

CJCM STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES TO ACCELERATE AND DEEPEN THE JUST TRANSITION



Discussion Document 1¹

Resisting Climate Apartheid and Eco-cidal Capitalism – Towards a Global Climate Justice Bloc for a Just World Peace, Earth Democracy and Climate Justice Deal for Africa

1. Introduction

1.1 Globalised carbon capitalism is like a snake eating its own tail, self-inflicting wounds. This is not new in the history of capitalism. Between 1870 and 1914, capitalism was also plagued by a general crisis, contributing to imperial conflict and the First World War (which claimed the lives of 10 million people). In the inter-war years, a second general crisis registered. Lessons were not learned from the first general crisis. The gold standard, financialising practices and free market ideology prevailed such that by 1929 the New York Stock Exchange crashed. Another round of inter-imperial conflict ensued, shaped by colonial and monopoly interests, culminating in the Second World War (in which about 50 million people lost lives, about 27 million just in the former Soviet Union). In the early 1970s a third general crisis of capitalism expressed itself through over-accumulation, declining profit rates, oil price shocks due to the formation of OPEC and the defeat of US armed forces in Vietnam.

1.2 From the 16th century to the present, every wave of capitalist expansion has attempted to enclose the natural commons (land, water, biodiversity, energy and labour) in the global north and south and destroy non-capitalist strata. The domination of nature, women and the racial other was connected. This historical process of enclosure, appropriation, domination and large scale destruction of human and non-human life is an expression of the eco-cidal logic of capitalist accumulation. War is merely one form and moment of extending this logic and systemic crisis. In the age of nuclear military powers and full spectrum warfare, war holds out the prospect of annihilation of human life. The opportunity for a just global peace and denuclearisation was ignored by the West when Mikhail Gorbachev made such a gesture. NATO could have been disbanded as well and this could have been a turning point in world history. Instead, the US in its geopolitical calculations chose to block the convergence of Western and Eastern Europe. The expression of its military-industrial-security complex interests in its National Security strategies over the past few decades has maintained an adversarial and now a military threat approach to both Russia and China. Unnecessary and dangerous geopolitical global rivalries are underway, in which the US is seeking to maintain its imperial dominance in the world and ensure the reproduction of carbon capitalism. The current situation in the

¹ Presented and discussed at CJCM Strategic dialogue held in Johannesburg and online, 30 September – 1 October 2022

Ukraine could escalate into serious biological and even nuclear warfare. These rivalries coincide with and exacerbate the current general crisis of capitalism.

1.3 Today capitalism is facing the fourth general crisis (circa 2007 till the present) in its history. This is a crisis of socioecological reproduction on a world scale. At one level, the restructuring of the international political economy into a global political economy through the neoliberal class project (1980 till the present), its transmission and lock-ins through structural adjustment and austerity, has been punctuated by currency collapses, ballooning private and public debt, overheating of housing markets, economy collapses and widespread precarity. The current fallout of geopolitical competition and global rivalry is a global cost of living crisis, induced by spikes in oil and food prices due to the US/NATO/Ukraine and Russia war; creating the conditions for global stagflation (high inflation, high unemployment and declining growth) and for more austerity to be imposed by ruling classes. This comes on the heels of neoliberal reason intensifying surplus value extraction through the contraction of welfare regimes, deindustrialisation, precarious labour market regimes, and low unit-labour cost manufacturing in China and much of the Global South, promoting universal commodification including the enhanced commodification of nature. Despite the ideological varieties of neoliberalism, in different national and regional contexts, the current realities we live is the world making essence of this class project.

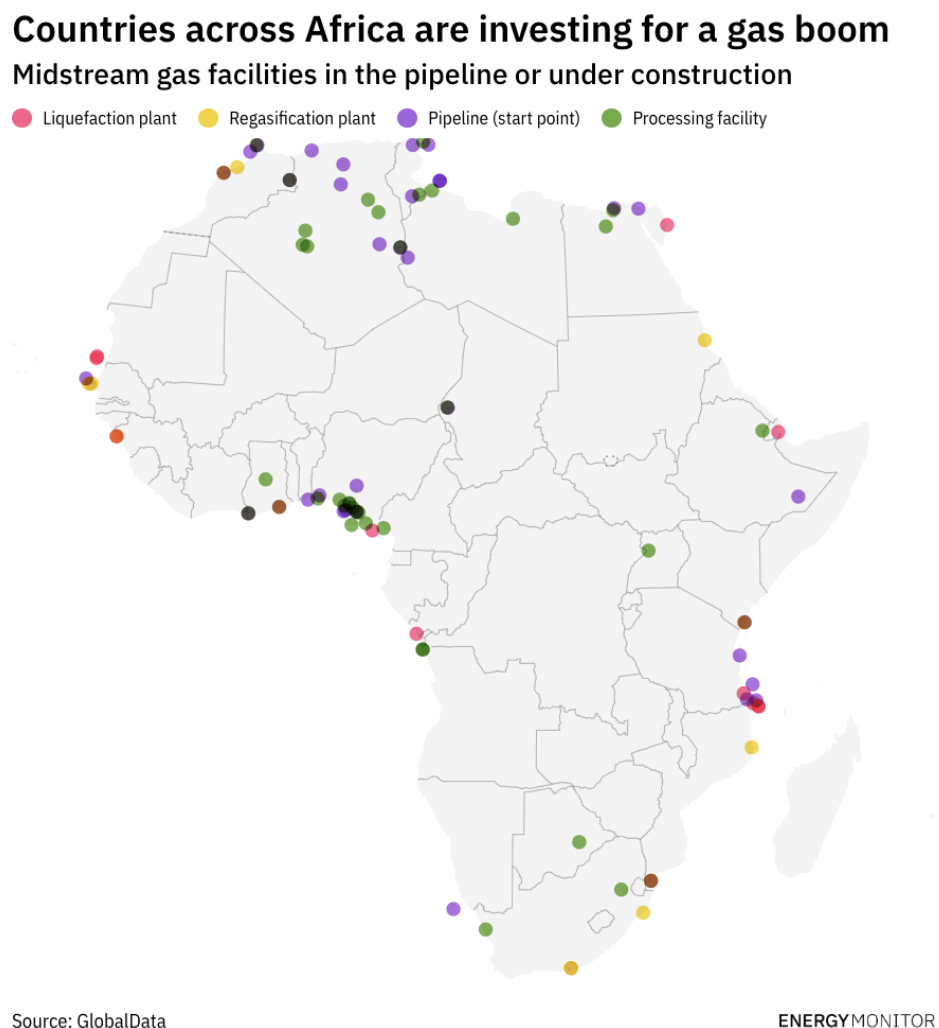
1.4 In the four decades of its existence neoliberalism has also accentuated deep systemic crisis tendencies, emanating from production/reproduction, nature/society and economic/polity institutional systemic divides. These have propelled neoliberalism or monopoly-finance capital into a phase of authoritarian neoliberalism: thin market democracies entrenching the power of transnationalising propertied classes from the USA to Brazil to South Africa and India, for instance. A global eco-fascist project, plunging the world into chaos and accentuating the ecocidal logic of global carbon capitalism has arrived threatening the future of human and non-human life. The prospect of extinction is what distinguishes the fourth general crisis of capitalism from all previous crises. It is a “poly-crisis” or multi-level total crisis of socio-ecological reproduction that cannot be managed with shallow reformism and “techno-fixes” if human and non-human life are to survive. Moreover, climate justice strategy has to come to terms with the complex global political field it has to contest, particularly the uneven impacts of climate apartheid, the underlying conditions generating and maintaining an eco-fascist class project, the self-induced disruptions of global carbon capitalism and the spaces it provides for strategic advance and agential challenges for a counter-hegemonic project on global and national terrains.

