

2015:
Year Zero for Climate
Justice

John Foran

Copyright © 2020 John Foran

All rights reserved.

Eco Vista Climate Justice Press

Eco [Isla] Vista, California

DEDICATION

For you, with love

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	viii
Introduction	1
1 2015: Year Zero for Climate Justice	6
2 Dear Governor Brown...	10
3 The Road from Paris ... to Paris	34
4 Re-Imagining Climate Justice at the COP: Finding Our Frontlines at a Gathering in Bellagio, Italy	45
5 Just Say “No” to the Paris COP: A Possible Way to Win Something for Climate Justice	56
6 A History of the Climate Negotiations in Six Videos	87
7 Ambition and Smoke, Love and Courage: What to Expect from the Climate Treaty Negotiations in Paris	103
8 COP 21, Round One: Battle Lines Are Drawn	118
9 The Insanity of the COP: We Must Adopt a Different Vision	130
10 Climate Talks at the 1.5 Degree Crossroads	145
11 The World is Broken and the Hypocrisy of COP 21 Isn’t Going to Put it Back Together	153

12	The Paris Agreement: Paper Heroes Widen the Climate Justice Gap	163
13	To Change Everything, It's Going to Take Everything We've Got	179
	Bibliography	183
	About the Author	204

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many, many people have helped with this. My gratitude to all the members of the Climate Justice Project and especially the Paris crew. Likewise, heartfelt thanks to Kristin Sponsler, my editor at *Resilience*, and to *Resilience* itself, where almost all of these pieces first appeared.

Thanks are due to Jennifer Ji and Asiha Khan, who so competently undertook the Herculean feat of turning every link in each blog post into a proper footnote, and for compiling the bibliography of all the references made in this book. Needless to say, any errors they may have made are mine as well.

Thanks, too, from the bottom of my heartfelt desire for climate justice, to Eileen Joy, Punctum's fearless leader and my ally in establishing the Climate Justice Press, whose first book this has the honor of being. May there be many more, and better ones, to come!

I also want to thank every writer whose work is quoted in these pages, and every photographer whose images are used here. I have tried to attribute them all. Where I have failed to do so, it is my hope that fair use practices and your comradely generosity might constitute the basis of my inadequate gratitude to you all for your brilliant work in the pursuit of justice for the planet and its people.

INTRODUCTION

This book contains nearly everything I wrote in 2015 about climate change – extended blog posts, mostly, mini-essays with pictures about the state of play of the global climate justice movement in the face of the climate crisis. They are largely reproduced as written on the dates under each, with present tense verbs intact and save for a few corrections and the very occasional update. I apologize for taking so long to bring this out, but I had to learn how to typeset. At just the right moment – I use the word “just” here very intentionally – a far better solution was found: the establishment of the Eco Vista Climate Justice Press, as a project of the Eco Vista Transition Initiative, in Isla Vista, California: www.ecovistacommunity.com!

It’s pretty evident that the UN climate summit, COP 21, held in Paris in December 2015 was very much on my mind. 2015 was, I think, “year zero,” for climate justice because we knew from the start that the world would descend on Paris, at least those who could afford to do so, and that, one way or another, history would be made.

Having been inside the COPs – the COP refers to the Conference of the 196 nations who are Parties to the climate negotiations, followed by the number of years since the first in 1995, making Paris COP 21 – since COP17 in Durban, South Africa, in 2011, and having spent four years with the global climate justice movement as a scholar-activist learning about the issues, trying to record and amplify youth voices, seeking to impact the negotiations in some small way through reports, e-books, and press conferences, I wanted to do my part in 2015 to advance the cause of climate justice in the context of the global climate treaty that the nations had been attempting to negotiate for four years, since declaring their intention to do that in 2011 and setting Paris 2015 as their deadline.

Thus, I wrote. And wrote some more. And co-hosted gatherings, from my home town of Santa Barbara to the shores of Lake Como in Italy. I attended a climate science conference in Paris in July, and

helped organize events like the “[Climate Futures: This Changes Everything](#)”¹ series at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where I work, and in the local community here.

As the year progressed, I participated in some of the [discussions](#)² that were happening, everywhere, about COP 21. In July, I [gathered](#)³ with scholars and activists in Bellagio to consider the future of climate justice after Paris. In October, I helped organize an ecosocialist gathering, where a short, pointed [video](#)⁴ was made about Paris.

And as the year’s discussions developed, I soon came to feel, alongside Pablo Solón, Bolivia’s radical former climate negotiator, and a few others, that the best possible outcome of COP 21 would be [NO agreement](#).⁵

Instead, we got the “[Paris Agreement](#).”⁶ I titled my post on December 12, the day it was agreed, “[Paper Heroes](#),”⁷ to signal that Paris was so triumphalist and so flimsy that it feels like some cynical joke played on the peoples of the world. I’ve thought about this a fair amount, gathering into [a bundle](#)⁸ some of the fascinatingly divergent

¹ “Climate Futures: This Changes Everything” (2015-2017), http://ehc.english.ucsb.edu/?page_id=11154

² “Paris Climate Justice” (2016), <http://www.parisclimatejustice.org/>

³ “Climate Futures” (2015), <https://sites.google.com/a/waikato.ac.nz/climate-futures/home>

⁴ Summer Gray, “COP 21 (We Can Change the World),” *YouTube* (October 15, 2015),

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bK0WtJu7QFU&feature=youtu.be>

⁵ John Foran, “Just Say “No” to the Paris COP: A Possible Way to Win Something for Climate Justice” (September 16, 2015), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-09-16/just-say-no-to-the-paris-cop-a-possible-way-to-win-something-for-climate-justice/>

⁶ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC], “The Paris Agreement” (December 12, 2015), http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC], “UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, ADOPTION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT” (December 12, 2015), <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l09r01.pdf>

⁷ John Foran, “The Paris Agreement: Paper Heroes Widen the Climate Justice Gap” (December 14, 2015), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-12-14/the-paris-agreement-paper-heroes-widen-the-climate-justice-gap/>

⁸ John Foran, “The First Draft of History Thirty-Four of the Best Pieces on

analyses, and as Paris recedes into the rear view mirror, more and more I'm coming to the view that that's where it belongs – behind us. For good.

The Paris Agreement calls on the world to keep global warming “well under 2 degrees, and as close to 1.5 degrees as possible.” That is useful, but like the rest of the high-minded words in this non-binding agreement, it is merely “voluntary” and “aspirational,” and at the rate these negotiations have been going for two decades, it will take at least the next ten COPs for them to get any traction.

We can't let them delay that long, or the window for even a dangerous two degrees will close...

Will the movement use the Paris Agreement against its architects (the well-meaning capitalist reformists of the UNFCCC and the enlightened wing of the one percent) and against our enemies – the fossil fuel industry, the political elites, the rich, the banks, and all the rest? That's a certainty.

Will we throw the cynical references to indigenous rights, a gender perspective, vulnerable nations, human rights, and intergenerational equity into their faces? Yes, we will.

Will we seize on the phrase “climate justice, as some call it” they so patronizingly let appear in the text – yes, we intend to make them come to rue the day they wrote these words, and force them to understand what they mean, if we can.

To hold the line on climate change to “dangerous” levels (and that is the best we can do, since we are headed for “extremely dangerous” – in all probability catastrophic – if we pursue business as usual or even the mild reforms of the Paris Agreement), we would need something akin to a radical climate moonshot, an ecosocialist [World War II-type war effort](#),⁹ a great transformation of everything that is so wrong about the world we live in. Everything.

As for the global climate justice movement, might it prove to be the most radical social movement of the twenty-first century?

It could if we make it so. We need to show up on *all* the frontlines, from the local to the global, and engage with *everything*, from short-

the Paris Agreement at COP 21” (January 4, 2016), <https://cloudup.com/cdaFzYn961X>

⁹ The Climate Mobilization (2017), <http://www.theclimatemobilization.org/>

range defensive action against every fossil fuel project and electoral ploy, to medium-range reforms (like Bernie Sanders’s “political revolution,” the [Next System Project](#),¹⁰ the [Leap Manifesto](#),¹¹ and so many more bright emerging ideas for a better world), to long-range radical (anti- or post- capitalist?) [system change](#).¹²

With the added challenge that the definition of “medium-range” in our critical present moment has been shortened to something like “from now to the next three or four years” and “long-range” “from now to the next 10-15 years” because that’s all we’ve got to really bend the arc of climate justice downwards so we can reach it.

But it can be done. We will not “save” the world. My reading of climate science makes me agree with my friend and ecosocialist scholar-activist [Brad Hornick](#) on this point:

All thinking clearly about climate and political realities can do is change the nature of the struggle.

It’s not an easy prospect as it requires heart-wrenching personal and collective existential crisis (questioning meaning in all facets of life and work).

I’ll say it now: there is conclusive evidence-based scientific determination of irreversible physical changes that will by necessity cause catastrophic destruction to civilization in the coming decades. Full stop.

We are at the point where we need to acknowledge these truths. It will come now or later – and if it comes later it will hit us much harder, and will mean deterioration in the relevance of certain life/work/political strategies.¹³

It’s hard to say it better than that. Consider this book of connected essays a wake-up call, colleagues. A call to arms, comrades. A personal

¹⁰ The Next System Project (2017), <http://thenextsystem.org/>

¹¹ The Leap Manifesto (2017), <https://leapmanifesto.org/en/the-leap-manifesto/#manifesto-content>

¹² System Change not Climate Change (2017), <http://systemchangenotclimatechange.org/>

¹³ Brad Hornick, “Kinder Morgan: The fight starts now!” (November 20, 2016), <http://systemchangenotclimatechange.org/columnists/brad-hornick>

YEAR ZERO FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

invitation, friends.

The time is now. We are the available ones. All of us.

2015: YEAR ZERO FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

January 1, 2015



Climate change protest in Copenhagen.¹⁴

My title is not original. As in many things radical, [Rebecca Solnit](#) has already given expression to some of my deepest feeling-thoughts, in words as relevant today as they were when she wrote them almost five years ago (here taken from *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities* (Haymarket Books, 2016):

Think of 2013 [JF: or whatever year we are in now] as the Year Zero in the battle over climate change, one in which we

¹⁴ Image found at Kevin Zeese and Margaret Flowers, “The Year We Build Power Together” (January 2, 2015), <https://popularresistance.org/newsletter-2015-the-year-we-build-power-together/>

are going to have to win big, or lose bigger.... The gifts you've already been given in 2012 [2016, 17, 18, 19 etc.] include a struggle over the fate of the Earth. This is probably not exactly what you asked for, and I wish it were otherwise – but to do good work, to be necessary, to have something to give: these are the true gifts. And at least there's a struggle ahead of us, not just doom and despair....

If you care about [children](#),¹⁵ [health](#),¹⁶ [poverty](#),¹⁷ [farmers](#),¹⁸ food, [hunger](#),¹⁹ or the economy, you really have no choice but to care about climate change. The reasons for acting may be somber, but the fight is a gift and an honor. What it will give you in return is meaning, purpose, hope, your best self, some really good company, and the satisfaction of being part of victories also to come. But what victory means needs to be imagined on a whole new scale as the news worsens....

This is, among other things, a war of the imagination: the carbon profiteers and their politicians are hoping you don't connect the dots, or imagine the various futures we could make or they could destroy, or grasp the remarkably beautiful and complex ways the natural world has worked to our benefit and is now being sabotaged, or discover your conscience and voice, or ever picture how different it could all be, how different it will need to be.

They are already at war against the wellbeing of our Earth. Their greed has no limits, their imagination nothing but limits. Fight back. You have the power. It's one of your gifts.²⁰

¹⁵ John Vidal, "Climate change will mean more malnourished children, experts warn" (December 5, 2012), <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/dec/05/climate-change-malnourished-children>

¹⁶ Paul R. Epstein, "The Ecology of Climate Change and Infectious Diseases" (March 1, 2010), <http://www.chgharvard.org/resource/ecology-climate-change-and-infectious-diseases>

¹⁷ "Poverty and Climate Change," <http://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/2502872.pdf>

¹⁸ David Simeral, United States Drought Monitor (2017), <http://drought-monitor.unl.edu>

¹⁹ Ben Block, "Eye on Earth," WorldWatch Institute (2016), <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/6271>

²⁰ Rebecca Solnit, "2013 as Year Zero for Us -- and Our Planet" (December

Two thousand fifteen, then 2016, was the [hottest year](#)²¹ in recorded history. Now 2018 is here. The future is right around the corner. Think of the coming year as year zero of that crucial decade where our future will be set in motion, for better or worse.

And of the many futures that are possible, which one will we make?

Two thousand fifteen could turn out to have been the year where the gears of the machine were slowed enough for us to imagine that this year, the momentum of the downward trajectory we are on can be stopped. A lot depends on what we do for climate justice in the twelve months that end in Paris at the COP 21 UN climate summit in December.

In 2014, the fledgling climate justice movement got up on its feet and started to walk and march. From now on we will have to start running. And learning on the run. It's up to us, extraordinarily ordinary people. A character in the film *The Imitation Game* says, "Sometimes it is the people no one imagines anything of who do the things that no one can imagine." And as [Robert Reich](#) reminds us: "As we head into 2015 [2018, etc.], it's important to keep in mind how quickly progressive change that seems radical, if not a pipe dream at one point in time, becomes feasible when enough people make a ruckus."²²

And as a wise person once said, if you're reading this, you're already in the conversation.

23, 2012), http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175632/tomgram/%3A_rebecca_solnit%2C_2013_as_year_zero_for_us_-_and_our_planet/?utm_source=TomDispatch&utm_campaign=05674e52c9-TD_Solnit12_23_2012&utm_medium=email

²¹ Justin Gillis, "2015 Was Hottest Year in Historical Record, Scientists Say" (January 20, 2016), https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/21/science/earth/2015-hottest-year-global-warming.html?_r=1

²² Stefanie Spear, "Must-See Robert Reich's 2014 Year in Review" (January 2, 2015), <http://www.ecowatch.com/must-see-robert-reichs-2014-year-in-review-1881994949.html>

YEAR ZERO FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE



2015

2

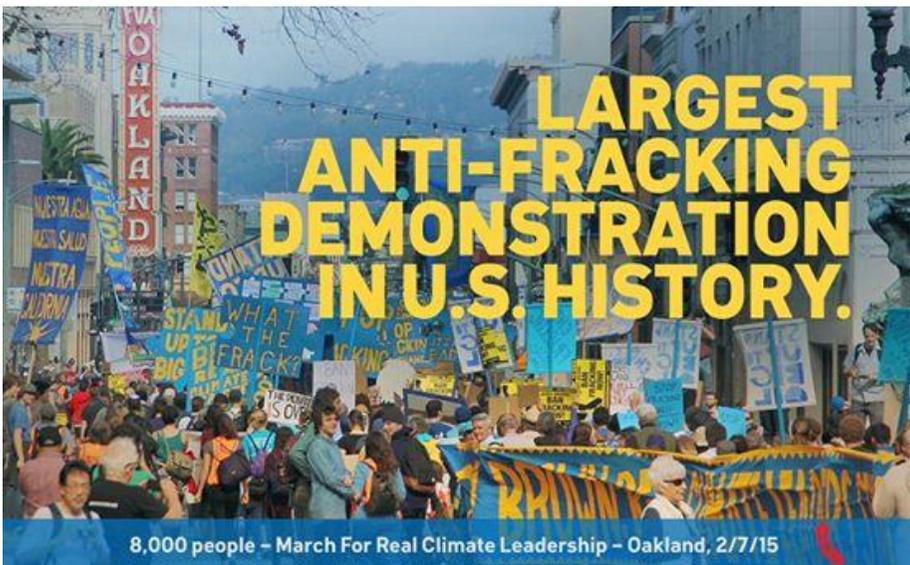
DEAR GOVERNOR BROWN...

February 8, 2015

Dear Governor Brown,

Yesterday we came to Oakland, your old home town.

Eight thousand of us stood shoulder to shoulder.²³



²³ All images except this first one are photographs made by the author.

YEAR ZERO FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

We marched.



We chanted.



We danced.



We sang.



YEAR ZERO FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

We beat our drums.



We made art out of our messages.



We smiled.



But we are serious too.



YEAR ZERO FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

We came from all parts of California.



A lot of us got here by bus.



I came from Santa Barbara.



My brother-in-law was there too.



And some of us came from beyond California ...



... because we all want to go *beyond* California.

And a lot of our friends aren't even human.



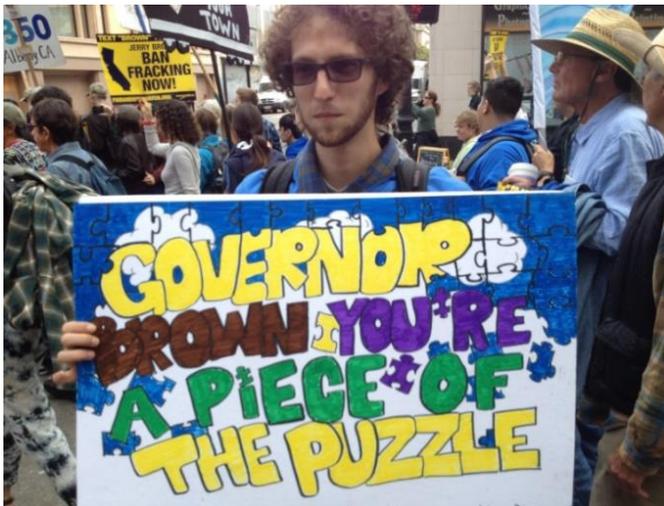
So, we all have a question for you.



You see, we're puzzled, because....



And it seems like you don't always remember ...



... to think.



To realize there are consequences.



We feel you should know *this* by now.



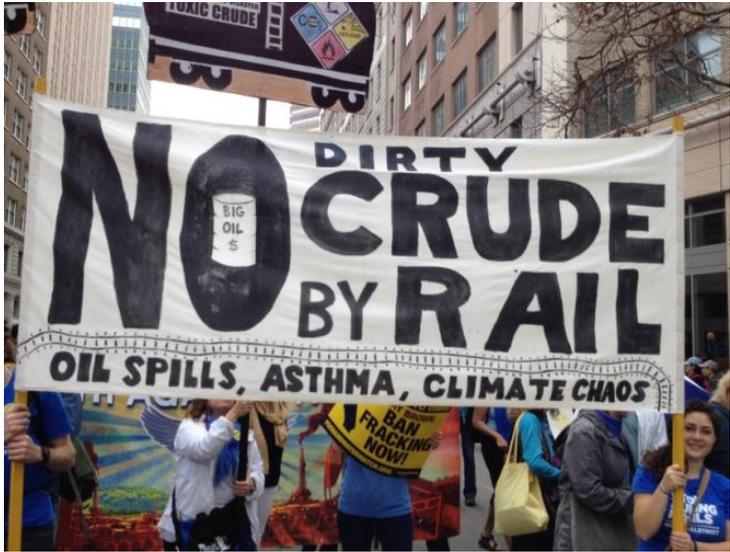
Others have done it before you. And many others will after you.



So, listen carefully: there are some things we need you to do.



There are quite a few things we're very concerned about...



Things that make us angry ...



Things we intend to stop...



And things we've had enough of.



YEAR ZERO FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

And there are so many things we *do* want...



Like putting an end to fracking in our state.



... and in our communities.



It will be great when our schools reflect our values too.



YEAR ZERO FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

Oh. We also want...

... healthy bodies.



(Have you heard? “Save a life – you’re a hero. Save a hundred lives – you’re a nurse.”)



We believe that everyone deserves clean water.



Everyone should be able to breathe clean air.



And we all need clean energy. Right now.



We want you to love everyone, including our mother, the Earth, as much as we do.



Most of all, we dream of ... a future.



So what we need you to show us now is simply this.



YEAR ZERO FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

We think it's time –

To stand up.



For what we believe in.



Because we want...



That's "Climate Justice."

And we want it now.

Because tomorrow will be too late.

And today is not too soon.



We are California.

And beyond.

climate treaty that is supposed to give us the best possible climate future as opposed to the catastrophic business-as-usual course we are on.

This [Conference](#),²⁵ the one I am at, is called “Our Common Future under Climate Change” (a clever evocation of a ground-breaking, far-sighted book from 1987 described below) and it has four overarching objectives:

1. Provide state-of-the-art scientific knowledge on climate change, one year after the release of IPCC AR5: physical basis of climate change, impacts, adaptation and vulnerability, mitigation, storylines and scenarios. [The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, issues definitive state of the art summations of what is known on the topic every five or six years; AR5 is the fifth such report, published in three volumes over the course of 2013 and 2014, one on [the physical science basis of climate change](#),²⁶ a second on [impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability](#),²⁷ and the third on [mitigation](#),²⁸ or scenarios for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions].
2. Explore a wide range of pathways combining climate change mitigation and adaptation, and sustainable development.

²⁵ Our Common Future Against Climate Change (2015), <http://www.commonfuture-paris2015.org/>

²⁶ T.F. Stocker et al., editors, “Summary for Policymakers,” 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* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg1/WG1AR5_SPM_FINAL.pdf

²⁷ C.B. Field et al., editors, “Summary for policymakers,” pp. 1-32 in *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability, Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg2/ar5_wgII_spm_en.pdf

²⁸ O. Edenhofer et al., editors, “Summary for policymakers,” in *Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change, Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg3/ipcc_wg3_ar5_summary-for-policymakers.pdf

3. Assess the potential for evidence-based solutions to climate change challenges.
4. Contribute to a science-society dialogue.

I've come because I want to learn more about climate science, for which I have feelings of profound awe and utmost respect – it lays out, after all, one of the underlying existential justifications for why we need to change the system. And I've not been disappointed: despite jet lag, missing baggage, coffee deficits, and the usual format of scholarly presentations (which can be excruciatingly boring, especially maddening when the subjects under discussion are important or gripping), I've come away with that awe intact.

You can hear the first day's opening plenary on *The State of Knowledge on Climate Change*, which I missed due to jet lag, [here](#).²⁹ Thomas Stocker, one of the lead authors of the Physical Science Basis report, presents a synthesis of its findings.

Warnings from the Frontlines of Science

Day Two, on *Landscapes of Our Common Future* was especially eye-opening. I heard Karen O'Brien, a sociologist at the University of Oslo and a contributing author to the Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability volume of the AR5, give an excellent talk on how we are addressing the wrong problems, *i.e.* technical problems rather than the diversity of values, mindsets, and worldviews where emotions are key and politics are central: we need to “change the politics, not the climate,” adapting from the inside out and making changes in the twin evils of consumerism and capitalism which drive the crisis.

Ricarda Winkelmann, from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impacts told us that the drying of the southwestern United States is one of two dozen global “tipping point” areas for the climate as a whole, where severe impacts are quite possible. One of the scariest and most plausible is that the now irreversible melting of certain parts of Antarctica (we just don't know when) will almost surely affect the Atlantic thermohaline circulation and raise sea levels (add the melting of the

²⁹ Our Common Future under Climate Change Paris 2015, “Plenary Session 1 - July 7, 2015” (July 8, 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWY6e5I1Kew>

Greenland ice sheet as another tipping point, and then imagine the feedbacks between even just these two events!)

Paul Leadley of the University of Paris was very good at showing how protecting biodiversity can aid in the mitigation of climate change. He noted that most of the less than two degrees Celsius scenarios for global warming in this century now rely on bioengineering and carbon capture and storage, and that attending to biodiversity preservation can alleviate some of our illusory reliance on a last minute deus ex machina in the form of miraculous “solution” to the problem of climate change.

Corrine Le Quéré, another of the authors of the AR5 report on the physical science, and Director of the indispensable [Tyndall Center for Climate Change Research](#)³⁰ at the University of East Anglia, England, observed that the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere – the main mechanism that produces the greenhouse effect – now rises at two parts per million a year (it’s at 403 ppm now and 450 is considered another boundary we must not pass), and it’s only this low because the oceans and land biomass have been absorbing more than half the total warming, a gift of mitigation that cannot go on forever, and that, worse, is devastating our creaturely relatives who inhabit the oceans. I made a note to learn more about [the carbon cycle](#)³¹ that is so fundamental to understanding climate change.

Shobhakar Dhakal from the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand talked about the cities of the future. Right now, 71-76 percent of CO₂ emissions come from cities, and even more if one takes into account the upstream effects of cities, which hold fifty-four percent of the world’s population (3.88 billion people) at the moment, a number estimated to rise to sixty-six percent (6.34 billion people) by 2050. China alone is projected to increase from 52.6 percent urban in 2012 to sixty percent by 2020! Low-carbon solutions for city life are thus particularly crucial, and Dhakal stressed that these solutions had to be transformative, not incremental.

One of the scariest things I registered here for the first time is that most of the scenarios for remaining under two degrees require negative net emissions after 2050, which means that they assume that we will pass the greenhouse gas concentration levels that we have to stay under, and can only get back to them by relying on taking carbon *out* of

³⁰ Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, <http://www.tyndall.ac.uk/>

³¹ The Global Carbon Project, <http://www.globalcarbonproject.org/>

the atmosphere at some future point after having put it there in the first place.

Some see this happening through increasing the world's forests and biomass to absorb more carbon, others through technological fixes which aren't yet deployable like carbon capture and storage (CCS). For others, including Kejun Jiang of China's Energy Research Center, both CCS and *nuclear power* are part of the plan. The mainstream thinking is that if we exceed the planetary boundary on climate change, we can reel it back later, or maybe deploy some massive scale geo-engineering fix to carry on more or less with business-as-usual.

Yet, to be fair, most of the people I heard speak made it quite clear that continuing on the path we are on is a recipe for catastrophe. So there seems to be a kind of cognitive disconnect between the science and the solutions to our planetary dilemmas.

This disconnect was magnified when I encountered the cutting edge of the big picture social and policy analysis in these meetings.

Warnings to the Social Science around the IPCC

Another of my *aha* moments was the realization that the mainstream and most of the people chosen as speakers here not only present overly optimistic scenarios of the future, but have next to no idea or understanding of the ways to overcome the obvious barriers to attaining them (and this would be even more true of the negotiators at the COP, to the degree that they understand the science, which I have to suppose that many of them do). Dealing with existing social, economic, and political crises while managing climate change as best we can, requires *deep* systemic change. We simply have to talk honestly about capitalism, consumption, poverty, social justice – and *critically*, without assumptions or illusions (if that's possible). I see no way around this; for starters they might read Naomi Klein's [This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate](https://ia802307.us.archive.org/34/items/pdfy-Skb-ch_k7psDm90Q/Naomi%20Klein%20-%20This%20Changes%20Everything.pdf).³²

³² Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), https://ia802307.us.archive.org/34/items/pdfy-Skb-ch_k7psDm90Q/Naomi%20Klein%20-%20This%20Changes%20Everything.pdf

An important and highly praised new initiative that I only became aware of here is *The World at 2050: Pathways Toward a Sustainable Future*,³³ a project jointly launched in March 2015 by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA³⁴), the [Stockholm Resilience Center](#)³⁵ at Stockholm University, the [Earth Institute](#)³⁶ at Columbia University, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN³⁷), and the [Alpbach Laxenburg Group](#).³⁸ Indeed, one of the morning's plenary speakers was Johan Rockström, director of the Stockholm Resilience Center, and leader of the group of Earth scientists who in 2009 developed the visionary [Planetary Boundaries](#)³⁹ approach to understanding the ecological impacts and limits of human activity on the planet.

In the afternoon, I attended *The World in 2050* session, headlined by Rockström and Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, an economist and former advisor to the governments of Bolivia and Poland now better known for his more recent work on poverty reduction and sustainable development. So many others in attendance had the same idea that we were moved to a larger auditorium.

While waiting in the corridor, I had the surprise and pleasure of meeting Kevin Anderson and Alice Bows, both of the Tyndall Centre, two of the leading radical climate scientists in the world and personal

³³ Pavel Kabat, "The World in 2050: Pathways towards a Sustainable Future," International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (March 12, 2015), <http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/about/news/150312-World-in-2050.html>

³⁴ International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, <http://www.iiasa.ac.at/>

³⁵ Stockholm Resilience Centre: Sustainability Science for Biosphere Stewardship, <http://www.stockholmresilience.org/>

³⁶ The Earth Institute, Columbia University, <http://www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu/articles/view/1791>

³⁷ Sustainable Development Solutions Network, A Global Initiative for the United Nations, <http://unsdsn.org/>

³⁸ Alpbach-Laxenburg Group, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (September 14, 2016), <http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/research/alg/Alpbach-Laxenburg-Group.html>

³⁹ Wikipedia, "Planetary Boundaries," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Planetary_boundaries

heroes of mine since hearing them speak in Warsaw at COP 19 in 2013, where Anderson [said](#) “Today, after two decades of bluff and lies, the remaining 2°C budget demands revolutionary change to the political and economic hegemony.”⁴⁰ Here in Paris he said to me that the IPCC and UNFCCC, which oversees the COP climate treaty negotiations were both locked into a discourse where they cannot understand or act upon the implications of their own science. Why is this? Because of the fossil fuel industry’s control of the process and the discourse, basically.

Once the session resumed, with Sachs absent, Johan Rockström introduced their *World in 2050* project, describing it as an initiative to link climate science (his specialty) with the [Sustainable Development Goals](#)⁴¹ (Sachs’s specialty), set to be finalized when the UN convenes in New York at the end of September. Four of the seventeen SDGs currently under consideration refer to planetary boundaries, and Rockström sees it as the first treaty to connect people and the planet, a more precise successor to the highly influential 1987 Brundtland Report which was called [Our Common Future](#) and coined the term “sustainable development,” famously – if open-endedly – defining this as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”⁴²

At the project launch back in March, Rockström had [said](#) “The novelty of the World in 2050 project is both the integration, exploring the feasibility, tradeoffs and synergies of the deep transformations; and the approach of starting from our goal of a future where humanity thrives on a stable resilient planet, and back casting from this point to find different pathways to meet this goal.”⁴³

⁴⁰ Renfrey Clarke, “The New Revolutionaries: Climate Scientists Demand Radical Change,” *Climate and Capitalism* (January 9, 2014), <http://climate-andcapitalism.com/2014/01/09/climate-scientists-become-revolutionaries/>

⁴¹ Sustainable Development, United Nations, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal>

⁴² *Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*, <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>

⁴³ Pavel Kabat, “The World in 2050: Pathways towards a Sustainable Future,” *International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis* (March 12, 2015), <http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/about/news/150312-World-in-2050.html>

Nebojsa Nakicenovic, former Professor of Energy Economics at the Vienna University of Technology and now Deputy Director General of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) then discussed in very general terms the shape of these pathways, showing us a slide of a “Possible Unified Field Analytic Approach” to climate change, which included values, power structures, and culture among the “ultimate drivers” of climate change.

Dr. Detlef von Vuuren, senior researcher at PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency and a professor in Integrated Assessment of Global Environmental Change at the Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University, spoke on integrated assessment models, and showed us a slide with a dotted line between The World at 2050/SDG’s ambitious goals and “business-as-usual” scenarios which have us heading for a world of plus four degrees Celsius. The dotted line represented “transformative actions and policy.”

This prompted a pretty engaging discussion, which I led off by saying:

“Your assumptions are backwards – you cannot reach the SDGs on equity, poverty reduction, or democratic governance under the present global political economy. The *only way* to achieve these wonderful goals is to make fundamental system change in governance that makes it actually democratic, to get the fossil fuel industry out of politics, governance, and the economy. If you’re talking about real, substantive, qualitative sustainable development, you can’t get there from here without leaving the logic of the systems we are now in – markets, capitalism, neoliberalism, unrepresentative democracies. The only way to do *that* is through social and political movements for radical social change.”

Kevin Anderson followed up with a more measured but devastating call for new emissions scenarios, pointing out that almost none of the 160 considered by the AR5 were going to achieve less than two degrees without requiring negative emissions after 2050, which, even if it were somehow possible, would be too late. In fact, he said, most of the less than two degree scenarios had emissions peaking by 2010, wryly noting that in addition to a *deus ex tecnologica* this would require time travel.

All of this was very politely handled by Nakicenovic, Rockström, van Vuuren, and Dr. Pavel Kabat, IIASA’s Director. Each expressed

their openness to more radical approaches to pathways; van Vuuren welcomed collaboration “with people who bring different story lines.”

Not so Robert Socolow of Princeton University, who accused me of being unrealistic and crazy (I paraphrase), taxing me with ignorantly advocating the dangerous route taken by twentieth century revolutions.

I was graciously allowed a closing reply, which I used to say that indeed I was something of an expert on twentieth-century revolutions, and that he perhaps needed to learn more about twenty-first century movements for radical social change, such as the global climate justice movement, which I tried to reassure him didn't too closely resemble the social revolutions of the twentieth century. I concluded by saying that the global climate justice movement was the *only* social force that was taking the science seriously (here I was exaggerating for emphasis in full knowledge that there are many social forces and even some states who do so).

* * * * *



My DIY effort under construction. Photo by John Foran.

My own participation in this massive conference was a poster presentation titled *Re-Imagining Radical Climate Justice for the Post-Paris World*, unfortunately just an abstract for a talk I would not be giving. In the end, I had a wonderful time chatting with nearby poster-mates Lukas, from Germany, working on how carbon markets were failing around the world and therefore would undermine the treaty; Daoud, from Burkina Faso, who is part of a team in Montpellier working on malaria, poverty, and the impacts of climate on both; and Michael,

from South Africa, who is working with others on a project that involves community-agenda setting for climate issues in South Africa, Peru, Chile, and Brazil.

Other friendly passersby included Vijaya, from India whose research shows how carbon offsets fail to trickle down to indigenous communities, and a man who works in northern Thailand and neighboring countries on water provision and management in rural communities. As usual, there's good news and bad news out there in the world, where real people are facing the onslaught of climate change and showing us our own futures here in the global North. Let's learn from and with them and share everything we know far and wide to build this movement, whose day is coming.

RE-IMAGINING CLIMATE JUSTICE AT THE COP:
FINDING OUR FRONTLINES AT A GATHERING
IN BELLAGIO, ITALY

August 5, 2015



Photo by John Foran. Image by Ben Liddie.

In their invigorating booklet, "[Organizing Cools the Planet](#)," Joshua Kahn Russell and Hilary Moore advise us to “find our frontlines” – an

approach pioneered by the Oakland-based activist organization [Movement Generation](#)⁴⁴ – if we want to change the world. By this, they mean “finding ways to *navigate the multiple crises that are already challenging our lives*.... What we do in the next two years will determine the landscape for the next ten years, which will determine the landscape for the next one hundred years.” Their deadline rings as true today as when they wrote these words in 2011.

Because of this timeline imposed on us by Nature (and revealed by science), social movements must ask new questions that we wouldn’t be asking if we had all the time we wanted. Because ecological collapse is embedded in all aspects of life on this planet, we need to think about *scale* in new ways. Social movements need to make unlikely alliances *that we wouldn’t otherwise make*. We therefore need a political compass with which to navigate these choices in a strategic and principled way.⁴⁵

Further inspired by [Patrick Reinsborough](#),⁴⁶ Kahn Russell and Moore note that “Climate Justice calls on us to ‘Think structurally, act strategically’ (though it may not be as catchy on a bumper sticker). Therefore, if your frontline doesn’t offer immediate action opportunities (or if they are not impactful at this moment), you need to align it with other frontlines.”

In the middle of July, I was one of eighteen scholars (plus one via Skype) who gathered in the lakeside town of Bellagio, Italy, to address the theme of “[Climate Futures: Re-imagining Global Climate Justice](#).”⁴⁷

We came from seventeen countries, range in age from our twenties

⁴⁴ Movement Generation, <http://movementgeneration.org/>

⁴⁵ Hilary Moore and Joshua Kahn Russell, *Organizing Cools the Planet* (Oakland: PM Press, 2011), http://www.climateaccess.org/sites/default/files/Moore%20and%20Russell_Organizing%20Cools%20the%20Planet.pdf

⁴⁶ Patrick Reinsborough, <https://fernwoodpublishing.ca/authors/view/patrick-reinsborough>

⁴⁷ “Climate Futures” (2015), <https://sites.google.com/a/waikato.ac.nz/climate-futures/home>

to our sixties, live on six continents (Antarctica wasn't directly represented), and included in our number scholars, activists, journalists, former UN climate negotiators, and climate scientists, with many of us wearing more than one of these hats. We commented often on this invigorating diversity of background, and sought to make of it a strength. Yet, in one of the ironic twists that a crazy and unequal world offers up, we had gathered in a place of privilege, the Rockefeller Foundation Center on scenic Lake Como, Italy, a playground for the rich and a gorgeous setting made possible by a funding institution built on oil money (though it has now joined the ranks of those who have listened to the divestment movement). Most of us have jobs that don't require backbreaking work, and the comfort of homes, the advantages of education, and a basic level of security in our lives (even as nothing is guaranteed any longer in a world that can change in an instant, and is changing slowly all around us).

