was first pointed out, America's

largest wind, solar and geothermal trade associations continue to embrace incrementalism, when the times call for revolutionary change.

Because the climate crisis threatens all life on Earth, it is first and foremost a moral issue. We have already seen how the poor and communities of color bear the brutal brunt of fossil fuel extraction and suffer the most from extreme weather disasters. Three out of four African Americans live within 30 miles of a coal-fired power plant. African-American children have an 80 percent higher rate of asthma, and are nearly three times more likely to die from asthma, than their white peers. The moral urgency of this crisis requires a rainbow coalition of people - reflecting the diversity of our great nation - coming together to solve it.

Alarming, latest projections by the U.S. Energy Information Administration have fossil fuels supplying almost 80 percent of the world's energy use through 2040, with carbon dioxide emissions rising 46 percent from 2010 levels. If this perilous trend is not reversed, runaway climate change could cause most of life on Earth to go extinct, testing the survival of humanity itself.

As the nation that historically contributed the most to global climate pollution, and is in the strongest position to respond, the U.S. has a moral imperative to lead this global charge.

### **Making the Great Transition**

It is time for America to unleash its entrepreneurial can-do spirit through a wartime-like mobilization to help save America, and the world. Innovating to zero emissions will not only help ensure our collective survival, it is the key to revitalizing

our ailing economy and putting America back to work. But we don't have until 2100, or even 2050, to transition off of fossil fuels. Scientists are calling for deep cuts in emissions now. Leaders showing us how to get there include:

- The National Renewable Energy Laboratory, which in 2012 commissioned a Renewable Electricity Futures Study showing that 80% of all U.S. electricity demand can be met with currently commercially available renewable energy technologies at the hourly level every day of the year.
- Former Vice President Al Gore, who in 2008 boldly called for 100% renewable electricity for the U.S. by 2018.
- Lester Brown, who in 2008 mapped out how to achieve 80% carbon cuts worldwide by 2020 in his authoritative book Plan B.
- Marc Jacobson and Mark Delucchi, who in 2009 released a plan to power the planet with 100 percent renewables by 2030, a vision that spawned The Solutions Project (a plan to transition all 50 states to 100 percent renewables).
- The prestigious Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research in London, Zero Carbon Britain and Australia's Beyond Zero Emissions, all of which are working to achieve zero emissions.

### **Zero Emissions Mandate**

We have solutions. They even have names: conservation; energy efficiency; solar power; wind power; geothermal power; standing forests; organic farms; industrial hemp;

electric vehicles; bicycles; mass transit; wave energy; tidal power; zero waste ...

Here and there aggressive initiatives are underway. China is developing a single 38,000 MW wind project large enough to electrify a country the size of Poland. Four states in Germany already get more than 50 percent of their electricity from wind power, while in the U.S., Iowa and South Dakota are generating more than 25 percent of their electricity from wind farms. But progress is not being made at anything close to a speed and scale commensurate with the scope of the planetary emergency we face.

On, Sept. 23, a UN Climate Summit is being held in New York City. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has challenged world leaders to bring their pledges to set the world on a low-carbon path. We entreat Mr. Ban, who calls zero emissions an “achievable goal,” to challenge attendees of the UN Climate Summit to bring their zero emissions plans to COP20 in Peru this December and to COP21 in France in 2015. Anything less will show our governments are not serious about solving this existential threat.

Our colleague Bill McKibben, who earlier this year called out the Obama administration for sabotaging the 2009 Copenhagen climate negotiations through NSA spying, has issued a “call to arms” inviting all who “give a damn about the biggest crisis our civilization has ever faced” to gather in New York City on Sept. 21 for a People’s Climate March to demand bold climate action at the UN Summit. We ask, what could be bolder than zero emissions?

Earth is the only known habitable planet in the universe, making the climate risks to humanity so great as to warrant the utmost

precaution. Now is the time for the climate justice movement to rally around a goal of zero emissions, with the U.S. leading the way by enacting zero emissions policies at the local, state and federal levels. For the love of humanity, and our children, we must act now.