2 Climate Apartheid and the Eco-cidal Logic of Capitalism

2.1 On 22 April 2021, on Earth Day, US President Joe Biden convened a summit on the climate crisis with the heads of several important countries. While this was an attempt to bring the US back into the climate crisis multilateral game and to lead from the front on a global challenge, the hypocrisy of this move was not lost on the global public. At the time of the convening of this summit, 223.6 million vaccine doses covering 35.2% of the US population were rolled out. Whereas in contrast, Nigeria with a population of 201 million

had only 1.2 million people vaccinated. The Biden Administration was asking the world to act collectively on the climate crisis when it was failing to ensure vaccine intellectual property was made available to countries in the global south. The US was not alone in hoarding vaccines and ensuring profit making for pharmaceutical companies. The UK, Canada and Western European governments did the same. The lesson from the Covid 19 pandemic is simple: vaccine apartheid was the West's response and this is consistent with how it is also approaching the climate crisis; climate apartheid: some peoples and nations are expendable as long as they are not the wealthy in Euro-America. Countries of the global south that did not cause the climate problem but mainly the poorer darker nations and peoples will carry the costs and face the disastrous consequences of climate shocks.

2.2 Western governments responsible for using coal, oil and gas for over 150 years have not risen to the challenge of rapidly phasing out fossil fuels and paying a climate debt to countries in the global south not responsible for such. For instance, on average American produces 15.52 tons of carbon per person annually as compared to a person in sub-Saharan Africa at 0.8 tons per person (except South Africa which is 8.16 tons per person). Moreover, in the midst of the US/NATO/Ukraine/Russia war Africa is being considered as a major supplier of gas and oil to Western Europe to meet its needs since gas and oil supply was stopped by the Putin Regime. Corrupt and lumpen ruling classes in Africa also want this to happen and currently up to \$400 billion worth of gas assets are under development.



2.3 In this context, even the International Energy Agency retreated from its call for no new investments in fossil fuels by saying gas is now exempted. Essentially giving license for fossil fuel extraction to intensify on the African continent to meet the needs of the West. Several vulnerable eco-systems and communities are threatened by this push for fossil fuels in Africa: the Okavango Delta, the rainforests in the Congo, ocean eco-systems amongst others. This challenge has plagued the UN COP process since its inception. The Glasgow COP in 2021 continued this ineffective approach to carbon capitalism.

2.4 When the world overshot a 1°C increase in planetary temperature in 2015 (and since prior to the industrial revolution) we have all started living on a new planet. Rich industrialised countries in the global north were responsible for about two thirds of historic greenhouse gas emissions that brought this climate shift about. Climate extremes intensified climate apartheid in numerous countries in the global south and specifically Africa. Recently Pakistan's extreme flooding impacted 33 million people, killing about 1314, including 458 children. Yet Pakistan's per capita emissions is 0.87 tons per person, very similar to sub-Saharan Africa's per capita emissions. According to the Climate Resilience Index (2022) all assessed nations in Africa were classified as lower resilient countries. Essentially African countries are extremely vulnerable and ill prepared. In Africa some of the following climate related shocks have registered:

- About 40 million people faced hunger in Southern Africa during the El Nino induced drought between 2015-2017;
- Cyclones Idai and Kenneth in 2019 devastated Mozambique, Malawi and eastern Zimbabwe. In Mozambique alone 2.2 million needed emergency assistance;
- A deadly flood in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, in April, killed almost 500 people and caused more than R17 billion in infrastructure damage;
- Flooding at the start of Nigeria's rainy season in 2022 impacted about 43 000 people, with the elderly, women and children bearing the brunt of displacement;
- A four-year drought in the Horn of Africa, together with several conflicts, has resulted in almost 22 million facing starvation in 2022.