Where were *our* frontlines? Each will speak for themselves. Mine are most obviously in the [university setting](#)⁴⁸ where I work, in the small but growing network of North American ecosocialists of [System Change Not Climate Change](#),⁴⁹ in a radical think tank called the [International Institute of Climate Action and Theory](#),⁵⁰ in our plucky [local 350](#) group,⁵¹ and with a creative band of activist scholars at the [Climate Justice Project](#).⁵²

All of us had such local roots and wider connections, no doubt.

My co-organizers Debashish Munshi and Priya Kurian are articulating the concept of "[sustainable citizenship](#)"⁵³ in their work on climate policy and action at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. Co-organizer Kum-Kum Bhavnani, like me based in the Sociology Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has helped pioneer the framework of "women, culture, and development" or WCD, an attempt to inspire scholars who work at these intersections which

⁴⁸ John Foran, <http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/faculty/john-foran>

⁴⁹ System Change not Climate Change (2017), <http://systemchangenotclimatechange.org/>

⁵⁰ International Institute of Climate Action and Theory, <http://www.iicat.org/>

⁵¹ 350 Santa Barbara, <https://350sb.org/>

⁵² Climate Justice Project, www.climatejusticeproject.org

⁵³ "Sustainable Citizenship" (2015), <https://sites.google.com/a/waikato.ac.nz/sustainable-citizenship-project/>

shape the possibilities of much of the world, for determined action in communities and global networks. The four of us are editing the new edition of [*Feminist Futures: Re-imagining Women, Culture and Development*](#)⁵⁴ (first edition Zed Press, 2003) – I guess we like to re-imagine things! Many of us have worked in education, from the village and community level like Sangion Tiu from Papua New Guinea, to the university and global community, such as Anabela Carvalho from Portugal.

Bill McKibben, who couldn't be with us in person, sent a video in which he states "Climate justice may be the most important two words that we've got now, the most important phrase on the planet. It's a way to unlock enormous power because it unites the scientific, and the moral, and the practical discourse on this earth and it gets them going in the same direction.... The good news is that if we deal wisely with this problem, this crisis, then we're going to build a world that works better than the one we have right now, a world that works fairly, is more democratic, less unequal."

For Yeb Saño, climate justice is a project, an undertaking where we are linked by our passion for achieving it. He reminded us that "justice" was a concept that even young children learn easily: we share our food, we take turns, we don't harm others. He noted, rightly, that "Friendship is the currency that inspires our work."

If there was substantial agreement among the group on the state of crisis humanity faces, and on where the frontlines of the impact of climate chaos are, and on what climate justice is, we nevertheless had a healthy variety of opinion on how to get it, and on much else besides.

As a group, one of the points of pressure we concentrated on is the looming nightmare of COP 21 in Paris this December – the UNFCCC climate treaty negotiations, which the global climate justice movement must inevitably confront in a few short months, and live with its outcome after that. While no one expects much of the fatally flawed and compromised climate negotiations that are supposed to finalize an "agreement" of some kind at the end of the year in Paris at COP 21, it is a place where a good part of the world's attention will be turned, at least to some degree. It will also likely be the site of intense

⁵⁴ Now published as Kum-Kum Bhavnani, John Foran, Priya Kurian, and Debashish Munshi, editors, *Feminist Futures: Reimagining Women, Culture and Development* (Zed Press, 2016).

narrative and political contention over the value and outcome of the negotiations, since world leaders, especially of the global North, will be seeking to declare a victory on the basis of some common text they will do everything in their power to get their counterparts all over the world to sign onto.

Being at a COP sometimes feels like “looking in the face of the enemy,” commented Anna Pérez Català, a young activist from Barcelona who had this feeling when she attended her first COP in 2014 in Lima. It’s a place where every delegate, in the eyes of former Maldives Minister of Environment Mohamed Aslam, should be replaced and the entire process up to now should be condemned (he said this not in Bellagio, but via Skype during COP 18 in Doha, Qatar in 2012, which he was unable to attend due to the coup against President Mohamed Nasheed; the heart-breaking struggle of Aslam and Nasheed to bring climate justice to the floor of COP 15 in Copenhagen in 2009 is chronicled in the film *Island President*⁵⁵). He asked us: “Can someone’s life be negotiated? Justice remains elusive.”

Patrick Bond judged the COP a distraction; markets and capitalism frame the system we have to change. But others countered that the COP is also a space where, despite the unequal nature of the process, at least a few things could happen that will save lives in our coming future. From a certain point of view, the COP is a concentrated distillation of the system, not a distraction. If the problem is capitalism, you have to take the COP seriously on some level.

Ahsan Uddin Ahmed, who has mobilized his climate science to advise the government of Bangladesh and the 160 members of parliament, is also working with civil servants, journalists, and villagers. Social scientist Qi Ye will do the same for his part of the world; he works in the realm of climate policy, with an eye to shaping progressive initiatives inside the Chinese political establishment. He pointed out that of the 150 million or more Chinese viewers of *Under the Dome*,⁵⁶ the film exposé of urban pollution that streamed for just three days earlier this year before authorities removed it from the web, the majority will

⁵⁵ *The Island President* (AfterImage Public Media, 2011), <http://theislandpresident.com/>

⁵⁶ Linghe in Mattrick, “Chai Jing’s review: Under the Dome – Investigating China’s Smog (full translation)” (March 1, 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6X2uwlQGQM>

have been young people. Theirs will be among the many strong voices of climate scientists who insist that world leaders wake up to the realities of a climate-changed world and take bold action, all the while knowing in their hearts that their “political masters” lack the guts to rise to the occasion. The most eloquent voice on this front is that of James Hansen, who recently castigated the “reticence” of climate scientists in an [essay](#) that reports “continued high emissions would result in multi-meter sea level rise this century and lock in continued ice sheet disintegration such that building cities or rebuilding cities on coast lines would become foolish.” Noting that the stated goal of 2°C is not a safe target, he concludes: “The bottom line message scientists should deliver to policymakers is that we have a global crisis, an emergency that calls for global cooperation to reduce emissions as rapidly as practical.”⁵⁷

In Bellagio, we all agreed on one thing: Paris will attract large numbers of climate activists, concerned citizens, good, bad, and indifferent NGOs, young people, old people, journalists, and communicators of every stripe. About half of our group plan to be there: seasoned scholar activist Patrick Bond from South Africa, youth organizers Anjali Appadurai from Canada, Majandra Acha from Peru, and Reem Al Mealla from Bahrain, former Philippines negotiator Yeb Saño, who [electrified](#) COP19 in Warsaw in 2013 at the opening plenary,⁵⁸ and myself.

The various parts of the climate movement itself have proposed a variety of approaches: some, like [Avaaz](#)⁵⁹ and its NGO allies will organize a massive march before the COP even begins, thinking to inflect the negotiations in the direction of something that can lay the foundations to somehow save the planet. They intend to take the rhetoric of global leaders and turn it into a weapon with which to shame or encourage them into doing the right thing.

Patrick Bond has already [questioned](#) the wisdom of this strategy:

⁵⁷ James Hansen, “Sea Level Disaster Ahead, but When?” (July 27, 2015), http://climateandcapitalism.com/2015/07/27/james-hansen-sea-level-disaster-ahead-but-when/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+climateandcapitalism%2FpEtD+%28Climate+and+Capitalism%29

⁵⁸ Climatebrad, “In Tearful, Amazing Speech, Philippines Climate Delegate Announces Hunger Strike” (November 12, 2013), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6RXGGFBdlo>

⁵⁹ Avaaz, <https://www.avaaz.org/page/en/>

“Avaaz are not only embarrassingly contradicted on their right flank. The organisation’s premature celebration is *dangerous*. After all, the conservative (pro-market pro-insiderism anti-activism) wing of ‘climate action’ politics – as distinct from climate *justice* advocacy – is gaming us all now, arguing that the Paris COP21 can result in a victory. Avaaz just amped up that narrative.”⁶⁰



March for Climate Leadership, Oakland, California, February 2015. Photo by John Foran.

The more radical climate justice movement has been trying to find strategies of repudiation of the UNFCCC and the Paris process and outcome, together with organizing to build numbers and turn the larger movements and NGOs in a more radical, ultimately even anti-capitalist direction. Some will pursue direct action in many forms and concrete acts, others will create spaces to articulate and build post-Paris visions of climate justice, and many will be communicating with their frontlines back home.

There are other possibilities for climate justice around (if not in) Paris, some of which will involve members our group.

⁶⁰ Patrick Bond, “Avaaz’s Climate Vanity: Upward gazing Can Be Politically Blinding” (June 17, 2015), <http://triplecrisis.com/avaazs-climate-vanity/>

Yeb Saño, inspired like millions of others by Pope Francis's bracing climate encyclical *Laudato Si'*,⁶¹ has been helping to build the [People's Pilgrimage](#),⁶² which, like the encyclical itself, is open to people of all faiths (including the climate justice faith). As he [said](#): "Paris is not our destination. Our real destination will be the hearts and minds of people, so our journey continues even after Paris."⁶³ He told us: "Paris is merely a six-year delay of what was promised in Copenhagen. Paris will give us a ten to fifteen page 'Motherhood' statement with lots of 'creative ambiguity.' Unless we change the system, the same system that got us into the crisis, the negotiations process cannot, for the life of me, I cannot see it get us out of it."

Majandra Acha and Anjali Appadurai will no doubt be using both inside and outside tactics to build the global climate justice youth movement. Erica Violet Lee will seek ways to articulate and strengthen the demands of indigenous communities, along with her organization, the amazing [Idle No More](#).⁶⁴ Reem Al Mealla simultaneously helps build the [Arab Youth Climate Movement](#)⁶⁵ and participates in policy discussions that ultimately rise up to the Arab world's governments and negotiators. Cherelle Jackson, the one true climate journalist among us, works for the same goals on her frontlines, Samoa and the small island states of OASIS, with youth, NGOs, and policymakers, desperate to draw the existential plight of these frontlines to the attention of governments and other powers that be. Anna Pérez Català is similarly at home (as much as anyone can feel at home in our present circumstances) among the *indignados* who brought hope to the streets of Spain in 2011 and continue to imbue grassroots politics in that country, and coordinating the making of the climate action plans of her region, Catalonia.

⁶¹ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* (Vatican Press, 2015), http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf

⁶² The People's Pilgrimage, <http://peoplespilgrimage.org/about.html>

⁶³ Meghan Rowling, Thomson Reuters Foundation, "Yeb Sano kicks off 6-month climate pilgrimage as faith groups seek boost from Pope," *Interaksyon* (June 10, 2015), <http://www.interaksyon.com/article/112113/yeb-sano-kicks-off-6-month-climate-pilgrimage-as-faith-groups-seek-boost-from-pope>

⁶⁴ Idle No More, <http://www.idlenomore.ca/>

⁶⁵ Arab Youth Climate Movement, <http://aycm.org/>

Mithika Mwenda, Secretary General of [PACJA](#),⁶⁶ the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, a network of more than one thousand organizations, holds no hope for the negotiations, but will insist, both inside and outside the negotiations, on climate justice in the massive frontline of Africa.

Sunita Narain, Director General of the Centre for Science and Environment ([CSE](#))⁶⁷ in New Delhi, told us over Skype about the Centre’s initiative to concretely and precisely analyze the INDCs [Intended Nationally Determined Contributions] that have emerged at the COP as the weak neoliberal replacement of the original UNFCCC foundational goal of a legally binding climate treaty. Each country in the climate negotiations has to put their INDC (with the emphasis on the “I” for “intended” – you can see those which have been submitted so far [here](#)⁶⁸) for climate mitigation on the table before Paris. These should be scrutinized for their effectiveness, ambition, and contribution to equity. Narain blamed the United States for shifting the discourse away from binding emissions targets to the misnamed “bottom-up” hodgepodge of pledges, and noted that former US negotiator Todd Stern’s definition of “equity” is that “every country has the right to determine its level of emissions,” while his definition of “national circumstances” for the United States is the political fact of a Senate dominated by Republicans. Meanwhile, President Obama makes fine speeches, like this one: “This year in Paris has to be the year that the world reaches an agreement. None of the nations represented here are moving fast enough. . . . any so-called leader who does not take this issue seriously or treats it like a joke – is not fit to lead.”⁶⁹ Narain predicts that Paris will end up being “a massive exercise in making it look like they [the major emitting countries] are doing something.”

Patrick Bond is part of ongoing strategy discussions among global activists, some of which are taking place on a new website, [The Road](#)

⁶⁶ Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, <http://www.pacja.org/index.php/en/>

⁶⁷ Centre for Science and Environment, <http://www.cseindia.org/>

⁶⁸ Intended Nationally Determined Contributions, <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/indc/Submission%20Pages/submissions.aspx>

⁶⁹ Climate Action Network, “Eco 4, ADP 2.10 Bonn September 2015 – Another Day Issue” (September 3, 2015), http://www.climate-network.org/sites/default/files/eco_4_adp2-10_english.pdf

[to Paris](#),⁷⁰ where all are invited to join in that conversation. Back in March, Bond [wrote](#) from a meeting of members of the movements at the World Social Forum in Tunis: “If you are serious about climate justice, the message from these [past] COP experiences is unmistakable. Going inside is suicide.”⁷¹ He and others have raised the possibility that we might be able to “Seattle Paris,” as suggested by Canadian author and activist Pat Mooney of [etc](#).⁷² “It should start like New York [where 400,000 marched together in September 2014] and end like Seattle [where the global justice movement shut down the meetings of the WTO in December 1999]. Shut the thing down!”⁷³

And what do I think? I continue to believe that many approaches hold promise. We need to be active everywhere, so we can say, as the global justice movement did before us: “[We Are Everywhere](#).”⁷⁴ Our movements – if they are real – can’t be competing with each other. They *must* learn to work together.

We should be trying to identify the strategies that give us the best chances of creating “tipping points” in the climate wars. I dream of a movement that can create a non-linear trajectory into the future.

One idea I am working on is a COP21-focused campaign for “Just Climate Futures: Saying No in Paris.” The best “outcome” for the COP would be NO treaty/agreement. A complete collapse, as with the WTO in Seattle, where there was NO possibility of declaring the outcome a success.

COP 21 is the best chance for all those countries (and there are many) who will get very little out of the treaty on the table to use their veto and say “No, not without the \$100 billion for the GCF, not without substantial money for Loss and Damages, not without closing the emissions gap so our populations don’t starve, drown, die of thirst, get killed in floods, not without free technology transfer, and much more!”

With people everywhere who are truly concerned about the

⁷⁰ “Paris Climate Justice” (2016), <http://www.parisclimatejustice.org/>

⁷¹ Patrick Bond, “Climate Movement Among Movements” (March 26, 2015), <http://www.telesurtnet/english/opinion/Climate-Movement-Across-Movements-20150326-0035.html>

⁷² etc Group, <http://www.etcgroup.org/>

⁷³ “The Paris Climate Change Spectacular,” ETC Group (July 9, 2015), <http://www.etcgroup.org/content/paris-climate-change-spectacular>

⁷⁴ Notes from Nowhere editorial collective, *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anti-Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2003).

planet's future we need to discredit the COP and not let it declare victory.

I believe that the movement should be seeking ways to bring this about.

If anyone agrees, the next questions are: how do we do that? Whom do we work with? How do we communicate this? Who is already working toward this end?

Stay tuned for more on this, and other initiatives generated by our group while in sunny Bellagio...⁷⁵



New York City People's Climate March, September 2014. Photo by John Foran.

⁷⁵ One of which is the forthcoming volume edited by Kum-Kum Bhavnani, John Foran, Priya A. Kurian, and Debashish Munshi, *Climate Futures: Re-imagining Global Climate Justice*.

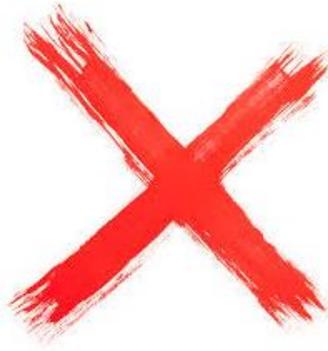
2015

5

JUST SAY “NO” TO THE PARIS COP:
A POSSIBLE WAY TO WIN SOMETHING FOR
CLIMATE JUSTICE

September 16, 2015

*For a Just Climate Future, We Must Have **No** Agreement in Paris*



A very simple argument makes the scale of our failure absolutely clear.... let's just call it the Vicious Syllogism. It goes as follows:

Premise 1: If we do not keep average atmospheric temperature rise below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, we are in for dangerous, unpredictable and potentially catastrophic climate change.

Premise 2: If the world does not keep further anthropogenic emissions of CO₂ equivalent to no more than (say) 1,300 billion tonnes, we shall not keep average atmospheric temperature rise below 2°C.

Premise 3: If [the UNFCCC is] not now even minimally embarked on a programme that might make limiting

ourselves to such a carbon budget even remotely feasible, we shall not keep further anthropogenic emissions of CO₂ equivalent to no more than 1,300 billion tonnes.

Premise 4: [The UNFCCC is] not now even minimally embarked on such a program.

So (by Premises 4 back through 1):

Conclusion: We are (already) in for dangerous, unpredictable and potentially catastrophic climate change.

– John Foster, *After Sustainability: Denial, Hope, Retrieval* (London: Earthscan, 2015), 2-3, with my [John Foran’s] substitution of “the UNFCCC” for “we” in the original

In the long-running medieval soap opera *Game of Thrones*, they say that “when you play the game of thrones, you win ... or you die. There is no middle ground” (season 1, episode 7 bears this title).

In the long-running contemporary soap opera *At the COP*, the same maxim holds true, it seems to me. “When you are dealing with the risks posed by climate change, you must play to win ... or people will die.”

This is why the global climate justice movement and its allies everywhere must pay attention to the COP21 meetings coming in December to Paris. And we will need to be very imaginative indeed to defeat our enemies – the largest corporations in the world, the global political elite, and the systems whose levers they believe they control: capitalism, the world energy supply, the mass media, and a largely-rigged brand of democracy that systematically excludes radical challengers.

The global climate justice movement must inevitably confront the looming nightmare of COP21 in Paris in a few short months, and live with its outcome long after that. Paris will attract large numbers of climate activists, concerned citizens, good, bad, and indifferent NGOs, young people, elders, journalists, and communicators of every stripe. While few in the climate justice movement expect much of the fatally flawed and compromised climate negotiations that are supposed to finalize a “treaty” of some kind in Paris, it *is* a place where a good part

of the world's attention will be turned, and thus presents opportunities for increasing the momentum and strength of our beautiful movements.

Paris will also likely be the site of intense narrative and political contention over the value and outcome of the negotiations, since world leaders, especially from the global North, will be seeking to declare a victory on the basis of some common text they will do everything in their power to get their counterparts all over the world to sign onto.

The whole world will be watching (and actually, we have to make sure that as much of the world as possible brings its attention to the spectacle). Meanwhile, we must summon all the creative powers we have to gather a force capable of pulling the emergency brake on the out-of-control locomotive of the COP before it takes us over a cliff.

“Paris is Coming”

The Paris COP has been held up by the global one percent as the site for a climate treaty that will set us on the road to a definitive solution to the “problem” of climate change like some holy grail.

Those of us who have followed the COP over the years through the critical perspective of climate justice know better. In another strange parallel with *Game of Thrones*, the phrase “Winter is coming” heralds an apocalyptic never-ending winter where people must battle with zombie-like creatures risen from the dead, while ever since the 2011 COP17 in Durban, South Africa, negotiations have been set on a zombie-like track to catastrophic global warming where market solutions and national “pledges” have dominated the discourse. It has been plainer to see with every passing year that the treaty process will not close the emissions gap needed to keep the world under two degrees Celsius of warming (we can see what .9 of one degree is doing to the people of the planet right now so two degrees itself is not acceptable either). The negotiations will not produce the kind and degree of technology transfer and generous public money that would be needed to build the low-carbon infrastructure the global South needs to overcome the poverty that the same system increases every year. It will not fund the “loss and damage” mechanism that Philippine delegate Yeb

Saño pleaded and fasted for at [COP19 in Warsaw in 2013](#).⁷⁶ And it will not produce a legally binding treaty, the expressed goal of the negotiations for two decades. Even French President François Hollande, in a rare moment of candor, has [said](#) that a “miracle ... would be needed for a compromise to be reached on the future of limiting greenhouse gases that would involve both developed and developing countries”⁷⁷ (in some elite form of magical thinking he is able to overcome any cognitive dissonance by avowing that he does of course believe that such a miracle will occur).

Reality suggests that we are on course to lock in an inadequate, woefully underfunded, and criminal set of non-binding “pledges” whose deadlines are laughably too late already. And the governments of the world at the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Climate Change Convention will be asked to hail this as a huge victory for humanity, with the transparent lie that it sets us on a course for what is needed at some unspecified future date. For the well-respected newsletter ECO, what’s [needed](#) in Paris are “equity, trust, solidarity, and action.”⁷⁸ These are precisely the ingredients that will be missing.

Pat Mooney, in the aptly titled “[The Paris Climate Change Spectacular](#)” sees the writing on the wall:

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris in December will feature all the tightly choreographed production values of a Hollywood blockbuster. The cast will be huge: presidents and prime ministers at center stage, supported by thousands of extras, including protesters, riot police, and busloads of media. The script may still be under wraps, but the plot

⁷⁶ John Foran, “¡Volveremos! / we will return’: The state of play for the global climate justice movement,” pp. 454-477 in *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements* 6 (1) (May): (May, 2014), <http://www.interfacejournal.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Interface-6-1-Foran.pdf>

⁷⁷ Fiona Harvey, “François Hollande calls for ‘miracle’ climate agreement at Paris talks,” *Guardian* (May 20, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/may/20/francois-hollande-calls-for-miracle-climate-agreement-at-paris-talks>

⁷⁸ Climate Action Network, “Eco 3, ADP 2.10 Bonn September 2015 – Dollars Issue” (September 2, 2015), <http://eco.climatenetwork.org/adp2-10-eco3/>

has already leaked: This time, in sharp contrast to the failed negotiations in Copenhagen in 2009, the planet is going to win.

It is a seductive plot, but one that does not quite hold together. Goodwill and hard bargaining, the world will be told, paid off. Governments have agreed to voluntary reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions that will prevent the planet from heating more than 2° Celsius. Then, in a stunning *deus ex machina*, it will [be revealed](#)⁷⁹ that the world's largest fossil-fuel companies ... have agreed to bring net emissions to zero by 2100, by capturing carbon at the source, sucking it out of the atmosphere, and storing it underground. The planet will have been saved, and the economy will be free to flourish. Cue the music and roll the credits.

The trouble is that the script is fiction, not documentary. The technology required has yet to be invented, and bringing net emissions to zero simply [is not possible](#).⁸⁰ And, like a Hollywood production, the Paris conference's message will have been heavily influenced by those who have the most money....

The story that the Paris conference's producers will ask viewers to believe relies on technologies that are no more effective than smoke and mirrors. It is important that we learn to see past them. The curtain will rise on a set of false promises, and it will close with policies that can lead only to mayhem – unless the audience gets into the act.⁸¹

This is the narrative and the outcome that we have to stop by the time

⁷⁹ Tara Patel and Javier Blas, "Oil Giants Band Together to Add Voice to Climate Debate" (May 20, 2015), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-05-20/oil-giants-band-together-to-add-their-voice-to-climate-debate>

⁸⁰ Lili Fuhr and Niclas Hällström, "The Myth of Net-Zero Emissions" (December 8, 2014), <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/net-zero-emissions-not-enough-by-lili-fuhr-and-niclas-h-llstr-m-2014-12>

⁸¹ "The Paris Climate Change Spectacular," ETC Group (July 9, 2015), <http://www.etcgroup.org/content/paris-climate-change-spectacular>

Paris has come and gone.

How are we going to do it in little more than two months?

Here are a few of the ways that might open up a chance for a better outcome to occur: that **no** climate treaty is agreed to, because any treaty that could realistically (or even improbably) be agreed to in Paris will lock in already dangerous climate change and push us into the disaster zone.

Delegitimizing the COP: Scientifically, Politically, Economically, Morally – in a Word, as *Climate Injustice*

Part of our job is to counter the triumphalist narrative that has been scripted for Paris and described above. To this task we must bring all our ingenuity, knowledge, and imagination, and we must take advantage of the several fronts on which that narrative has gaping weaknesses.

In particular, we must be prepared to counter the claims that the outcome – “however flawed” – is the “first step” in some “process” that will ultimately “save the planet” when we already know that it will not set us on a path to the steep reductions required by science and the justice demanded by humanity (I realize of course that some readers and perhaps many in the wider climate movement think otherwise, and it is with them as well as those who agree that I hope further discussion will arise).

How do we counter the mainstream media discourse?

The radical implications of mainstream climate science need to be communicated

The world’s climate scientists gathered in Paris early in July for a four-day conference on “[Our Common Future under Climate Change](#)”⁸² which I attended and [reported](#)⁸³ on. One of the scariest things I registered there for the first time is that most of the scenarios for limiting warming to two degrees Celsius require *negative net emissions after 2050* – which means that they assume that we will pass the greenhouse gas

⁸² Our Common Future Under Climate Change, <http://www.commonfuture-paris2015.org/>

⁸³ John Foran, “An Ecosocialist at the ‘Our Common Future’ Conference” (July 10, 2015), <http://climateandcapitalism.com/2015/07/10/an-ecosocialist-at-the-our-common-future-conference/>

concentration levels that we have to stay under, and can only get back under them by relying on taking carbon *out* of the atmosphere after having put it there. Some see this happening through increasing the world's forests and biomass to absorb more carbon, others through technological fixes which aren't yet and may never be deployable, like carbon capture and storage (CCS). For others, including Kejun Jiang of China's Energy Research Center as well as host nation France, both CCS and nuclear power are part of the plan. The mainstream thinking is that even though we will exceed the planetary boundary on climate change, we can reel it back later, or maybe deploy some massive scale geo-engineering fix to carry on more or less with business-as-usual. To be fair, most of the people I listened to made it quite clear that continuing the path we are on is a recipe for catastrophe. So there seems to be a kind of cognitive disconnect between the science and the solutions to our planetary dilemmas. The same could be said of those who hold out some hope for the COP process as it is currently constructed.

As the clock ticks and the planet warms, leading climate scientists such as James Hansen continue to make heroic efforts to warn the world of the threat posed by climate change, going back, in Hansen's case, to the [testimony](#) he gave before Congress in 1988.⁸⁴ Hansen recently castigated the "reticence" of his colleagues in an [essay](#) that concludes "continued high emissions would result in multi-meter sea level rise this century and lock in continued ice sheet disintegration such that building cities or rebuilding cities on coast lines would become foolish."⁸⁵ Noting that the stated goal of two degrees Celsius is not a safe target, he concludes: "The bottom line message scientists should deliver to policymakers is that we have a global crisis, an emergency that calls for global cooperation to reduce emissions as rapidly as practical." But let's face the facts: despite a chorus of scientists shouting this very message from the rooftops, what is on offer in Paris has no prospect for deep emissions reductions. On the contrary, after twenty

⁸⁴ James Hansen, "The Greenhouse Effect: Impacts on Current Global Temperature and Regional Heat Waves" (June 23, 1988), http://climatechange.procon.org/sourcefiles/1988_Hansen_Senate_Testimony.pdf

⁸⁵ James Hansen, "Sea Level Disaster Ahead, but When?" (July 27, 2015), http://climateandcapitalism.com/2015/07/27/james-hansen-sea-level-disaster-ahead-but-when/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+climateandcapitalism%2FpEtD+%28Climate+and+Capitalism%29

years of COPs, global CO₂ emissions are up from 23.6 gigatons to 35.2 gigatons, some [49.6 percent higher](#) than they were when we started with COP1 in 1995.⁸⁶

The world needs to know the full truth about climate change, a truth which goes even deeper than the voluminous reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [the IPCC issues definitive state of the art summations of what is known on the topic every five or six years; AR5, the Fifth Assessment Report, was published in three volumes over the course of 2013 and 2014: one on [the physical science basis of climate change](#);⁸⁷ a second on [impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability](#);⁸⁸ and the third on [mitigation](#),⁸⁹ or scenarios for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions]. Kevin Anderson and Alice Bows, both of the Tyndall Centre in England, are two of the leading climate scientists in the world and have been personal heroes since I heard them speak in Warsaw at COP19 in 2013, where Anderson [said](#) “Today, after two decades of bluff and lies, the remaining 2°C budget demands revolutionary change to the political and economic hegemony.”⁹⁰ In Paris this

⁸⁶ European Commission, “CO₂ time series 1990-2013 per region/country,” (December, 2014), <http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/overview.php?v=CO2ts1990-2013>

⁸⁷ T.F. Stocker et al., editors, “Summary for Policymakers,” 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* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg1/WG1AR5_SPM_FINAL.pdf

⁸⁸ C.B. Field et al., editors, “Summary for policymakers,” pp. 1-32 in *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability, Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg2/ar5_wgII_spm_en.pdf

⁸⁹ O. Edenhofer, et al., editors, “Summary for policymakers, in *Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change, Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg3/ipcc_wg3_ar5_summary-for-policymakers.pdf

⁹⁰ Renfrey Clarke, “The New Revolutionaries: Climate Scientists Demand

July he said to me that the IPCC and UNFCCC which oversees the COP climate treaty negotiations were both stuck in a discourse where they cannot understand or act upon the implications of their own science. He was the one who pointed out that almost none of the 160 future climate scenarios considered in the AR5 were going to achieve less than two degrees without requiring negative emissions after 2050, which, even if it were somehow possible, would be too late. In fact, Anderson said, most of the less than two degree scenarios had emissions peaking by 2010, wryly noting that in addition to a *deus ex technologica* this would require time travel! Perhaps the [scientifically-challenged](#) cli-fi thriller *Interstellar*⁹¹ would be the best model for this scenario...

What lies behind global elites' willingness to overshoot the atmosphere's [carrying capacity](#)⁹² and so blatantly ignore the [precautionary principle](#)?⁹³ The fossil fuel industry's control of the process and the discourse, basically. And this brings us to the foundations of the problem, so pointedly put by Naomi Klein in the title of her invaluable book, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate*,⁹⁴ where she makes the case that we cannot get a grip on the defining existential challenge of our time without confronting global capitalism decisively. So, not only do widely available mainstream climate science and elementary political reasoning tell us we will need radical social change, we have to do it in a hurry, the sooner the better.

From a certain point of view, then, the COP is nothing more than a concentrated distillation of the system, not a distraction or a waste of our time. If the problem is capitalism, then you have to take the COP seriously on some level, and confront it.

Radical Change,” Climate and Capitalism (January 9, 2014), <http://climateandcapitalism.com/2014/01/09/climate-scientists-become-revolutionaries/>

⁹¹ “Interstellar (film)” Wikipedia (February 27, 2017), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:CiteThisPage?page=Interstellar_%28film%29

⁹² “Carrying Capacity” (2003), <http://www.sustainable-scale.org/ConceptualFramework/UnderstandingScale/MeasuringScale/CarryingCapacity.aspx>

⁹³ “Precautionary Principle, Understanding Science in Regulation” (2017), <http://sehn.org/precautionary-principle/>

⁹⁴ Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), https://ia802307.us.archive.org/34/items/pdfy-Skb-ch_k7psDm90Q/Naomi%20Klein%20-%20This%20Changes%20Everything.pdf

The political economy of climate change at the COP has to be discredited

Recently, Nobel laureate in economics Joseph Stiglitz [called](#) the upcoming Paris talks “a charade.”⁹⁵ If someone as visible as he believes this, maybe there *is* some hope of changing the narrative.

Along with bringing the radical implications of the science forward on every level and to every audience, we must undermine the political and economic distortions of the science into policy at the COP. Organizations such as [Corporate Europe Observatory](#),⁹⁶ [Friends of the Earth](#),⁹⁷ [Third World Network](#),⁹⁸ [350.org](#),⁹⁹ the [International Institute of Sustainable Development](#),¹⁰⁰ and many others have been doing so for some time now (my apologies if I have left your favorite out).

Since the UNFCCC doesn’t plan on releasing its own analysis of the INDCs [Intended Nationally Determined Contributions] received until fairly close to the start of the COP, we can seize the initiative by pre-empting that document with hard work now, such as that proposed by Sunita Narain of the Centre for Science and Environment in New Delhi and her colleagues. One preliminary analysis of the pledges made so far is by the Leave It in the Ground Initiative (LINGO) titled “The Paris Mirage – Reducing emissions while increasing them.” It concludes that “While many governments will pledge to reduce their countries’ CO2 emissions at COP21, paradoxically, at the same time, most are working to increase them.”¹⁰¹ Another place to look is Tom Athanasiou’s EcoEquity project. Many organizations, including the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance PACJA, Friends of the Earth International (FOEI), 350.org, Greenpeace, Oilwatch, and with “repre-

⁹⁵ Peter Coy, “Stiglitz Calls Climate Talks a ‘Charade,’ Pushes Plan C,” *Bloomberg* (July 9, 2015), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-07-10/stiglitz-calls-climate-talks-a-charade-pushes-plan-c>

⁹⁶ Corporate Europe Observatory, <https://corporateeurope.org/about-ceo>

⁹⁷ Friends of the Earth, <http://www.foe.org/about-us>

⁹⁸ Third World Network, <https://twnnews.net/>

⁹⁹ 350, <https://350.org/about/what-we-do/>

¹⁰⁰ International Institute of Sustainable Development Reporting Services, <http://enb.iisd.org/>

¹⁰¹ “The Paris Mirage - Reducing emissions while increasing them” (August, 2015), <http://leave-it-in-the-ground.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/The-Paris-Mirage-LINGO.pdf>

sentatives of Southern social movements of climate-impacted communities and of international faith, labor, development and environmental organizations,” joined together in July to form the People’s Test on Climate, which has issued a set of demands that they will fight for at the Paris COP; these include deep emissions cuts, climate finance, loss and damage, technology transfer, and real, not false, solutions – in a word, climate justice.¹⁰²

The best analysis we have at the moment may be that of the Climate Action Tracker consortium, whose September 1 Briefing makes clear which countries could be our allies inside the negotiations (an analysis I will turn to later) and who are the problem (hint: they tend to have two characteristics: they are wealthier and bigger emitters than most of the nations of the world).¹⁰³

Broadcasting far and wide the shortcomings, dead ends, false solutions, and faulty logic embedded in the [negotiating text](#)¹⁰⁴ is a necessary task for shifting the narrative playing field in advance of Paris. One innovative approach is that of the [Deconstructing Paris](#) group of law students and graduates in Wellington, New Zealand, whose aim is to “deconstruct the language that is being negotiated for the Conference of Parties in Paris in November/December 2015.... to highlight where countries are trying to insert ‘weasel words’ which allow them to avoid playing their role in preventing dangerous climate change.”¹⁰⁵

Let’s think about how to amplify all these voices as far and wide as possible as they make their findings known.

What Might We Do at the COP? The Spectrum of Inside-outside Strategies

¹⁰² “People’s Test on Climate in 2015,” <https://www.commondreams.org/peoples-test-climate-2015>

¹⁰³ Climate Action Tracker Consortium, “The CAT emissions gap – How close are INDCs to 2 and 1.5°C pathways?” (September 1, 2015), <http://climateactiontracker.org/publications/briefing/221/The-CAT-emissions-gap-How-close-are-INDCs-to-2-and-1.5C-pathways.html>

¹⁰⁴ UNFCCC, “Streamlined and consolidated text” (June 11, 2015), http://unfccc.int/files/bodies/awg/application/pdf/adp2-9_i3_11jun2015t1630_np.pdf

¹⁰⁵ Deconstructing Paris, <http://paristext2015.com/>

The climate justice movement has been trying to find promising strategies of repudiation of the UNFCCC and the Paris process and outcome, together with organizing to build numbers and turn the larger movements and NGOs in the more radical direction that the crisis we face requires of us. Hundreds of thousands of people will march; thousands more will likely pursue direct action in many forms and concrete acts; still others will create spaces to articulate and build post-Paris visions of climate justice; and many of us will be communicating with our frontlines back home. What follows are just a few of the possibilities for building movements for climate justice around and in Paris.