Zero emissions: because the first step to making things better is to stop making things worse.



## The Lima Ecosocialist Declaration October 6, 2014

<http://ecosocialisthorizons.com/2014/10/the-lima-ecosocialist-declaration/>



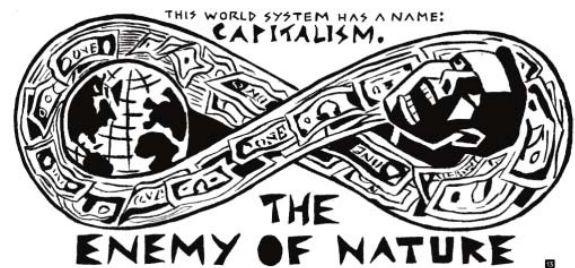
**Declaration of the Ecosocialist International  
Network before COP20 in Lima, Peru  
(December 2014)**

Translated by Quincy Saul for Ecosocialist  
Horizons, affiliate of the Ecosocialist  
International Network.

*Our lives are worth more than their profits!*

The imminent climate crisis that we confront today is a grave threat to the preservation of life on the planet. Many academic and political works have confirmed the fragility of life on earth to temperature change. Only a few degrees can cause – and are causing – an ecological catastrophe of incalculable consequences. Now we are experiencing the deadly effects of this situation. The melting ice, the contamination of the atmosphere, rising sea levels, desertification, and the increasing intensity of the weather, are all proof.

It is now fundamental to ask ourselves who and what is causing the climate to change like this. We urgently need to unmask all the abstract answers, which attempt to blame all of humanity. These abstract answers disconnect the current situation from the historical dynamics which have emerged from fossil fuel (coal, oil gas)-based industrialization, which causes global warming, and the logic of capitalism, which is sustained by the private appropriation of wealth, and the conquest of profit. Profit at the cost of social exploitation and ecological devastation: these are two faces of the same system, which is the culprit of climate catastrophe.



(Illustration by Seth Tobocman, from “Truth and Dare,” Ecosocialist Horizons)

In this panorama, the Conference of the Parties (COP), organized by diverse governments and funded by large corporations, confirms the responsibility of capitalism for the climate crisis, by putting on empty events without any effective resolutions capable of solving the problem. In fact, we are moving backwards, a retreat expressed in the ridiculous “green funds” which openly profit from pollution. Sadly, this dynamic is deepened through the attitudes sustained by multiple governments – facilitating pollution and putting the profits of corporations above the wellbeing of people. This can be seen most strongly in the

countries of the South, and thus it is fundamental to comprehend that the dynamics of this system tend to dump the global ecological crisis upon the shoulders of the oppressed and exploited of the earth.

It is vital to emphasize the importance of the diverse social and ecological struggles all over the world, which propose to stop climate change and the ecological crisis through the logic of solidarity. It is important to note that many of these processes are launched and led by women. Without a doubt, the Latin American scenario today exemplifies the mix of resistance, self-management and processes of transformation, based on projects which can unite new proposals with ancestral cosmovisions. One example can be found in the brave struggles of the indigenous peoples and campesinos of Peru, in particular their resistance to the Conga mega-mining project. It is also useful to focus our attention on the experience of the Yasuni Park, which was the initiative of indigenous and ecological movements – to protect a large region of Amazon rain forest from oil drilling, in exchange for payments from rich nations to the people of Ecuador. The government of Rafael Correa accepted the proposal for several years, but recently decided to open the park to multinational oil corporations, provoking important protests. Another case can be found in the development projects which the Brazilian government is attempting to carry out, which threaten a large part of Amazonia with destruction.