2.5 The richest 0.1% of people globally contribute 467 tonnes of carbon emissions every year, and the top 0.01% contribute a staggering 2,530 tonnes per person per year. When the world overshoots 1.5°C, climate extremes will intensify for vulnerable island states, coastal communities and several countries in the global south heating faster than the global average. About 3.6 billion people in the global south face climate harm for a problem they did not cause. According to the World Meteorological Organisation by 2030 it is estimated up to 118 million poor African's will be exposed to floods, droughts and extreme heat. Gender inequalities will be exacerbated and children will face serious risks. Climate apartheid is poised to intensify in Africa as African's become expendable to Western countries and the wealthy on our planet responsible for the climate crisis.

3 Understanding Carbon Capital's Victory and Lock-in of Fossil Fuels

3.1 The increasing use of oil, coal and gas is exacerbating the climate ecological rift and creating a global gas chamber that can wipe out human and non-human life. Despite this

prospect the declining US hegemon, the largest historical carbon emitter, and the UN multilateral process have not solved the climate crisis. With almost three decades of climate science, multilateral negotiations and everyday climate shocks, together with a 1.2°C temperature increase since prior to the industrial revolution, fossil fuels still dominate the global political economy. In the 11th hour the International Energy Agency (IEA), in 2021 declared no new oil, coal and gas investment take place if “net zero” is to be reached by 2050. However, so far, the carbon addicted states and corporations are not adhering to this. At the same time, we have to ask why didn’t the US, the UN COP process and the IEA declare this in the 1990s or the early 2000s? The simple answer to this question is that carbon capital won and entrenched the use of fossil fuels, despite the scientific urgency and the worsening climate crisis.

3.2 Three crucial political economy conditions gave rise to this. First, the power of the carbon capitalist lobby in the Washington beltway. Since James Hansen drew attention to the urgencies in climate science in 1988, Exxon together with the American Petroleum Institute, the National Association of Manufacturers, the US Chamber of Commerce and 13 other industry associations went on the offensive. The Global Climate Coalition (GCC) unleashed a public relations exercise that gridlocked the Washington beltway, and sowed confusion in the American public and amongst global ruling classes. Climate science denialism, discrediting climate science and scientists, strategic lobbying and dishonest marketing went into overdrive including even affecting the UN climate change negotiations. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, despite insisting on reducing carbon emissions in countries, nevertheless failed to place sufficient emphasis on the rapid phase out of fossil fuels in the global economy, allowing the idea of carbon credits, technological schemes with respect to carbon capture and sequestration, and the idea of negative carbon emissions to subvert the process (all echoed by the World Bank and IMF). Meanwhile, with the American public prevented from recognising the urgencies of climate science and the captured political leadership in Washington overtly supporting fossil fuel interests, the GCC declared that it had won and was disbanded by 2002. Contemporary resistance to complex hydrocarbon extraction has been occurring in this context of the perpetuation of fossil fuel production as business as usual. “Blockadia” and even divestment have been unable to stop the fossil fuel juggernaut.

3.3 Second, given that the United States has been dominated by carbon capital, which is closely tied to the ruling financial interests, it has failed to provide decisive leadership in the UN multilateral process from the Kyoto Protocol to the current Paris Climate Agreement. U.S. Presidents have consistently maintained that the “American way of life is not up for negotiation” and neither can there be binding regulatory commitments, despite the deadly consequences of carbon emissions. This failure of imperial leadership emboldened a call for “catch up carbon development” in the global south and ensured fossil fuel spigots remained open over the past twenty years to meet the needs of China, India and other G20 countries. At the same time, the failure to provide the billions promised for just transitions to countries, that did not cause the climate crisis has not materialised and this has ensured that countries in the global south, including fossil fuel resource economies, have remained trapped in resource extraction. The winner in this context has been carbon capital.

3.4 Third, despite the fanfare, backslapping and public relations projection of a great success, after the Paris Climate Agreement was put in place, a ruling class eco-fascist project has congealed and is shaping climate politics. This is made up of two dominant ideological currents: (a) center right neoliberals who hide behind the failed UN climate negotiation process and now the Paris Climate Agreement. Their rhetoric is all about market led just transitions, techno fixes (carbon capture and storage, a push for hydrogen not always green, electric vehicles and geo-engineering) and finance (carbon offsets, trading and taxes). Yet in practice these leaders and their countries are not shining examples of decarbonisation, but rather the use of fossil fuels is being perpetuated and climate modernisation is their game with the assumption of a linear and gradual process of change by 2050. They claim that the climate emergency can be managed from above and are sending mixed signals to publics, to placate concerns, but are actually trying to manage elite risk; (b) hard right neoliberals who accept globalised accumulation, but have embraced exclusionary and racist nationalisms, are ambivalent about climate science and its urgencies. Where there is an embrace of climate science racist neo-Malthusian and anti-darker nation attitudes have emerged to buttress carceral border regimes.

4. The Glasgow COP and the Continuity of the Eco-fascist Project

4.1 The Glasgow UN climate negotiations in November 2021, happened in a context in which Covid 19 was ravaging our societies and this expression of the revenge of nature was a powerful message to the world. In many ways, it was a prelude to greater pain awaiting our societies as the climate crisis worsens. Despite this context world leaders and carbon ruling classes came short in terms of their commitments. According to Columbia Universities Centre on Global Energy Policy, after assessing Nationally Determined Commitments, the world was only on track to cut emissions by 9 percent by 2030, far short of the necessary cutting of emissions by about half.² Only 14 countries have also signed “net zero” into law. It would seem as if will and commitment is faltering at a policy implementation level. The Joe Biden administration, while promising a “renewable energy revolution” and delivering a watered down Inflation Reduction Act (supporting a limited push towards renewables), has released massive amounts of petroleum from US reserves and has placed pressure on fracking businesses to meet supply side shortfalls. US coal use is also on the rise. This has been induced by high oil prices and the bans imposed on Russia in response to the Ukraine War. According to the US government itself, it is anticipating total US crude production will scale new heights under Biden.³ Today the US is the number one oil and gas producer in the world and its fossil fuel corporations have made super profits in the midst of crude oil price spikes due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and are positioned as key suppliers to Western Europe. Other examples of ongoing carbon criminality include Trudeau’s administration in Canada which is delaying delivery of a promised cap on emissions from the fossil fuel sector, insisting there is no need to curb production.⁴ In South Africa, the Cyril Ramaphosa Regime, one of the most carbon