Climate Justice: the inside game

For years, scores of dedicated activist organizations and committed NGOs have tried to influence or protest the discourse and outcomes of successive COPs by maintaining a presence as civil society delegates on the inside. At COP after COP we have seen inventive, symbolic actions and a variety of practical and visionary side events, as well as press conferences and counter-narratives sent into global webspaces. The Climate Action Network's publication [ECO](#),¹⁰⁶ the International Institute for Sustainable Development's [Earth Negotiations Bulletin](#),¹⁰⁷ the reports done by the [Third World Network](#),¹⁰⁸ and the broadcasts of [Democracy Now!](#)¹⁰⁹ have been invaluable sources for what happens at the COPs, and will all certainly be upping their efforts in Paris. For those who will not be present, as well as those inside the negotiating halls and outside on the streets, these are indispensable resources for tracking and reacting to events in close to real time.

The global youth climate justice movement will no doubt be using both inside and outside tactics to build their own capacity while con-

¹⁰⁶ Climate Network, "UN Lima Climate Change Conference - December 2014 - COP 20/CMP 10" (December 2014), <http://www.climate-network.org/event/un-lima-climate-change-conference-december-2014-cop-20cmp-10>

¹⁰⁷ IISD Reporting Services, "Lima Climate Change Conference- December 2014" (December 12, 2014), <http://enb.iisd.org/climate/cop20/enb/>

¹⁰⁸ Third World Network, <http://twm.my/>

¹⁰⁹ "Lima Climate Summit 2014" *Democracy Now!* (December), https://www.democracynow.org/topics/lima_climate_summit_2014

tinuing to make crucial contributions to the broader global climate justice movement. I have seen the radicalizing potential and the power of young activists at the last four COPs, compiling a set of interviews for an [e-book](#),¹¹⁰ observing their creative actions, holding [press conferences](#)¹¹¹ with them, and cheering them on. They will be one of the most numerous and diverse sectors of civil society inside COP21.

Mithika Mwenda, Secretary General of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance network of more than one thousand organizations, told us in July that he holds no hope for the negotiations, but that PACJA will insist, both inside and outside the negotiations, on climate justice for the massive frontline of Africa. Dozens of organizations will be doing the same in various ways, from FOEI to CAN, Greenpeace to 350.org, the Sierra Club to Idle No More.

I have myself observed and participated in these efforts since Durban and tried to amplify their messages to the world. In 2011, for example, Anjali Appadurai electrified the COP on the final day in Durban with a message in which she [asked](#) “Where is the courage in these rooms? Now is not the time for incremental action. In the long run, these will be seen as the defining moments of an era in which narrow self-interest prevailed over science, reason and common compassion.”¹¹² This critique continues to ring true today and will remain just as apt a question to pose in Paris.

One of the most striking [pun unavoidable] actions in the history of these civil society efforts was the large walkout that took place just before the close of COP19 in Warsaw in 2013. Seeing no meaningful progress in the talks, finding themselves excluded from the process on many levels, and witnessing the blatant corporate presence – even sponsorship – at the meetings, hundreds of activists staged a walkout

¹¹⁰ John Foran, Summer Gray, and Corrie Grosse, editors, *At the COP: Global Climate Justice Youth Speak Out* (2014), 2014file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/foran-ellis-and-gray-2014-at-the-cop.pdf

¹¹¹ “University of California: WHAT NOW for Climate Justice? - Youth Movements from Lima to Paris” (December 2, 2014), <https://un-fccc6.meta-fusion.com/cop20/events/2014-12-02-17-00-university-of-california-what-now-for-climate-justice-youth-movements-from-lima-to-paris>

¹¹² “‘Get It Done’: Urging Climate Justice, Youth Delegate Anjali Appadurai Mic Checks U.N. Summit,” *Democracy Now!* (December 9, 2011), https://www.democracynow.org/2011/12/9/get_it_done_urgening_climate_justice

from the National Stadium, most of them vowing not to set foot in it again. By any reckoning, a significant portion of all civil society delegates to COP19 simply walked out. The mood was defiant; the white shirts said “Polluters talk, we walk!” and on their backs, “Volveremos!” – “We will be back!” The messages were clear, passing judgment on the complete inability of the UNFCCC to advance the treaty process at COP19, and signaling that this walkout was tactical, that the movement would return, with renewed force, to the 2014 COP20 in Lima, Peru, and to Paris in 2015. My colleagues at the Climate Justice Project, Summer Gray and Corrie Ellis made a video that captures the elevated mood of the participants as they turned their backs on the Warsaw COP.¹¹³ Despite its symbolic success, however, the great civil society walkout at Warsaw must be seen for what it was: a major event and statement laid down by a movement that by its own admission is still too small to do what it needs and wants to accomplish – the herculean feat of somehow making the outcome of the negotiations reflect the global demand for climate justice.

Marching in numbers to change the world

Most of the people who come to Paris to bear witness will be on the outside of the COP space, of course, and the various parts of the climate movement itself have proposed a variety of approaches. Some will join with Avaaz and its NGO allies to stage a massive march on the model of the great People’s Climate March of September 2014 before the COP begins, with the aim of influencing the negotiations in the direction of something that can lay the foundations to somehow save the planet.¹¹⁴ They intend to take the rhetoric of global leaders and turn it into a weapon with which to shame or encourage them into doing the right thing.

Some, such as Patrick Bond, have already questioned the wisdom

¹¹³ Summer Gray, “COP19 Walk Out: Voices of the Climate Justice Movement” (November 21, 2013),

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbtdXFeUXk&feature=youtu.be>

¹¹⁴ Ricken Patel, “People’s Climate March: the revolution starts here” (July 25, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jul/29/peoples-climate-march-the-revolution-starts-here>

of this strategy in the context of Avaaz's [praise](#)¹¹⁵ in July for the G7's [statement](#)¹¹⁶ on reducing emissions to zero by 2100: "Avaaz's ... premature celebration is *dangerous*. After all, the conservative (pro-market pro-insiderism anti-activism) wing of 'climate action' politics – as distinct from climate *justice* advocacy – is gaming us all now, arguing that the Paris COP21 can result in a victory. Avaaz just amped up that narrative."¹¹⁷

A more focused version of this people power approach is that of Yeb Saño, inspired like millions of others by Pope Francis's bracing climate encyclical [Laudato Si'](#).¹¹⁸ Saño has been helping to build the [People's Pilgrimage](#),¹¹⁹ which, like the encyclical itself, is open to people of all faiths (including the climate justice faith). As he [said](#) "Paris is not our destination. Our real destination will be the hearts and minds of people, so our journey continues even after Paris."¹²⁰

It is crucial to see that these marches are not in competition with other activities in some kind of mutually exclusive zero sum game. Movements appeal to new members in a variety of ways, and different people respond to different messages. Forging a truly broad and deep climate justice movement will require moving more and more people into and through climate action to climate justice, and these marches can be (literally) steps in that direction.

¹¹⁵ Avaaz, "From G7 to Paris: Goodbye Fossil Fuels," https://secure.avaaz.org/en/paris_here_we_come/

¹¹⁶ Kate Connolly, "G7 leaders agree to phase out fossil fuel use by end of century" (June 8, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/08/g7-leaders-agree-phase-out-fossil-fuel-use-end-of-century>

¹¹⁷ Patrick Bond, "Avaaz's Climate Vanity" (June 17, 2015), <http://triplecrisis.com/avaazs-climate-vanity/a>

¹¹⁸ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* (Vatican Press, 2015), http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf

¹¹⁹ The People's Pilgrimage, <http://peoplespilgrimage.org/about.html>

¹²⁰ Megan Rowling, "Yeb Sano kicks off 6-month climate pilgrimage as faith groups seek boost from Pope" (June 10, 2015), <http://www.interaksyon.com/article/112113/yeb-sano-kicks-off-6-month-climate-pilgrimage-as-faith-groups-seek-boost-from-pope>



Yeb Saño in Delhi, August 2015: “In the face of climate change and all the adversity we have to face in this world, this is not just a journey. It is a battle – one that we cannot afford to lose.”¹²¹

Creating a People’s Space

The movements have also sought to create strong counter-spaces on the occasions of the COP meetings, and the impact of these projects too on countless activists would be hard to overestimate.

Copenhagen’s [Klimaforum](#)¹²² at COP15 in 2009 may have been the biggest and most consequential of these happenings. My own formation as a climate activist was indelibly shaped by attending some remarkable events. I laughed when Naomi Klein presented the “[Angry Mermaid](#)” awards to the big fossil fuel industries and lobbyists and the politicians that do their bidding in exchange for money.¹²³ I watched with admiring amusement when the somewhat uncharismatic but lovable Bill McKibben had to hold the crowd for an indefinite period while we waited for the arrival of an important guest, who turned out

¹²¹ Source for photo and caption: Yeb Saño, “In the Footsteps of Gandhi” (August 24, 2015), <http://peoplespilgrimage.org/evoke/blog/in-the-footsteps-of-gandhi/view>

¹²² Wikipedia, “Klimaforum09” (March 4, 2017), <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klimaforum09>

¹²³ “Naomi Klein gives ‘Angry Mermaid Award’ in Copenhagen” (December 15, 2009), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ge864JnnVm0>

to be [Mohamed Nasheed](#), the president of the Maldives whose passion for climate justice lifted us all.¹²⁴ The fact that he had come straight from the airport to talk to *us* – the movement – rather than going to his hotel or the negotiating halls spoke volumes about the significance of what we were doing.

In Lima in December 2014 a remarkable experiment was the CasActiva temporary convergence space organized in large part by the Bolivian-Peruvian group [TierrActiva](#).¹²⁵ This was a smaller, more youth-directed and direct action-centered counterspace where activists such as [Majandra Acha](#),¹²⁶ [Juan Soriano](#),¹²⁷ [Nicky Scordellis](#),¹²⁸ and many others met up to engage in group projects and life-affirming exchanges. This had happened in Warsaw, too, a year earlier, where the walkout was largely conceived in such a space.

In Paris, the network of French and global organizers who have come together as [Coalition Climat21](#) will build on these achievements and try to do even more to enable us to share insights, teach skills, strengthen bonds, plan actions, and envision futures across a variety of venues. One of these will be a two-day Citizen Climate Summit on December 5 and 6, in Montreuil, a working-class neighborhood of Paris. In the words of the organizers of the Coalition Climat21, this will be a place “to put forward solutions tackling climate change. Let’s show decision-makers that these solutions already exist and are building a better world: with more justice, more solidarity, more happiness! During the Citizen Climate Summit you will also have the opportunity

¹²⁴ Mat McDermott, “Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed is an Eco-Rock Star - Brings Down the House in Copenhagen” (December 14, 2009), <https://www.treehugger.com/corporate-responsibility/maldives-president-mohamed-nasheed-is-an-eco-rock-star-brings-down-the-house-in-copenhagen.html>

¹²⁵ “Tierra Activa” <https://www.facebook.com/tierra.activa>

¹²⁶ Global Call for Climate Action, “COP20: TierraActiva call on international activists to join Lima climate march” (December 4, 2014), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAF46mLioM0>

¹²⁷ Global Call for Climate Action, “COP20: Juan Carlos Soriano, CasActiva & 350.org on the Lima climate march” (December 4, 2014), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1zMtExhYqk>

¹²⁸ La Pública, “#CasActiva un espacio de encuentro en la #cumbredelospueblos” (December 9, 2014), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvV70thaKXo>

to pay a visit to the World Village of Alternatives to learn more on concrete alternative solutions to fight against climate change.... Putting in common our experience, analyses, struggles, and hopes will enable us to anchor our movement for the long-term.”¹²⁹

This will be followed between December 7 and 11 at the Climate Action Zone (ZAC) at the CENTQUATRE-PARIS in the northern part of Paris, where “All people are welcome – from the activists who will come from every corner of the world to local French high school students. Here one can get basic information on the climate crisis and the UN negotiations, as well as meet with others to share information, create, and organize.” During the “crunch time” of the second week of the COP when the negotiations will likely be floundering, participants in the Climate Action Zone will generate plans for their movements’ actions and messages at the end of the COP on Saturday, December 12, thereby creating the chance to “have the final word” on COP21.

A parallel initiative is the Climate Games the latest brainwave of the Laboratory of Insurrectional Imagination (le Labofii), which has issued a call for a series of “hackathons,” to “bring artists, activists, designers, scientists, hackers, architects, gamers, performers and other citizens together to conceptualise, and build and rehearse effective new tools and tactics of resistance to be used during the COP21.”¹³⁰ The idea of staging Climate Games was pioneered by [GroenFront](#)¹³¹ in Amsterdam in the summer of 2014, who will work with the Labofii to stage the 2015 games in Paris. Teams of activists will form to engage in “a mass participation transmedia action framework that merges the street, disobedient bodies and cyberspace, and turns the city into a total resistance performance event open to all.”

A People’s Climate Strike to build a movement with teeth

Another intriguing and promising new strategy is to build support for a “global climate strike” in the run-up to, during, and after the COP.

¹²⁹ Coalition Climat 21, <http://coalitionclimat21.org/en>

¹³⁰ The Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination, <http://www.labofii.net/>. I can no longer find the quote on the website.

¹³¹ “GroenFront!” Wikipedia, <https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/GroenFront%21>

This idea has been put forward by the [Global Climate Convergence](#),¹³² a coalition of US-based activists involved with the Green Party, 350.org locals, [System Change Not Climate Change](#),¹³³ and others – the same group who organized two days of workshops and events around the New York City People’s Climate March and the next day’s [Flood Wall Street](#)¹³⁴ action in September 2014. As Ben Manski and Jill Stein [explain](#): “What makes a strike different from mere protest? A strike is an economic stoppage. A strike does not plead. It does not demand. It simply *does*.”¹³⁵

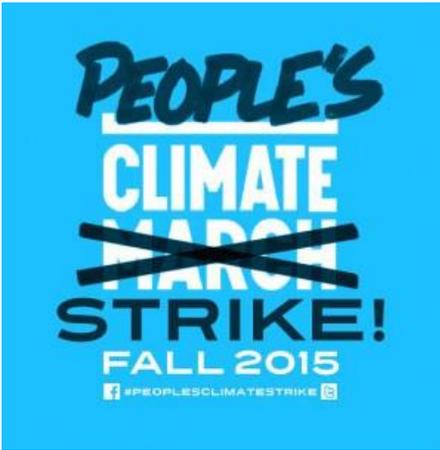


Image: <http://globalclimateconvergence.org/2015/07/peoples-climate-strike-a-call-to-action/>

At this point, the plan is for decentralized actions to occur around the world starting on November 26 just before the COP starts and continuing through December 12, to coincide with the final actions planned in Paris. “A People’s Climate Strike is being planned – to bring the engines of economic and ecological destruction to a grinding halt, demonstrate our growing power, and promote community-controlled,

¹³² Global Climate Convergence, <http://globalclimateconvergence.org/>

¹³³ System Change not Climate Change, <http://systemchangenotclimatechange.org/>

¹³⁴ #FloodWallStreet, <http://floodwallstreet.net/>

¹³⁵ Ben Manski and Jill Stein, “The Global Climate Strike: Why We Can’t Wait” (September 24, 2014), <https://popularresistance.org/the-global-climate-strike-why-we-cant-wait/>

just, and green alternatives. It will take place in cities and villages across the globe in solidarity with the Paris protests against the final UN Climate Summit sell out this December, 2015. The People's Climate Strike will move us from the symbolism of marches towards the assertion of power in the streets. We will begin to develop a tool that has been essential for democratic social change throughout history.”

Another form of the strike calls on students (including children) to skip classes or turn their schools into sites of climate action on November 30, the day the COP opens.

**Calling students around the World for
a global CLIMATE STRIKE
on November 30, 2015**

Are you still going to school—doing your homework—while
they are **burning our future?**

Every day, governments and companies are extracting and burning
more and more fossil fuels. With them, *the future of our planet is also
going up in smoke.*

For the last 25 years, the older generations have been negotiating to
stop this. *Their outcomes: broken promises.* They promised to cut
CO₂ emissions **but they have not done their homework.** Instead, they
keep digging and drilling for more coal, oil and gas.

We are not going to sit back and watch this any longer!
Climate Strike is a wake-up call to our generation.
We will be at least a million students doing climate actions together!

Register at climatestrike.net and become a part of Climate Strike!

We need your voices, hands, hearts and smarts!

- ★ Let's keep the fossil fuels in the ground
- ★ Let's make the transition to 100% clean energy
- ★ Let's help climate refugees

*We cannot wait any longer.
It's our time to create history!*

**Climate
strike** 
is ON 

Image: <http://climatestrike.net/>

Could We “Seattle” the COP?

The idea of “Seattle-ing” a COP was first raised by legendary South

African activist and poet Dennis Brutus for COP15 in Copenhagen 2009, shortly before his death.¹³⁶ Back in March, another South African, Patrick Bond, [wrote](#) from a meeting of members of the movements at the World Social Forum in Tunis: “If you are serious about climate justice, the message from these [past] COP experiences is unmistakable. Going inside is suicide.”¹³⁷ He and others raised the possibility that we might be able to “Seattle Paris,” as suggested by Canadian author and activist [Pat Mooney](#) of [etc](#):¹³⁸ “It should start like New York [where 400,000 marched together in September 2014] and end like Seattle [where the global justice movement shut down the meetings of the WTO in December 1999]. Shut the thing down!”¹³⁹

On Saturday, December 12, many activists will converge in the streets of Paris under the rubric of a Blockadia-style series of actions that have yet to be determined but about which discussions are now being held. As the Coalition Climat21 [website](#) puts it: “We do not want to remain mere spectators of the end of the UN conference, patiently awaiting the verdict of the negotiations! We will show that the movement for climate justice possesses the energy and determination to impose its solutions, and to grow even stronger in 2016!”¹⁴⁰ One discussion document that is circulating called “Redlines Are Not For Crossing” notes:

Thousands of people are estimated to take part in D12, the December 12th mass action during the last moments of the COP. Following the success of Ende Gelände, the open cast coal mine shut down in August, D12 could well be the world’s biggest act of disobedience for climate justice. The inevitable bad agreement will be a death sentence for the poor and the planet and a blessing for corporations, but world leaders will have

¹³⁶ Jess Worth, “In our hands” (December 1, 2009), <https://newint.org/features/2009/12/01/keynote-copenhagen/>

¹³⁷ Patrick Bond, “Climate Movements Across Movements” (March 26, 2015), <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/Climate-Movement-Across-Movements-20150326-0035.html>

¹³⁸ etc Group, <http://www.etcgroup.org/>

¹³⁹ “The Paris Climate Change Spectacular,” ETC Group (July 9, 2015), <http://www.etcgroup.org/content/paris-climate-change-spectacular>

¹⁴⁰ Coalition Climat 21, <http://coalitionclimat21.org/en>

no problem pretending that it is a success and the “best” they could do. We cannot let such a deal pass unchallenged. The call for D12 is that “We (the movements) will have the last word” but the actions which accompany “the last word” cannot simply become a footnote to the main story.

John Jordan, who has written a moving [account](#) of the Ende Gelände [“Here and No Further”] action mentioned above, writes:

IMAGINE: When the summit inevitably crosses these red lines and just as the final UN plenary begins – the church bells, synagogues, minarets and civil defense sirens blast across Paris. This is the sign for the start of the action, people begin encircling the summit.

Three circles are made. On the inside of the Le Bourget conference center, hundreds of civil society NGOs, scientists and defecting delegates hold hands and refuse to let the delegations leave. Outside a middle ring of people surround the conference center, their backs turned towards it. Some have come with wind turbines, solar panels, bikes and mobile gardens, others are setting up tents “Occupy” style, hundreds of chairs re-appropriated from banks funding climate crimes form an alternative assembly as a barricade, farmers have driven tractors into place together with the frontline communities from la ZAD to the Pacific islands, everyone is calm and determined but refuses to be moved. If country representatives want to leave Le Bourget, then it will be by walking over the bodies of the very people they claim to represent.

Transport hubs and other roads that would enable delegates to leave Paris are also being blocked by smaller affinity groups; and finally an outer ring of tens of thousands, unable to come to Paris, take solidarity Blockadia actions in their own territories. The “red lines” meme appears everywhere, drawn across train tracks carrying coal, stretched across the entrances of institutions that refused to divest, marking the fields

were fracking rigs are planned.

The mass act of legitimate disobedience fills the front pages and the airwaves, the social media sphere buzzes, washing away the world governments' greenwash with images of creative resistance, no one believes that a bad deal is a good deal anymore, everyone sees it for what it is – the ultimate false solution. Plans for a mass shut down of “carbon bombs” across the world in the spring of 2016 are announced as the blockades are lifted. Rather than a Copenhagen hangover, we return from Paris filled with confidence and a much clearer path emerges towards climate justice in the months and years ahead.¹⁴¹

Stay tuned for the development of this set of possibilities at the Coalition Climat21 [website](#),¹⁴² whose final form will take shape in further discussions over the course of the fall, and can only fully emerge as events themselves unfold. What is clear to me is that history will be made in the streets of Paris on that day.



Source: <http://coalitionclimat21.org/en>

¹⁴¹ The Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination, “DRAWING A LINE IN THE SAND: THE MOVEMENT VICTORY AT ENDE GELÄNDE OPENS UP THE ROAD OF DISOBEDIENCE FOR PARIS” (August 23, 2015), <https://labofii.wordpress.com/2015/08/23/drawing-a-line-in-the-sand-the-movement-victory-at-ende-gelände-opens-up-the-road-of-disobedience-for-paris/>

¹⁴² Coalition Climat 21, <http://coalitionclimat21.org/en>

Just Say “NO” to the COP!

With people everywhere who are truly concerned about the planet’s future we need to discredit the COP and not let it declare victory. But is there any chance of it actually ending as an unmistakable failure that even world leaders and the global media would be unable to deny?

COP21 is the best chance for all those countries (and there are many) who will get very little out of the treaty on the table to use their veto and say “No, not without \$100 billion or more annually in new money (not aid that has already been committed or loans with the usual awful conditions) for the Green Climate Fund, not without equally substantial funding for Loss and Damage, not without free technology transfer, not without closing the huge emissions gap to stay under 1.5 degrees so our populations don’t starve, drown, die of thirst, or get killed in floods, not without a treaty that is legally binding, and much more.”

These are merely, after all, the promises made in Copenhagen, Durban, Warsaw, and Lima, none of which look likely to remain standing when the Paris outcome is announced on December 11 (or 12 or 13).

Can we not imagine a different, more unscripted ending to COP21, even a complete collapse, as with the WTO in Seattle, with NO possibility of declaring the outcome a success?

Pablo Solón has already floated this idea, [noting](#) that “A bad deal in Paris will lock in catastrophic consequences for the future of the planet and humanity.”¹⁴³ In March at a meeting of climate activists at the World Social Forum, he said: “I think we need a clearer narrative: let’s stop an agreement that’s going to burn the climate. We already know that agreement exists. If China peaks emissions only by 2030 or if we accept Obama’s offer to China, we all burn. The Paris agreement will be worse than the draft we’ve seen. The point is not to put pressure for something better. It’s to stop a bad deal. We are against carbon markets, geoengineering and the emissions targets.”

Two diametrically opposite and legitimate objections may be made

¹⁴³ Pablo Solón, “Behind the climate negotiating text for COP21” (March 12, 2015), <http://focusweb.org/content/behind-climate-negotiating-text-cop21>

to the “No” argument: the first is that it may not be possible to achieve it, as Patrick Bond has cautioned in one of the best [analyses](#) of movement options to date, while the second is that it would be a mistake in the first place to prefer no agreement or condemn in advance the agreement that we might be able to get in Paris, which may after all be a step on the road to something better, as Avaaz hopes.¹⁴⁴ I have tried to address each of these already, and I welcome more discussion of the options, but it should be clear that at this point, like Pablo Solón and Patrick Bond, I believe that the movement should investigate ways to bring about such an outcome.

Blocking something bad – until something better can be constructed – can be a recipe for climate justice. When the Keystone pipeline, which looked sure to be approved when it first surfaced early in Barack Obama’s first term was opposed by a handful of activists, this delayed approval until facts on the ground changed enough for it to be almost inconceivable today: a slam-dunk turned into a very likely “no,” and built a movement in the process. Why should we aim for anything less?

Next Steps: Where Can We Go Right Now?

Who could be our allies inside the negotiations? Which countries might stand up as strongly as Bolivia did in Cancún in 2010, or as individual leaders and negotiators from the Maldives, Sudan, or the Philippines have done in the past? Clearly, an important task is to know enough about each country’s and each bloc of countries’ positions on the key issues, and who will be negotiating for each. Another key task will be to find ways to communicate and dialogue with these potential allies (assuming they exist) before and during the COP.

There are various candidates for stronger stands to be taken in this COP. In May, the Climate Vulnerable Forum – twenty countries in front-line positions as climate change advances – issued a [statement](#) that “Two Degrees Celsius is Inadequate.”¹⁴⁵ These countries include

¹⁴⁴ Patrick Bond, “Can Climate Activists’ ‘Movement Below’ Transcend Negotiators’ ‘Paralysis Above?’” (2015), <http://jwsr.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/jwsr/article/view/578/651>

¹⁴⁵ Climate Vulnerable Forum, “20 Nations Call to Strengthen 2 Degrees

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Kiribati, Madagascar, Maldives, Nepal, the Philippines, Rwanda, Santa Lucia, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Vietnam. The coastal nation of Belize has joined Aruba, Bahamas, Grenada, and six other islands (not all are countries) who have each [pledged](#) to go to one hundred percent renewable energy; Belize will do this by 2020.¹⁴⁶

A 2012 [document](#) prepared for the Rio+20 debacle, “The Peoples’ Sustainability Treaty On Transitioning to a Zero Fossil Fuels World,” notes: “There are champions emerging, such as the governments of Bhutan, Samoa, Maldives, Costa Rica, Ethiopia and Denmark who have set themselves ‘carbon neutrality’ or zero fossils targets.”¹⁴⁷

More recently, in a study of the formal pledges made to date the Climate Action Tracker Consortium’s [August Briefing](#) points out that AOSIS, the 44-member strong Alliance of Small Island States, has endorsed keeping warming under the safer, if more difficult limit of 1.5 degrees Celsius, and has called on the nations of the world to be fully de-carbonized by 2050.¹⁴⁸ The 48-member Least Developed Countries bloc issued a statement in February calling for “emissions peaking for developed countries in 2015, with an aim of net zero emissions by 2050 in the context of equitable access to sustainable development.”

With a little bit of imagination and respect (ok, leavened by a healthy dose of “hopeful” thinking) other possibilities might include Germany, Bolivia, Cuba, Venezuela, Ecuador, Mexico, and Norway – none of whom, of course, are paragons of actualized climate justice as of yet – and others whom we must identify and seriously consider as

Climate Goal” (May 1, 2015), <http://www.thecvf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/cvfpresrelease010515.pdf>

¹⁴⁶ Anastasia Pantisios, “Belize Joins Ten Island Challenge to Transition to 100% Renewable Energy” (July 9, 2015), <http://www.ecowatch.com/belize-joins-ten-island-challenge-to-transition-to-100-renewable-energy-1882065330.html>

¹⁴⁷ “Peoples’ Sustainability Treaty On Transitioning to a Zero Fossil Fuels World,” Peoples’ Sustainability Treaties (June, 2012), <https://sustainabilitytreaties.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/peoples-sustainability-treaty-on-transitioning-to-a-zero-fossil-fuel-world-draft-for-rio20.pdf>

¹⁴⁸ Carbon Action Tracker, <http://climateactiontracker.org/>. The link to this data, also for the quote that follows, can no longer be found.

potential voices willing to say no in the name of climate justice, inter-generational equity, common but differentiated responsibility, and plain human common sense inside the negotiations.

The most hopeful sign to date is the just concluded Africa Climate Talks in Tanzania, where negotiators met civil society activists, including Patrick Bond, who argued for their joint collaboration, as [reported](#) in a PANA Press account:

Once it is clear that a deal, which will be nowhere near to 2 degrees Celsius will be adopted, “this is when we need African societies to demand that they don’t negotiate further”, Bond said, in reference to the global agreement on the emission reduction required to control global temperature increases to 2 degrees Celsius by 2050.

All evidence indicates, however, that for Africa and the Small Island Developing States, temperature increases above 1.5 degrees Celsius are already catastrophic.

“If they (African negotiators and the civil society) unite and decide to walk out, they will deny consensus and then force the next COP (Conference of Parties) which is going to be in Africa, Morocco in 2016, to then change the power balance in the meantime,” Bond stated.¹⁴⁹

Is this a pipedream? Possibly. Maybe probably. But what have we got to lose from trying this approach? And what might be gained for the planet if an opening in the global climate talks is somehow breached?

Let’s remember that the great civil society walkout in Warsaw was preceded two days earlier by a walkout of representatives of 133 countries of the global South over the non-inclusion of loss and damage at that point in the negotiations. Venezuelan negotiator Claudia Salerno [explained](#) why they walked out: “When you see developed countries

¹⁴⁹ “Tanzania: African climate negotiators urged to employ WTO Seattle strategy” Panapress (September 5, 2015), <http://www.panapress.com/Tanzania--African-climate-negotiators-urged-to-employ-WTO-Seattle-strategy--15-630452044-27-lang2-index.html>

being so bold to tell you that they are not even considering reducing their emissions, but they are not even considering paying for the costs that those inactions have in the life of others, that is really rude and hard to handle it politically, that we are heading to a point in which countries are not ready to take responsibility for their acts. And in this case, even more pathetic, they are not wanting to be hold responsible for their inaction and their lack of responsibility with humanity and the future generations.”¹⁵⁰

For those who agree, the next questions are: How do we do that? How do we communicate this? With whom do we work? Who is already working toward this end?

What could we do after Paris?

A “No” in Paris would compel the world’s governments to come back and negotiate seriously lest they be the ones condemned in global opinion for lacking the courage to take action for the common future of humanity.

Surely we will also need to figure out ways to elect governments that would go to the COP with ambition, wherever that is possible (and we should be attempting to go beyond the possible, as radicals do all the time). It’s high time for a new UNFCCC altogether – let’s imagine what it would look like and how to make it happen.

**LET'S MOBILIZE
AGAINST
CLIMATE CHANGE
THROUGHOUT 2015**

Source: <http://coalitionclimat21.org/en>

¹⁵⁰ Claudia Salerno, “As Poor Countries Walk Out of Climate Talks, Venezuela Calls on Industrial Nations to Take Action,” *Democracy Now!* (November 20, 2013), https://www.democracynow.org/2013/11/20/as_poor_countries_walk_out_of

Surely we will also need to figure out ways to elect governments that would go to the COP with ambition, wherever that is possible (and we should be attempting to go beyond the possible, as radicals do all the time). It's high time for a new UNFCCC altogether – let's imagine what it would look like and how to make it happen.

Maybe it will take some new combination of radical social movements and a hitherto unknown, more horizontal kind of political party to bring about deep transformation of our societies in the direction of economic equality, climate justice, and participatory democracy. Determined movements can force parties to make good on their promises, and radical governments must draw their strength and legitimacy from uncompromising movements in order to stand up against the forces that will seek to destroy us all. There is no easy path, as Syriza proved in Greece, but new paths have ways of opening up to those who dare to seek them. There have been [hints](#) of this in the past,¹⁵¹ and this possibility remains alive in the present, and always in the future.

I continue to believe that many approaches hold promise. Our movements – if they are real – can't be competing with each other. They *must* learn to work together, despite their diversity of tactics, and yes, even of strategies. For [John Jordan](#), “Only a broad space of disobedience where we do not condemn the actions of others will keep us strong. We must hold ourselves together in unity and diversity, just like the rich networks that make up the resilient ecosystems we are protecting.”¹⁵² Perhaps we should be trying to identify and combine the multiple strategies that give us the best chances of creating “tipping points” of our own for climate justice. As Cam Fenton has recently put it in an [essay](#) that should be widely read: “In the end, if we are constantly building alignment along fault lines, any big tent will be

¹⁵¹ John Foran, “Beyond Insurgency to Radical Social Change: The New Situation,” *Studies in Social Justice* 8 (4) (2014): 5-25, <https://brock.scholarportal.info/journals/index.php/SSJ/article/view/1036/1006>

¹⁵² The Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination, “DRAWING A LINE IN THE SAND: THE MOVEMENT VICTORY AT ENDE GELÄNDE OPENS UP THE ROAD OF DISOBEDIENCE FOR PARIS” (August 23, 2015), <https://labofii.wordpress.com/2015/08/23/drawing-a-line-in-the-sand-the-movement-victory-at-ende-gelände-opens-up-the-road-of-disobedience-for-paris/>

stronger and more valuable in the long run. After all, fault lines are the points that have raised mountains, carved shorelines and shaken the earth with powerful quakes.”¹⁵³

I dream of radical climate action of the kind needed to address the interlocking crises of capitalist globalization, militarism and violence, and the disillusionment of so many people with politics as usual. To deal with simultaneous social, economic, and political crises while managing climate change as best we can requires deep systemic change and a movement that can create a non-linear trajectory into the future. To weather this storm, we will need both the spirit of [Blockadia](#) – that “vast but interwoven web of campaigns standing up against the fossil fuel industry”¹⁵⁴ and [Alternatiba](#)¹⁵⁵ – the web of sustainable, life-affirming alternatives to the death spiral of fossil-fueled neoliberal capitalism.

The climate justice movement may just have a world-historical role to play in bringing these new things into the world.

*For a Just Climate Future, **No** Agreement in Paris!*

All are invited to join in this conversation at [The Road to Paris](#) website.¹⁵⁶



¹⁵³ Cam Fenton, “WHY THE CLIMATE MOVEMENT NEEDS TO MOVE BEYOND THE ‘BIG TENT’” (September 8, 2015), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-09-08/why-the-climate-movement-needs-to-move-beyond-the-big-tent/>

¹⁵⁴ Jesse Fruhwirth and Melanie Jae Martin, “Welcome to Blockadia!” (January 15, 2013), <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/13927-welcome-to-blockadia>

¹⁵⁵ Alternatiba, <https://alternatiba.eu/en/>

¹⁵⁶ Paris Climate Justice, <http://www.parisclimatejustice.org/>

Acknowledgements: I'd like to thank Patrick Bond, Skye Bougty-Marshall, Ramona Foran, Michael Gasser, Stephen Leahy, Theo LeQuesne, Brian Tokar, Richard Widick, Emily Williams, and others who have lovingly provided helpful comments, counterarguments, and corrections to earlier drafts.

A HISTORY OF THE CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS IN SIX VIDEOS

November 10, 2015

A few days ago, the topic for my undergraduate class, *Earth in Crisis*, taught to 150 students, half in Sociology and half in Environmental Studies at UC Santa Barbara, was “What a COP is *Really* Like, and What the Treaty Looks Like.”

We never got to looking at the [current treaty text](#)¹⁵⁷ in our seventy-five minute session, but there’s no shame in that, as neither did the 190-plus negotiators during last week’s Bonn intersessional, and they had five full days.

I was going to start with Copenhagen, which I attended for five days on the outside, learning about climate justice for the first time in the Klimaforum at the knees of [Naomi Klein](#),¹⁵⁸ [Bill McKibben](#),¹⁵⁹ and [Mohamed Nasheed](#).¹⁶⁰ I also witnessed the “Battle of Copenhagen” unfold in the snow outside the Bella Center where a march of 4,000 activists tried to meet up with delegated members of civil society and the handful of progressive negotiators like Pablo Solón of Bolivia and Mohamed Aslam of the Philippines, only to be met with police batons

¹⁵⁷ “Draft agreement and draft decision on workstreams 1 and 2 of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action” (October 23, 2015), <http://unfccc.int/files/bodies/application/pdf/ws1and2@2330.pdf>

¹⁵⁸ Connie Hedegaard, “Naomi Klein Throws Down in Copenhagen-COP15 president says Failure is Not an Option” (December 8, 2009), <https://southernshiftnews.wordpress.com/2009/12/08/naomi-klein-throws-down-in-copenhagen-cop15-president-says-failure-is-not-an-option/>

¹⁵⁹ Bill McKibben, “Reason and Faith in Copenhagen” (December 13, 2009), <http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2009/12/reason-and-faith-copenhagen>

¹⁶⁰ Michael McIntee, “President Nasheed- ‘We Refuse To Be Quiet On Climate Change’” (December 15, 2009), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f99KV0P8NSE>

and kept apart.¹⁶¹

Severn Suzuki at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio

Instead, perhaps because I had shown it two days prior to that at a [forum](#)¹⁶² that members of UCSB's [Climate Justice Project](#)¹⁶³ had put on called "The Paris COP 21 Climate Summit: Why We Are Going and What We Hope to Do There for Climate Justice," I thought I would set the scene with the famous, heart-rending and poignant oration delivered by twelve-year old Severn Suzuki at the Earth Summit in Rio in July 1992, which I urge you to view:¹⁶⁴



Here is how she ended her speech:

Two days ago here in Brazil, we were shocked when we spent some time with some children living on the streets. And this is what one child told us: "I wish I was rich and if I were, I would give all the street children

¹⁶¹ There is a shocking video of part of this action at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/blog/2009/dec/16/copenhagen-climate-change-protests-live>

¹⁶² Environmental Humanities Center, "The Paris COP 21 Climate Summit: Why We Are Going and What We Hope to Do There for Climate Justice" (2016), <https://vimeo.com/144040565>

¹⁶³ Climate Justice Project, www.climatejusticeproject.org/

¹⁶⁴ "Severn Cullis-Suzuki at Rio Summit 1992" (August 16, 2012), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJJGuIZVfLM>

food, clothes, medicine, shelter and love and affection.” If a child on the street who has nothing, is willing to share, why are we who have everything still so greedy?