From this perspective, there is very little to hope for at COP20 this December in Lima, Peru. If there is any escape from climate change and the global ecological crisis, it will emerge from the power of struggle and the organization of the oppressed and exploited peoples of the world, with the understanding

that the struggle for a world without ecological devastation must connect to the struggle for a society without oppression or exploitation. This change must begin now, bringing together unique struggles, daily efforts, processes of self-management, and reforms to slow the crisis, with a vision centered on a change of civilization; a new society in harmony with nature. This is the central proposal of ecosocialism, an alternative to our current ecological catastrophe.

Change the system, not the climate!

*Signatures:*

Argentina: Manuel Ludueña, Paulo Bergel.

Belgium: Christine Vanden Daelen, Daniel Tanuro.

Brazil: Joao Alfredo de Telles Melo, Marcos Barbosa, José Corrêa, Isabel Loureiro, Renato Roseno, Renato Cinco, Henrique Vieira, Flávio Serafini, Alexandre Araújo, Carlos Bittencourt, Renato Gomes.

Canada: Jonatas Durand Folco (Quebec), Terisa Turner.

Spain: Esther Vivas (Cataluña), Jaime Pastor, Justa Montero, Mariano Alfonso, Teresa Rodrigues, Manuel Gari. Jorge Riechmann, Joaquin Vega

United States: Ariel Salleh, Capitalism, Nature and Socialism (Revue, USA), Joel Kovel, Leigh Brownhill, Qunicy Saul, Salvatore Engel Di Mauro, Terran Giacomini.

France: Christine Poupin, Dominique Cellier, Henrik Davi, Mathieu Agostini, Michel Bello, Michael Löwy, Vincent Gay. Laurent Garrouste, Sophie Ozanne

Greece: Yorgos Mitralias, Panos Totsikas

México : Andrés Lund, Samuel González  
Contreras. José Efraín Cruz Marín

Norway: Anders Ekeland.

Perú: Hugo Blanco.

País Vasco: Iñigo Antepara, Josu Egireun,  
Mikel Casado, Sindicato ELA. Ainhara  
Plazaola.

Switzerland: Juan Tortosa, Mirko Locatelli.  
Anna Spillmann, Félix Dalang

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## Contributors

**Patrick Bond**, a political economist, specializes in climate change, global governance, economic policy, environmental policy and civil society. His doctoral studies under David Harvey's supervision were at Johns Hopkins University in Geography and Environmental Engineering. He is senior professor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal School of Built Environment and Development Studies. Since 2004 he has directed the UKZN Centre for Civil Society, which in December 2011 hosted the "People's Space" counter-summit to the COP17. Patrick's books include: *BRICS and the Contradictions of World Capitalism* (co-edited with Ana Garcia, Haymarket Press, Pluto Press, Aakar Press and Jacana Press, 2015); *Politics of Climate Justice: Paralysis Above, Movement Below* (UKZN Press 2012 – named by the *Guardian* as one of ten leading climate politics books); *Durban's Climate Gamble: Trading Carbon, Betting the Earth* (edited, Unisa Press, 2011); *Climate Change, Carbon Trading and Civil Society: Negative Returns on South African Investments* (co-edited with Rehana Dada and Graham Erion for UKZN Press, 2009); *Trouble in the Air: Global Warming and the Privatised Atmosphere* (edited with Rehana Dada for the TransNational Institute, 2005); and *Unsustainable South Africa: Environment, Development and Social Protest* (UKZN Press and Merlin Press, 2002). (Publications archive.)

**Dr. Michael K. Dorsey** is interim Director of the energy and environment program at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. He is a Director on the national board of the Sierra Club—one of the largest and oldest US environmental organizations.