² <https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/research/report/tallying-updated-ndcs-gauge-emissions-reductions-2030-and-progress-toward-net-zero>

³ See Browner, D. “Big Oil has nothing to complain about under Joe Biden,” *Financial times*, 1 April 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/3fe7d626-7e3e-4cb9-bce5-6798c50c47e8>

⁴ <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2022/03/31/canadian-government-ducks-fight-with-oil-and-gas-industry/>

intensive economies even in the BRICS, is still obsessed with a coal heavy energy mix (at least up till 2030) and currently pursuing off-shore oil and gas extraction, gas based Karpowerships (to meet supply side challenges), nuclear power and fracking. In many of these countries massive subsidies to fossil fuel industries are still in place (in 2020 fossil fuel burning was subsidised to the tune of \$5.9 trillion globally or \$11 million per minute. In 2020/21 the South African government provided fossil fuel subsidies to the amount of R172 billion in total and social costs due to pollution amounted to R550 billion). Essentially, centre right neoliberals are becoming indistinguishable from hard right neoliberals, as eco-fascism marches on.

4.2 Despite all the fanfare at the Glasgow COP about finance capital pulling the plug on fossil fuel investments, this is far from what is happening in reality. The Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero, includes the Net Zero Banking Alliance (which was launched in April 2021), and despite its declared intentions simultaneously funded huge transactions contrary to “net zero”, with dire implications for carbon lock-ins for coming decades. This includes: May 2021: \$10B to Saudi Aramco (Citi, JPMorgan Chase), \$1.5B to Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. (Citi); June 2021: \$12.5B to QatarEnergy (Citi, JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Goldman Sachs); August 2021: \$10B to ExxonMobil (Citi, JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Morgan Stanley).⁵ In the 13th annual report *Banking on Climate Chaos* the following critical observation is made:

In the six years since the Paris Agreement was adopted, the world’s 60 largest private banks financed fossil fuels with USD \$4.6 trillion, with \$742 billion in 2021 alone. 2021 fossil fuel financing numbers remained above 2016 levels, when the Paris Agreement was signed. Of particular significance is the revelation that the 60 banks profiled in the report funnelled \$185.5 billion just last year into the 100 companies doing the most to expand the fossil fuel sector.⁶

4.3 The UN-led COP Summit process has failed to stop a looming 1.5C overshoot of planetary temperature. In the next few years several regions of the world heating at twice the global average, such as Southern Africa, will be devastated by extreme climate shocks. Sea-level rise is also going to impact island states, low lying countries and coastal areas. Climate apartheid and injustice is going to intensify while carbon criminals - states in the global north, ruling classes in the global south and the wealthy - continue using oil, coal and gas. The eco-fascist class project is going to bring immense suffering and loss of life to the most vulnerable – human and non-human.

5 Maturing Contradictions and Capitalism’s Own Systemic Disruptions

5.1 The current debate amongst the global capitalist intelligentsia centres on the end of globalisation and the fragmentation of the neoliberal economic order. Dani Rodrick, the famous Harvard economist, in 2016 was already cautioning ruling classes “not to fret” about deglobalisation as what was required was an adjustment from deep globalisation;

⁵ https://climateandcapitalism.com/2022/03/31/bankers-lie-about-fossil-fuel-finance/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=bankers-lie-about-fossil-fuel-finance

a more moderated globalisation was on the cards with imbalances being adjusted and greater government responsibility coming to the fore.⁷ Since then, various important developments have emerged to challenge liberalised trading systems. Donald Trump's big push to decouple the US economy from China (continued by Biden), the impact of Covid 19 on supply chains (including vaccine apartheid), Brexit, ongoing technological rivalry between the US and China and the Russian offensive in Ukraine upending all illusions about energy dependence. All the assumptions of open, intellectual property and "free market" trading systems have been shattered as governments rethink degrees of integration, deglobalisation and how to manage systemic risk. The EU, for instance, plans to buy gas as a cartel similar to OPEC to ensure price advantages. The space this opens for exits from imperial disciplining and to accelerate deep just transitions, including sharing renewable energy technology and research in the global south, cannot be underestimated. While intellectual property rights for vaccines obstructed vaccine production in the global south, this must be resisted for renewable technologies to prevent climate apartheid.

5.2 However, the remaking of global trading systems is merely the surface expression of the deeper systemic crisis tendencies shaping and limiting the globalised logic of the eco-fascist class project. Financialised inequality and structural unemployment, further entrenching class, race and gender divides in societies, are exacerbating the crisis of socio-ecological reproduction in households and beyond. According to recent reports on executive pay packages the trend of concentrating wealth at the top has continued, despite the suffering inflicted by Covid 19 on societies, with 280 of the 500 S&P companies that have reported figures this year, highlighting that the median pay for CEOs in the largest capitalised firms on American stock exchanges has jumped to a record \$14.2mn for 2021, up from \$13.5mn in 2020.⁸ Moreover, the median ratio has shot up to 245 for 2021 from 192 for 2020, an extremely large year-over-year increase. While women globally are in the lowest paid work, 75 percent of women in developing regions are in the informal economy, with about 600 million in the most insecure and precarious forms of work, women doing twice as much unpaid care work (with annual estimates at \$10.8 trillion) and women work longer days than men (when paid and unpaid work is counted together).⁹ In South Africa structural unemployment has been above 20 percent since the 1970s. Today its highly globalised and financialised economy, has an unemployment rate of 35.3 percent and the highest gini-coefficient in the world (63), with 71 percent of the wealth owned by 10 percent of the population. In this context, unviable societies and the failure of "trickle-down economics" are also engendering new forms of resistance to tackle class, race and gender oppression. These forms of resistance can either be captured by exclusionary nationalisms or can be mobilised in a transformative direction.