I can't stop thinking that these children are my age, that it makes a tremendous difference where you are born, that I could be one of those children living in the favelas of Rio, I could be a child starving in Somalia, a victim of war in the Middle East or a beggar in India.

I'm only a child yet I know if all the money spent on war was spent on ending poverty and finding environmental answers, what a wonderful place this earth would be!

At school, even in kindergarten, you teach us how to behave in the world. You teach us:

- not to fight with others,
- to work things out,
- to respect others,
- to clean up our mess,
- not to hurt other creatures
- to share, not be greedy.

Then why do you go out and do the things you tell us not to do?

Do not forget why you're attending these conferences, who you're doing this for – we are your own children. You are deciding what kind of world we will grow up in. Parents should be able to comfort their children by saying “everything's going to be alright,” “we're doing the best we can,” and “it's not the end of the world.

But I don't think you can say that to us anymore. Are we even on your list of priorities? My father always says “You are what you do, not what you say.

Well, what you do makes me cry at night. You grownups say you love us. I challenge you, please make your actions reflect your words. Thank you for listening.

It's pretty hard to say it any better than a twelve year-old did in Rio a quarter of a century ago. Appealing to the humanity of the delegates, asking them to follow their own moral precepts, to be generous, to think of the future, to respect Mother Earth, she electrified the hall.

And, to their credit, out of Rio came the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (the [IPCC](#)), which now gives us the state of the art of climate science), and the United Nations Framework Conventional on Climate Change (the [UNFCCC](#)), which oversees the COP process). And five years later, at COP 3 in Kyoto, the world delivered its first climate treaty, the [Kyoto Protocol](#),¹⁶⁵ which if it had been adhered to, would have certainly put us in a far better position than we are in today, headed for 3.6 degrees Celsius by 2100 with global “business-as-usual,” or should we say “capitalism as usual.”

Instead, the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases at the time (and still the all-time record holder), the United States, never ratified the treaty, along with Australia; Japan and Canada later dropped out; and by 2009, we were promised a new and better treaty would be signed at COP 15 in Copenhagen.

Tom Smith Nails the Outcome at Copenhagen's COP 15 in December 2009

I've already talked about Copenhagen, above. What started as Hopenhagen ended as Nopenhagen. Tom Smith, a young British climate activist in the fledgling [UKYCC](#) (the U.K. Youth Climate Coalition), explains what was at stake for him and many other climate campaigners in a remarkable [video interview](#), “We're Not Done Yet.”¹⁶⁶

Among other things, he says:

They haven't committed to emission targets; they want to limit temperature increase to two degrees, which basically means that's a number of countries that are going to go underwater. They also haven't given sufficient adaptation funds for developing nations. It might as

¹⁶⁵ “Kyoto Protocol,” *Wikipedia* (March 5, 2017), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyoto_Protocol

¹⁶⁶ “We're Not Done Yet” (January 22, 2010), <http://www.yesmagazine.org/planet/were-not-done-yet>

well have not have happened and we have well been in the same situation that we were two weeks ago.



Even though this was the biggest climate summit that's ever happened, it hasn't moved anything; it proves the UN isn't working at the moment. This process has been going on for eighteen years. Some of the delegations here are that old and this has been going on the whole of their lifetime and it still hasn't worked.

I met a girl called Alysia from the Maldives about a week ago; she'd given an interview to the press, like just begging people to look after her and to look after her people and saying how terrified she was that by the time she was forty or fifty, she's going to be an environmental refugee. She wasn't going to have a home. She didn't even make it to the end of the press interview because she was so emotional. It's really, really painful to see these kinds of emotions in real life; to see these people just begging the world to listen to them and for them to be swept aside like nothing and for nothing to come out of Copenhagen, it's fucking painful.

He goes on to say:

All the actions we have done may not have literally changed what's happened on the inside but when we're walking along with 100,000 people from all different walks of life, children, families, businessmen, it just

showed there is a momentum. The passion that's, that has been showing in the last few weeks has been so amazing. The whole of the team, the whole of the international youth, the whole of the movement is hopeful and it's exciting. It's been one of the more important things that's been going on. Much more important than what's been going on inside the conference center is to see the movement growing, and to see the passion growing, is to see the possibilities growing, there has been so many moments that just remind exactly why I'm here.

Getting to know international youth has been one of the greatest things; we've sponsored quite a few Kenyans to come over so, we've spent a lot of time getting to know them when they get here.

Two groups from the other side of the world, sitting in a tiny restaurant, chatting about our languages and our cultures; we played snowball fights with them, we played football. It just makes the whole UN process at the moment seem ridiculous. It's like every country is fighting for itself, thinking about "what can I get out of this?" All of the youth are going to be affected, from all over around the world.

To form those kinds of bonds with those people is so incredible because when you're older, you're all going to work together and maybe there won't be this divide that there is at the moment. But the reason I got, the reason I got involved in the whole of this thing is it's not about negativity. It's about making sure that the good stuff that we have is protected....

Copenhagen was never going to be the end; we need more of the population of the world to come aboard. We need to show the world leaders that we know enough and we care enough. We're going to keep going; if we have to change the way the UN system works, we'll do it...

I'm twenty years old. I'm a random guy from a little village just near Cambridge. I'm not a genius. I'm not a scientist. I'm not a politician. But I'm here and I am

having an influence and I am influencing people and influencing the process because I'm here and if the whole of the world did that, whatever they could, whatever time they had, it would completely change the world.

You're not just on your own in this but you've got everyone around you lighting torches, not going to give up fighting.

And we're not done yet.

Though the movement is said to have gone into a two-year depression after vesting its hopes in Copenhagen, it's not quite true, is it? In April of 2010, it reassembled in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and drafted one of the most radical documents of climate justice we have, "The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth," which [affirms](#) that "The Inherent Rights of Mother Earth" include, among many other things:

- *the right to life and to exist;*
- *the right to be respected;*
- *the right to regenerate its bio-capacity and to continue its vital cycles and processes free from human disruptions;*
- *the right to maintain its identity and integrity as a distinct, self-regulating and interrelated being;*
- *the right to water as a source of life;*
- *the right to clean air;*
- *the right to integral health;*
- *the right to be free from contamination, pollution and toxic or radioactive waste;*
- *the right to not have its genetic structure modified or disrupted in a manner that threatens its integrity or vital and healthy functioning;*
- *the right to full and prompt restoration the violation of the rights recognized in this Declaration caused by human activities.¹⁶⁷*

Anjali Appadurai Demands "Get it done!" on behalf of Global Civil Society at the End of COP 11 in Durban in 2011

¹⁶⁷ "Rights of Mother Earth," <https://pwccc.wordpress.com/programa/>



And by COP 17 in Durban, South Africa, the movement was back inside the COP, and this time, it was being energized by young people’s rising voices. Civil society (that means all of *us*) gets to observe some of the negotiations at a COP, and to make “interventions” (arguments and demands) at certain key moments of each COP, such as the Opening Plenary on day one and the Final Plenary on the last day. As long as time remains after all the country delegations who want to speak have had their say, that is. In Durban, on the last day, Anjali Appadurai, a student at the College of the Atlantic in Maine, USA, went to the podium and addressed the assembled countries and representatives of the world and planet who could squeeze into the room in a passionate and blistering call on the delegates to heed the voices of the world’s youth, and to act responsibly. The [speech](#) is titled, accurately, “Get It Done!”

I speak for more than half the world’s population. We are the silent majority. You’ve given us a seat in this hall, but our interests are not on the table. What does it take to get a stake in this game? Lobbyists? Corporate influence? Money? You’ve been negotiating all my life. In that time, you’ve failed to meet pledges, you’ve missed targets, and you’ve broken promises. But you’ve heard this all before.

We’re in Africa, home to communities on the front line of climate change. The world’s poorest countries need funding for adaptation *now*.... But as 2012 dawns, the Green Climate Fund is empty.

The International Energy Agency tells us we have five years until the window to avoid irreversible climate change closes. The science tells us that we have five years maximum. You're saying, "Give us ten."

The most stark betrayal of your generation's responsibility to ours is that you call this "*ambition.*" Where is the courage in these rooms? Now is not the time for incremental action. In the long run, these will be seen as the defining moments of an era in which narrow self-interest prevailed over science, reason and common compassion.

There *is* real ambition in this room, but it's been dismissed as radical, deemed not politically possible. Stand with Africa. Long-term thinking is not radical. What's radical is to completely alter the planet's climate, to betray the future of my generation, and to condemn millions to death by climate change. What's radical is to write off the fact that change is within our reach. 2011 was the year in which the silent majority found their voice, the year when the bottom shook the top. 2011 was the year when the radical became reality.

Common, but differentiated, and historical responsibility are not up for debate. Respect the foundational principles of this convention. Respect the integral values of humanity. Respect the future of your descendants. Mandela said, "It always seems impossible, until it's done." So, distinguished delegates and governments around the world, governments of the developed world, deep cuts now. Get it *done*.¹⁶⁸

With these words she brought down the house and compelled the session chair to confess: "On a purely personal note, I wonder why we let not speak half of the world's population first in this conference, but only last."

¹⁶⁸ climatebrad [Brad Johnson], "Anjali Appadurai Mic Checks COP17: 'Deep Cuts Now! Get It Done!'" (December 10, 2011), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5w7d5SVAvrw>

Yeb Saño Brings the World to Tears and Fasts for Loss and Damage in Warsaw at COP 19 in 2013

Fast forward two years, and almost nothing has been accomplished since Durban ended with a promise of crafting a new global climate treaty by 2015. COP 19 opened on a gloomy day in Warsaw, Poland, against the backdrop of a massively destructive cyclone named Haiyan/Yolanda striking the Philippines – the second year in a row when by some cruel irony such an unnatural disaster had occurred.



Yeb Saño. Photo by Ben Liddie.

When the chief delegate from the Philippines, Naderev “Yeb” Saño, took his turn at the podium, the crowd was expectant, but no one was prepared for the electricity of what followed, providing the first sign that the world might not stand idly by while the COP took only baby steps in the negotiations. Saño addressed the assembled nations with these words.

To anyone who continues to deny the reality that is climate change, I dare you to get off your ivory tower and away from the comfort of your armchair. I dare you to go to the islands of the Pacific, the islands of the Caribbean and the islands of the Indian Ocean and see the impacts of rising sea levels, to the mountainous regions of the Himalayas and the Andes to see communities confronting glacial floods, to the Arctic where communities grapple with the fast dwindling polar ice caps, to

the large deltas of the Mekong, the Ganges, the Amazon, and the Nile where lives and livelihoods are drowned, to the hills of Central America that confront similar monstrous hurricanes, to the vast savannas of Africa where climate change has likewise become a matter of life and death as food and water become scarce. Not to forget the massive hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico and the eastern seaboard of North America. And if that is not enough, you may want to pay a visit to the Philippines right now....

What my country is going through as a result of this extreme climate event is madness. The climate crisis is *madness*....

It is the nineteenth COP, but we might as well stop counting, because my country refuses to accept that a COP30 or a COP40 will be needed to solve climate change. And because it seems that despite the significant gains we have had since the UNFCCC was born, twenty years hence we continue to fail in fulfilling the ultimate objective of the Convention. Now, we find ourselves in a situation where we have to ask ourselves – can we ever attain the objective set out in Article 2 – which is to prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system? By failing to meet the objectives of the Convention, we may have ratified the doom of vulnerable countries.

We find ourselves at a critical juncture and the situation is such that even the most ambitious emissions reductions by developed countries, who should have been taking the lead in combating climate change in the past two decades, will not be enough to avert the crisis. It is now too late, too late to talk about the world being able to rely on Annex I countries to solve the climate crisis. We have entered a new era that demands global solidarity in order to fight climate change and ensure that pursuit of sustainable human development remains at the fore of the global community's efforts. This is why means of implementation for developing countries is ever more crucial....

We cannot sit and stay helpless staring at this international climate stalemate. It is now time to take action. We need an *emergency climate pathway*....

This process under the UNFCCC has been called many names. It has been called a farce. It has been called an annual carbon-intensive gathering of useless frequent flyers. It has been called many names. But it has also been called the Project to save the Planet. It has been called “saving tomorrow today.” We can fix this. We can stop this madness. Right now. Right here, in the middle of this football field.

I call on you to lead us. And let Poland be forever known as the place we truly cared to stop this madness. Can humanity rise to the occasion? I still believe we can.¹⁶⁹

Saño’s speech moved people to tears in the overflow hall where I sat. His words drew up a glaring contrast, often noted by its critics, between the official COP where middle-aged men (mostly) in suits show up year after year to fumble their mandate to do something historically meaningful, and what we might call “The People’s COP,” the efforts of global civil society to inject reality and creativity into the discussions.

Inadvertently, Saño became a hero to all of those who wanted real climate action. After his speech, three young activists unfurled a banner of solidarity and escorted him out of the COP. Disgracefully, and in a telling sign of the UNFCCC’s increasingly hardline instincts to stifle strong civil society input, Executive Secretary Cristiana Figueres issued a five-year ban to the three. Despite every appeal, they were not allowed to return.

This formed part of a wider pattern of exclusion and dismissal of civil society, which had already taken the form of severely restricting

¹⁶⁹ There is a video: “IISD/ENB+ Video Warsaw Climate Conference (COP19/CMP9) Special Video” (November 11, 2013), <http://enb.iisd.org/videos/climate/cop19-special-videos/>, and one can also read the full text of his seventeen-minute speech: Naderev Saño, “Typhoon Haiyan: we cannot afford to procrastinate on climate action” (November 11, 2013), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/11/typhoon-haiyan-philippines-climate-change?INTCMP=SRCH>

the size of civil society delegations, and would be followed by the Executive Secretary's appearance at the World Coal Association summit a week later as a keynote speaker. When they heard of her plan to do this, the Conference of Youth had told her, "You either get to speak to us or to them. But not both." Figueres would leave Warsaw with her reputation severely damaged in the eyes of a wide swath of civil society.

Saño's dramatic words, and subsequent declaration that he would fast out of solidarity with those left with nothing after the storm, until *something* meaningful came out of this COP, prised one concession out of the negotiators: the creation of a fund for Loss and Damage to provide immediate relief to those who will be affected by climate disasters in future extreme weather events. The fund has remained empty to this day, and indeed, could be negotiated out of the final Paris text if someone doesn't stand up again for it.

Yeb Saño himself did not return as chief Philippines negotiation to COP 20 in Lima in 2014, amid speculation that pressure on the government of the Philippines from some undisclosed country or countries had caused his removal.

Instead, inspired like millions of others by Pope Francis's bracing climate encyclical *Laudato Si'*,¹⁷⁰ he has been helping to build the *People's Pilgrimage*,¹⁷¹ which, like the encyclical itself, is open to people of all faiths (including the climate justice faith).

Civil Society Walks Out at COP19 on November 21, 2013

COP 19 did not go well. Corporations' logos were omnipresent at the conference. Figueres addressed the World Coal Association's summit, negotiations remained stalled. By the second to last day of COP 18 we had had enough. There was a call for civil society to turn its back on this COP and leave it, and leave it is precisely what we did.

Seeing no meaningful progress in the talks, finding themselves excluded from the process on many levels, and witnessing the blatant

¹⁷⁰ "Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* of the Holy Father Francis on Care for Our Common Home," *Vatican Press*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf

¹⁷¹ *The People's Pilgrimage*, <http://peoplespilgrimage.org/about.html>

corporate presence – even sponsorship – at the COP, hundreds of activists staged a walkout from the National Stadium, most of them vowing not to set foot in it again. Estimates of the crowd’s size ranged from 300 (undoubtedly an underestimate, as 300 white t-shirts were distributed before the action and hundreds of those who walked out didn’t have them) to a high estimate of 800. By any reckoning, a significant portion of all civil society delegates to COP19 simply walked out. There were about 8,300 participants at COP19, and of these approximately 1,500 were representatives of civil society NGOs and organizations.

Summer Gray and Corrie Ellis from our UC Santa Barbara-based Climate Justice Project made a [video](#)¹⁷² that captures the elevated mood of the participants as they turned their backs on the Warsaw COP.



Demonstrating outside the COP after the walkout. Photo: John Foran.

¹⁷² Summer Gray, “COP19 Walk Out: Voices of the Climate Justice Movement” (November 21, 2013), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbtdXFeEUXk&feature=youtu.be>

The walkout was conceived and planned by some of the radical young activists and youth organizations, but it came to enjoy broad appeal (it had a predecessor in the mass walkout of civil society at the Rio+20 meetings in Brazil in June 2013). In addition, veteran organizers from Friends of the Earth, Oxfam, ActionAid, the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, the Bolivian Platform on Climate Change, LDC Watch, the International Trade Union Confederation, the Philippines Movement on Climate Change, and (unexpectedly) the World Wildlife Fund, among others, lent the names of their organizations to the action, and Kumi Naidoo, the executive director of Greenpeace, turned up to deliver the principal [remarks](#)¹⁷³ at the press conference that preceded the walkout.

At 2 p.m. precisely, groups of activists who had met up in many corners of the cavernous National Stadium started to walk out, converging on the ground level of the building which led to the exits. We filmed as they streamed by, in their hundreds, happy with their decision. The mood was defiant; the white shirts said “Polluters talk, we walk!” and on their backs, “Volveremos!” (“We will be back.”) The messages were clear, passing judgment on the complete inability of the UNFCCC to advance the treaty process at COP19, and signaling that this walkout was tactical, that the movement would return, with renewed force, to the 2014 COP20 in Lima, Peru, in the hope that Latin American civil society and the governments of Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Cuba, and others might make their more radical demands for climate justice heard and felt inside the COP.

Lima, however, and the several intersessional negotiating rounds of 2015 have yielded meager returns in the form of an unwieldy treaty text with all of the long-standing sticking points – most of them to do with the demands of climate justice – still in brackets.

A High Stakes Dinner Party in Paris in Four Weeks

This brings us to COP 21, which opens on Monday November 30 in Paris and ends two weeks later on Friday, December 11 (unless it goes

¹⁷³ “‘Nature Does Not Negotiate’: Environmentalists Walk Out of U.N. Climate Summit in Warsaw,” *Democracy Now!* (November 21, 2013), https://www.democracynow.org/2013/11/21/nature_does_not_negotiate_environmentalists_walk

a day or two extra while negotiators scramble for some kind of face-saving formula to present to the world). I have no illusions about the outcome of the Paris COP, and have [argued](#) that we should “Just Say ‘No’ to the COP.”¹⁷⁴

Meanwhile, as a humorous introduction to what’s on the menu (and in this moment of humanity-wide existential crisis, a sense of humor is a useful quality to possess), *Grist* magazine’s Ben Aldern revisits COP history and offers a mouth-watering [video preview](#)¹⁷⁵ of what’s to come.



Like it or not, we have a date in Paris, and I hope these video vignettes of the high points of the past get you in the right mood for it. What mood will you be in when our date with history rolls around?

¹⁷⁴ John Foran, “‘Just Say ‘No’ to the Paris COP: A Possible Way to Win Something for Climate Justice” (September 16, 2015), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-09-16/just-say-no-to-the-paris-cop-a-possible-way-to-win-something-for-climate-justice/>

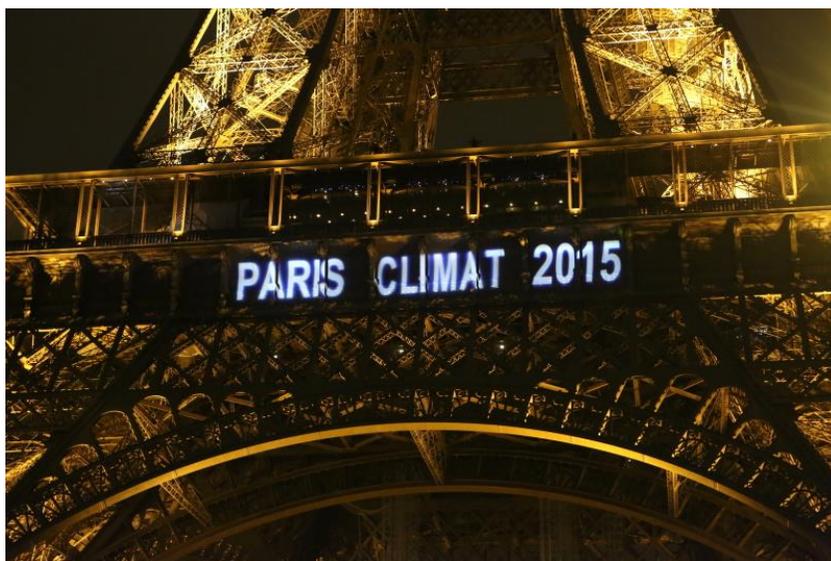
¹⁷⁵ Clayton Aldern, “There’s a high-stakes dinner party in Paris and you’re invited. Check out our climate negotiations explainer” (October 27, 2015), http://grist.org/politics/theres-a-high-stakes-dinner-party-in-paris-and-youre-invited-check-out-our-climate-negotiations-explainer/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily-horizon

AMBITION AND SMOKE, LOVE AND COURAGE:
WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE CLIMATE TREATY
NEGOTIATIONS IN PARIS

November 30, 2015

“The most important question raised by the climate summit may be: Does the power to change the world belong to the people in the conference rooms of Le Bourget or to the people in the streets of Paris?”

Rebecca Solnit, “[Power in Paris](#)”¹⁷⁶



The Paris COP 21 UN climate summit is upon us, now, starting on Monday, November 30. I have spent the last year, ever since the dust

¹⁷⁶ Rebecca Solnit, “Power in Paris” (December 2015), <http://harpers.org/archive/2015/12/power-in-paris/>

of Lima was wiped from my shoes, trying my best to get a grasp on what was going to happen and communicating what I found out to all interested parties.

In the last two months, the world's attention has really started to focus on climate, the COP, and the possibilities and probabilities of "success" and (gasp!) "failure." The murder of 129 people in the streets of Paris on Friday, November 13, has only trained hearts and minds more on this ground zero in the interlaced struggles for peace on Earth with justice.

Within twenty-four hours, the French government and the UNFCCC had reassured us that the COP would proceed exactly as planned, with added layers of security. The incredible and creative plans of civil society for making sure that the world's demand for climate justice will be heard in Paris hung in the balance until the government of François Hollande made it known that the twin bookends of our strategy – the massive march on Sunday, November 29 and the nonviolent civil disobedience and other acts of protest scheduled for the outcome of the COP on Friday and Saturday, December 11 and 12 – would be prohibited from occurring.

A COP without the full-throated participation of global civil society, however, has a less than zero chance of succeeding, whatever that nebulous term connotes. Just as the COP must go on, so, too, will we, the countless members of the global climate justice movement, whether marching under that banner in Paris or simply showing up in our hearts and heads.

But the carefully prepared script that global elites have been busy writing for Paris may not end up the way they think, and here's why.

Ambition and Smoke: The Negotiations Will Take Unexpected Turns

In "Just Say 'No' to the Paris COP," I developed an argument that the best possible outcome would be a conference that ended in disarray, without an agreement that would lock in catastrophic climate change or be hailed by most of the world as the first step on the road to a future without climate chaos and social turmoil (as if). I have seen nothing on the part of the negotiating process in the intervening weeks that makes me think differently.

What is it that the governments of the world are being asked to do

in Paris? Their remit is to agree on a global treaty that would address several key elements: 1) an ambitious upper limit on the amount of warming that humanity should countenance as acceptable and somehow safe for future generations, 2) a legally binding set of measures that all countries would agree on to achieve that goal, and 3) mobilization of the technical and financial resources to ensure that all countries would have the means to make the transition to a low or zero carbon way of life, and to do so in a way that enables the rapid emergence of the global South from poverty and inequality in the name of social justice.

Operationally, this means choosing between 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius as the temperature target, creating a mechanism to close the widening emissions gap to put us on that path, and securing at least \$100 billion annually for a Green Climate Fund, and something similar for the Loss and Damage mechanism that will provide immediate emergency aid to countries hit by extreme weather events.

At the moment, all the national pledges for climate action – the Individually Determined National Contributions (INDCs) – are in. Unfortunately, the best estimates for the warming that they will give us vary between an optimistic 2.7 degrees and around 3.3 degrees or a little more. The calculations are rendered more difficult because the UNFCCC failed to agree on any uniform ways of making these pledges in the four years that they gave themselves at COP 17 in Durban, South Africa, in 2011 to make this happen.

In Climate Action Tracker’s estimation, after careful [review](#) of nineteen pledges “covering about 71% of global emissions, 17 have not been rated as ‘sufficient’.... Two are sufficient but cover only 0.4% of global emissions.”¹⁷⁷ They [conclude](#) that the current level of ambition would give us a 66 percent chance of staying under 3 degrees Celsius!¹⁷⁸

There is a major risk that if current INDCs are locked in for 2030

¹⁷⁷ Johannes Gütschow, “INDCs lower projected warming to 2.7°C: significant progress but still above 2°C” (October 1, 2015), http://climateaction-tracker.org/assets/publications/CAT_global_temperature_update_October_2015.pdf

¹⁷⁸ “Comparison between Climate Action Tracker and Climate Interactive assessments” (October 19, 2015), <http://climateaction-tracker.org/global/227/Comparison-between-Climat-Action-Tracker-and-Climat-Interactive-assessments.html>

and not reviewed and strengthened every five years, starting in 2020, that achievement of the 1.5°C goal called for by all the most vulnerable countries may be locked out, and achievement of the 2°C goal fundamentally threatened.

Based on the climate action promised under the INDCs it is now clear that governments at the Paris climate conference need to consider a formal acknowledgement that there is an insufficient level of mitigation ambition for 2025 and 2030 to limit warming below 2°C.

In November a group of NGOs including 350.org, Friends of the Earth International, the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, and others issued "[Fair Shares: A Civil Society Equity Review of INDCs](#),"¹⁷⁹ which finds that the INDC commitments will likely lead the world to a devastating 3°C or more warming above pre-industrial levels. The current INDCs amount to barely half of the emissions cuts required by 2030. Moreover, the INDCs submitted by all major developed countries fall well short of their fair shares. From the list of countries highlighted in the report, Russia's INDC represents zero contribution towards committing its fair share. Japan's represents about a tenth, the United States' about a fifth, and the European Union's just over a fifth of its fair share. On the other hand, the majority of developing countries' mitigation pledges exceed or broadly meet their fair share, including Kenya, the Marshall Islands, China, Indonesia, and India. Brazil's INDC represents slightly more than two thirds of its fair share.

So, on the main question, what is on the table will warm the planet at least three times more above pre-industrial levels than what we currently have done, about 0.85 degrees Celsius. No one wants to see worse effects from climate change than we are experiencing now, but that is inevitable since there is already enough carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the air to take us to 1.4 degrees, even if we stopped burning fossil fuels tomorrow.

To make matters worse, these "pledges" will not be legally binding commitments. They will not even go into effect until 2020. They will not be reviewed so they can be "ratcheted up" for five more years till 2025. And they will take us well beyond the supposedly "safe" threshold of 2 degrees in the next quarter century.

This is what Christiana Figueres, the Executive Secretary of the

¹⁷⁹ The document can be found at the website of the Civil Society Review, <http://civilsocietyreview.org/>

UNFCCC, President Obama, and other world “leaders” will hail as a success, if all goes well for them in Paris.

But to get agreement even on these dispiriting and ecocidal targets, they will need nearly every government of the world to agree that this is fair and reasonable. To do so, they are going to have to come up with about \$90 billion more for the Green Climate Fund than has been pledged so far. And they will have to do something for Loss and Damage as well.

And herein lies a little room for hope. Many countries – more than 100 – have said that they cannot live (in some cases literally) with 2 degrees of warming, and are demanding that the treaty inscribe 1.5 degrees as the target. Many are insisting that \$100 billion for the GCF is a non-negotiable promise (it was made at COP 15 back in 2009 in Copenhagen). And others, such as the Philippines, need substantial funding for Loss and Damage as well.

So how exactly will the global North get an agreement under these circumstances? The negotiating text has not shrunk below 50 pages in the multiple “intersessional” meetings that took place in 2015. Most of the text is in brackets, meaning that there are competing proposals for all of the clauses that involve these and other crucial issues. There are seemingly unbridgeable differences of opinion among the nations at the table. And the working time and process at a COP are simply not constructed to produce efficiency or progress in the negotiations.

Thus even if the will existed, and it doesn’t, it strikes me as absurd to think that these two weeks in Paris will get to the finish line. They have kicked the can down the road for four years, avoiding all the intractable differences, barely making progress on the shape of the treaty itself, let alone the content.

On the other hand, Sunita Narain, who along with Chandra Bhushan of the Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment is the author of a devastating critique of US proposals on climate change – “[Captain America: U.S. Climate Goals – A Reckoning](#)”¹⁸⁰ – has made perhaps the [best case](#)¹⁸¹ for how world leaders (and there are no world

¹⁸⁰ Sunita Narain and Chandra Bhushan, *Captain America: U.S. Climate Goals: A Reckoning* (Delhi: Center for Science and Environment, 2015), www.cseindia.org/userfiles/Capitan-America-Report.pdf

¹⁸¹ Sunita Narain, “Paris foretold and forewarned: what to expect from

leaders in climate change, except perhaps for Pope Francis, who doesn't have a country to bring to the table) are going to pull an agreement out of the hat.

So, what is likely to happen? Let me use my 20-COP past to map out the likely scenario and explain what it means for us in the emerging South that is already affected by unseasonal weather but needs its right to development.

First, there will be a Paris deal. This is a given. But to make it happen the French will make some clever moves, given that the current draft has been negotiated for over four years, is more than 50 pages long and full of disagreements. They have already changed the order of things by inviting heads of state on the first day and not the last. Everyone from Obama, German Chancellor Angela Merkel to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is coming. The French will produce (and I hope with more finesse than the Danish government) a zero draft with the bare bones of the agreement at the start of the two-week meeting. The heads of state will have little room but to endorse this broad agreement. Then for the next two weeks negotiators will idle away time till the gavel comes down on the midnight of the last day.

Second, this zero draft for the Paris treaty will be minimalist and, therefore, seemingly non-controversial. It will endorse the submission of the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), which are voluntary commitments made by countries to cut carbon emissions. It will admit that the sum of these commitments does not add up to keeping the world below 2°C rise, which is seen to be the least risky option. But it will say that the agreement provides a stable

COP21” (November 30, 2015), <http://www.down-toearth.org.in/blog/paris-foretold-and-forewarned-51778>

and predictable foundation to ratchet up the commitments in the future.

Third, it will not make the commitment or the expected result legally binding. Instead it will make the procedure of submitting reports binding. It will also sidestep the tricky issue of review of INDCs, which countries like India have strangely objected to. It will simply say that in five years there will be a stock take of the aggregate of all INDCs. So no individual country's progress will be reviewed, only the sum of their actions and how close it is to keeping the temperature rise below 2°C. On the really tricky issue of additional finance it will not mention specifics, just make a broad promise. And to keep the Americans happy it will try and do the finance bit on another piece of paper. In this way, the Paris Climate Change Treaty will be ready for signature even before the leaders leave. It will be weak but aspirational. The spin will be that it lays the ground for future action.

She goes on to pass judgment on what this would mean:

What it means is a little more than this. The world would have agreed to a framework, pushed by the US, which is voluntary, bottom up – countries decide what they will do rather than get targets based on their contribution to the problem – and most importantly universal. It breaks once and for all the distinction between developing and developed countries. As agreed in the Framework Convention on Climate Change, developed countries had to take the first and drastic action because of their historical responsibility.

It also means the US will appropriate an even greater share of the carbon budget, simply because its intended action is unambitious. The world is left with a limited space to emit greenhouse gases, if it wants to stay within a not-too-dangerous threshold. The still developing world – India and all of Africa – needs to increase emissions for its development. But by 2030, the

timeframe of the intended Paris treaty, almost all the carbon budget would be gone. Our future right to development will be surrendered. We will be told to find a different way to grow economically. Ours has to be a low-carbon growth and if it is expensive, it is our problem. There will be no money or technology to aid us to get there.¹⁸²

This would be clever indeed. It is precisely the dangerous scenario we have to block, to figure out how to throw a wrench with “climate justice” etched into it into its gears.

“Where is the ambition in these rooms?”

So who might make it awkward for the architects of this disastrous treaty in Paris? In addition to the dozens of countries who are on record for a 1.5° temperature ceiling and the nearly unanimous desire for a legally binding treaty worthy of the name, there is the Climate Vulnerable Forum, a diverse set of countries who have formed a loose negotiating bloc for the summit. Their [Founding Communiqué](#) gives some hope, insisting that “the minimum deliverable for the UN Climate Change Conference at Paris (UNFCCC COP21) is an agreement entirely consistent with the non-negotiable survival of our kind.”¹⁸³

AOSIS, the 44-member strong Alliance of Small Island States, has also [endorsed](#) keeping warming under the safer, if more difficult limit of 1.5 degrees Celsius, and has called on the nations of the world to be fully de-carbonized by 2050. The 48-member Least Developed Countries bloc issued a statement in February calling for “emissions peaking for developed countries in 2015, with an aim of net zero emissions by 2050 in the context of equitable access to sustainable development.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Sunita Narain, “Paris foretold and forewarned: what to expect from COP21” (November 30, 2015), <http://www.down-toearth.org.in/blog/paris-foretold-and-forewarned-51778>

¹⁸³ “Most vulnerable nations form climate action coalition” (October 11, 2015), http://climateandcapitalism.com/2015/10/11/most-vulnerable-nations-form-climate-action-coalition/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+climateandcapitalism%2FpEtD+%28Climate+and+Capitalism%29

¹⁸⁴ Carbon Action Tracker, <http://climateactiontracker.org/>. The link to

On the truly poignant side, Peru, Mexico, and Colombia have pledged money to the Green Climate Fund, shaming the wealthy nations of the world, who have so far put up only about \$10 billion of the promised \$100 billion annually by 2020 (the claim that there is actually now \$62 billion promised to the Fund is full of double counting and includes forms of “aid” that come with plenty of strings attached). Perhaps the wealthy should just ask the global South to fund the rest!

Hope and Possibility: Climate Justice at Cop 21 and Beyond, or, Why We Are Going and What We Hope to Do There for Climate Justice

I have just argued that the best possible outcome of the COP 21 negotiations would be *not* to agree on a treaty, but instead for the talks to descend into chaos in the halls in a scenario where nations inside the negotiations blocked any outcome because what is on the table is completely unacceptable.

As this is the position of the vast majority of the global climate justice movement – that the COP process is hopelessly compromised and inadequate – we might ask: What can or should the movement do in Paris to enable such an outcome, however slight the chance of it may seem?

In “Just Say ‘No’ to the Paris COP,” I outlined the variety of actions that the movement has planned for Paris. I’d like to return to them here, updated under new circumstances, and with the COP itself (no pun intended) fast on our heels.

Global Climate Marches will take place (almost) everywhere

The [November 29 marches](#)¹⁸⁵ in Paris and around the world are intended by their big NGO organizers such as Avaaz and 350.org to take the rhetoric of global leaders and turn it into a weapon with which to shame or encourage them into doing the right thing. With their potential to appeal to newly active people in a variety of ways, taking into account that different people respond to different messages, their aim is to forge a truly broad and deep climate justice movement, which will require moving more and more people into and through climate action

this data and for the quote can no longer be found.

¹⁸⁵ 350, <https://350.org/global-climate-march/>

to climate justice.

Now, of course, the situation on the ground in Paris is vastly altered after the November 13 massacre of 129 people by the terrorists of ISIS/Daesh. So the organizers are calling for a huge turnout around the world to replace the momentum stolen by the French authorities from a march that would have numbered in the several hundred thousands – indeed, with the solidarity of the climate justice movement for real peace throughout the world based on social justice, it would not be too far-fetched to imagine that closer to a million people would have been in the streets of Paris, with Parisians responding to this solidarity. After the *Charlie Hebdo* murders in January, some 1.6 million people marched in Paris and three million across France a week later; think what could have been this time. Meanwhile the [People's Pilgrimage](#),¹⁸⁶ inspired by Pope Francis's bracing climate encyclical [Laudato Si](#),¹⁸⁷ is set to arrive in Paris just before the COP opens on November 30.