Dorsey is a recognized expert on global governance, finance and sustainability. In 1992, he was a member of the U.S. State Department Delegation to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, "The Earth Summit." From 1994-96 he was a task force member of President William Jefferson Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development. In 1997, in Glasgow, Scotland, Dorsey was bestowed Rotary International's highest honor, *The Paul Harris Medal for Distinguished Service to Humanity*. From April 2007 until November 2008 Dr. Dorsey was a member of Senator Barack Obama's energy and environment Presidential campaign team. In 2010 Lisa Jackson, the US Environmental Protection Agency (US-EPA) Administrator, appointed Dr. Dorsey to the EPA's National Advisory Committee (NAC). Administrator Jackson reappointed Dr. Dorsey to the US-EPA NAC in 2012. In 2013 Dr. Dorsey was made a "Full member" of the Club of Rome; that same year the *National Journal* named Dr. Dorsey one of 200 national "energy and environment expert insiders".

**John Foran** has taught sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara since 1989. His books include *Fragile Resistance: Social Transformation in Iran from 1500 to the Present* (1993, get it free here) and *Taking Power: On the Origins of Third World Revolutions* (2005). Since attending the COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009, he has taken constant inspiration from the global climate justice movement, which he teaches, researches, and speaks about whenever he can (he has been accused of talking about nothing else). Foran is engaged in a long-term participatory action project with the global climate justice movement, and with Dr. Richard Widick, he also co-directs the International Institute of Climate

Action & Theory (IICAT) ([www.iicat.org](http://www.iicat.org)) and is a founding member of the Climate Justice Project, where his blog posts can be found. He is also active in the Green Party, 350.org, and System Change Not Climate Change. He has written and writes for a number of on-line publications about these struggles (see his work [here](#) and [here](#)).

**Pascoe Sabido** has been with Corporate Europe Observatory in Brussels since January 2013, focusing on industry influence over policy making within the European institutions and internationally. His current focus is on exposing the role of dirty industry lobbying in climate policy making – at the national, regional (EU), and UN level. He previously worked as an international renewable energy campaigner at Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland, focusing on community-owned and controlled energy alternatives (see the book chapter “Reclaiming Power – an energy model for people and the planet,” with Niclas Hällström, in *What Next Volume III: Climate, Development and Equity*; and the book *Powering Africa Through Feed-in Tariffs*). He previously worked at the New Economics Foundation in London, working on social policy.

**Jim Shultz**, a native of California, holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from UC Berkeley and a master’s degree in public administration from Harvard University. He has served as staff to the California Legislature, as an advocate with Common Cause and Consumers Union, and as a visiting professor at San Francisco State University and faculty at the Salzburg Seminar.

As the founder and executive director of The Democracy Center since 1992, Jim has led advocacy development programs in more

than two dozen countries across five continents, training and counseling thousands of citizen activists across a wide range of social, economic, and environmental justice issues. He has worked internationally as a consultant in close collaboration with organizations including UNICEF, UNDP, the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Institute, the International Budget Partnership and others. As an advocate, Jim has also helped lead a variety of victorious citizen action campaigns at the state, national and international level, including the campaign that forced the Bechtel Corporation to drop its \$50 million legal action against Bolivia following the Cochabamba Water Revolt.

Jim is the author and editor of three books, including the award-winning *The Democracy Owners' Manual* (Rutgers University Press, 2002) and *Dignity and Defiance – Stories from Bolivia's Challenge to Globalization* (UC Press, 2009). He is also author of a variety of major reports on global public policy issues and his articles have appeared in newspapers and magazines across the US, Canada and Europe. His reporting on the Bolivian Water Revolt was named top story of 2000 by *Project Censored*.

Jim and his wife Lynn have three children and have lived in Cochabamba, Bolivia since 1998, where he also served for many years as president of an 80-child orphanage.