⁷ There is no need to fret about deglobalisation. https://www.ft.com/content/d9a28a08-895c-11e6-8cb7-e7ada1d123b1?accessToken=zWAAAX_z7k9CkdPZoooliVwR5tOMt-etodEjsQ.MEYCIQD8ZOwk62iAp4UZlaesI2jwsCyRmhggoIE5jzhwl8dVFQlhAlvbXleSK6EmCRC533edtGfy5Q4eR-YF_zpgF881LIQ5&sharetype=gift?token=10a71b45-4485-4e97-86b5-c52dd7ec452f

⁸ 'US executives reap record pay as historic income gap with staff widens' *Financial Times*, April 3, 2002. <https://www.ft.com/content/f02787c1-35a8-41c4-8099-395109e49b4f>

⁹ See <https://www.oxfam.org/en/why-majority-worlds-poor-are-women>

5.3 The ecological rifts of capitalism are manifold. Biological disasters such as COVID-19 are certainly going to increase as natural habitats are destroyed, through biological warfare (involving laboratories experimenting with dangerous pathogens), as climate change contributes to releasing more pathogens and as eco-fascist anti-science positions create more vulnerable publics. The enabling conditions for more zoonotic diseases are in place. This means more disruptions but these pandemic threats also make it essential for public health systems to be strengthened and repurposed to also face the challenges of worsening climate crisis. Water peak is another major ecological rift being exacerbated by wasteful water use (agriculture accounts for 70 percent of global water withdrawals including the use of irrigation systems), pollution from mining, mismanagement of water commons and climate impacts on the hydrological cycle through floods and droughts (currently such catastrophes have tripled from 97 per annum during the 1980s to an annual average of 309 between 2010 and 2019).¹⁰ According to one estimate, water scarcity could impact GDP by up to 14 percent in 2050, with the Middle East being one of the most affected regions. In this context tighter water regulations on use, re-use, democratic planning and ensuring democratic management of the water commons will be necessitated limiting the power of corporations to appropriate and wastefully utilise scarce water resources.

5.4 The climate ecological rift is the most dangerous and is intersecting with other systemic crisis tendencies. As more coal, oil and gas are extracted, the heating and ultimately more intense climate extremes (droughts, coldwaves, floods, heatwaves, cyclones/hurricanes and tornadoes) register as shocks. Scientific attribution is clear on this planetary shift. In 2021 the United States experienced twenty separate billion dollar weather and climate disasters (ranging from a cold wave event, wild fires, floods, tornadoes, tropical cyclones and severe weather events) with a price tag of \$145 billion (slightly cheaper than climate shocks in 2005 and 2017).¹¹ Madagascar, on top of a major drought in 2021 which left one million people in food stress, had to deal with four tropical cyclones (Emnati, Dumako, Batsirai and Ana) in early 2022 which destroyed about 90 percent of agricultural crops in some areas, affecting many people.¹² These shocks are examples of climate injustices perpetuated by the ongoing emissions from using and burning fossil fuels. The most recent report from the IPCC Working Group 3 on *Mitigation* underlines the importance to urgently phase out fossil fuels including preventing no new investment over the next three years¹³. Yet from the preceding analysis on eco-fascism, carbon investments and lock-ins are continuing. Climate determinism through greater shocks will impact on the vulnerable, public panic, prospects for mass-based climate justice politics and the imperative to accelerate and deepen the just transition.

¹⁰ <https://phys.org/news/2022-01-scientists-widespread-drought-21st-century.html>

¹¹ <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/blogs/beyond-data/2021-us-billion-dollar-weather-and-climate-disasters-historical>

¹² <https://reliefweb.int/report/madagascar/extreme-weather-and-climate-events-heighten-humanitarian-needs-madagascar-and>

¹³ This is a reference to the entire 2,900 page Mitigation report. It is all downloadable through the UN IPCC. IPCC, April 2022. *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*

5.5 The crisis of liberal democracies, as thin market democracies entrenching the sovereignty of capital, are in deep systemic crisis. It is more than legitimacy crises but rather about degeneration into authoritarian and neo-fascist politics. The US military-industrial-security complex is now driving an agenda for a “new Cold War” with Russia and China, while the American public have no say over this plutocratic foreign and national security direction. Biden has also increased US military spending by \$800 billion, unleashing further emissions on the world given the high carbon footprint of the US military, from point emissions in producing military technologies to waging warfare. The Russian invasion of Ukraine not only intensifies this spiral but also reinforces a global food shock (largely due to climate impacts on globalised value chains) that began in 2021, but which has been amplified by supply side constraints in wheat, fertiliser and cooking oil. The spike in food prices is also compounded by the spike in global oil prices, fuelling global inflationary pressures and a new round of austerity to maintain a crisis ridden system. China has its own financialised overaccumulation challenges such as its huge housing bubble bursting (the Evergrande problem). Volatility in its stock exchanges, breakdown in supply chains due to a hard lock down approach and being ensnared increasingly into global rivalries with the USA, all add up to a possible conflict that can reinforce mutual economic destruction, given how inter-locked China and the USA are in economic terms (trade, debt, investment).¹⁴

Moreover, in this context of global political, economic, and environmental crises we must situate the struggles for socioecological survival on a global scale, in South Africa and subsequent decades.