The question remains: what will happen in Paris on November 29? I will be there with a dozen other members of the [Climate Justice Project](#) with the aim of participating fully in the actions and doing our best to report on them. I know that I will show up at the duly appointed place and time, and we will have to see who else does.

The Climate Games

Creative ideas abound in this movement, and there will be many thousands of imaginative, passionate people on hand to enact them. In the aftermath of the French crackdown on public demonstrations, the role that will be played throughout COP 21 by participants in the [Climate Games](#) looms even larger than before.

Organized by the [Laboratory of Insurrectional Imagination](#) (le Labofiti) as an open call to anyone who feels moved to do express their views about the COP and the larger forces behind it, conceived as *the Mesh* – “austerity-dictating politicians, fossil fuel corporations, industry lobbyists, peddlers of false solutions and greenwashers,” it anticipates

¹⁸⁶ *The People's Pilgrimage*, <http://peoplespilgrimage.org/about.html>

¹⁸⁷ “Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si*’ of the Holy Father Francis on Care for Our Common Home,” *Vatican Press*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf

a joyful chaos that will bring together “artists, activists, designers, scientists, hackers, architects, gamers, performers and other citizens together to conceptualise, and build and rehearse effective new tools and tactics of resistance to be used during the COP21.” Teams of activists will form to engage in “a mass participation transmedia action framework that merges the street, disobedient bodies and cyberspace, and turns the city into a total resistance performance event open to all.”¹⁸⁸

The Climate Games organizers’ eloquent [response](#) to November 13 merits quoting in full:

First of all, we want to clearly state our solidarity with all victims of all forms of terror. Machine guns and explosives hurt the same whether in Paris or Beirut, Ankara or Yola, Damascus or Kobane, Baghdad or elsewhere. The hurt feels the same whether it comes from the gun of a jihadist or a police officer, the missiles of a fighter plane or a drone.

These attacks must not change the conversation but deepen it. We want to clearly state that our dedication for social and climate justice remains as strong as ever. We are convinced that the geopolitical and economic dynamics that underpin climate chaos are the same as those that feed terrorism. From the oil wars in Iraq to the droughts in Syria caused by ecological collapse, all feed the same inequalities that lead to cycles of violent conflict.

We are writing this from a city under a state of emergency. The government has announced that the COP21 negotiations will go on, but all public outdoor demonstrations across France, including the Global Climate March and the day of mass actions on December 12th, have been banned. We refuse this shadow of the future, we will not bend to the politics of fear that stifle liberties in the name of security. The biggest threat to security, to life in all its forms, is the system that drives the climate disaster. History is never made

¹⁸⁸ The Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination, <http://www.labofii.net/>. I can no longer find the quote on the website.

by those who ask permission.

We believe that COP21 can not take place without the participation or mobilizations of civil society while governments and multinationals continue with business as usual. Only the Climate Justice movements with their disobedient bodies will be able to do the necessary work of keeping 80% of the fossil fuels in the ground.

We are still and more than ever dedicated to forms of actions that aim to address the root causes of climate chaos in determined non-violent ways. Our playing field has been totally transformed in Paris, but everywhere else in the world we encourage people to continue with their plans and adventures. We call all teams in Paris to take into account the exceptional circumstances and to not put anyone in fear or danger.

The decentralised creative nature of the Climate Games could become the alternative nonviolent response to this state of emergency. Like the mushrooms that emerge at dawn, the ants that scuttle across borders at night we will rise out of fear and shock, we will adapt and resist. We are not fighting for nature, we are nature defending itself.¹⁸⁹

A People's Climate Strike builds out from Paris

Another intriguing and promising new strategy for the movement that will have its premiere in Paris is that of a global or [people's climate strike](#).¹⁹⁰ As Ben Manski and Jill Stein [explain](#): “What makes a strike different from mere protest? A strike is an economic stoppage. A strike does not plead. It does not demand. It simply *does*.”¹⁹¹

A coalition of US climate justice groups, among them 350, the Green party, and many others who joined in the Global Climate Convergence to organize the September 2014 New York City march of

¹⁸⁹ The link to this quote is now broken.

¹⁹⁰ *Climate Strike*, <http://globalclimateconvergence.org/climate-strike/>

¹⁹¹ Ben Manski and Jill Stein, “The Global Climate Strike: Why We Can’t Wait” (September 24, 2014), <https://popularresistance.org/the-global-climate-strike-why-we-cant-wait/>

over 400,000 people, endorsed the idea on their website:

[A People's Climate Strike](#) is being planned – to bring the engines of economic and ecological destruction to a grinding halt, demonstrate our growing power, and promote community-controlled, just, and green alternatives. The People's Climate Strike will move us from the symbolism of marches towards the assertion of power in the streets. We will begin to develop a tool that has been essential for democratic social change throughout history.¹⁹²

In Paris, there is a [call for students](#)¹⁹³ (including children) all around the world to skip classes or turn their schools into sites of climate action on November 30, the day the COP opens. There are actions planned for seventy countries on that day. In the eyes of the organizers, “The adult generations have **promised** to stop the climate crisis, but they have **skipped their homework year after year. Climate strike** is a wake-up call to our own generation. And it is the start of a network that will solve the greatest challenge in human history. **Together.** We need your *hands* and *hearts* and *smarts!*” The measure of its success will be the number of people who [raise their hands](#): “The open hand is the symbol of Climate Strike. ***If you agree to the three demands of Climate Strike:*** 1) fossils should stay in the ground, 2) transition to 100% clean energy, 3) help people impacted by climate change then show the world your hand.”¹⁹⁴

Creating a People's Alternative to the COP

At every COP, movements seek to create strong counter-spaces and projects, whose impact on countless activists over the years would be hard to overestimate. In Paris, the network of French and global organizers who have come together as [Coalition Climat21](#)¹⁹⁵ has shown an astonishing capacity to make it possible to share insights, teach

¹⁹² <http://globalclimateconvergence.org/climate-strike/>

¹⁹³ *Climate Strike*, <http://www.climatestrike.net/>

¹⁹⁴ *The Show of Hands for Climate Strike*, <http://www.climatestrike.net/show-of-hands/>

¹⁹⁵ *Coalition Climat21*, <http://coalitionclimat21.org/en>

skills, strengthen bonds, plan actions, and envision futures across a variety of venues. One of these will be a two-day [Citizen Climate Summit](#) or “Village of Alternatives” on December 5 and 6, in Montreuil, a working-class neighborhood of Paris where my group will be staying. In the words of the organizers of the Coalition Climat21, this will be a place “to put forward solutions tackling climate change. Let’s show decision-makers that these solutions already exist and are building a better world: with more justice, more solidarity, more happiness! ... Putting in common our experience, analyses, struggles, and hopes will enable us to anchor our movement for the long-term.”¹⁹⁶

This will be followed between December 7 and 11 at the [Climate Action Zone](#) (ZAC) at the CENTQUATRE-PARIS in the northern part of Paris, where “All people are welcome – from the activists who will come from every corner of the world to local French high school students. Here one can get basic information on the climate crisis and the UN negotiations, as well as meet with others to share information, create, and organize.” During the “crunch time” of the second week of the COP when the negotiations will likely be floundering, participants in the Climate Action Zone will generate plans for their movements’ actions and messages at the end of the COP on Friday, December 11, and Saturday, December 12, seizing our chance to “have the final word” on COP21. As Amy Goodman of Democracy Now! [puts it](#): “If the leaders fail, many will be there to storm the Bastille.”¹⁹⁷

The Streets Await Us

Things are most definitely heating up (so to speak) for Paris. While the French state cries for a war on terrorism and denies our civil liberties, this is being met with a cry for a just peace with climate justice.

COP 21 is a litmus test of where power lies. The balance of forces has greatly changed, and the climate justice movement is much savvier than at Copenhagen in 2009. In the [heart-wrenching words](#) of the Network of Spiritual Progressives:

¹⁹⁶ *Coalition Climat21*, <http://coalitionclimat21.org/en>. After the events, the website was changed slightly but most of this material can still be seen there.

¹⁹⁷ Amy Goodman, “Global Call for Climate Action: Storming the Bastille at the Paris Summit” (October 30, 2015), <http://www.alternet.org/environment/global-call-climate-action-storming-bastille-paris-summit>

What if the wake-up call of these kinds of acts are to help us see that the only real response (once we recognize the existential crisis of being alive, being vulnerable, not knowing if we will live or die today and try to find some acceptance and peace with that while we go about living our lives and perhaps in remembering our vulnerability we choose to live our lives more fully, love more unconditionally, and be more generous and kind) is to build a movement and take back our country and our world. Perhaps this moment is a call to action – not to create a false sense of safety or security or to turn more inward – for ordinary people to rise-up and lead because our leaders are failing us.¹⁹⁸

In this crucial moment of history, I don't think I could rise out of bed in the morning if it wasn't for the global climate justice movement – its creativity, growing numbers, passion, imagination, grit, and joyfulness.

In hopes to see you or your spirit on the streets of Paris!



History is never made by those who ask permission.

¹⁹⁸ Network of Spiritual Progressives, “Fear and Response After Paris” (November 19, 2015), <http://www.parisclimatejustice.org/article/fear-and-response-after-paris>

COP 21, Round One: Battle Lines Are Drawn

*A Report on the Global Climate March and the Opening of the Paris COP 21
Negotiations*

December 3, 2015



The Climate March in Bogotá, Colombia. Photo by Jose Miguel Gomez for Reuters.

The much-anticipated UN climate summit COP 21 kicked off in Paris on the last weekend of November as heads of state, national delegations, activists, NGOs, and journalists took up residence in a city whose world had been shattered just two weeks before by suicide bombs taking 129 lives. The French government decided that while the COP would go on as planned, the climate movement's plans for

mass demonstrations to bookend the start and finish of the talks would not. This seemed strange, as concerts, Christmas fairs, and sporting events in large public venues were allowed to continue, and in fact, all that was banned was the gathering of two or more people for the purposes of a public event with political content. This has changed the story of the summit from the outset, and decidedly not for the better.

Sunday's Climate Marches: The Missing Million

So on Saturday and Sunday, November 28 and 29, climate marches were held around the world to try to send the messages to global leaders that those in Paris could not. May Boeve of 350.org, one of the principle organizations behind the day, [reported](#) that no less than 785,000 [marched and demonstrated](#) and made themselves [colorful](#) in at least 2,300 cities in over 175 countries, marking November 29, 2015 as one of the greatest days of climate action mobilization ever.¹⁹⁹ The 50,000 mark was surpassed or approached in London and Melbourne, but it was the fact that so many places came out on the day that made it significant. One of the central demands of the mobilization was “Keep fossil fuels in the ground and finance a just transition to 100% renewable energy by 2050,” summing up the minimum conditions for climate justice at the COP.

No fun and games in Paris

What happened in Paris was another story, part of which I witnessed myself. The most well attended event was the formation of a human chain along the route of the banned People's Climate March, and the most creative was the deposit of pairs of shoes at the Place de la République, where the march was to have started. Upwards of 10,000 people defied the ban on the march and stretched out in a line many

¹⁹⁹ 350, “We Sent a Message to Paris,” https://350.org/global-climate-march/?akid=9228.494146.iW1wkQ&rd=1&t=1&utm_medium=email, which also features photos from around the world. For a moment-by-moment account of the actions everywhere, see Claire Phipps, Adam Vaughan, and Oliver Milman, “Global climate march 2015: hundreds of thousands march around the world – as it happened” (November 29, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/live/2015/nov/29/global-peoples-climate-change-march-2015-day-of-action-live>

blocks long on the sidewalk along the three kilometer route of the march, expressing their demands on hand-held signs. This was definitely the most upbeat message of the day and the atmosphere was positive, an attempt to redeem the authorities' efforts to shut things down with creativity and improvisation – do people holding the hands of their neighbors constitute an “illegal assembly”? The police decided they did not.

Back at la République, another planned statement of symbolic indignation was made, when a large swath of the square was covered in footwear of all sorts, including a pair from the Pope and many children's shoes making tiny but poignant statements of their futures at stake.



Protestors' shoes at the Place de la République. Photo by John Foran.

The Place de la République was also dotted by a couple of thousand climate activists, waving flags, dancing, and chanting. Around 1 p.m. small groups of black-clad anarchists, mostly young and mostly male, started to claim street space on one end of the square, and hundreds of police, many in full riot gear, formed ranks on the side streets on the corners. By 1:30 there was a tense stand-off with the two sides no more than a meter apart, the crowd having grown to more than 500 people. When some pushing occurred at the point of contact in one of

those side streets, the first tear gas was launched, close enough so I could taste it. The crowd retreated slowly, throwing some of the shoes that they had picked up, with other projectiles, the police advancing toward the square under cover of lots more tear gas. The action ended with over 200 people arrested and many hundreds more “kettled” in by the police, who kept them there for several hours without permission to leave.



The first tear gas is launched. Photo by John Foran.

Opinion was divided on the political meaning and efficacy of the actions that led to the confrontation. For a sympathetic account, see the *Democracy Now!* [broadcast](#) from on the spot, which clearly shows the all-too-normal brutality of the French police, who trampled on the flowers and candles of the memorial to the victims of the November 13 massacres to get at the activists.²⁰⁰ Though DN’s story focused on

²⁰⁰ “Thousands Defy Paris State of Emergency, Protest Ban to Sound the Alarm on Global Climate Crisis,” *Democracy Now!* (November 30, 2015), https://www.democracynow.org/2015/11/30/thousands_defy_paris_state_of_emergency?auto-start=true&get_clicky_key=suggested_next_story
We also have a video from Mariah Brennan Clegg of the Climate Justice Project who was caught in the kettle, but eventually let go:

the police violence, some activists were not so sanguine, signaling a certain division within the movement and its links with other important struggles over what tactics are most appropriate to the tasks at hand, discussions that remain relevant to this day.

What's crystal clear is that the ban on demonstrations, which is being selectively and arbitrarily enforced, is dampening down our ability – and I think especially the ability of ordinary people – to get their messages heard. But there are many smart people doing lots of what they do well both inside and outside the COP so their publics are getting good information and analysis. It's more the general media story that concerns me, as movement building has to go through that route as well.

The French state is most concerned about what will happen when lots of people are angry and unhappy at the outcome on December 12. The house arrest of two dozen activists the week before the COP began and the police operation at the Place de la République are meant to send a signal to the movement and weaken its resolve. It is a very damning indictment that the French hosts of COP 21 are bent on shutting down popular participation, and that, in turn, has angered people beyond the climate movement, and should concern us all. At bottom, as former Bolivian delegate Pablo Solón [said](#) the day before the COP started, “They are using fear to hide a very bad agreement.... The Paris agreement is an agreement that will see the planet burn.”²⁰¹

Trying to Generate Momentum

As the talks started, some bold new initiatives were announced, each aimed at showing commitment to the cause by key players:

- India is going to head a coalition of 120 countries to [create](#) an International Agency for Solar Technologies and Applications

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8KkWYuX4nVHa3dCYnJZNEZwQ2M/view>

²⁰¹ “‘The Paris Agreement Will See the Planet Burn’: Former Bolivian Climate Negotiator Pablo Solón,” *Democracy Now!* (December 1, 2015), https://www.democracynow.org/2015/12/1/the_paris_agreement_will_see_the

(Iasta), which “aims to spread cheap solar technology across the globe with pooled policy knowledge.”²⁰²

- The US and eighteen other major emitting nations, including the UK, Canada, China, Brazil, India and South Africa, [pledged](#) to double funds for clean energy research for a total of some \$20 billion over five years.²⁰³
- Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Richard Branson, and other global billionaires launched the [Breakthrough Energy Coalition](#), which will combine governments, researchers, and investors to speed the global transition to renewable energies.²⁰⁴

One can look at these announcements in various ways, with a skeptical eye noting that these are some of the countries whose national pledges fall squarely into the “inadequate” range, and a set of investors whose carbon footprints and unfulfilled past promises in the case of Branson leave much to be desired. But such a transition we do, indeed, need, and so...

One possible game changer was [announced](#) by the African group here, which set up the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) with the goal of building 100 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2020 and 300 GW by 2030, an enormous ambition and emissions reducer considering that the total electrical generation capacity of the whole continent at the moment is 150 GW.²⁰⁵

The Negotiations

Meanwhile, at the COP itself, the crucial body negotiating the treaty, the ADP, began its work on Sunday, November 29, giving themselves an extra day to accomplish their task. But they only worked for an hour. UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres said, without

²⁰² Arthur Neslen, “India unveils global solar alliance of 120 countries at Paris climate summit” (November 30, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/nov/30/india-set-to-unveil-global-solar-alliance-of-120-countries-at-paris-climate-summit>

²⁰³ Suzanne Goldberg, “Major powers pledge \$20bn for green energy research” (November 29, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/nov/30/major-powers-pledge-20bn-for-green-energy-research>

²⁰⁴ Breakthrough Energy, <http://www.b-t.energy/>

²⁰⁵ <http://www.arei.org/>

irony, “Never has the future of so many been in the hands of so few,” her attempt to summon courage and greatness from the assembled delegates unwittingly revealing the privilege and injustice at the heart of the process.

On Monday, and into Tuesday at noon, opening statements were delivered. There were lots of grand speeches and few surprises here; instead a day and a half was lost for the negotiations. Groups representing well over 100 countries – the LDCs, G77 plus China, AOSIS, and even BASIC [the major powers of the global South, including Brazil, South Africa, India, and China] – reiterated their calls for a 1.5 degree limit, stating “our very survival is at stake.” Along with representatives from civil society, there was a strong call for phasing out fossil fuels and transitioning to a completely renewable energy economy by 2050. There was a common call also for a five year review of INDCs [national climate action pledges], and revisions to make them stronger in emissions reductions. The words “climate justice” were uttered by the representative for indigenous peoples – a call for climate justice that comes from “mountains, rivers, forests, oceans, and people,” saying that a two degree target would be “catastrophic” to nature and to people, and make achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals impossible. This was one intervention that received applause from the audience.

Global civil society tried, as ever, to make its voice heard, sometimes in conjunction with national parties. Christopher Loeak, President of the Marshall Islands delivered “millions of petitions calling for 100% clean energy for all” to heads of state as talks began. The first of dozens of “side events” that civil society puts on inside the COP began, as did the press conferences held during the negotiations. One of the most powerful was that of indigenous peoples, with Tom Goldtooth insisting on “The sacredness of all nature, of all of life. That is why we are suspicious of solutions coming from the hallways of the UNFCCC,” and in particular the market-based REDD centerpiece on deforestation, labelled a “deceitful scam” that trades emissions for the protection of forests. This all too often involves taking away the rights of indigenous peoples who already live there, repeating the colonial crimes of rendering the inhabitants of this part of the world invisible, or worse, taking their lives in the process. Meanwhile the purchasers continue to emit CO₂, while being hailed as contributing somehow to reducing emissions.

The Climate Vulnerable Forum – now comprising forty-three countries – assumed moral leadership of COP 21 by declaring that they would achieve full decarbonization of their economies, running on one hundred percent renewable energy – by 2050, and called on the world to do so. This is big for two reasons: the CVF has more than doubled in size, now representing more than one billion people, and they have set the most ambitious emissions reductions in the world as their goal. Bangladesh’s Minister of Environment Anwar Hossain Manju issued the [challenge](#): “We refuse to be the sacrifice of the international community in Paris. Anything that takes our survival off the table here is a red line. All parties have an obligation to act. Not doing so is a crime.” Costa Rica’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Manuel Gonzalez also had justice on his lips: “Keeping warming to a minimum – to below 1.5 degrees – won’t simply deliver safety and prosperity, it will also deliver justice.”²⁰⁶ The message that the prescription of conventionally measured capitalist growth in GDP is the way toward a just energy transition must also be given the lie.

A Strike for the Planet

On Monday, November 30 I witnessed the public launch of the student climate strike movement, joining a gathering of about twenty-five people for a day-long workshop. Organizer Kjell Kühne of the Leave It in the Ground initiative [[LINGO](#)²⁰⁷] told us: “There’s not much time. But we have to do this, to stop fossil fuel extraction. We have no other choice. But there *is* hope.” In his view, hope lies in all the things that make our enemies weaker: the fossil fuel divestment movement, law suits and legal action for the climate; pushing for 100 percent clean energy; and creating an economy for the common good.

Fifteen year-old eco hip-hop artist Xiuhtezcatl Tonatiuh was in attendance, and told *New Internationalist* reporters Marienna Pope-Weidemann and Samir Dathi, who have given us an excellent [account](#) of the day’s events, “In the light of a collapsing world, what better time to be

²⁰⁶ Climate Vulnerable Forum, “World’s vulnerable open gateway to climate safe future at Paris” (November 30, 2015), <http://www.thecvf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/High-Level-Meeting-1.pdf>

²⁰⁷ LINGO, <http://leave-it-in-the-ground.org/>

born than now? Because our generation gets to rewrite history.”²⁰⁸ And that is precisely what this movement of students from five continents intends to do in the coming year, and far beyond.



Mexican activist and co-organizer Paulina Sanchez greeted the frazzled author with a hug. Photo by Climate Strike.

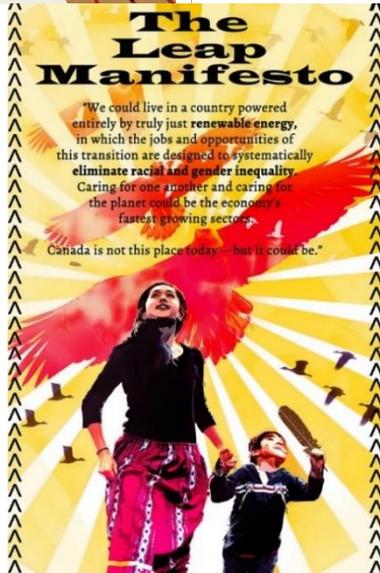
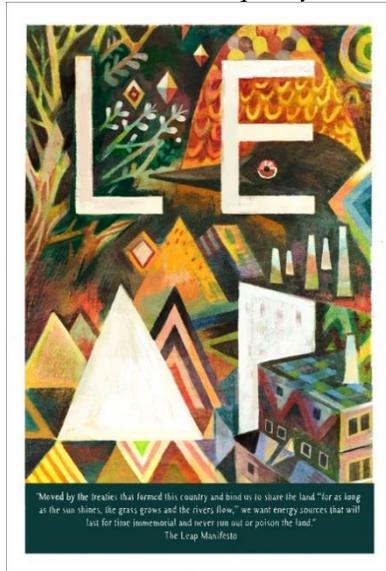
Of Leap Years and Manifestos

On Wednesday, December 2, we went to hear the group that has spearheaded Canada’s [Leap Manifesto](#),²⁰⁹ including filmmaker Avi Lewis, author Naomi Klein, and leaders and activists of indigenous, labor, water rights, and other movements. The “momentum of the no” that has built a series of wins against extractivism in the tar sands, the Arctic, and elsewhere in the past year, must be balanced by “a vision of the yes” that channels the deep desire for radical, ambitious, and bold change. We have a choice between “The politicians locked up in Le

²⁰⁸ Marienna Pope-Weidemann, “The youth movement strikes back” (December 2, 2015), <https://newint.org/blog/2015/12/02/the-youth-movement-strikes-back/>

²⁰⁹ The Leap Manifesto, <https://leapmanifesto.org/en/the-leap-manifesto/>

Bourget [who] are living in a dream world,” and a politics of intersectionality that does the difficult work of building bridges between movements who have rarely worked together until quite recently, across generations, racial divides, gender lines, and classes. “A time of multiple, overlapping crises requires integrated solutions that radically build more just economies and societies based on radical equality.”



Posters by Julie Flett, Matt Forsyth, and Angela Sterritt.

Maude Barlow, of the Council of Canadians, told us to look behind the fine words of the heads of state assembled in Paris to the real agenda of COP 21, based on a globalization of unlimited growth, austerity, and secretive trade agreements while three-quarters of the world's people cannot find permanent work with decent pay and benefits.

It is fitting to give the last word on the opening days of COP 21 to an activist described by writer [Jamey Kelsey-Fry](#):

There is a pervasive sense of courage in the face of extreme adversity. When I ask people if they are frightened, they say that they are but that they are also completely determined, and that they are proud to be able to be here and take action. One unnamed young French woman goes further: “With climate change we are talking about unimaginable violence, violence on a massive scale. Climate change is a war, the biggest war we have ever seen. We must represent everyone and we must act now. If you do not come here to fight for climate justice, act in your own homes, in your own towns and cities.”²¹⁰

2016 is a leap year. Strange and magical things can happen on that day. May it be a whole year of leaps for climate justice.

Sources for following the COP

UNFCCC webcasts for live and recorded sessions and press conferences at COP21:

<http://unfccc6.meta-fusion.com/cop21/events>

²¹⁰ Jamie Kelsey-Fry, “To the (inflatable) barricades!” (November 27, 2015), <https://newint.org/blog/2015/11/27/to-the-inflatable-barricades/>

YEAR ZERO FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

Climate Action Network [CAN], *Eco Newsletter*, <http://www.climate-network.org/eco-newsletters>

Third World Network [TWN], “Paris News Updates,” <http://www.twn.my/>

International Institute for Sustainable Development [IISD], daily *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop21/enb/about.html>

Democracy Now! broadcasting daily from COP 21: <http://www.democracynow.org/>

IBON International Updates: <http://iboninternational.org/>

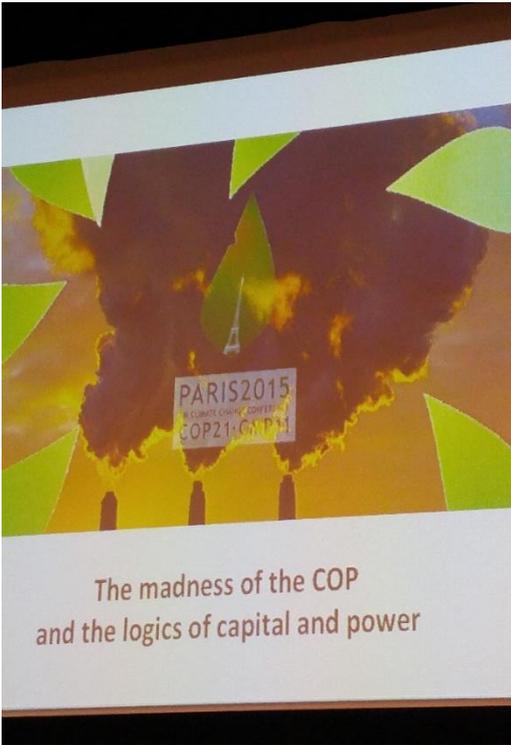
Climate Justice Project blog posts: www.climatejusticeproject.org

2015

9

THE INSANITY OF THE COP: WE MUST ADOPT A DIFFERENT VISION

December 7, 2015



Graphic from the International Tribunal of the Rights of Nature, Paris, December 5, 2015. Photo by John Foran.

AMY GOODMAN: What did you make of President Obama's speech on Monday here at the U.N. Climate Summit?

JAMES HANSEN: Well, we have to decide, are these people stupid or are they just uninformed? Are they badly advised? I think that he really believes he's doing something. You know, he wants to have a legacy, a legacy having done something in the climate problem. But what he is proposing is totally ineffectual. I mean, there are some small things that are talked about here, the fact that they may have a fund for investment and invest more in clean energies, but these are minor things. As long as fossil fuels are dirt cheap, people will keep burning them.

– [Interviewed](#) on *Democracy Now!*, December 4, 2015²¹¹

Thus spoke climate scientist James Hansen after listening to the statements of the heads of state at the Paris COP 21 negotiations last week. He went on to [say](#): “What I am hearing is that the heads of state are planning to clap each other on the back and say this is a very successful conference. If that is what happens, we are screwing the next generation, because we are doing the same as before.... we hear the same old thing as Kyoto [in 1997]. We are asking each country to cap emissions, or reduce emissions. In science when you do a well conducted experiment you expect to get the same result. So why are we talking about doing the same again? This is half-arsed and half-baked.”²¹²

We are now entering the second and final week of the talks, and there is considerable discussion in much of the world press about the growing possibility of a historic agreement. Ministers will settle down

²¹¹ “Climate Scientist James Hansen Warns World is on Wrong Track to Prevent Runaway Global Warming,” *Democracy Now!* (December 4, 2015), https://www.democracynow.org/2015/12/4/climate_scientist_james_hansen_warns_world?utm_source=Democracy+Now!&utm_campaign=dda1a7ce60-Daily_Digest&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_fa2346a853-dda1a7ce60-190186665

²¹² John Vidal, “UN on wrong track with plans to limit global warming to 2C, says top scientist” (December 3, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/03/un-wrong-track-plans-limit-global-warming-2c-top-scientist-climate-change>

to resolve the many parts of the [treaty text](#)²¹³ still in brackets, with diametrically opposed competing proposals still very much found across the still sizable forty-plus page document.

But like Hansen and many others here in Paris, I come not to praise the COP, but to bury it. That, certainly, was the verdict of the [International Tribunal of the Rights of Nature](#), held over two days in a packed auditorium in Paris on December 4 and 5.²¹⁴ And a careful look at how the case was made is the subject of this chapter.

Another, Older Way of Looking at the World Anew

First, some background. In 2010, a gathering of 35,000 people in Cochabamba, Bolivia, discussed, and after much deliberation, adopted the [Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth](#). It is a must read for all who would be Earth Citizens.

Its foundational premises are that “we are all part of Mother Earth, an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings with a common destiny;... 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;... conscious of the urgency of taking decisive, collective action to transform structures and systems that cause climate change and other threats to Mother Earth.”²¹⁵

From this it follows that Mother Earth, of which we are only a part, has inherent and inalienable rights, among them:

²¹³ United Nations, “Draft Paris Outcome” (December 5, 2015), <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/adp2/eng/106r01.pdf>

²¹⁴ Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, “International Rights of Nature Tribunal – Paris,” <http://therightsofnature.org/rights-of-nature-tribunal-paris/>

²¹⁵ The Rights of Nature, “Universal Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth” (April 22, 2010), <http://therightsofnature.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-UNIVERSAL-DECLARATION-OF-THE-RIGHTS-OF-MOTHER-EARTH-APRIL-22-2010.pdf>

- (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.

In view of these rights, it follows that each of us, as human beings (and crucially, this applies to nation states and public institutions, as well as businesses and corporations, who are part of Mother Earth, whether they recognize it or not) has responsibility for “respecting and living in harmony with Mother Earth.” And therefore, the Declaration obliges (i.e. requires and insists) that all of the above entities *must* “ensure that the pursuit of human wellbeing contributes to the wellbeing of Mother Earth, now and in the future; establish and apply effective norms and laws for the defence, protection and conservation of the rights of Mother Earth; respect, protect, conserve and where necessary, restore the integrity, of the vital ecological cycles, processes and balances of Mother Earth; 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.”

The Declaration furthermore empowers all human beings and institutions “to defend the rights of Mother Earth and of all beings; establish precautionary and restrictive measures to prevent human activities from causing species extinction, the destruction of ecosystems or

the disruption of ecological cycles; guarantee peace and eliminate nuclear, chemical and biological weapons; promote and support practices of respect for Mother Earth and all beings, in accordance with their own cultures, traditions and customs,” and finally, “promote economic systems that are in harmony with Mother Earth and in accordance with the rights recognized in this Declaration.”

Though ignored in the halls of the UN when Bolivia tried to bring it to the General Assembly for adoption, the Rights of Nature have been taken up and defended by global activists in many parts of the world. In January 2014, the first International Tribunal on the Rights of Nature and Mother Earth was held in Quito, Ecuador, and chaired by Dr. Vandana Shiva, trying such cases as the oil pollution of Chevron-Texaco in Ecuador, the catastrophic BP Deepwater Horizon spill off the Gulf Coast of Mexico, instances of hydraulic fracturing in the US, and the condition of Australia’s Great Barrier Reef. A second tribunal was held at the end of 2014 during COP 20 in Lima, Peru, looking at specific mining projects in Ecuador and Peru, the Belo Monte Dam in Brazil, and the REDD program on deforestation, a centerpiece of the climate negotiations.

The Tribunal is hosted by the [Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature](#),²¹⁶ a coalition of movements and organizations from every continent whose founding members include the [Fundación Pachamama](#),²¹⁷ [Global Exchange](#),²¹⁸ the [Pachamama Alliance](#),²¹⁹ the [Council of Canadians](#),²²⁰ the [Australian Earth Laws Alliance](#),²²¹ [EnAct International](#),²²²

²¹⁶ Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, “Founding Organizations and Members,” <http://therightsofnature.org/founding-organizations/>

²¹⁷ Fundación Pachamama, <https://www.pachamama.org/advocacy/fundacion-pachamama>

²¹⁸ Global Exchange, <http://www.globalexchange.org/>

²¹⁹ Pachamama Alliance, <https://www.pachamama.org/>

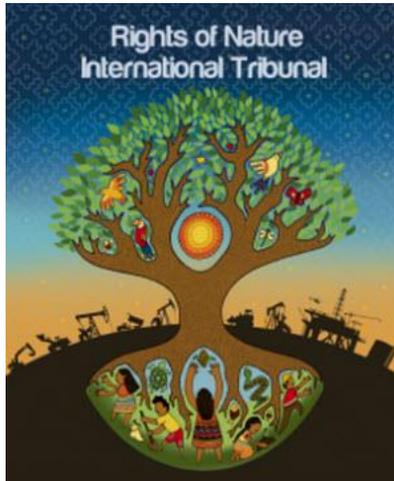
²²⁰ The Council of Canadians Acting for Social Justice, <http://canadians.org/>

²²¹ Australian Earth Laws Alliance, <http://www.earthlaws.org.au/>

²²² EnAct International Governance for a sustainable future, <http://www.enact-international.com/>

the [Gaia Foundation](#),²²³ [WildLaw UK](#),²²⁴ and [Navdanya International](#).²²⁵ The Paris Tribunal was conducted in partnership with [End Ecocide on Earth](#),²²⁶ and supported by [NaturesRights](#)²²⁷ and [Attac France](#).²²⁸

The judges for this year's tribunal in Paris include Tom Goldtooth (Indigenous Environmental Network), economist Alberto Acosta (former president of the Constituent Assembly in Ecuador), Ruth Nyambura from Kenya (African Biodiversity Network), Osprey Orielle Lake of the US-based Women's Earth and Climate Action Network, Nnimmo Bassey, former director of Friends of the Earth International, and federal prosecutor Felicio Pontes from Brazil, with other accomplished judges drawn from academia and the climate justice organizations around the world.²²⁹



²²³ The Gaia Foundation, <http://www.gaiafoundation.org/>

²²⁴ Lilla, "Das läuft im Internet," *Impressum Internet Service Provider* (July 24, 2016), <http://www.wildlawuk.org/>

²²⁵ Navdanya, <http://www.navdanya.org/>

²²⁶ End Ecocide on Earth, <https://www.endecocide.org/>

²²⁷ Nature Rights, <http://www.naturerights.com/site/>

²²⁸ Attac, <https://france.attac.org/>

²²⁹ "Giving Mother Earth a Voice in Paris International Tribunal on Rights of Nature Convened during COP21" (November 27, 2015), <http://the-rightsofnature.org/wp-content/uploads/Press-Release-on-Paris-Rights-of-Nature-Tribunal-final.pdf>

A Different Kind of Opening Ceremony

While the COP is famous for the flowery words of the nations on day one (which would be inspiring if they led to deeds), the Tribunal opened with a different invocation, an indigenous song to the six cardinal directions – east, south, west, north, the sky above, and the earth below. We did this to “narrow the distance between our head and our heart,” advice the negotiators would do well to follow.

There followed some of the most beautiful words of welcome for an occasion I have ever heard, spoken by Casey Camp-Horinek of the Ponca Nation in Oklahoma, and I offer here a poor paraphrase of some of what I heard.



Casey Camp-Horinek. Photo by John Foran.

This morning we all woke up to the same sun. Here, in Paris! We also felt some pain, because the Earth has become so ugly. We recognize human violence in so many places. Maybe we don't deserve to be here right now.

But maybe we can make the effort to see that we are but a small fraction of what exists in Mother Earth.

Sometimes we sundancers go without food or drink so that we may understand what that feels like, and so that future generations may have these things.

When we share this breath, it's not new breath. We share this breath with all things. Science says the same thing, in a different way.

What we have forgotten is to give back sometimes. We think that paying a bill with money or a plastic card makes things alright, is payment in full.

You should know better. Aren't you part of Nature? You haven't forgotten her, have you? And if you have, feel her now.