**Nathan Thanki** is from Belfast, Ireland but is currently based in Lima, Peru where he is supporting Peruvian movements and organizations as they prepare a People’s Summit on Climate Change and a People’s March during the UN negotiations in December 2014. Nathan has been involved in environmental justice activism since he began his undergraduate degree at College of the

Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine, in 2011, through collectives like Earth in Brackets and the Tipping Point Collective. He has reported from multilateral governmental and civil society processes such as UNCSD, UNFCCC, CBD, and the World Social Forum. Inside the negotiations, Nathan is an active member of several informal coordination networks as well as the Youth constituency, YOUNGO. He has worked for Third World Network (TWN) to conduct research into the landscape of adaptation finance, economic costs of climate change impacts, traditional adaptation technologies in agriculture, and the scope and spread of climate change research centres. However, Nathan does not just follow the official process. Since its founding in 2012 he has served as a member of the Coordinating Committee for the Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice, through which he has worked on Reclaim Power! -- a month (2013) and a week (2014) of coordinated global action on energy. He has also worked on grassroots campaigns with Friends of the Earth in Belfast.

**Brian Tokar** is an activist and author, director of the Institute for Social Ecology, and a lecturer in Environmental Studies at the University of Vermont. He is the author of *The Green Alternative*, *Earth for Sale*, and *Toward Climate Justice: Perspectives on the Climate Crisis and Social Change*, which was recently reissued in an expanded and revised edition by the New Compass Press. He is an editor of *Agriculture and Food in Crisis* (with Fred Magdoff) and also edited two collections on biotechnology and GMOs: *Redesigning Life?* and *Gene Traders*. Tokar is a board member of 350Vermont, and a contributor to the *Routledge Handbook of the Climate Change Movement*, *A Line in the Tar Sands*, and other recent books. His articles on environmental issues and popular

movements appear in *Z Magazine* and *Green Social Thought*, and on websites such as *Counterpunch*, *ZNet*, and *Toward Freedom*. He has lectured across the US and internationally on social ecology and the links between environmental and social movements.

**Dr. Richard Widick** is a Visiting Scholar at the Orfalea Center for Global & International Studies at the University of California, and Co-Director with John Foran of The International Institute of Climate Action and Theory (IICAT), where he publishes his environmental and climate-focused cultural theory, history and analysis. He is author of *Trouble in the Forest: California's Redwood Timber Wars* (2009, University of Minnesota Press). In spring of 2015 he will be teaching *Dreaming the Revolution: Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche* in the German, Slavic and Semitic Languages & Comparative Literature Departments at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

**Emily Williams** is a Campaign Director with CSSC for the fossil fuel divestment campaign, in which she works with college and university students across the state to support them in their campaigns and grow them into climate leaders. She graduated from UCSB in 2013, with a B.S. in Environmental Studies and a concentration in Geographic Information Systems, where she co-founded the Fossil Free UC campaign. She wrote her thesis on determining the financial harm UCSB is responsible for vis-a-vis its investments in the coal industry. She attended COP19 in Warsaw, Poland with the Climate Justice Project, a project of the International Institute of Climate Action and Theory ([iicat.org/cjp](http://iicat.org/cjp)), and is a member of the SustainUS delegation to COP 20 in Lima, Peru.

**Leehi Yona** grew up in Montreal, Canada. After completing a Diploma of Collegial Studies in Arts & Sciences with a Third World Studies Certificate at Marianopolis College in Québec, she now attends Dartmouth College, where she is pursuing her undergraduate studies, double majoring in Biology and Environmental Studies, and minoring in Public Policy. She is deeply passionate about the intersection of science, policy, economics, health, and society as they pertain to climate change and climate justice. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Green Coalition -- a Montreal-area green and blue space conservation organization -- and founded the Green Schools Coalition of Montreal, an alliance of the student leaders of environmental clubs and organizations in elementary and high schools in the region. She helped organize PowerShift Canada in 2012 and PowerShift USA in 2013, has served on the national core team for XL DISSENT, a youth-led act of nonviolent civil disobedience against the Keystone XL pipeline, and is a lead organizer of the Divest Dartmouth fossil fuel disinvestment campaign. She is on the SustainUS youth delegation to COP20 in Lima. Leehi received the Lieutenant Governor of Québec's Youth Medal in 2010 and was named Canada's Top Environmentalist under 25 in 2013.