6 From Symbolic Climate Justice Resistance to a Global Climate Justice Bloc of Governments, Workers, Peoples and Movements

6.1 There have been two cycles of climate justice resistance (from 2004 to 2015, then 2015 to 2020). In the first cycle of resistance climate justice activists broke with those who believed change could come from within the UN COP process. Increasingly these activists took to the streets to reject false solutions and demand system change. The Cochabamba Peoples Summit in 2010 was the high point of this cycle of resistance. In 2015 after the world overshot a 1°C increase in planetary temperature since prior to the Industrial Revolution, a new cycle of climate justice resistance began to emerge. In South Africa the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign was formed which later spawned the Climate Justice Charter Movement, in the US the iconic #NODAPL or Standing Rock struggle grabbed headline news as indigenous communities resisted an oil pipeline, Extinction Rebellion made its appearance in 2018 and so did Greta Thunberg and the #FridaysForFuture movement. These 1 degree Celsius movements were disrupted by Covid 19 and a new cycle of resistance has begun. The challenge, at a global level, facing this cycle of resistance is a shift beyond symbolic and crowd centred activism but towards the construction of a global climate justice bloc of governments, workers, peoples and movements. Without institutional convergence at a global scale climate justice politics will not be effective to break with the eco-cidal logic of carbon capitalism.

¹⁴ <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/great-economic-rivalry-china-vs-us>

6.2 Crucial in this regard are the lessons to be learned from previous examples of internationalism in the 20th century. The Communist International secured immense space for the Soviet Union to thrive and consolidate its revolutionary gains until it became an appendage of Stalin's Russia. Bandung (1955-1980) revolutionary nationalist movements, resisting colonialism and imperialism, formed the Non-Aligned Movement which provided a third bloc between the US-led West and the Soviet Bloc. It also gave momentum to the formation of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the call for a New International Economic Order in the mid 1970s within the UN system and strengthened alignments around resource nationalism such as OPEC. In the 20th century the Pan-African Movement spawned the Organisation of African Unity in 1963 and contributed to the resistance of colonialism and apartheid. The end of apartheid would not have been possible without the Anti-apartheid Movement including Cuban resistance to the South African National Defence Force in the battlefields of Angola. These internationalism's mobilised governments, workers, peoples and movements around specific causes. Climate Justice internationalism has to now do the same to utilise the worsening crises of global capitalism and its own disruptions to end carbon capitalism. Resistance to global eco-fascism has to be institutionalised now as part of the third cycle of climate justice resistance.

6.3 A global Climate Justice Bloc of governments, workers, peoples and movements has the potential to emerge and be constituted through a convergence of national climate justice movements, vulnerable frontline island and coastal communities, countries in climate hot spots (heating at twice the global average), countries owed a climate debt (but who are also indebted), countries devastated by climate shocks, international climate justice campaigns (food sovereignty, divestment, phase out fossil fuels, #debtforclimate, end fossil fuel subsidies and more), anti-austerity resistance forces and forces committed to global peace through demilitarisation and de-nuclearisation.

6.4 The Climate Justice Charter Movement in South Africa seeks to support the strengthening of climate justice movements and forces on the African continent and will convene a Global Climate Justice Council and Assembly to coordinate struggles and strengthen the building of a global Climate Justice Bloc of governments, peoples, workers and movements around some of the following struggles and demands:

(i) Global Just Peace

- Call for the disbanding of NATO, Russian withdrawal from Ukraine, denuclearisation, demilitarisation (including the conversion of all armaments industries to support the production of climate emergency technologies) and the end to arms sales to the global south;
- Call for the conversion of all armed forces into special climate emergency public service agencies to assist all those impacted by climate extremes;
- Build active solidarity around the demands of vulnerable island states and countries;
- Internationalise support for all struggles against fossil fuel extraction (fracking, off-shore etc.) and the right to give consent including divestment by banks, pension funds and investment corporations;
- Intensify demands to end subsidies to fossil fuel industries (coal, oil and gas) and to shift these fiscal resources towards socially owned renewable

energy systems (democratic state utilities, cooperatives, democratic municipal corporations, community trusts etc.);

- Reject false climate solutions that perpetuate the power of corporations, techno-fixes, markets and ultimately climate apartheid. This includes rejecting nuclear power;
- Intensify demands for reparations and payments for climate debt from the global north including calls for greater resources for loss and damage, #debtforclimate (write off of financial debt of poor countries not responsible for the climate crisis);
- Support the Phase out of Fossil Fuel Treaty and campaign for all governments and cities to adopt it;
- Reject austerity policies and demand increased ecological, carbon and progressive taxes on the rich and corporations including wealth, income and inheritance taxes as the basis for basic income transfers for all living on planet earth;
- Consideration to be given for targeted climate justice sanctions against countries and corporations responsible for climate harm;
- Strengthen calls to stop external financing (R131 billion plus an additional R6.2 billion from the German government) for South Africa's just transition until the South African government commits to no new investment in coal, oil and gas, particularly off-shore oil and gas extraction, fracking and new coal mines (please sign and pass this petition on : <https://chnng.it/FfvkWW525k>);
- Legal strategies challenging climate injustices perpetrated by carbon addicted politicians and CEO's of fossil fuel corporations to be supported including attempts to secure accountability by such carbon criminals for crimes against humanity. Calls for a 'Nuremburg trial' of carbon criminals needs to be strengthened.

(ii) Earth Democracy

- Deepen solidarities with indigenous communities facing eco-cidal dispossession from the spread of extractivism, ranching and deforestation in the Amazon, the Central African rainforests and other fragile eco-systems;
- Support indigenous approaches for cultural restoration of life enabling natural commons systems, rights of nature and bio-regions;
- Intensify the calls for ending exclusionary border regimes to ensure human mobility as zones of unliveability expand;
- Develop support for a post UN institutional architecture to manage the planetary natural commons, ensure an earth democracy, manage the transition beyond restrictive border regimes and lead a planetary just transition;
- Re-agrarianise the world through food sovereignty;
- Increase support for a planetary eco-cide law that criminalises the mass scale destruction of human and non-human life;
- Actively support calls for an Earth Assembly process.