In Oklahoma, we've had over 5,000 earthquakes this year, from fracking. We are stealing the liberty of the planet itself. We must learn to make decisions about the entire community of life.

This tribunal is a people's convention – of all peoples – at a time when governments are locked inside negotiations that will lead nowhere.

We will bring seven cases to prove that Earth is a living being. That her rights have been violated, and that we have made her sick. And we will present some solutions and remedies.

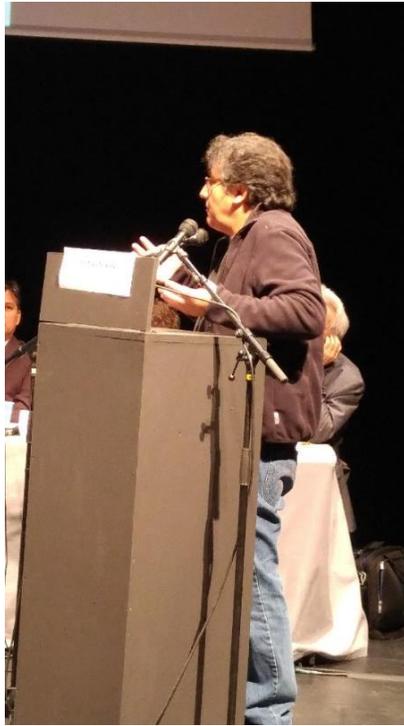
The Central Case of Climate Change

The most encompassing of the cases brought to Paris was the issue of climate change itself. It was tried by Pablo Solón, former Bolivian chief negotiator at the COP and one of the co-organizers of the 2010 Cochabamba gathering. Solón set out to establish that climate change is “a crime that is a systemic violation of almost all the inherent Rights of Mother Earth.”

He asked: who is responsible for climate change? It is not humanity as a whole. The richest ten percent of the world's population bear responsibility for almost half of all the emissions caused by human consumption. Meanwhile, just ninety companies have produced a staggering sixty-three percent of all global greenhouse gas emissions from 1854 to 2010 – some 914 gigatons of CO_{2e} out of a total of 1,450 (or the carbon dioxide equivalent of all greenhouse gas emissions). Of

these, just six giant fossil fuel companies have produced sixteen percent of all emissions ever: Chevron (3.52 percent), Exxon (3.22), Saudi Arabia's Aramco (3.17), BP (2.47), Russia's Gazprom (2.22), and Shell (2.12). If we look at nation-states, the countries of the United States, the European Union, China, and Russia are the most responsible, in historical terms.

If we look at the INDCs that the nations have brought as their emissions reduction pledges to COP 21, they will not reduce annual global emissions from the current level of about fifty gigatons CO_{2e} but instead we will actually have an *increase* to sixty gigatons CO_{2e} by 2030!



Pablo Solón. Photo by John Foran.

Since nothing that is likely to survive in the COP negotiating text requires real emissions cuts, limits fossil fuel extraction, halts deforestation, or reduces the practice of industrial agriculture, the whole process is a form of “schizophrenia” that doesn’t address the causes of climate

change, let alone attack them aggressively and in line with climate science.

As Solón put it, “there is a madness of the COP with respect to capital and power.” The case is therefore against corporations, governments, the UNFCCC, and the “capitalist, productivist, anthropocentric, and patriarchal systems.”

Witnesses for Mother Earth

At this point various expert witnesses were called upon to speak to the many issues raised by the case of climate change.

Energy

French activist Maxime Combes charged the fossil fuel industry, whether transnational corporations or publicly-owned national industries as public enemy number one, and singled out ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson’s declaration that they will continue to burn fossil fuels as long as possible as a crime against humanity. He noted the danger of treaty text that states that measures cannot be taken that go against the current rules of the global economy. Combes called for an immediate moratorium on all new fossil fuel exploration as a minimum measure in the right direction.

Desmond D’Sa of the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance and winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize for his tireless organizing in South Africa, stated that “Society is paying a huge price because of our greed and our thirst for fossil fuels. What is needed is the world’s people to come together. We can’t rely on the governments – they will fail us. It’s time to find a new way of how to deal with the COP. It needs a new approach, an approach that puts people first. We have to start pushing back to dismantle the corporations and the governments that support them. Nature is not going to wait for us. Neither will anything else. The time is right. Right now.”

The nuclear power option was ruled a crime against Nature “for eternity” by Roland Debordes, President of La Commission de Recherche et d’Information Indépendantes sur la Radioactivité ([CRIIRAD](http://www.criirad.org)),²³⁰ who called it the riskiest form of energy. It is also one

²³⁰ Association CRIIRAD Laboratoire, <http://www.criirad.org/english/presentation.html>

of the dirtiest, as evidenced by the terrible effect on the public health of communities where uranium is mined, including on indigenous land in the US and in Niger. He concluded: “Nuclear power is not for human beings. We do not have enough morality for it.”

Water and forests

Global water expert Maude Barlow began her testimony by noting: “We take water for granted – for our pleasure, and for profit. But every day we put waste into water that equals the weight of all humans! The deforestation of the Amazon is contributing to the drought in California. Water is an absolutely crucial part of the picture that is almost entirely missing here in Paris. Two billion people drink contaminated water every day. More children die of water-borne disease than any other cause. Water is the first face of climate change, of refugees, of conflict.”

Deeming the global water situation an unequivocal crime against humanity and nature, she called for a new water ethic. Against Nestlé’s criminal proposal that after putting aside 1.5 percent of the world’s water for the poor, the rest should be privatized, she argued “Water is a human right that should never be privatized. Water has rights too. The way we abuse and take water for granted is a crime against nature, forests, wetlands, and other species. We now have water trading, which is insanity. We absolutely have to keep water out of the market system.”

She ended with Martin Luther King Jr.’s words: “Legislation may not protect the heart, but it will restrict the heartless.”

When asked what would happen if we did not have forests, David Kureeba of the Global Forest Coalition in Uganda answered: “We would not have life. If we harm Mother Earth, she will penalize us. We would be destroying our own lives. Communities can manage forests better than governments. We need people power.”

Agriculture and the financialization of nature

Ivonne Yáñez of [Acción Ecológica](http://www.accionecologica.org/)²³¹ led several expert witnesses

²³¹ Acción Ecológica, <http://www.accionecologica.org/>

through the problems with the UNFCCC REDD reforestation program, which like other new market mechanisms is based on calculating the monetary value of “ecosystem services.” German biologist Jutta Kill explained how one aspect of an ecosystem can be isolated and made equivalent with another ecosystem service somewhere else, all the while pretending that no harm has been done to the biosystem, the climate, or Earth as an organic whole. French economist and member of ATTAC Geneviève Azam called the neoliberal financialization of nature a “veritable pollution.” The concept of “natural capital” is “nature for economists.” Now, instead of being concerned with the actual environmental impact of a project, it becomes simply a question of compensation, of finding some “equivalent” to “offset” the harm. This cold utilitarian substitution of one of its integral parts for another marks the death of nature as a whole.

World-renowned global justice icon Vandana Shiva prosecuted the case against industrial agriculture. We were treated to a preview of a [film](#) in progress, *Farmers Lives Matter*, in which one Punjabi farmer said: “The Earth now has cancer. We now have cancer. The pesticides are intoxicants. The more you use, the more you need.”²³²

She called on several witnesses to make her case.

Badrul Alam, a leader of the Bangladesh Krishok Federation, the largest peasant organization in that country, contrasted the model of peasant agriculture based on the principle of food sovereignty with corporate “Climate Smart” agriculture based on GMO seeds, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides being pushed by Monsanto, Cargill, and DuPont inside the COP, calling the latter “not smart enough.”

Journalist Marie-Monique Robin noted that dozens of independent studies have demonstrated the toxicity of glyphosate, the active ingredient in Monsanto’s signature weed-killing product, RoundUp, in wide use across the world. Glyphosate was first introduced in the 1960s as a powerful industrial cleaner, and was recently pronounced to be “[probably carcinogenic](#)”²³³ to humans by the WTO. It is definitely

²³² Indra Shekhar Singh, “Farmers’ Lives Matter – Punjab” (October 22, 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8R6nIUb8XR8>

²³³ Lorraine Chow, “Monsanto’s Roundup — Most Popular Weed Killer in U.S. — ‘Probably’ Causes Cancer, WHO Report Says” (March, 23 2015), <http://www.ecowatch.com/monsantos-roundup-most-popular-weed-killer-in-u-s-probably-causes-canc-1882023016.html>

carcinogenic in animals, and as Robin put it, “A lot of scientists will deny it, but *we* are animals.”

The case against industrial agriculture was further supported by the testimony of Ronnie Cummins, long active in social justice movements and the founder of the [Organic Consumers Association](#).²³⁴ He estimated that fifteen percent of all fossil fuel use comes from industrial agriculture, and another fifteen percent from the processing, packaging, and transportation of its products. Then our food waste ends up as a source of the potent greenhouse gas methane. “Industrial food is poison,” he concluded tartly.

Technologies

Pat Mooney, Executive Director of the [etc group](#)²³⁵ which tracks new technologies, focused attention on how the promotion of such technologies at the COP, among them carbon capture and storage (CCS) or emerging forms of extreme genetic engineering are a dangerous element of the Paris negotiations. The term “net zero emissions” is used to justify the lack of ambition in the collective INDC pledges by gambling that risky, unproven, and as yet not even discovered decarbonization technologies will allow us to keep using fossil fuels because we will eventually be able to remove “excess” carbon dioxide from the atmosphere! Quipping that “Pachamama would be doing just fine if there weren’t so many macho papas around,” he said of the promotion of these fixes: “This is absolutely insane. That we would leave Paris and have confidence that BP, Shell, and Volkswagen will take care of the problem of overshoot. We can’t leave Paris with anyone believing that is the answer.”

Silvia Ribeiro, etc’s Latin American Director, followed this with a concise critique of large-scale geo-engineering schemes that are most prominently pursued in the US, UK, Canada, Russia, and on the local level, in China. Whether putting aerosols into the atmosphere, iron sulfate into the ocean, or giant mirrors into orbit, these promised solutions will disequilibrate the climate and can’t be experimented with at

²³⁴ Organic Consumers Association, <https://www.organicconsumers.org/about-oca>

²³⁵ etcGROUP, <http://www.etcgroup.org/users/pat-mooney>

scale to see if they work or are safe. They also tend to be capital-intensive projects beyond community control, and almost all of them would be irreversible. Most importantly, they cut off the full flowering of the safer, more just alternative technologies and practices that we need to, and can, develop.

Trade

Tony Clarke, Founder of the [Polaris Institute](#)²³⁶ in Canada and board member of the [International Forum on Globalization](#)²³⁷ testified on the impact of free trade agreements on climate change. Trade agreements and the corporations that benefit from institutions such as the World Trade Organization are the engine of global economic expansion. Transnational corporations “look upon nature as capital. They see Earth as a dead organism, to be exploited and extracted from.” Free trade agreements are hindering the full development of alternative energy. The only remedy for the planet’s climate is to dismantle corporate sovereignty and power in a complete overhaul of the present system in favor of global trade justice. The good news, he told us, is that there is a people’s treaty being developed to attempt just that.

In a kind of summary, for me, Gloria Ushigua, an indigenous Ecuadoran activist, testified: “We are fighting for our lives, for our land.”

A Judgment on the COP

The prosecutors, witnesses, and judges knew their subjects. They were all qualified experts, skilled in a variety of ways of approaching the climate crisis, which at bottom is a human, existential issue. It can only be confronted honestly and squarely by each of us rising to the occasion and taking responsibility in a time of planetary crisis.

²³⁶ Institut Polaris Institute, “Alliances and Partners,” http://www.polaris-institute.org/alliances_partners

²³⁷ International Forum on Globalization, “Position Statement,” <http://ifg.org/about/position-statement/>



Gloria Ushigua. Photo of a picture taken by John Foran.

The overall verdict of the Tribunal is that the Paris agreement will lock in the worst abuses of capitalism and guarantee climate catastrophe.

The current logic of the COP, which isn't sustainable, just, or innocent of multiple crimes comes with the clear intention of committing many more. We need *another* logic and set of principles to guide us. And we need a path to get there...

The Tribunal represents a possible alternative logic for a global agreement, one based on a very different conception of rights – of Nature, of human communities, and of future generations who must find a balanced way to live on Earth, if they, and she, are to thrive.

And though we surely don't have the upper hand inside COP 21, it is entirely possible that that is not where the real battle for the planet will be fought.

There *is* a different way. All we have to do is enlarge the many paths to it that already exist, and create many more new ones. This we must do, and this we will do.

Climate Talks at the 1.5 Degree Crossroads

December 9, 2015



Activists at COP 21 in front of mock Eiffel Tower. Photo credit: [SBS TV/Radio Australia](#)²³⁸

There's an interesting story developing at the Paris COP 21 UN climate summit that may have more to it than meets the eye. It's the momentum that has been growing in week two for a threshold target of no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming above pre-industrial levels.

Going into the COP, over 100 countries of the 195 at the table had

²³⁸ SBS,

http://www.sbs.com.au/news/sites/sbs.com.au.news/files/styles/body_image/public/20151205001206184609-original_0.jpg?itok=CTrko-yi

affirmed that 1.5 degrees should be adopted instead of the 2 degrees that has been a non-controversial ambition for the past several years of the talks. Leadership on this change has been exercised by a new grouping, the Climate Vulnerable Forum, which insisted on it in a [declaration](#)²³⁹ signed by forty-three countries just before the COP started, as well as by the more than forty nations in the Alliance of Small Island States. For these nations, it is their very survival that is at stake, and one of the global climate justice movement's rallying cries is "1.5 to stay alive!"

Against this bloc, none of the wealthy countries, who are responsible for most of the historical emissions so far, had endorsed 1.5 on the tacit grounds that they would then need to rapidly and radically transform their energy systems to renewable sources, flying in the face of the powerful corporations who have influence on these governments – especially the United States – and who argue (with some accuracy) that it would spell the end of the high (and wasteful) consumption, high mobility lifestyles of much of their populations.

A Bombshell, or, Something New under the Sun

This picture changed in the course of the negotiations last week when host country France, together with Germany, Europe's most powerful economy, came out in favor of enshrining 1.5 degrees in the text.

It changed even more on Monday of week two when Canada, US, and China unexpectedly joined them, according to an [article](#) in *The Guardian*:

“We are working with other countries on some formulation that would include 1.5C,” Todd Stern, the State Department envoy, told a press conference.

China said it was supporting a 1.5C target and for rich countries to accept the principle that they are responsible for long term and irreversible damage done by climate change.

“There are some things that you cannot adapt to. We need to see something to address permanent

²³⁹ Climate Vulnerable Forum, “The Manila-Paris Declaration” (November 30, 2015), <http://www.thevcf.org/the-manila-paris-declaration/>

losses,” said a spokesman for the G77 and China group of 132 countries. A Chinese spokesman said: “We stand with other developing countries.”

Canada, regarded as a climate villain for the last decade, also came around with Catherine McKenna, the new environment and climate change minister, embracing 1.5C in closed door sessions.

The EU spokeswoman Carole Dieschebourg said ministers were “open” to a 1.5C target. “The difficult issues will be finance and differentiation,” she said, referring to the idea that rich countries should do more than poor countries. “We have a difficult week ahead. All the major issues are unresolved.”

This surprising development has generated some pushback, from both expected and unexpected quarters:

But there were some prominent hold-outs. India said the 1.5C target raised immediate issues of fairness because it would put greater limits on capacity of developing countries to grow their economies.

“Why not 1C, why 1.5C,” Ashok Lavasa, India’s lead negotiator, said. “The moment we are talking about target we are also talking about carbon budgets. We need to look at the development space that is available and therefore those who are eager to maintain it below 2C should actually be working to maintain that carbon space so that they don’t compromise the needs of developing countries.”

Campaign groups meanwhile said the aspiration to 1.5C was far-removed from reality. The current pledges from 185 countries [won’t even restrict warming to 2C](#).²⁴⁰

Erich Pica, the director of Friends of the Earth US,

²⁴⁰ Taryn Fransen and Kelly Levin, “INSIDER: Why Are INDC Studies Reaching Different Temperature Estimates?” (November 9, 2015), <http://www.wri.org/blog/2015/11/insider-why-are-indc-studies-reaching-different-temperature-estimates>

accused the rich countries of backing vulnerable states on the 1.5C goal to crowd out bigger developing countries.

“There is a dangerous push that developed countries are using on this push to 1.5C to blur the lines,” he said. “The US and European countries are adopting the idea of 1.5C as a mitigation target but they are blurring of the lines on what has to happen to have a just and fair sharing of the 1.5C equation.”²⁴¹

It also raises the question: why would some of the biggest contributors to global warming be making these statements? These are the same countries who have given past COPs the nickname of “Conference of Polluters,” so why would they advocate an ambitious new goal and stand with countries whose need for massive adaptation support they should be funding with the Green Climate Fund and funds for recovering from extreme weather events like the cyclone Yolanda that killed 10,000 people the day before COP 19 began in Warsaw in 2013?

The Science and Politics of 1.5

Let’s step back for a moment from these negotiating maneuvers and take a sober look at the climate crisis we are in. Climate science, of course, is one of the ultimate arbiters here. We have currently warmed the Earth 0.85 degrees Celsius over the pre-industrial level since around the year 1800, and put enough greenhouse gases into the atmosphere for this to rise to 1.4 degrees in due course, owing to the lag effect between rising CO₂ levels and actual surface temperature warming (a lag partly because the oceans have been absorbing so much of the increased carbon dioxide at the expense of their ability to sustain life). So we will eventually reach 1.4 degrees even if we stop burning all fossil fuels tomorrow.

With 2015 set to be the warmest year in recorded history (beating the 2014 record), we will soon enough reach the 1 degree threshold. In

²⁴¹Suzanne Goldenberg and John Vidal, “Paris climate talks: biggest polluters back tougher warming target” (December 7, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/07/paris-climate-talks-biggest-polluters-back-tougher-warming-target>

fact, Hoesung Lee, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, [told](#) the COP on Monday, that by the end of this year, average global temperature “could reach” 1 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels.²⁴²

The dangers are obvious: if less than one degree is bringing with it the extreme weather, loss and damage, slow-burning drought, and other calamities that are already killing people and forcing people to leave everything they know, then every increment above that makes life on Earth more miserable and dangerous for millions of people. Or as Kevin Anderson and Alice Bows [put it](#), 2 degrees now marks the difference between “dangerous” and “extremely dangerous” climate change.²⁴³

The window to transforming our energy, agriculture, and lifeways in time to stay under 1.5 degrees is obviously closing fast, and there are studies on both sides of the question of whether it is still technically possible. I’m not saying that it is. Some of the best science on this has been done by Kevin Anderson and Alice Bows above, and some of the renewable energy engineering and policy side has been [provided](#) by Mark Jacobson and colleagues at Stanford and Berkeley.²⁴⁴

We understand the crisis we are in. We have human ingenuity and desire. We need to forge the political will to undertake something on the order of a Marshall Plan-level [mobilization](#) of government and people in the United States and to facilitate local versions of comparable efforts everywhere.²⁴⁵

²⁴² IISD Reporting Services, “Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB)” (December 8, 2015), <http://www.iisd.ca/vol12/enb12659e.html>

²⁴³ Kevin Anderson and Alice Bows, “Beyond ‘Dangerous’ Climate Change: Emission Scenarios for a New World” (2011), <http://rsta.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/roypta/369/1934/20.full.pdf>

²⁴⁴ Mark A. Delucchi, Mark Z. Jacobson, Mark Z, et.al., “100% Clean and Renewable Wind, Water, and Sunlight (WWS) All-sector Energy Roadmaps for the 50 United States” (2015), <http://web.stanford.edu/group/efmh/jacobson/Articles/I/USStatesWWS.pdf>

²⁴⁵ Margaret Klein Salamon and Ezra Silk, “The Case for Climate Mobilization” (September 20, 2014), <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9HHPq85FjLGcJvbGdWVUZCZVk/view>

What's Going On?

Let's move on to the political implications of adapting 1.5 instead of 2 degrees as the agreed red line on global warming. It would certainly be a blow, however symbolic, to the fossil fuel industry worldwide, and to the corporations that have brought us industrial agriculture. The carbon footprint of these corporations is all over the COP.

And it would, at least at first, be symbolic, and words only, yes. But we need powerful stories and arguments to use as wedges to pry away the powerholders' deadly grip on the world. Chevron, Monsanto, ExxonMobil, Cargill, Shell, DuPont, BP, and other corporate giants would be placed on the defensive vis-à-vis the movements calling for their dismantling. Big fossil fuel producing and exporting countries like Saudi Arabia, Russia, the United States, and Australia, along with Ecuador, Venezuela, Nigeria, and others in the global South would see their economies in critical condition. So, as Erich Pica and Ashok Lavasa caution above, going to 1.5 degrees would lead to discussions about climate justice in the equitable distribution of what atmospheric space remained, and huge commitments to transfer wealth and technology from the North to the South.

And this is why it seems so improbable that 1.5 degrees could end up in the final treaty text. Maybe it's just a publicity stunt, a calculated bluff, a gesture toward the global South with no chance of succeeding under the consensus rules of the COP. The US et al. can look good at no risk to themselves or the corporations whose backs they watch.

And maybe it's a maneuver to force greater commitments and draw attention to the lack of ambition of India, as suggested above. But it highlights just as much the utter inadequacy of the pledges of the United States, China, and all the top emitters as well.

It's also entirely possible that the big emitters are covering their inadequacies and deceptions on every other issue at stake in the negotiations with this one grand gesture, thinking it the key to getting an agreement that fails the world on adaptation funding, loss and damage assistance, and the weaknesses of the INDC pledging system itself, which after all, puts us on a [path to 3 degrees](#).²⁴⁶ Maybe it could be "the

²⁴⁶ Climate Action Trackers, "Comparison between Climate Action Tracker and Climate Interactive Assessments" (October 19, 2015), <http://climate-actiontracker.org/global/227/Comparison-between-Climate-Action->

great bargain” that unlocks the stalemate in the bracketed text, where North and South are clashing without resolution in sight, thereby permitting the powerful to claim victory at the end of this COP, a COP with zero prospect of fulfilling its promises in any meaningful way, as Walden Bello has just [pointed out](#).²⁴⁷

But to imagine this is to discount the determination and vision of the other countries calling for 1.5 degrees – the small island states, the coastal countries, the countries already subject to drought and water problems. So, maybe this issue, and the unwillingness of the COP to consent to it, will be the spark that burns the disastrous treaty in the making, and forces the transformation in the rules of the COP that is needed for a fair, binding, and ambitious global climate treaty. Could it be another way, perhaps our best chance, to say “[No” to the Paris COP](#)”?²⁴⁸

The End of Capitalism (as We Know It)

The great irony is that staying under 1.5 degrees at this point would surely mean the end of capitalism as we know it, since the degree of economic transformation it requires completely contradicts the cruel imperative of profit-making based on endless, wasteful growth and the breakneck speed at which nature is being depleted – our civilizational overshoot of the Earth’s carrying capacity at the cost of obscene inequality and at the expense of future generations.

The only true carriers of a 1.5 degree future are the people of the world, organized into the most powerful and loving network of movements ever seen, what Naomi Klein, in her [book](#) *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate*, has called Blockadia²⁴⁹ and what the global climate justice movement aspires to become by linking together all the great liberatory movements for social justice that are underway among

Tracker-and-Climate-Interactive-assessments.html

²⁴⁷ Walden Bello, “No Climate Deal Is Better Than a Bad One” (December 2, 2015), <http://fpif.org/no-climate-deal-better-bad-one/>

²⁴⁸ John Foran, “Just Say ‘NO’ to the Paris COP: A Possible Way to Win Something for Climate Justice” (September 16, 2015), <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-09-16/just-say-no-to-the-paris-cop-a-possible-way-to-win-something-for-climate-justice/>

²⁴⁹ Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2014).

students, workers, indigenous people, people of color, women, all genders, young and all ages. Everywhere.

Because the unprecedented interlocking crises we now face – caused by capitalist globalization, militarism, and the exclusion of real challengers from political systems everywhere – are linked and exacerbated by the most urgent crisis of them all. And this means that finding ways to address them synergistically could take us closer to rolling back all of these systems and opening paths to the worlds we want.

I have no hesitation in supporting the goal of 1.5 degrees, both for the climate justice movement and in the treaty text. I will fight for it, wherever it presents itself, and if that means arguing that it is the one thing that could come of this COP that we could be proud of and to build on for the coming struggles, so be it. It doesn't mean we accept the rest, but it could mean that the treaty contains an Achilles heel that might bring down the entire edifice, if we know how to put it to good effect as a rallying cry against the corporations and governments.

And of course, by the end of the week, 1.5 could very easily have been swept away from the agreement, like the waves beating on the shores of many a small island state.

But it's time for the world to wake up to the fact that this is what we must aim for, if we are serious about our children's futures, and the dignity of humanity itself in coming decades.



Photo credit: [Caribbean News Service](#)²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ Dizzanne Billy, "No Time For Hyperboles: Caribbean Leaders Bring 1.5 Degrees to the Fore" (December 1, 2015), <http://caribbeannewservice.com/now/no-time-for-hyperboles-caribbean-leaders-bring-1-5-degrees-to-the-fore/>

(“sustainable development”).

And sometimes it’s just out in the open, a brazen display of power, right in your face.

There is plenty of hypocrisy and deception here in Paris to go around.

The US plays this game to win. All the big emitters, led by China, and followed by the European Union, Russia, India, Japan, Canada, Brazil, Australia, and the rest, are players. The dirty energy companies, the banks, big agriculture, and their corporate partners around the world stand off to the side, calling the plays and standing to win big.

The latest version of the proposed Draft Outcome, issued by COP 21 President Laurent Fabius on December 9, has reduced the climate treaty text from 48 to 29 pages.²⁵¹ It consists of a 15-page “Agreement” in the form of 26 Articles, followed by a 14-page proposed draft “Decision” text, which lays out the results of COP 21 and touches on matters that while important to the outcome, have not made it into the Agreement, thus improving the chances that parts of it can be legally binding but watering down the whole. It is all sleight of hand.

We should look at some of its peculiar propositions with an eye to spotting the planet-killing hypocrisy that the COP is serving up to us as the first big step to save the Earth.

Fossil Fuels: That Which Cannot be Named

The fossil fuels which are inexorably warming the planet do not appear by name anywhere in the text. The battle over their future is being fought out in Article 2 where the debate over 1.5 or 2 degrees of warming is going to decide among three options:

Option 1: *below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels,*

Option 2: *well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels [and to [rapidly] scale up global efforts to limit temperature increase to below 1.5 °C] [, while recognizing that in some regions and vulnerable ecosystems high risks are projected even for warming above 1.5 °C],*

²⁵¹ DRAFT TEXT on COP 21 agenda item 4 (b) Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (December 9, 2015), <https://junkscience.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/da01.pdf>

Option 3: *below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.*

Option 2 may well be the winning formula for bringing together intractable foes over options 1 versus 3.

The fate of fossil fuels is also linked to Article 3 of the Agreement which covers “Mitigation” of greenhouse gases under two options for the “Collective long-term goal” of the countries:

Option 1: *Parties collectively aim to reach the global temperature goal referred to in Article 2 through [a peaking of global greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, recognizing that peaking requires deeper cuts of emissions of developed countries and will be longer for developing countries; rapid reductions thereafter to [40–70 per cent] [70–95 per cent] below 2010 levels by 2050; toward achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions [by the end] [after the middle] of the century] informed by best available science, on the basis of equity and in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.*

Option 2: *Parties collectively aim to reach the global temperature goal referred to in Article 2 through a long-term global low emissions [transformation toward [climate neutrality] [decarbonization]] over the course of this century informed by best available science, on the basis of equity and in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.*

This is a great example of the significance of bracketed text, which means words that are not yet agreed to by all. Removing either the brackets or the text is where all the action and drama are now taking place.

Article 3 asks: Should we aim for a fixed percentage of emissions reductions and decarbonization, and if so, should this be on the order of the decisive cuts that climate science requires us to choose (70-95 percent by 2050)?

Or, on the other hand, should we accept the fossil fuel corporations and countries that want no mention of any percentage reduction, or the least possible, or failing that, a vague “climate neutrality” or “net zero” for emissions in the global economy? These formulations would keep the door open for the continued extraction of oil, gas, and coal

based on the assumption that we will figure out ways in the future to extract as much greenhouse gases as we produce. They also want any statements that phase fossil fuels out to take effect only at the end of the century rather than 2050, needless to say.

Both sides in this battle have made sure to soften the effects of the other's option being preferred, so the negotiations over mitigation targets look to be long and hard. This matters, but no matter which targets are chosen, the fact remains that current pledges of the countries will take us to 3 degrees or more.

This is the hypocrisy of something not said in the text.

Free Trade and Unfree Governments: Burning Carbon while the World Fiddles around

Much later on, bracketed Decision item 33 proposes that “Unilateral measures shall not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade.”

This impenetrable formulation implies that free trade and other agreements will continue to hamper countries' efforts to take climate action should those countries “restrict” a corporation's freedom to operate. Among other things, it could be used as grounds for legal action taken against governments, regions, or cities trying to ban or stop particular fossil fuel operations, whether drilling, transportation in pipelines or on trains, or the construction of ports and terminals for their export abroad.

The counter to this vision of unchecked free trade is a bracketed proposal for an addendum known as Article 3ter, titled “Mechanism to Support Sustainable Development.”

It is highly significant that a competing clause from the previous draft that had [caused concern](#) among climate justice activists has been dropped from the negotiating text here.²⁵² The deleted text called for a mechanism to “Provide for net global emission reductions through the cancellation of a share of units generated, transferred, used or acquired,” a proxy for carbon markets and other offset programs which

²⁵² Pablo Solón, “Art 3ter. New Carbon Markets under the Name of Sustainable Development” (July 12, 2015), <http://www.parisclimatejustice.org/article/art-3ter-new-carbon-markets-under-name-sustainable-development>

have so far done little to reduce emissions.

Whether this is a substantive victory of course remains to be seen. Things have a way of sneaking in through the back door or behind closed doors at a COP. Maybe not prohibiting something explicitly is as good as including it in the text.

The draft article 3ter does contain text that appears to be intended as an alternative to the abuses that market mechanisms inevitably bring with them:

*A mechanism is hereby established to support **holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development in harmony with nature**, to be available to assist [developing country] Parties ... including, in a balanced manner, mitigation, adaptation, provision of finance, technology transfer and capacity building [emphasis added].*

This seems more in keeping with the climate justice demand for a different kind of development that is ecologically sound and protected from rapacious corporate designs, although one must doubt that the wording is strong enough to prevent its abuse by governments and corporations.

US Hypocrisy on Loss and Damage

Although references to “the needs of developing countries” abound, sometimes together with reference to those that are “extremely vulnerable,” the text on Loss and Damage was unchanged as of Wednesday and reported as still under deliberation. This promises to be a major sticking point in the final hours of negotiations, made all the harder because the US has been telling small island states and others behind closed doors that it cannot accept a Loss and Damage mechanism with real teeth. Nitin Sethi, senior associate editor at the *Business Standard* in India, [reports](#) that the US will only accept language on this subject that states: “The Parties recognize the importance of averting and minimizing loss and damage from climate change... The Parties commit to continued implementation of the Warsaw International Mechanism under the Convention, in accordance with decisions of the Conference of the Parties and on a cooperative basis that *does not involve liability and compensation*” [emphasis added].

Sethi reports:

“Midway through the negotiations, the US is showing its true colours by proposing a specific exclusion of any future compensation for loss and damage. Such a move belies the US’ empty rhetoric of solidarity with vulnerable nations,” said Harjeet Singh, Climate Policy Manager at ActionAid International and an observer focused on this element of the climate negotiations.

“From their point of view, in the shape of Loss and Damage the developed countries see a tiger cub in the room and they want to break its teeth before it learns to hunt,” said a developing country negotiator.²⁵³

In other words, the US, EU, and other wealthy countries refuse and fear the notion that they bear any legal (let alone moral) responsibility for the extreme weather that has proven especially deadly when it strikes the poorest, most vulnerable nations and people. But this is precisely what “climate justice” entails: that those who are responsible for climate change are responsible for the damages it causes to those who are not responsible for causing the problem.

Thus, the one achievement of the negotiations at COP 19 in Warsaw with any potential to provide relief for those millions of people whose lives will be shattered in an instant by devastating weather in the future, would not survive the negotiations in any meaningful sense. Sethi [told](#) *Democracy Now!* that “as per all countries, I think there’s a big degree of game that they all play, a theatric that they play.”²⁵⁴

How to Turn \$10 Billion into \$62 Billion

²⁵³ Nitin Sethi, “US and EU want Loss and Damage as a toothless tiger in Paris agreement” (December 7, 2015), http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/us-and-eu-want-loss-and-damage-as-a-toothless-tiger-in-paris-agreement-115120700043_1.html

²⁵⁴ “‘Loss and Damage’: U.S. Stymies Push for Compensation for Climate Devastation at U.N. Climate Summit,” *Democracy Now!* (December 8, 2015), https://www.democracynow.org/2015/12/8/loss_and_damage_us_stymies_push

The Green Climate Fund was a face-saving promise made at Copenhagen in 2009 for the wealthy countries of the global North to come up with \$100 billion annually by 2020. Its purpose is to help others make the necessary infrastructural investments to avoid burning fossil fuels in their efforts to bring millions of people out of poverty, but it remains embarrassingly short of the necessary funds as the talks race toward their conclusion.

In fact, parties are not even in agreement as to how much money has been pledged, or is being transferred currently. Wealthy nations cite a report issued earlier this fall by the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (basically, Europe plus the US and Canada) that in 2014, \$62 billion was devoted to this purpose. But [critics](#) have noted that this sum includes loans, private funding, and export credits, whose “ultimate beneficiaries ... are actors in rich countries – not developing countries, much less poor and vulnerable communities,” according to Senior Policy Analyst Brandon Wu of ActionAid, who represents developed country NGOs on the board of the Green Climate Fund.²⁵⁵

Laurent Fabius, who as President of COP 21 is the person at the center of the process, accepts this figure, saying there is only \$40 billion to go. India, China, and South Africa, on the other hand, strongly [disputed](#) the \$62 billion figure on Tuesday,²⁵⁶ with India’s Economic Ministry claiming that the amount of real money transferred in 2014 could be as low as \$2.2 billion, and with firm country pledges for 2020 stuck at the \$10 billion level, according to the [Green Climate Fund](#) itself.²⁵⁷

Simon Buckle, head of climate change at the OECD and lead author on the climate finance report [acknowledged](#) that “The question of what counts or doesn’t count in the \$100bn is not for the OECD

²⁵⁵ Theophilus Ikpome, “New OECD report on climate finance misleading – ActionAid” (October 8, 2015), <http://climatereporters.com/2015/10/new-oecd-report-on-climate-finance-misleading-action-aid/>

²⁵⁶ Suzanne Goldenberg, Lenore Taylor, and John Vidal, “More countries reject OECD study on climate aid” (December 8, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/08/more-countries-reject-oecd-study-on-climate-aid-paris-cop21>

²⁵⁷ Green Climate Fund, “Resources Mobilized,” <http://www.greenclimate.fund/partners/contributors/resources-mobilized>

to determine.” In a possibly ironic understatement, he noted: “We understand this is a hugely political issue.”²⁵⁸

All of this makes plain that there is a huge gap on climate finance at the heart of the treaty text that will need to be bridged by parties that are at odds on the issue of how much money there will be, what form it should take to constitute a real transfer of funds, and who will provide it.

Oh, and for some large-scale hypocrisy, let’s observe that \$100 billion a year won’t even begin to address the adaptation problems of all the countries who need funds, which would be on the order of a trillion dollars annually at the very least, to start immediately, not in 2020. Thus the debate is shifted from a just accounting of the North’s climate debt to the South to a fight over “crumbs,” according to some climate activists. Compare this sum with the equivalent amount the US found very quickly to bail out its failed financial institutions in 2008-9, or the trillions it has spent on waging war for oil in Iraq.

A Coalition of the Ambitious?

One of the meeting’s big surprises so far has been the [announcement](#) on Tuesday of an informal new grouping of countries that is being called “the high ambition coalition,” consisting of the EU and many nations of the global South, whose numbers swelled to more than 100 when the United States and other countries joined the next day.²⁵⁹ China and India remain outside it, and it may make problems for the Alliance of Small Island States to hold together, as some of its members have not joined, perhaps out of suspicion of EU and US motives.

Such a coalition was originally proposed in July and has been kept secret until this critical stage in the talks. One of its chief architects, Tony De Brum, foreign minister of the Marshall Islands, [said](#): “We will

²⁵⁸ John Vidal, “Paris climate talks: Indian officials accuse OECD of exaggerating climate aid” (December 2, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/02/paris-climate-talks-indian-officials-accuse-rich-countries-of-exaggerating-climate-aid>

²⁵⁹ Fiona Harvey and Karl Mathiesen, “Climate coalition breaks cover in Paris to push for binding and ambitious deal” (December 8, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/08/coalition-paris-push-for-binding-ambitious-climate-change-deal>

be fighting for some very basic issues.... Strong recognition of the below 1.5-degree temperature goal, a clear pathway for a low-carbon future, five-yearly updates and a strong package of support for developing countries, including delivery of \$100bn per annum.”²⁶⁰

Whether this grouping really makes a difference remains to be seen (see the discussion of funding above), but it can be seen as a political coup for the United States and the EU, and it is certainly good cover for other US sins of omission and commission here.

Like the groundswell for a 1.5 degree temperature rise limit, this development provides a glimpse into the frantic closed-door bargaining that must now be going on.

The Hypocrisy of the State of Emergency

When the French state decided the public demonstrations around the COP would be banned, it committed the ultimate hypocrisy of making free political expression illegal. There is no justification for banning political expression in a democracy, and the hypocrisy of doing so under the ridiculous excuse that the French police couldn’t guarantee our safety was plainly shown when they started to arrest, teargas, and jail nonviolent activists in the streets of Paris.

To criminalize in advance any expression of criticism at the outcome of the COP on December 12 is to *create* a state of emergency, an emergency for the right to publically participate and voice an opinion in a democratic state.

Ultimately, such an action is a dismissal of the basic well-being of humanity, in direct contradiction with the stated goals of the UN and the UNFCCC themselves, and only serves to illuminate the inconvenient truth that only radical social change will be up to the challenge posed by climate change.

The Big Lie: COP 21 will Save Us

In the proposed draft “Decision” text, item 17 addresses the elephant in the room. It “Notes with concern that the estimated aggregate greenhouse gas emission levels resulting from the INDCs in 2025 and

²⁶⁰ Matt McGrath, “COP21: US Joins ‘High Ambition Coalition’ for Climate Deal” (December 10, 2015), <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-35057282>

2030 do not fall within least-cost 2°C scenarios, and that much greater emission reduction efforts than those associated with the INDCs will be required in the period after 2025 and 2030 in order to hold the temperature rise to below 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.”

What about *Unintended* Nationally Determined Contributions? These are pledges, they are not commitments. They are nationally determined, not collectively and equitably decided upon. What happens when they are not adhered to?

Meanwhile, Article 10 on “The Global Stock Take” puts off till 2023 or 2024 the next such exercise, meaning we will live under the current INDCs’ unambitious 3 degrees of warming for another eight years before we even revisit the situation. By then, more windows will be closed and thresholds of warming far greater than we should countenance will be facts on the ground, under the waters, and in the air. We will then be in a situation of chasing after incrementally smaller, more costly, more difficult improvements in reducing the odds our emissions efforts will enter into unpredictable and extremely dangerous (i.e. over 2 degrees of warming) territory. Here not only are all bets off, but runaway climate change becomes increasingly likely.

We are gambling with the future so that profits can continue to be made in a system incapable of meeting its minimum responsibilities to humans and to nature. This is the big lie which voids the legitimacy of the treaty from the start.

The time to stop this climate game is now, the place is here, in Paris.

With the clock ticking down, and pressure growing to make bad decisions among poor options, the right thing to do is to declare timeout for a visionary change in the process.

The chances for this outcome – the great No that says yes to life – are dwindling, passing through our hands like sand in a glass, but they remain alive at the edge of the table and in the halls, or perhaps off the site, out of sight, waiting for their moment.

The Paris Agreement: Paper Heroes Widen the Climate Justice Gap

December 13, 2015

“By comparison to what it could have been, it’s a miracle. By comparison to what it should have been, it’s a disaster.... The talks in Paris are the best there have ever been. And that is a terrible indictment.” George Monbiot, [The Guardian](#), December 12, 2015²⁶¹



Banner saying “COP 21 +3 Degrees Celsius” on fire at climate protest in Paris, December 12, 2015. Photo by John Foran.

²⁶¹ George Monbiot, “Grand Promises of Paris Climate Deal Undermined by Squalid Retrenchments” (December 12, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/georgemonbiot/2015/dec/12/paris-climate-deal-governments-fossil-fuels>

The day after can be a source of regret, or a new beginning. It all depends on how much we can perceive the importance of events in time, in history, in life itself.

On Saturday, December 12, in Paris, the negotiators at the COP 21 UN climate summit came to a final decision on the text they have been negotiating for four years, or six, or twenty-one by signaling their assent to a thirty-two page document, titled simply “[The Paris Agreement](#).”²⁶² Not quite a treaty, since it is not really legally binding in a strict sense, it gives the world its second global climate accord, superseding the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, and replacing it with a global map for our climate future agreed by almost all 196 parties to it, the nations of the world.²⁶³

It’s just not a map to any kind of future we should want.

Saving the World: The Master Narrative

Scenes of relief and jubilation broke out on the floor of the closing plenary when Laurent Fabius, the President of COP 21, gavelled the session to a close amidst thunderous applause late on Saturday afternoon. It was a huge diplomatic accomplishment to get the nations to agree to anything, as anyone who has ever followed a COP can attest. And in this sense, it *was* a miracle, since going into Paris the parties were far apart on all the tough negotiating issues that had stymied progress over the years: who should be responsible for emissions reductions, how massive adaptation funds should be raised and allocated to the Global South, and who would help climate-impacted countries recover from the loss and damage of catastrophic weather events.

Of the agreement, Laurent Fabius [said](#): “It is my deep conviction that we have come up with an ambitious and balanced agreement. Today it is a moment of truth.”²⁶⁴ Not shy about taking credit, Barack

²⁶² United Nations, “ADOPTION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT” (December 12, 2015), <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l09r01.pdf>

²⁶³ Syria and Nicaragua did not agree in Paris; Nicaragua’s objections were that the text didn’t go *far enough*. Both countries have subsequently ratified it.

²⁶⁴ Suzanne Goldenberg et al., “Paris Climate Deal: Nearly 200 Nations Sign In End of Fossil Fuel Era” (December 12, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/12/paris-climate-deal-200-nations-sign>

Obama [said](#) “We’ve transformed the United States into the global leader in fighting climate change,”²⁶⁵ and [tweeted](#): “This is huge: Almost every country in the world just signed on to the #Paris Agreement on climate change – thanks to American leadership.”²⁶⁶ Al Gore was “visibly moved” and John Kerry [announced](#) “It’s a victory for all of the planet and future generations.”²⁶⁷ French President François Hollande [observed](#) that “12 December 2015 will be a date to go down in history as a major leap for mankind. It is rare in any lifetime to have a chance to change the world.”²⁶⁸

Some international experts agreed. Lord Stern, author of *Why Are We Waiting? The Logic, Urgency, and Promise of Tackling Climate Change*, [proclaimed](#): “This is a historic moment, not just for us and our world today, but for our children, our grandchildren and future generations. The Paris Agreement is a turning point in the world’s fight against unmanaged climate change, which threatens prosperity and wellbeing among both rich and poor countries.”²⁶⁹

Professor Hans Joachim (John) Schellnhuber, Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research [effused](#): “The spirits of Paris have defeated the ghosts of Copenhagen! Reason and moral combined at the COP21 to deliver a historical climate agreement that

finish-fossil-fuel-era?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Othe

²⁶⁵ Julie Hirschfeld Davis, “Obama, Once a Guest, Is Now a Leader in World Talks” (December 12, 2015), https://www.ny-times.com/2015/12/13/us/president-obama-once-a-guest-now-a-leader-in-world-talks.html?_r=0

²⁶⁶ @BarackObama. “This is huge: Almost every country in the world just signed on to the #ParisAgreement on climate change—thanks to American leadership” (December 12, 2015, 10:29 a.m.), <https://twitter.com/BarackObama/status/675744353667702784>

²⁶⁷ James Randerson and Adam Vaughan, “Paris Climate Talks: Governments Adopt Historic Deal – As It Happened” (December 12, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/live/2015/dec/12/paris-climate-talks-francois-hollande-to-join-summit-as-final-draft-published-live>

²⁶⁸ One World UK, “Too Weak, Too Late, Say Climate Justice Campaigners” (December 12, 2015), <http://oneworld.org/2015/12/12/too-weak-too-late-says-climate-justice-campaigners/>

²⁶⁹ Agence France-Presse, “195 Nations Adopt Historic Paris Agreement To Stop Global Warming” (December 13, 2015), <http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/195-nations-adopt-historic-paris-agreement-to-stop-global-warming-1254241>

finally transcends national egotisms.”²⁷⁰ *In the view* of Eva Filzmoser, director at Carbon Market Watch, “*The French Presidency achieved a miracle in presenting a detailed treaty acceptable to all Parties. At first reading, the new global climate treaty is surprisingly positive. We are still looking for the loopholes.*”²⁷¹

Most of the world press will by now have followed suit. The message that goes out to the world will be the saving the planet one, tempered to some degree by any closer look at the details, and failing to credit the success of the climate justice movement in raising awareness about the issues, or noting its own, more nuanced and critical assessments, in the narratives that are being written at a furious pace.

Burning the World: The Climate Movement Judges the Paris Outcome

First reactions from the climate movements, NGOs, and activists were decidedly mixed, and where one stood on the Agreement could be a political litmus test of where the climate movement’s fault lines and political sensibilities lie.

Truly celebratory praise came instantly from the more than 42 million-member on-line movement Avaaz, in the form of an e-mail from Emma Ruby-Sachs titled: “We did it! – A turning point in human history”:

World leaders at the UN climate talks have just set a landmark goal that can save everything we love!

This is what we marched for, what we signed, called, donated, messaged, and hoped for: a brilliant and massive turning point in human history.

It’s called net-zero human emissions – a balancing of what we release into the air and what is taken out –

²⁷⁰ Climate-KIC News, “Climate-KIC Chairman: ‘Climate Deal is a Turning Point in the Human Enterprise, Transformation Begins’” (December 13, 2015), <http://www.climate-kic.org/news/climate-kic-chairman-climate-deal-is-a-turning-point-in-the-human-enterprise-transformation-begins/>

²⁷¹ One World UK, “Too Weak, Too Late, Say Climate Justice Campaigners” (December 12, 2015), <http://oneworld.org/2015/12/12/too-weak-too-late-says-climate-justice-campaigners/>

and when the dust settles and the Paris Agreement is in the hands of lawmakers, clean energy will be the best, cheapest, and most effective way to keep their promise. This gives us the platform we need to realize the dream of a safe future for generations!

Out of great crises, humanity has borne beautiful visions. World War II gave rise to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an enduring standard for our spirit and capacity as one people. The fall of Apartheid led South Africa to the single most bold and progressive constitution in the world.

Ambitious visions like these rely on movements to carry them into the mainstream, and on movements to make them reality in our everyday lives. Today is no exception.

Some of the trouble with this formulation is indicated by other large climate NGOs. There were many shades of criticism, beginning with the cautious optimism of Greenpeace International Director Kumi Naidoo, who drew the balance sheet [this way](#):

The wheel of climate action turns slowly, but in Paris it has turned. This deal puts the fossil fuel industry on the wrong side of history.

There's much in the text that has been diluted and polluted by the people who despoil our planet, but it contains a new imperative to limit temperature rises to 1.5 degrees. That single number, and the new goal of net zero emissions by the second half of this century, will cause consternation in the boardrooms of coal companies and the palaces of oil-exporting states....

There's not enough in this deal for the nations and people on the frontlines of climate change. It contains an inherent, ingrained injustice. The nations which caused this problem have promised too little help to

the people who are already losing their lives and livelihoods.²⁷²

The global movement 350.org, far more radical in its views than it used to be, went further. In the [words](#) of Bill McKibben, “Every government seems now to recognize that the fossil fuel era must end and soon. But the power of the fossil fuel industry is reflected in the text, which drags out the transition so far that endless climate damage will be done. Since pace is the crucial question now, activists must redouble our efforts to weaken that industry. This didn’t save the planet but it may have saved the chance of saving the planet.”²⁷³ May Boeve, 350’s Executive Director, believes the Agreement can be used in the fight against the fossil fuel corporations and countries: “This marks the end of the era of fossil fuels. There is no way to meet the targets laid out in this agreement without keeping coal, oil and gas in the ground. The text should send a clear signal to fossil fuel investors: divest now.”

The climate justice and radical spectrum was more unequivocal in its condemnation. In a spirited defiance of police orders not to assemble (the government gave in at the last minute), an estimated 15,000 or more determined climate activists gathered to protest the agreement’s crossing of “red lines” for the planet and to honor those whose lives have been lost to climate injustice.

And at a gathering of thousands of activists who held hands in front of the Eiffel Tower on Saturday, Naomi Klein [said what had to be said](#).

Our leaders have shown themselves willing to set our world on fire and we will not let that happen. Our mood today is not one of despair but rather a clarifying sense of commitment and purpose. We knew that these were not the real leaders. We knew that the leaders were in the streets, that the leaders were in the

²⁷² Greenpeace, “Kumi Naidoo of Greenpeace responds to Paris draft deal” (December 12, 2015), <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/press/releases/2015/kumi-naidoo-cop21-final-text-paris-climate/>

²⁷³ For both 350.org quotes, see Bill McKibben, “350.org & Bill McKibben React to COP21 Climate Text” (December 12, 2015), <https://350.org/press-release/cop21-reaction/>

fields, that this city is filled with climate heroes.



Some of the thousands of people who brought their “red lines for the climate that must not be crossed” to the Arc de Triomphe on December 12, 2015. Photo: John Foran

fields, that this city is filled with climate heroes.

Despite their beautiful words, our leaders remain trapped in a broken system and a crashing worldview based on dominance of people and the planet and that worldview simply does not allow them to align their words, their goals, with their actions.

And so the gap is increased between the rhetoric and the goal of safety and the reality of the epic danger they are allowing to unfold. And the gap is increased between the expressions of solidarity with the most vulnerable and the reality of those leaders consistently putting the interests of the rich and powerful before the interests of the vulnerable, and indeed the interests of all humanity.

Our leaders have none of the courage that it takes

to stand up to the corporate interests that are responsible for this crisis. They can't even say the words "fossil fuels" in this text. So it is up to us to do what they so clearly refuse to do, which is to stand up to the polluters and make them pay.

And we will do this everywhere, using every tool that we can. We will do it in the streets with protests like this one, and we will do it in the face of every single polluting project that they decide to try to roll out.

We are doing this already, and we're winning....

This is a global movement. Some of us call it Blockadia. So we will take them on in the streets, the forests, and in the water. In our schools, in our places of worship, and in our cities. And we're going after them with our art, with our culture, because as we know, the logic of austerity is incompatible with life on Earth....

We are accelerating the rollout of a society that is based on protecting life, on climate justice, on energy democracy....

As we go forward, we also have to acknowledge the grief, grief that we will not deny nor will we suppress, grief at what we have already lost, for those whom we have already lost.

And we acknowledge that there is also rage at those who could have acted long ago but chose not to, and at those who make that same disastrous decision still.

But mostly, mostly there is joy. Mostly there is joy and resolve as we witness the next world taking shape before our eyes. We used to think that it was our job to save the world. Then we realized that we are really saving ourselves. We used to say that we were here to protect nature, and now we say that we *are* nature, protecting herself.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ I have transcribed this speech from my own notes and from the video by Ian Lee, "WIN 20151212 15 56 45 Pro" (December 12, 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhYIA7E3JsY>

Under the title, “Too weak, too late, say climate justice campaigners” can be found an extensive [compendium](#) of radical opinion that emerged within hours of the outcome.²⁷⁵

“This deal offers a frayed life-line to the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people.” – Helen Szoke, executive director, Oxfam

“The US is a cruel hypocrite. Obama spoke about embracing the US’s role of creating the problem and the need to take responsibility. This is all talk and no action. They created a clause that excludes compensation and liability for the losses and damages brought on by climate chaos. This is a deliberate plan to make the rich richer and the poor poorer.” – Lidy Nacpil, Asian People’s Movement on Debt and Development

“We, Indigenous Peoples, are the redline. We have drawn that line with our bodies against the privatisation of nature, to dirty fossil fuels and to climate change. We are the defenders of the world’s most biologically and culturally diverse regions. We will protect our sacred lands. Our knowledge has much of the solutions to climate change that humanity seeks. It’s only when they listen to our message that ecosystems of the world will be renewed.” – Tom Goldtooth, Executive Director, Indigenous Environmental Network

“The Paris Agreement will be known as the Polluters’ Great Escape since it weakens rules on the rich countries and puts the world on a pathway to 3C warming.” – Victor Menotti, International Forum on Globalization

“The price tag for climate damages this century will be

²⁷⁵ The quotes that follow come from this very useful piece: “One World UK, “Too Weak, Too Late, Say Climate Justice Campaigners” (December 12, 2015), <http://oneworld.org/2015/12/12/too-weak-too-late-says-climate-justice-campaigners/>

in the trillions, with much of that damage in poor and vulnerable countries. The US is responsible for much of that toll, but they don't care and they won't pay. With arm twisting of developing countries, they have language now protecting the richest and heaping devastating costs onto the poorest.” – Doreen Stabinsky, Professor of Global Environmental Politics, College of the Atlantic, Maine, US

“Close to 100% reductions are needed by developed countries already by 2030 for a reasonable chance of 2°, let alone 1,5° world. Paris had the opportunity to deliver radical pre-2020 action and did none of this. Developed countries’ refusal to commit to either cuts or necessary finance means we are sleepwalking into climate chaos.” – Niclas Hällström, What Next Forum

“The Paris negotiators are caught up in a frenzy of self-congratulation about 1.5 degrees being included in the agreement, but the reality is that the reductions on the table are still locking us into 3 degrees of global warming.... The bullying and arm twisting of rich countries, combined with the pressure to agree to a deal at all costs, has ensured that the agreement will prevent poor countries from seeking redress for the devastating impacts of a crisis that has been thrust upon them.” – Nick Dearden, director of Global Justice Now

“The deal fails to deliver the rules and tools to ensure that climate change doesn't spiral out of control. Many in Paris seem to have forgotten the very people that this climate agreement was supposed to protect.... In spite of this result in Paris, people all over the world must push their governments to go beyond what they have agreed here.” – Teresa Anderson, Policy Officer, ActionAid International

The key organizers of climate justice actions by civil society during COP 21 were unanimous in their condemnation of the outcome. “Rich

countries have moved the goal posts so far that we are left with a sham of a deal in Paris. Through piecemeal pledges and bullying tactics, rich countries have pushed through a very bad deal,” [said](#) Sara Shaw, Friends of the Earth International climate justice and energy coordinator. Asad Rehman of the same organization, who knows as much about justice issues at the COP as anyone, put it this way: “The iceberg has struck, the ship is going down and the band is still playing to warm applause.”²⁷⁶

Attac France, one of the key climate justice organizations on the ground in Paris, active in every aspect of the mobilization of civil society, was equally critical. Activist and spokesperson on climate issues Maxime Combes [said](#): “The mandate given to COP 21, François Hollande and Laurent Fabius was not to get an accord at any price. To use the terms ‘ambitious,’ ‘just,’ and ‘legally binding’ in presenting the Agreement is an intellectual fraud. And to add a vague reference to ‘climate justice’ is contemptuous of all who have mobilized under its name for years.” Attac spokesperson Thomas Coutrot added: “The emptiness of this agreement reflects the powerlessness of governments to attack the true causes of climate disruption. This comes as no surprise: the greed of the multinationals, the fossil fuel energy, and the obsession with growth are considered untouchable.”²⁷⁷

Danny Chivers and Jess Worth, who have provided excellent coverage of COP 21 for *The New Internationalist*, evaluated the outcome in terms of the four criteria of [The People’s Test](#) developed by movement organizations from the global South. These are:

1. *Catalyze immediate, urgent and drastic emission reductions;*
2. *Provide adequate support for transformation;*
3. *Deliver justice for impacted people;*

²⁷⁶ For quotes by Sara Shaw and Asad Rehman, see Friends of the Earth International, “Paris Climate Deal is a Sham” (December 12, 2015), <http://www.foei.org/press/archive-by-subject/climate-justice-energy-press/paris-climate-deal-sham>

²⁷⁷ Attac, “Réaction d’Attac France à l’Accord de Paris” (December 12, 2015), <https://france.attac.org/actus-et-medias/salle-de-presse/article/reaction-d-attac-france-a-l-accord-de-paris>

4. *Focus on genuine, effective action rather than false solutions.*²⁷⁸

The title of their [piece](#) gives the answer: “Paris deal: Epic fail on a planetary scale.”²⁷⁹

Where is the Justice?

The central failures of what has happened in Paris have been underlined by the trenchant criticisms above. Based on a year-long study of the process, actually stretching back to my first time inside the COP in Durban four years ago, and shaped by these roller-coaster two weeks in Paris, I offer here my first reflections on what is, by any measure, a historic moment in the sense that it will shape all our futures.

There are two huge gaps between the lines of the Agreement: one of greenhouse gas emissions and one of elementary climate justice.

The INDCs that constitute the core of the Agreement’s stance on the greenhouse gases that are driving global warming faster and faster toward the cliff of extreme danger, give us a world of something over three degrees Celsius – in other words, Paris has been a completely unacceptable failure to take the kind of action that climate science is screaming for and the world’s people must have.

If anything, mentioning 1.5 degrees in the text only heightens this glaring hole at the center of the plan to save the planet, highlighting how far away our governments are from being able to rise to the greatest challenge that humanity has ever faced.

Of the 180 pledges received, only two have been judged “sufficient” by [Climate Action Tracker](#), those of Gambia and Bhutan, whose share in global emissions is vanishingly small, and whose courageous actions are therefore symbolic, in both the sense of “only symbolic” and “visionary and humane.”²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ People’s Test on Climate, “The People’s Test on Climate 2015” (December 12, 2015), <http://peoplestestonclimate.org/>

²⁷⁹ Danny Chivers and Jess Worth, “Paris Deal: Epic Fail on a planetary scale” (December 12, 2015), <https://newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2015/12/12/cop21-paris-deal-epi-fail-on-planetary-scale/>

²⁸⁰ Climate Action Tracker, “Tracking (I)NDCs” (November 8, 2015), <http://climateactiontracker.org/indcs.html>

Kevin Anderson, Deputy Director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, [noted](#) that “The Copenhagen text included aviation and shipping emissions, that together are as large as the emissions of Britain and Germany combined, but they are not mentioned in the Paris text.” Overall, he finds the agreement “weaker than Copenhagen” and “not consistent with the latest science.”²⁸¹ This is [put](#) more colorfully but just as strongly by the United States’ most well-known climate scientist, James Hansen: “It’s a fraud really, a fake,” he says, rubbing his head. “It’s just bullshit for them to say: ‘We’ll have a 2C warming target and then try to do a little better every five years.’ It’s just worthless words. There is no action, just promises. As long as fossil fuels appear to be the cheapest fuels out there, they will be continued to be burned.”²⁸²

So, emissions remain essentially out of control, *pace* the optimists who make observations along the lines of “We have cut a degree or more of the business-as-usual scenario already, and we will do more and more as time goes on and the provisions for adjusting national pledges become increasingly ambitious.” It is very hard for me to see this happening (and I’m an optimist too most days).

The words “climate justice” and “just transition” actually each appear once in the Agreement’s preamble, but they are passed over as foreign notions held by unnamed others: “Noting the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth, and noting the importance for some of the concept of ‘climate justice’, when taking action to address climate change.”

In reality, instead of justice, the most vulnerable nations in the world have been betrayed by the global North and the big emitters like China and India.

Loss and damage remain words on paper, with no permanent standing, no mechanism for finding the funds, and a clear statement that no one is “liable” to pay to assist countries hard hit already by

²⁸¹ Danny Chivers and Jess Worth, “Paris Deal: Epic Fail on a Planetary Scale” (December 12, 2015), <https://newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2015/12/12/cop21-paris-deal-epi-fail-on-planetary-scale/>

²⁸² Oliver Milman, “James Hansen, Father of Climate Change Awareness, Calls Paris Talks a ‘Fraud’” (December 12, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/12/james-hansen-climate-change-paris-talks-fraud>

climate catastrophe like the Philippines and many others to come.

The decision text on this makes clear that “Article 8 of the Agreement does not involve or provide a basis for any liability or compensation.” “The idea of even discussing loss and damage now or in the future was off limits. The Americans told us it would kill the COP,” [said](#) Leisha Beardmore, the chief negotiator for the Seychelles. “They have always been telling us: ‘Don’t even say that’.”²⁸³ Instead of this, developing countries are offered “Comprehensive risk assessment and management, risk insurance facilities, climate risk pooling and other insurance solutions.”

There is no firm commitment from any country to actually make a contribution to the Green Climate Fund’s promised \$100 billion annually by 2020. These funds are for making the front-line communities of the global South more resilient to the inevitable disasters that even 1.5 degrees will serve up with increasing frequency. Instead, developed countries are “strongly urged” to find “a concrete roadmap” to locate this missing money!

There is nothing binding in the Paris Agreement that will force any government to act with compassion, responsibility, and more than words to bend the arc of climate change in the direction of justice.

And why should we expect otherwise? The real problem with the COP process is that it can only produce a document forged by and for the world’s political and economic elites. The most rapacious corporations in the world can carry on wrecking the planet, especially if they say the right things and make some gestures of awareness of the climate crisis. The main mechanisms for bringing down emissions remain in marketized form, subject to every abuse that follows when we measure human needs and nature herself in the cold, hard terms of cash money.

Salvaging Something for the Future We Want

Enshrining the words “1.5 degrees Celsius” in a global climate accord opens a door to a house on fire, and will be fashioned into one of the

²⁸³ Suzanne Goldenberg et al., “Paris Climate Deal: Nearly 200 Nations Sign In End of Fossil Fuel Era” (December 12, 2015), https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/12/paris-climate-deal-200-nations-sign-finish-fossil-fuel-era?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Othe

most powerful memes of the global climate justice movement now. We will finally turn the page on the COP process and get down to the business of transforming a world that has been broken by greed, callous disregard for life, and the slow violence that capitalism visits on the majority world, each day a little more cruelly than the last.

The climate justice movement has gained demonstrable strength in the course of 2014 and 2015, and here in Paris too. The connections made here, the insights generated, the empowerment of activists of all ages, will be taken home to make deeper connections with the movements, organizations, front-line communities, and people who are already doing so much. They will be used to try to stop the climate madness of the world's political and economic elites, and the systems that have created it: capitalism, patriarchy, racism, militarism, colonialism – all the operations of power in our warming world. My guess is that at the end of the day, the network of networks that comprise the movement will be stronger than ever, going into the battles of 2016.



“Climate Justice Peace” spelled by thousands of activists across Paris, December 12, 2015

“When we came into these Paris talks we had very low expectations. These expectations have been exceeded in how low they are.

*It's what happens on Monday that's the most important thing. Do we return to our capitals, do we build a movement, do we make sure our countries are doing their fair share? Do we stop the dirty energy industry, do we invest in new climate jobs, do we invest in community-owned decentralized energy? And most importantly, do we stand in solidarity with the millions of people across the world who are struggling for climate justice?*²⁸⁴ – Asad Rehman, [quoted](#) by Danny Chivers

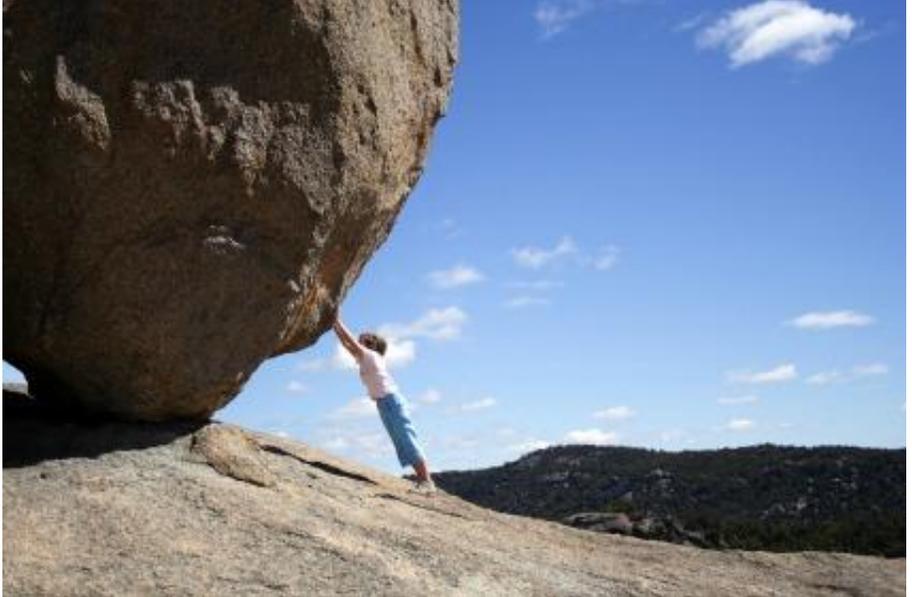
It's up to the movements, networks, activists, thinkers, bloggers, organizers, and countless “ordinary people” to step up in 2016.

We will create the worlds we dream of together, no matter what it takes, and we will fight to keep them alive in our hearts and our communities, helping Mother Earth defend herself, and in the process, rising to the great challenges of our time, step by step, win or lose, come what may.

²⁸⁴ Danny Chivers and Jess Worth, “Paris deal: Epic fail on a planetary scale” (December 12, 2015), <https://newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2015/12/12/cop21-paris-deal-epi-fail-on-planetary-scale/>

To Change Everything, It's Going to Take Everything
We've Got

January 1, 2016



OK, here's the idea. We're in a crisis so deep, so knotted, so unprecedented, and so urgent that, well, we have to change everything, pretty much. Or else.

And there's no one to do it for us. There's just us. Just-us. Justice.

And who are we? We are everyone, everywhere, who wants to do this. Everyone, everywhere, who cares what happens to everything – each other, humanity, Mother Earth, nature, the planet, the future creatures for whom what we do this day – this year – will make a difference. Possibly all the difference.

And what do we have to do? To repeat: we have to change most of the systems in which we live, whether we are in comfort or not, whether we have other preoccupations or not, whether we are happy or not, whether we have enough time, money, resources, or not. And

we have to be radical.

And why do we have to do this? Let each of us answer for ourselves. Because in the end, we will have to answer for ourselves. For what we did this coming year, and what we didn't.

OK, enough of the solemn words and grandiose tone. What am I really trying to talk about here?

Let's start with the situation: our operating system here on Earth has gone critical – as in far too many greenhouse gases, poisoned waters, dying oceans, melting ice, heat waves, drought, floods, cyclones, air pollution, land degradation, and on down the long lonely line of the civilizational lowlights of the twenty-first century.

This is on top of the poverty, the hunger, the forced migration, the joblessness, the hopelessness, the general lesslessness.

And it's all inter-connected, isn't it? Ice melts, exposing more land and open water to the sun, increasing the temperature so more ice melts. The global economy takes your job, then the bank takes your house, the health industry takes back your insurance, and the economy takes someone else's job who depended on you doing what you used to do. The superpower bombs your village, takes away your family, and puts you on the road to another place, or into armed opposition to that superpower, which bombs another village in another country.

Meanwhile there are very *very* few real leaders in positions of power, whether running nations or cities, corporations or businesses, schools or universities, media or culture. This was apparent at the recent COP 21 climate summit that gave us the Paris Agreement – where the would-be heroes turned out to be [made of paper](#).

So, it's up to us. And to change everything, we'll have to have everyone we can, doing what they think best, giving everything they have.

And when we give everything, what happens? Something changes, somewhere. Someone notices. Someone takes hope that change can happen. Someone else gives everything. Someone notices...



Paris, December 12, 2015. Photo: John Foran

We feel better. Stronger. More alive. More in love.

So we have something more to give.

Will it be enough?

No one can say. Who knows which future we'll have? Who knows our own power? Who can measure our imagination? Who can imagine our creativity?

Have you ever felt it? What it feels like to be alive? To be part of something big? To be with others who have the same dreams?

Now is the time. This is year one. Today we start. Just us.



The rose fist of the [Climate Justice Project](#). Design by Summer Gray.

To be continued ...