(iii) Possible Elements of a Climate Justice Deal for Africa

- Renew a radical Pan-Africanism: centering emancipatory feminism, decolonisation (particularly African ecological conceptions of being human) and indigenous ecology as the basis for a climate justice vision for Africa. Such a vision to be developed bottom up;
- Demilitarise the entire continent: including ending all foreign military bases, bilateral military relations and convert all armed forces into a continental climate emergency public service to provide assistance during climate shocks;
- A Universal Basic Income for All Africans: based on keeping Africa's fossil fuel in the ground and ensuring resilient eco-commons systems. This to be paid by global north countries and corporations responsible for the climate crisis;
- A Deep Just Transition Plan for Africa: to be guided by a radical Pan African vision and developed in a bottom up manner to ensure transformative decarbonisation, adaptation and regeneration for the entire continent;
- Establish a climate reparations fund for Africa: for colonial harms, unequal ecological exchange, climate debt payments, for adaptation and mitigation, loss and damages and debt write off for the just transition. This fund must contribute to financing the deep and accelerated just transition on the continent;
- Early warning and disaster management systems: build and capacitate early warning and people driven disaster management systems on the continent;
- Control of strategic resources and minerals: ensure all strategic minerals and resources on the continent required for the just transition globally are carefully mapped, quantified and priced through a continental cartel like 'OPEC'. The revenue generated to support the acceleration and deepening of Africa's just transition;
- Beyond the AU: Develop a reform agenda for the African Union in keeping with an earth democracy approach that takes us beyond colonially constructed nation states. The architecture for a local, continental and earth democracy needs to be imagined and constructed.

7 Fighting for What Is Essential for Survival – The South African Climate Justice Project

7.1 In April of 2022, South Africa experienced a flash flood primarily located in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), killing close to 500 people, nearly 4000 homes were destroyed, more than 40 000 people were displaced and over 6000 schools affected. The cost of the damage is estimated at R17 billion. This flash flood comes on the heels of the worst drought in the history of the country (2014 till 2021), tornadoes, flash flooding (including in 2017, 2019, late 2021 in KZN), landslides and wild fires. The ANC government has not learned any lessons from these climate extremes and has not placed South Africa on deep just transition trajectory. Instead, it has had a discursive approach to climate policy and multilateral negotiations, for almost three decades, while continuing to support a carbon-based minerals-energy complex including its expansion. As the twelfth highest carbon

emitter in the world and with the intensive use of coal since the late nineteenth century, South Africa should have been trail blazing in terms of systemic adaptation and decarbonisation. In 2018, when the UN issued its 1.5°C report the initial core of organisations that make up the Climate Justice Charter Movement (CJCM) (over 60 organisations including trade unions) called on South Africa's President and parliament to convene an emergency sitting of parliament to deliberate on the science and climate policy implications of this report, given that South Africa is heating at twice the global average which would place it at 3°C with a global 1.5°C overshoot.¹⁵ The government ignored this call to place the country on a climate emergency footing to deal with climate induced weather extremes. Subsequent calls also made during South Africa's drought and in engagements with South Africa's parliament for mainstreaming a climate emergency response were also ignored.¹⁶ In this context the Climate Justice Charter Movement (CJCM) has charged the President, his cabinet, the Premier of the KZN Province, the Mayor of the eThekweni (Durban) and the Deputy Chairperson of the Climate Commission with culpable homicide for the loss of lives during the recent flooding. This refers to illegal and negligent action. This move by the CJCM is an unprecedented attempt to secure climate justice utilising criminal law and has received extensive media coverage in the South African context.

7.2 The CJCM has to be located within the making of global climate justice politics. The second cycle of resistance spawned 1°C movements such as #NODAPL, Extinction Rebellion, Sunrise Movement, #FridaysForFuture, Indigenous Peoples Resistance to the destruction of the Amazon and the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign (SAFSC). The latter emerged during the worst drought in the history of South Africa (2014-2021). It mobilised with drought impacted communities, against high food prices and hunger. These basic needs of communities became the basis to link the climate crisis and injustice. In 2015 the SAFSC convened a hunger tribunal with trade unions, faith based communities and the South African Human Rights Commission and picketed outside the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.¹⁷ In 2016 it hosted drought speak outs with drought-affected communities, built a campaign around #FoodPricesMustFall and led a bread march through the streets of Johannesburg.¹⁸ In 2018 it developed a Peoples Food Sovereignty Act which it took to South Africa's parliament and seven government departments demanding adoption.¹⁹ All these concerns about climate extremes, a heating country and the need for systemic transformation were ignored by the ANC state. By 2019 the SAFSC began working actively on a Climate Justice Charter (CJC) process for South Africa. It convened dialogues with drought affected communities, the media, trade unions, social and environmental justice organisations, climate scientists, youth and children, activists were invited to write think pieces, conferencing platforms were created and eventually a draft of the Climate Justice

¹⁵ <https://www.safsc.org.za/open-letter-to-president-cyril-ramaphosa-demand-for-emergency-parliamentary-sitting-on-un-1-5c-report/>

¹⁶ See media releases of the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign here: <https://www.safsc.org.za/category/media2/>

¹⁷ <https://www.safsc.org.za/hello-world/>

¹⁸ https://www.safsc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/SAFSC_NCC_Press-Release_11-March-2016.pdf

¹⁹ <https://www.safsc.org.za/national-peoples-drought-speak-out-and-bread-march-memorandum/> and <https://www.safsc.org.za/press-release-the-anc-government-is-the-national-disaster-in-the-water-crisis-feb-2018/>

Charter (CJC) was placed online for public comment for the first half of 2020 and it was finally launched by South Africa's leading eco-socialist-feminists on August 28 of that year. Today the Climate Justice Charter Movement is endorsed by 273 organisations and growing.²⁰ The CJC was handed over to South Africa's parliament on October 16, 2020, World Food Day, with the demand it be adopted as per section 234 of the South African constitution which provides for charters to be adopted. While this has not been conceded the CJC is now a rallying point across progressive civil society, providing greater ideological coherence and a pluri-vision for what a Democratic Eco-Socialist South Africa would look like. This is not a blueprint but an aspirational framework, a signpost, of where the country should go if we are to survive a climate driven world.