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Organizations

350

<https://350.org/>

350 Santa Barbara

<https://350sb.org/>

#FloodWallStreet

<http://floodwallstreet.net/>

Acción Ecológica

<http://www.accionecologica.org/>

Alternatiba

<https://alternatiba.eu/en/>

Attac

<https://france.attac.org/>

Australian Earth Laws Alliance

<http://www.earthlaws.org.au/>

Avaaz

<https://www.avaaz.org/page/en/>

Arab Youth Climate Movement

<http://aycm.org/>

Breakthrough Energy

<http://www.b-t.energy/>

Centre for Science and Environment

<http://www.cseindia.org/>

Civil Society Review

<http://civilsocietyreview.org/>

Climate Action Network International

<http://www.climateactionnetwork.org/>

Climate Action Tracker

<http://climateactiontracker.org/>

The Climate Mobilization

<http://www.theclimatemobilization.org/>

Climate Nexus

<http://climatenexus.org/about-us/road-through-paris/>

Climate Strike

<http://www.climatestrike.net/>

Climate Strike

<http://globalclimateconvergence.org/climate-strike/>

Coalition Climat21

<http://coalitionclimat21.org/en>

Corporate Europe Observatory

<https://corporateeurope.org/>

Deconstructing Paris

<http://paristext2015.com/>

EcoEquity

<http://www.ecoequity.org/about/>

End Ecocide on Earth

<https://www.endecocide.org/>

ETC Group

<http://www.etcgroup.org/>

Friends of the Earth

<http://www.foe.org/about-us>

Friends of the Earth International

<http://www.foei.org/>

Global Climate Convergence

<http://globalclimateconvergence.org/>

Global Exchange

<http://www.globalexchange.org/>

Greenpeace

<http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/what-we-do/>

Idle No More

<http://www.idlenomore.ca/>

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

<http://www.ipcc.ch/organization/organization.shtml>

International Forum on Globalization

<http://ifg.org/about/position-statement/>

International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis

<http://www.iiasa.ac.at/>

International Institute of Climate Action and Theory

<http://www.iicat.org/>

International Institute of Sustainable Development Reporting Services

<http://enb.iisd.org/>

Institut Polaris Institute

http://www.polarisinstitute.org/alliances_partners

LINGO

- <http://leave-it-in-the-ground.org/>
Movement Generation Justice and Ecology Project
<http://movementgeneration.org/>
- Nature Rights*
<http://www.naturerights.com/site/>
- Navdanya*
<http://www.navdanya.org/>
- The Next System Project*
<http://thenextsystem.org/>
- Oilwatch*
<http://www.oilwatch.org/en/>
- Organic Consumers Association*
<https://www.organicconsumers.org/about-oca>
- Pachamama Alliance*
<https://www.pachamama.org/>
- Pan African Climate Justice Alliance*
<http://www.pacja.org/index.php/en/>
- People's Test on Climate*
<https://www.commondreams.org/peoples-test-climate-2015>
- Sierra Club*
<http://www.sierraclub.org/>
- System Change not Climate Change*
<http://systemchangenotclimatechange.org/>
- The Council of Canadians Acting for Social Justice*
<http://canadians.org/>
- The Earth Institute, Columbia University*
<http://www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu/articles/view/1791>
- The Gaia Foundation*
<http://www.gaiafoundation.org/>
- The Global Carbon Project*
<http://www.globalcarbonproject.org/>
- The Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination*
<http://www.labofii.net/>
- The People's Pilgrimage*
<http://peoplespilgrimage.org/about.html>
- The Rights of Nature*
<http://therightsofnature.org/founding-organizations/>
- The Show of Hands for Climate Strike*
<http://www.climatestrike.net/show-of-hands/>

Third World Network

<https://twnews.net/>

Tierra Activa

<https://www.facebook.com/tierra.activa>

Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research

<http://www.tyndall.ac.uk/>

UK Youth Climate Coalition For a Clean, Fair Future

<http://ukycc.org/>

UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

<http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

References

350. “We Sent a Message to Paris.” https://350.org/global-climate-march/?akid=9228.494146.iW1wkQ&rd=1&t=1&utm_medium=email
- @BarackObama. 2015. “This is huge: Almost every country in the world just signed on to the #ParisAgreement on climate change—thanks to American leadership.” (December 12, 10:29 a.m.). <https://twitter.com/BarackObama/status/675744353667702784>
- Agence France-Presse*. 2015. “195 Nations Adopt Historic Paris Agreement To Stop Global Warming.” (December 13). <http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/195-nations-adopt-historic-paris-agreement-to-stop-global-warming-1254241>
- Aldern, Clayton. 2015. “There’s a high-stakes dinner party in Paris and you’re invited. Check out our climate negotiations explainer.” (October 27). http://grist.org/politics/theres-a-high-stakes-dinner-party-in-paris-and-youre-invited-check-out-our-climate-negotiations-explainer/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily-horizon
- Alpbach-Laxenburg Group, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis*. 2016. (September 14). <http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/research/alg/Alpbach-Laxenburg-Group.html>
- Anderson, Kevin. Bows, Alice. 2011. “Beyond ‘Dangerous’ Climate Change: Emission Scenarios for a New World.” <http://rsta.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/roypta/369/1934/20.full.pdf>
- Association CRIIRAD Laboratoire*. <http://www.criirad.org/english/presentation.html>

- Attac*. 2015. “Réaction d’Attac France à l’Accord de Paris.” (December 12). <https://france.attac.org/actus-et-medias/salle-de-presse/article/reaction-d-attac-france-a-l-accord-de-paris>
- Avaaz*. 2015. “Climate countdown to Paris -- the Avaaz blog.” (November 30). https://www.avaaz.org/en/climate_countdown_to_paris/
- Avaaz*. “From G7 to Paris: Goodbye Fossil Fuels.” https://secure.avaaz.org/en/paris_here_we_come/
- Bello, Walden. 2015. “No Climate Deal Is Better Than a Bad One.” (December 2). <http://fpif.org/no-climate-deal-better-bad-one/>
- Bhavnani, Kum-Kum, John Foran, Priya A. Kurian, Debashish Munshi. 2016. *Feminist Futures: Reimagining Women, Culture and Development*. London: Zed Press. <https://www.zedbooks.net/shop/book/feminist-futures/>
- Billy, Dizzanne. 2015. “No Time For Hyperboles: Caribbean Leaders Bring 1.5 Degrees to the Fore.” (December 1). <http://caribbeannewsservice.com/now/no-time-for-hyperboles-caribbean-leaders-bring-1-5-degrees-to-the-fore/>
- Block, Ben. 2016. “Eye on Earth.” *WorldWatch Institute* <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/6271>
- Bond, Patrick. 2015. “Avaaz’s Climate Vanity.” (June 17). <http://triplecrisis.com/avaazs-climate-vanity/a>
- Bond, Patrick. 2015. “Can Climate Activists’ ‘Movement Below’ Transcend Negotiators’ ‘Paralysis Above?’” <http://jwsr.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/jwsr/article/view/578/651>
- Bond, Patrick. 2015. “Climate Movements Across Movements.” (March 26). <http://www.telesurtv.net/187nglish/opinion/Climate-Movement-Across-Movements-20150326-0035.html>
- Bond, Patrick. 2015. “Avaaz’s Climate Vanity: Upward gazing Can Be Politically Blinding” (June 17, 2015), <http://triplecrisis.com/avaazs-climate-vanity/>
- “Carrying Capacity.” 2013. <http://www.sustainablescale.org/ConceptualFramework/UnderstandingScale/MeasuringScale/Carrying-Capacity.aspx>
- “Check out these amazing photos from the world’s biggest day of climate action ever.” 2015. (November 30). http://grist.org/climate-energy/check-out-photos-from-the-worlds-biggest-day-of-climate-action-ever/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily-horizon

- Chivers, Danny, and Jess Worth. 2015. "Paris Deal: Epic Fail on a Planetary Scale." (December 12). <https://newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2015/12/12/cop21-paris-deal-epi-fail-on-planetary-scale/>
- Chow, Lorraine. 2015. "Monsanto's Roundup — Most Popular Weed Killer in U.S. — 'Probably' Causes Cancer, WHO Report Says." *EcoWatch* (March, 23). <http://www.ecowatch.com/monsantos-roundup-most-popular-weed-killer-in-u-s-probably-causes-canc-1882023016.html>
- Clarke, Renfrey. 2014. "The New Revolutionaries: Climate Scientists Demand Radical Change." *Climate and Capitalism*. (January 9). <http://climateandcapitalism.com/2014/01/09/climate-scientists-become-revolutionaries>
- Climate Action Network*. 2015. "Eco 3, ADP 2.10 Bonn September 2015 – Dollars Issue." (September 2). <http://eco.climatenetwork.org/adp2-10-eco3/>
- Climate Action Network*. 2015. "Eco 4, ADP 2.10 Bonn September 2015 – Another Day Issue." (September 3). http://www.climatenetwork.org/sites/default/files/eco_4_adp2-10_english.pdf
- Climate Action Tracker*. 2015. "The CAT emissions gap – How close are INDCs to 2 and 1.5°C pathways?" (September 1, 2015). <http://climateactiontracker.org/publications/briefing/221/The-CAT-emissions-gap-How-close-are-INDCs-to-2-and-1.5C-pathways.html>
- Climate Action Tracker*. 2015. "Comparison between Climate Action Tracker and Climate Interactive Assessments." (October 19). <http://climateactiontracker.org/global/227/Comparison-between-Climate-Action-Tracker-and-Climate-Interactive-assessments.html>
- Climate Action Tracker*. 2015. "Tracking (I)NDCs" (November 8). <http://climateactiontracker.org/indcs.html>
- "Climate Futures." 2015. <https://sites.google.com/a/waikato.ac.nz/climate-futures/home>
- "Climate Futures: This Changes Everything." 2015-2017. http://ehc.english.ucsb.edu/?page_id=11154
- Climate Network*. 2014. "UN Lima Climate Change Conference - December 2014 - COP 20/CMP 10." (December). <http://www.climatenetwork.org/event/un-lima-climate-change-conference-december-2014-cop-20cmp-10>

- “Climate Scientist James Hansen Warns World is on Wrong Track to Prevent Runaway Global Warming.” 2015. *Democracy Now!* (December 4). https://www.democracynow.org/2015/12/4/climate_scientist_james_hansen_warns_world?utm_source=Democracy+Now!&utm_campaign=dda1a7ce60-Daily_Digest&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_fa2346a853-dda1a7ce60-190186665
- Climate Vulnerable Forum. 2015. “The Manila-Paris Declaration.” (November 30). <http://www.thecvf.org/the-manila-paris-declaration/>
- Climate Vulnerable Forum*. 2015. “20 Nations Call to Strengthen 2 Degrees Climate Goal.” (May 1). <http://www.thecvf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/cvfpresrelease010515.pdf>
- Climate Vulnerable Forum*. 2015. “World’s vulnerable open gateway to climate safe future at Paris.” (November 30). <http://www.thecvf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/High-Level-Meeting-1.pdf>
- climatebrad [Brad Johnson]. 2011. “Anjali Appadurai Mic Checks COP17: ‘Deep Cuts Now! Get It Done!’” *YouTube* (December 10). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5w7d5SVAvrw>
- climatebrad [Brad Johnson]. 2013. “In Tearful, Amazing Speech, Philippines Climate Delegate Announces Hunger Strike.” *YouTube* (November 12). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6RXGGFBdlo>
- Climate-KIC News*. 2015. “Climate-KIC Chairman: ‘Climate Deal is a Turning Point in the Human Enterprise, Transformation Begins.’” (December 13). <http://www.climate-kic.org/news/climate-kic-chairman-climate-deal-is-a-turning-point-in-the-human-enterprise-transformation-begins/>
- “Comparison between Climate Action Tracker and Climate Interactive assessments.” 2015. (October 19). <http://climateaction-tracker.org/global/227/Comparison-between-Climate-Action-Tracker-and-Climate-Interactive-assessments.html>
- Connolly, Kate. 2015. “G7 leaders agree to phase out fossil fuel use by end of century.” *The Guardian* (June 8). <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/08/g7-leaders-agree-phase-out-fossil-fuel-use-end-of-century>
- Coy, Peter. 2015. “Stiglitz Calls Climate Talks a ‘Charade,’ Pushes

- Plan C.” *Bloomberg*. (July 9). <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-07-10/stiglitz-calls-climate-talks-a-charade-pushes-plan-c>
- Davis, Julie Hirschfeld. 2015. “Obama, Once a Guest, Is Now a Leader in World Talks.” (December 12). <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/13/us/president-obama-once-a-guest-now-a-leader-in->
- Delucchi, Mark A. Jacobson, Mark Z, et.al. 2015. “100% Clean and Renewable Wind, Water, and Sunlight (WWS) All-sector Energy Roadmaps for the 50 United States. <http://web.stanford.edu/group/efmh/jacobson/Articles/I/USStatesWWS.pdf>
- Democracy Now!* 2011. “Get It Done?: Urging Climate Justice, Youth Delegate Anjali Appadurai Mic Checks U.N. Summit.” *Democracy Now!* (December 9). https://www.democracynow.org/2011/12/9/get_it_done_urguing_climate_justice
- “Draft agreement and draft decision on workstreams 1 and 2 of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action.” 2015. <http://unfccc.int/files/bodies/application/pdf/ws1and2@2330.pdf>
- “Drawing a Line in the Sand: The Movement Victory at Ende Gelände Opens Up the Road of Disobedience for Paris.” 2015. *The Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination*. (August 23). <https://labofii.wordpress.com/2015/08/23/drawing-a-line-in-the-sand-the-movement-victory-at-ende-gelände-opens-up-the-road-of-disobedience-for-paris/>
- Edenhofer, O., R. Pichs-Madruga, Y. Sokona, E. Farahani, S. Kadner, K. Seyboth, A. Adler, I. Baum, S. Brunner, P. Eickemeier, B. Kriemann, J. Savolainen, S. Schlömer, C. von Stechow, T. Zwickel and J.C. Minx, editors. 2014. “IPCC, 2014: Summary for Policymakers.” *Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change*. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg3/ipcc_wg3_ar5_summary-for-policymakers.pdf
- EnAct International Governance for a Sustainable Future*. <http://www.enact-international.com/>
- Environmental Humanities Center. 2016. “The Paris COP 21 Climate Summit: Why We Are Going and What We Hope to Do

- There for Climate Justice.” *Vimeo*.
<https://vimeo.com/144040565>
- Epstein, Paul R. 2010. “The Ecology of Climate Change and Infectious Diseases.” *Harvard Center for Health and the Global Environment*. (March 1). <http://www.chgeharvard.org/resource/ecology-climate-change-and-infectious-diseases>
- ETC Group. 2015. “The Paris Climate-Change Spectacular.” (July 9). <http://www.etcgroup.org/content/paris-climate-change-spectacular>
- European Commission Joint Research Centre EDGAR Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research. 2014. “CO2 time series 1990-2013 per region/country.” (December). <http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/overview.php?v=CO2ts1990-2013>
- Fenton, Cam. 2015. “Why the Climate Movement Needs to Move Beyond the ‘Big Tent’.” (September 8). <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-09-08/why-the-climate-movement-needs-to-move-beyond-the-big-tent/>
- Field, C.B., V.R. Barros, D.J. Dokken, K.J. Mach, M.D. Mastrandrea, T.E. Bilir, M. Chatterjee, K.L. Ebi, Y.O. Estrada, R.C. Genova, B. Girma, E.S. Kissel, A.N. Levy, S. MacCracken, P.R. Mastrandrea, and L.L. White, editors. 2014: “Summary for Policymakers.” *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.” Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg2/ar5_wgII_spm_en.pdf
- Foran, John. 2014. “Beyond Insurgency to Radical Social Change: The New Situation.” *Studies in Social Justice* 8 (1): 5-25. <https://brock.scholarsportal.info/journals/index.php/SSJ/article/view/1036/1006>
- Foran, John. 2014. “‘¡Volveremos!/We Will Return’: The State of Play for the Global Climate Justice Movement.” *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements* 6 (1) (May): 454-477. <http://www.interfacejournal.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Interface-6-1-Foran.pdf>
- Foran, John. 2015. “An Ecosocialist at the ‘Our Common Future’ Conference.” (July 10). <http://climateandcapital->

- ism.com/2015/07/10/an-ecosocialist-at-the-our-common-future-conference/
- Foran, John. 2015. "Just Say "No" to the Paris COP: A Possible Way to Win Something for Climate Justice." *Resilience*. (September 16). <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-09-16/just-say-no-to-the-paris-cop-a-possible-way-to-win-something-for-climate-justice/>
- Foran, John. 2015. "A History of the Climate Negotiations in Six Videos." (November 10). <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-11-10/a-history-of-the-climate-negotiations-in-six-videos/>
- Foran, John. 2016. *The First Draft of History Thirty-Four of the Best Pieces on the Paris Agreement at COP 21*. (January 4). <https://cloudup.com/cdaFzYn961X>
- Foran, John. 2015. "The Paris Agreement: Paper Heroes Widen the Climate Justice Gap." *Resilience*. (December 14). <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-12-14/the-paris-agreement-paper-heroes-widen-the-climate-justice-gap/>
- Foran, John, Summer Gray, and Corrie Grosse, editors. 2014. *At the COP: Global Climate Justice Youth Speak Out*. file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/foran-ellis-and-gray-2014-at-the-cop.pdf
- Fransen, Taryn. Levin, Kelly. 2015. "INSIDER: Why Are INDC Studies Reaching Different Temperature Estimates?" (November 9). <http://www.wri.org/blog/2015/11/insider-why-are-indc-studies-reaching-different-temperature-estimates>
- Friends of the Earth International. 2015. "Paris Climate Deal is a Sham." (December 12). <http://www.foei.org/press/archive-by-subject/climate-justice-energy-press/paris-climate-deal-sham>
- Fruhworth, Jesse and Melanie Jae Martin. 2013. "Welcome to Blockadia!" (January 15). <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/13927-welcome-to-blockadia>
- Fuhr, Lili. Hällström, Niclas. 2014. "The Myth of Net-Zero Emissions". (December 8). <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/net-zero-emissions-not-enough-by-lili-fuhr-and-niclas-hallstr-m-2014-12>
- Gillis, Justin. 2016. "2015 Was Hottest Year in Historical Record, Scientists Say." *New York Times* (January 20). <https://www.ny-times.com/2016/01/21/science/earth/2015-hottest-year-global->

- warming.html?_r=1
- “Giving Mother Earth a Voice in Paris International Tribunal on Rights of Nature Convened during COP21.” 2015. <http://therightsofnature.org/wp-content/uploads/Press-Release-on-Paris-Rights-of-Nature-Tribunal-final.pdf>
- Global Call for Climate Action. 2014. “COP20: Juan Carlos Soriano, CasActiva & 350.org on the Lima climate march.” *YouTube* (December 4) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1zMtExhYqk>
- Global Call for Climate Action. 2014. “COP20: TierraActiva call on international activists to join Lima climate march.” *YouTube*. (December 4) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAF46mLioM0>
- Goldenberg, Suzanne. 2015. “Major powers pledge \$20bn for green energy research.” (November 29). <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/nov/30/major-powers-pledge-20bn-for-green-energy-research>
- Goldenberg, Suzanne, Lenore Taylor, and John Vidal. 2015. “More countries reject OECD study on climate aid.” (December 8). <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/08/more-countries-reject-oecd-study-on-climate-aid-paris-cop21>
- Goldenberg, Suzanne et al. 2015. “Paris Climate Deal: Nearly 200 Nations Sign In End of Fossil Fuel Era.” (December 12). https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/12/paris-climate-deal-200-nations-sign-finish-fossil-fuel-era?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Othe
- Goldenberg, Suzanne and John Vidal. 2015. “Paris climate talks: biggest polluters back tougher warming target.” (December 7). <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/07/paris-climate-talks-biggest-polluters-back-tougher-warming-target>
- Goodman, Amy. 2015. “Global Call for Climate Action: Storming the Bastille at the Paris Summit.” (October 30). <http://www.alternet.org/environment/global-call-climate-action-storming-bastille-paris-summit>
- Gray, Summer. 2013. “COP19 Walk Out: Voices of the Climate Justice Movement.” *YouTube* (November 21). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbtdXFeUXk&feature=youtu.be>
- Gray, Summer. 2015. “COP 21 (We Can Change the World).”

YouTube. (October 15).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bK0Wtju7QFU&feature=youtu.be>

Green Climate Fund, “Resources Mobilized.” <http://www.greenclimate.fund/partners/contributors/resources-mobilized>

Greenpeace. 2015. “Kumi Naidoo of Greenpeace responds to Paris draft deal.” (December 12).

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/press/releases/2015/kumi-naidoo-cop21-final-text-paris-climate/>

“GroenFront!” *Wikipedia*. <https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/GroenFront%21>

Gütschow, Johannes. 2015. “INDCs lower projected warming to 2.7°C: significant progress but still above 2°C.” (October 1).

http://climateactiontracker.org/assets/publications/CAT_global_temperature_update_October_2015.pdf

Hansen, James. 1988. “The Greenhouse Effect: Impacts on Current Global Temperature and Regional Heat Waves.” (June 23).

http://climatechange.procon.org/sourcefiles/1988_Hansen_Senate_Testimony.pdf

Hansen, James. 2015. “Sea Level Disaster Ahead, but When?” *Climate and Capitalism*. (July 27). http://climateandcapitalism.com/2015/07/27/james-hansen-sea-level-disaster-ahead-but-when/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+climateandcapitalism%2FpEtD+%28Climate+and+Capitalism%29

http://climateandcapitalism.com/2015/07/27/james-hansen-sea-level-disaster-ahead-but-when/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+climateandcapitalism%2FpEtD+%28Climate+and+Capitalism%29

Harvey, Fiona and Karl Mathiesen. 2015. “Climate coalition breaks cover in Paris to push for binding and ambitious deal.” (December 8). <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/08/coalition-paris-push-for-binding-ambitious-climate-change-deal>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/08/coalition-paris-push-for-binding-ambitious-climate-change-deal>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/08/coalition-paris-push-for-binding-ambitious-climate-change-deal>

Harvey, Fiona. 2015. “François Hollande calls for ‘miracle’ climate agreement at Paris talks.” (May 20). <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/may/20/francois-hollande-calls-for-miracle-climate-agreement-at-paris-talks>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/may/20/francois-hollande-calls-for-miracle-climate-agreement-at-paris-talks>

Hedegaard, Connie. 2009. “Naomi Klein Throws Down in Copenhagen-COP15 President says Failure is Not an Option.” (December 8). <https://southernshiftnews.wordpress.com/2009/12/08/naomi-klein-throws-down-in-copenhagen-cop15-president-says-failure-is-not-an-option/>

<https://southernshiftnews.wordpress.com/2009/12/08/naomi-klein-throws-down-in-copenhagen-cop15-president-says-failure-is-not-an-option/>

- Hornick, Brad. 2016. “Kinder Morgan: The fight starts now!” (November 30).
<http://systemchangenotclimatechange.org/columnists/brad-hornick>
- IISD [The International Institute for Sustainable Development]. 2013. “IISD/ENB+ Video Warsaw Climate Conference (COP19/CMP9) Special Video.” (November 11).
<http://enb.iisd.org/videos/climate/cop19-special-videos/>
- IISD [The International Institute for Sustainable Development] Reporting Services. 2014. “Lima Climate Change Conference- December 2014.” (December 12). <http://enb.iisd.org/climate/cop20/enb/>
- IISD [The International Institute for Sustainable Development] Reporting Services. 2015. “Earth Negotiations Bulletin.” (December 8). <http://www.iisd.ca/vol12/enb12659e.html>
- Ikpome, Theophilus. 2015. “New OECD report on climate finance misleading – ActionAid.” (October 8). <http://climatereporters.com/2015/10/new-oecd-report-on-climate-finance-misleading-actionaid/>
- Indra Shekhar Singh. 2015. “Farmers’ Lives Matter – Punjab.” *YouTube* (October 22).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8R6nIUb8XRs>
- Intended Nationally Determined Contributions*. <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/indc/Submission%20Pages/submissions.aspx>
- “International Rights of Nature Tribunal – Paris.” 2015. <http://therightsofnature.org/rights-of-nature-tribunal-paris/>
- Kabat, Pavel. 2015. “The World in 2050: Pathways towards a sustainable future.” *International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis*. (March 12).
<http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/about/news/150312-World-in-2050.html>
- Kelsey-Fry, Jamie. 2015. “To the (inflatable) barricades!” (November 27). <https://newint.org/blog/2015/11/27/to-the-inflatable-barricades/>
- Klein, Naomi. 2014. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Klein Salamon, Margaret and Ezra Silk. 2014. “The Case for Climate Mobilization.” (September 20).

- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9HHPq85FjLGcjJvbGdWVUZCZVk/view>
- “Kyoto Protocol.” *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyoto_Protocol
- La Pública. 2014. “#CasActiva un espacio de encuentro en la #cumbredelospueblos.” *YouTUBE* (December 9). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvV70thaKXo>
- Lee, Ian. 2015. “WIN 20151212 15 56 45 Pro” (December 12). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhYIA7E3JsY>
- Lilla. 2016. “Das läuft im Internet.” *Impressum Internet Service Provider* (July 24). <http://www.wildlawuk.org/>
- “Lima Climate Summit 2014.” *Democracy Now!* (December 2014). https://www.democracynow.org/topics/lima_climate_summit_2014
- Linghein Mattrick. 2015. “Chai Jing’s review: Under the Dome – Investigating China’s Smog 柴静雾霾调查：穹顶之下 (full translation).” *YouTUBE*. (March 1). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6X2uwlQGQM>
- “Loss and Damage’: U.S. Stymies Push for Compensation for Climate Devastation at U.N. Climate Summit.” 2015. *Democracy Now!* (December 8). https://www.democracynow.org/2015/12/8/loss_and_damage_us_stymies_push
- Manski, Ben and Jill Stein. 2014. “The Global Climate Strike: Why We Can’t Wait.” (September 24). <https://popularresistance.org/the-global-climate-strike-why-we-cant-wait/>
- McDermott, Met. 2009. “Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed is an Eco-Rock Star - Brings Down the House in Copenhagen.” (December 14). <http://www.treehugger.com/corporate-responsibility/maldives-president-mohamed-nasheed-is-an-eco-rock-star-brings-down-the-house-in-copenhagen.html>
- McGrath, Matt. 2015. “COP21: US Joins ‘High Ambition Coalition’ for Climate Deal.” (December 10). <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-35057282>
- McIntee, Michael. 2009. “President Nasheed – ‘We Refuse To Be Quiet’ On Climate Change.” *YouTUBE* (December 15). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f99KV0P8NSE>
- McKibben, Bill. 2009. “Reason and Faith in Copenhagen.” (December 13). <http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2009/12/reason-and-faith-copenhagen>

- McKibben, Bill. 2015. “350.org & Bill McKibben React to COP21 Climate Text.” (December 12).
<https://350.org/press-release/cop21-reaction/>
- Milman, Oliver. 2015. “James Henson, Father of Climate Change Awareness, Calls Paris Talks a ‘Fraud’” (December 12).
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/12/james-hansen-climate-change-paris-talks-fraud>
- Monbiot, George. 2015. “Grand Promises of Paris Climate Deal Undermined by Squalid Retrenchments.” (December 12).
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/george-monbiot/2015/dec/12/paris-climate-deal-governments-fossil-fuels>
- Moore, Hilary and Joshua Kahn Russell. 2011. *Organizing Cools the Planet*. Oakland: PM Press. http://www.climateaccess.org/sites/default/files/Moore%20and%20Russell_Organizing%20Cools%20the%20Planet.pdf
- “Most vulnerable nations form climate action coalition.” 2015. (October 11). http://climateandcapitalism.com/2015/10/11/most-vulnerable-nations-form-climate-action-coalition/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+climateandcapitalism%2FpEtD+%28Climate+and+Capitalism%29
- “Naomi Klein gives ‘Angry Mermaid Award’ in Copenhagen.” 2009. *YouTube* (December 15).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ge864JnnVm0>
- Narain, Sunita. 2015. “Paris foretold and forewarned: what to expect from COP21.” (November 30). <http://www.down-toearth.org.in/blog/paris-foretold-and-forewarned-51778>
- Narain, Sunita and Chandra Bhushan. 2015. *Captain America: U.S. Climate Goals: A Reckoning*. Delhi: Center for Science and Environment. www.cseindia.org/userfiles/Capitan-America-Report.pdf
- “‘Nature Does Not Negotiate’: Environmentalists Walk Out of U.N. Climate Summit in Warsaw.” 2013. *Democracy Now!*
https://www.democracynow.org/2013/11/21/nature_does_not_negotiate_environmentalists_walk
- Neslen, Arthur. 2015. “India unveils global solar alliance of 120 countries at Paris climate summit.” (November 30).

- <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/nov/30/india-set-to-unveil-global-solar-alliance-of-120-countries-at-paris-climate-summit>
- Network of Spiritual Progressives. 2015. "Fear and Response After Paris." (November 19). <http://www.parisclimatejustice.org/article/fear-and-response-after-paris>
- Notes from Nowhere editorial collective. 2003. *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anti-Capitalism*. London: Verso.
- One World UK. 2015. "Too Weak, Too Late, Say Climate Justice Campaigners." (December 12). <http://oneworld.org/2015/12/12/too-weak-too-late-says-climate-justice-campaigners/>
- Our Common Future Against Climate Change*. 2015. <http://www.commonfuture-paris2015.org/>
- Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*. <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>
- Our Common Future under Climate Change Paris 2015*. 2015. "Plenary Session 1 - July 7, 2015." *YouTube*. (July 8). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWY6e5I1Kew>
- Pantsios, Anastasia. 2015. "Belize Joins Ten Island Challenge to Transition to 100% Renewable Energy." (July 9). <http://www.eco-watch.com/belize-joins-ten-island-challenge-to-transition-to-100-renewable-energ-1882065330.html>
- "Paris Climate Justice." 2016. <http://www.parisclimatejustice.org/>
- Patel, Ricken. 2015. "People's Climate March: The Revolution Starts Here." *The Guardian* (July 25). <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jul/29/peoples-climate-march-the-revolution-starts-here>
- Patel, Tara and Javier Blas. 2015. "Oil Giants Band Together to Add Voice to Climate Debate." (May 20). <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-05-20/oil-giants-band-together-to-add-their-voice-to-climate-debate>
- Peoples' Sustainability Treaties*. 2012. "Peoples' Sustainability Treaty On Transitioning to a Zero Fossil Fuels World." (June). <https://sustainabilitytreaties.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/peoples-sustainability-treaty-on-transitioning-to-a-zero-fossil-fuel-world-draft-for-rio20.pdf>
- People's Test on Climate*. 2015. "The People's Test on Climate 2015."

- (December 12). <http://peoplestestonclimate.org/>
- Phipps, Claire, Adam Vaughan, and Oliver Milman. 2015. “Global climate march 2015: hundreds of thousands march around the world – as it happened.” (November 29). <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/live/2015/nov/29/global-peoples-climate-change-march-2015-day-of-action-live>
- Pope Francis. 2015. *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si of the Holy Father Francis on Care for our Common Home*. Vatican: Vatican Press. http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf
- Pope-Weidemann, Marienna. 2015. “The youth movement strikes back.” (December 2). <https://newint.org/blog/2015/12/02/the-youth-movement-strikes-back/>
- Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research*. 2016. (December 8). <https://www.pik-potsdam.de/>
- “Poverty and Climate Change.” <http://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/2502872.pdf>
- “Precautionary Principle, Understanding Science in Regulation.” 2017. <http://sehn.org/precautionary-principle/>
- Randerson, James and Adam Vaughan. 2015. “Paris Climate Talks: Governments Adopt Historic Deal – As It Happened.” (December 12). <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/live/2015/dec/12/paris-climate-talks-francois-hollande-to-join-summit-as-final-draft-published-live>
- “Rights of Mother Earth.” <https://pwccc.wordpress.com/programa/>
- Rowling, Meghan and Thomson Reuters Foundation. 2015. “Yeb Sano kicks off 6-month climate pilgrimage as faith groups seek boost from Pope.” *Interaksyon* (June 10). <http://www.interaksyon.com/article/112113/yeb-sano-kicks-off-6-month-climate-pilgrimage-as-faith-groups-seek-boost-from-pope>
- Saño, Naderev “Yeb”. 2013. “Typhoon Haiyan: we cannot afford to procrastinate on climate action.” *The Guardian* (November 11). <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/11/typhoon-haiyan-philippines-climate-change?INTCMP=SRCH>
- Saño, Naderev “Yeb”. 2015. “In the Footsteps of Gandhi.” (August 24). <http://peoplespilgrimage.org/evoke/blog/in-the-footsteps-of-gandhi/view>
- Sethi, Nitin. 2015. “US and EU want Loss and Damage as a toothless

- tiger in Paris agreement.” (December 7). http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/us-and-eu-want-loss-and-damage-as-a-toothless-tiger-in-paris-agreement-115120700043_1.html
- Simeral, David. 2017. “United States Drought Monitor.” <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>
- Smith, Yves. 2015. “U.S. Climate Goals: A Reckoning.” (October 10). http://www.nakedcapitalism.com/2015/10/u-s-climate-goals-a-reckoning.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+NakedCapitalism+%28naked+capitalism%29
- Solnit, Rebecca. 2012. “Tomgram: Rebecca Solnit, 2013 as Year Zero for Us -- and Our Planet.” *TomDispatch* (December 23). http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175632/tomgram%3A_rebecca_solnit%2C_2013_as_year_zero_for_us_-_and_our_planet/?utm_source=TomDispatch&utm_campaign=05674e52c9-TD_Solnit12_23_2012&utm_medium=email
- Solnit, Rebecca. 2015. “Power in Paris.” (December). <http://harpers.org/archive/2015/12/power-in-paris/>
- Solón, Pablo. 2015. “Behind the climate negotiating text for COP21.” (March 12). <http://focusweb.org/content/behind-climate-negotiating-text-cop21>
- Solón, Pablo. 2015. “Art 3ter. New Carbon Markets under the Name of Sustainable Development.” (July 12). <http://www.parisclimatejustice.org/article/art-3ter-new-carbon-markets-under-name-sustainable-development>
- Spear, Stefanie. 2015. “Must-See Robert Reich’s 2014 Year in Review” *EcoWatch* (January 2). <http://www.ecowatch.com/must-see-robert-reichs-2014-year-in-review-1881994949.html>
- Stern, Lord Nicholas. 2015. *Why Are We Waiting? The Logic, Urgency, and Promise of Tackling Climate Change*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Stocker, T.F., D. Qin, G.-K. Plattner, M. Tignor, S.K. Allen, J. Boschung, A. Nauels, Y. Xia, V. Bex and P.M. Midgley, editors. 2013. “Summary for Policymakers.” *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis*. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.” *Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA*. http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg1/WG1AR5_SPM_FINAL.pdf

Stockholm Resilience Centre: Sustainability Science for Biosphere Stewardship.

<http://www.stockholmresilience.org/>

“Sustainable Citizenship.” 2015. <https://sites.google.com/a/waikato.ac.nz/sustainable-citizenship-project/>

Sustainable Development, United Nations. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal>

Sustainable Development Solutions Network, A Global Initiative for the United Nations. <http://unsdsn.org/>

“Tanzania: African climate negotiators urged to employ WTO Seattle strategy.” 2015. *Panapress.* (September 5).

<http://www.panapress.com/Tanzania--African-climate-negotiators-urged-to-employ-WTO-Seattle-strategy---15-630452044-27-lang2-index.html>

The Island President. 2011. Directed by John Shenk. <http://theislandpresident.com/>

The Leap Manifesto. 2017. <https://leapmanifesto.org/en/the-leap-manifesto/#manifesto-content>

“‘The Paris Agreement Will See the Planet Burn’: Former Bolivian Climate Negotiator Pablo Solón.” 2015. *Democracy Now!* (December 1). https://www.democracynow.org/2015/12/1/the_paris_agreement_will_see_the

“The Paris Climate Change Spectacular.” 2015. *ETC Group* (July 9).

<http://www.etcgroup.org/content/paris-climate-change-spectacular>

“The Paris Mirage – Reducing Emissions while Increasing Them.” (August).

<http://leave-it-in-the-ground.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/The-Paris-Mirage-LINGO.pdf>

“Thousands Defy Paris State of Emergency, Protest Ban to Sound the Alarm on Global Climate Crisis.” 2015. *Democracy Now!* (November 30). https://www.democracynow.org/2015/11/30/thousands_defy_paris_state_of_emergency?

UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 2015. “The Paris Agreement” (December 12).

<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l09r01.pdf> or http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php

UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 2015. “Streamlined and consolidated text.” (June 11).

- http://unfccc.int/files/bodies/awg/application/pdf/adp2-9_i3_11jun2015t1630_np.pdf
- UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 2015. "Paris Climate Change Conference." (November). http://unfccc.int/meetings/paris_nov_2015/meeting/8926.php
- UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 2015. "Draft Paris Outcome." (December 5). <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/adp2/eng/106r01.pdf>
- UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 2015 "DRAFT TEXT on COP 21 agenda item 4 (b) Durban Platform for Enhanced Action." (December 9). <https://junkscience.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/da01.pdf>
- UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 2015a. "ADOPTION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT" (December 12).
- "Universal Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth." 2010. <http://therightsofnature.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-UNIVERSAL-DECLARATION-OF-THE-RIGHTS-OF-MOTHER-EARTH-APRIL-22-2010.pdf>
- Vidal, John. 2012. "Climate change will mean more malnourished children, experts warn." *The Guardian* (December 5). <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/dec/05/climate-change-malnourished-children>
- Vidal, John. 2015. "Paris climate talks: Indian officials accuse OECD of exaggerating climate aid." (December 2). <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/02/paris-climate-talks-indian-officials-accuse-rich-countries-of-exaggerating-climate-aid>
- Vidal, John. 2015. "UN on Wrong Track with Plans to Limit Global Warming to 2C, says Top Scientist." *The Guardian* (December 3). <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/03/un-wrong-track-plans-limit-global-warming-2c-top-scientist-climate-change>
- We Canada. 2012. "Severn Cullis-Suzuki at Rio Summit 1992." (August 16, 2012). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJJGuI-ZVfLM>
- "We're Not Done Yet." 2010. *Yes!Magazine* (January 22). <http://www.yesmagazine.org/planet/were-not-done-yet>

- Widick, Richard and John Foran. *WHAT NOW for Climate Justice? – Youth Movements from Lima to Paris*. 2014. (December 2).
<https://unfccc6.meta-fusion.com/cop20/events/2014-12-02-17-00-university-of-california-what-now-for-climate-justice-youth-movements-from-lima-to-paris>
- Wikipedia. 2014. “Interstellar (film).” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:CiteThisPage?page=Interstellar_%28film%29
- Wikipedia. 2017. “Planetary Boundaries.” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Planetary_boundaries
- Wikipedia. 2017. “Klimaforum09.” (March 4). <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klimaforum09>
- Worth, Jess. 2009. “In Our Hands.” (December 1).
<https://newint.org/features/2009/12/01/keynote-copenhagen/>
- Zeese, Kevin and Margaret Flowers. 2015. “Newsletter: 2015 The Year We Build Power Together.” *Popular Resistance* (January 2).
<https://popularresistance.org/newsletter-2015-the-year-we-build-power-together/>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Foran teaches Sociology and Environmental Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

His academic specialty is movements for radical social change, both 20th century revolutions – his book is called *Taking Power: On the Origins of Twentieth Century Revolutions in the Third World* (Cambridge University Press, 2005) – and 21st century movements for radical social change, from the global justice movement to Occupy, the Arab Spring, the Zapatistas, and now, esp. the global climate justice movement (see “Beyond Insurgency to Radical Social Change: ‘The New Situation,’” pp. 5-25 in *Studies in Social Justice* (2014).

He now works passionately as a scholar-activist on and within the global climate justice movement, which he sees as at the center of the struggle for any prospect of achieving social justice and radical social change in the 21st century. A lot of his work is published at www.resilience.org. It can also be found in two places that he has helped co-create: the websites of the International Institute of Climate Action and Theory (www.iicat.org/john-forans-iicat-research-portal/), and the Climate Justice Project (www.climatejusticeproject.org). He is also a co-creator of the UC Santa Barbara Environmental/Climate Justice Studies Digital Platform, which launched recently at <http://ejcj.or-faleacenter.ucsb.edu/>.

He is presently co-directing a major new curriculum project on teaching climate justice from kindergarten to the university with colleagues in the UC and CSU university systems here in California: <http://climatechampions.ucop.edu/uc-csu-knowledge-action-network-for-transformative-climate-and-sustainability-education-and-action/>. He teaches university-level courses on “Earth in Crisis,” “Climate Justice,” “Activism,” and “The World in 2050: Sustainable Development and Its Alternatives.”

He is an active member of System Change Not Climate Change, the Green Party of California, The Climate Mobilization, and Santa Barbara 350.