7.3 The CJC is anti-capitalist, emancipatory-feminist, decolonial and is ultimately about emancipatory ecology. The latter distinguishes it from climate modernising capitalist approaches or deep ecology approaches. The former assumes green capitalism (markets, technology and finance) will solve the climate crisis, while the latter blames humans for the ecological crises of our time; it tends towards being misanthropic. Emancipatory ecology recognises humans are dependent on nature, humans are socio-ecological beings, nature like workers are a source of value and nature has limits. Moreover, the sources of knowledge in such an approach centres the tacit knowledge of the subaltern (workers, peasants, indigenous peoples, grassroots women and the victims of carbon capitalism more generally). Hence the CJC embodies the aspirations of key subaltern forces shaping South African society. It contains transformative goals, principles to guide the deep just transition, 14 systemic alternatives, a conception of a people driven climate justice state and a strong commitment to renewing commoning practices and radical Pan-Africanism, as part of building global solidarities.²¹

7.4 In the light of the continuity of the eco-fascist project globally and in South Africa, the CJC movement has entered a new strategic phase of campaigning.²² In its strategic perspective document titled: *What Next For the Climate Justice Charter Movement?* the CJCM advances the following crucial aspects of a transformative political orientation informed by the pluri-vision of the CJC in relation to: (1) a theory of change centred on a climate justice project, defending the commons and advancing deep transformation through democratic systemic reforms as part of accelerating and deepening the just transition. Democratic systemic reforms represent a constitutive form of power from below and can be calibrated as weak, strong and transformative based on political contingencies and the relations of forces. The politics of democratic systemic reforms will come to the fore in the context of pushing for the rapid phase out of fossil fuels, advancing decarbonisation in communities, workplaces and sectors, developing democratic plans to address climate risks, advancing transformative regeneration in the context of climate shocks and state failure; (2) strategic transformation through a climate justice political project and developing policy content for an accelerated and deep just transition from below. Currently the CJCM is busy developing the systemic alternatives in the charter into policies for South Africa's deep just transition. The first policy on a universal basic income

²⁰ <https://cjc.org.za/endorse>

²¹ <https://cjc.org.za/the-charter/en#justice>

²² <https://cjc.org.za/media/posts/3d0345f5-ec23-464c-8861-9e9ff2489cb9>

has been developed based on an intensive universal basic income/grant (#UBIGNow campaign during Covid-19) campaign and in-depth economic modelling. Policies on the water commons, rights of nature, zero waste, socially owned renewable energy and food sovereignty will be developed this year through public engagements.²³ In addition, the CJCM is working on a macro-economic Climate Justice Deal for the country. The latter has involved collaborations with various heterodox economists; and (3) crucial programmatic and tactical priorities that take forward the climate justice project from below. Currently the CJCM has an umbrella campaign “to accelerate and deepen the just transition” and through this platform is building convergences and solidaristic actions including working with communities leading food sovereignty pathway building, frontline organisations standing up to off-shore oil and gas extraction, organisations campaigning against nuclear power, developing a peoples just transition planning tool (which will inform a campaign for the rapid phase out of fossil fuels), working with communities facing water crises and building a network for climate justice “lawfare.” The CJCM in South Africa is not about importing or downloading a template for its struggle and strategic politics. It is building on and going beyond traditions of mass politics prevalent in the South African context. In coming months, the CJCM will take the leap to become a formal mass-based member driven organisation of movements, community organisations and individuals grounded in local organising. It will also be debating and clarifying how to ensure South Africa’s 2024 national elections are climate justice elections.

8 Challenges to Planetise the Movement to Confront Climate Apartheid and End Ecocidal Capitalism

8.1 The CJCM, like climate justice forces in other parts of the world, is attempting to scale up and intensify a third cycle of climate justice resistance (2020 till the present) but it faces certain common challenges. These include:

- Going beyond single issue, symbolic and apocalyptic climate politics - The climate crisis is multifaceted and cannot be overcome in a piecemeal manner. Neither can it be overcome by mere performative denunciation, shaming and endless critique. Symbolic climate politics has reached its limits. We are running out of time and climate justice forces have to present concrete answers to accelerate and deepen the just transition. They have to assail power structures, contest power and lead from above and from below with concrete answers. We are now in the era of climate elections. This does not mean narrow electoralism or endless bottom-up building. Working strategically with this tension is the only antidote to the other extreme of apocalyptic climate politics which debilitates transformative praxis with its doomsday discourses and paralysis talk. The world needs inspirational examples and political tipping point interventions that democratically leapfrog societies beyond carbon capitalism;
- Climate justice activism has to be about trans-politics, ensuring workers go beyond narrow economic politics, feminists beyond women’s oppression and environmentalists beyond specific environmental problems. Bridges have to be built, convergences cemented and a common programmatic solidarity has to be engendered as part of tackling the dangerous climate contradiction while addressing

²³ <https://cjcm.org.za/policies>

class exploitation and multiple oppressions. We all have to be intersectional but also anti-capitalist at the same time;

- Climate justice politics has to go beyond crowd politics, theatre outside climate summits and national “cloning” of international trends. While transnational solidarities are important, this is no substitute for national movement building which has to take center stage to the third cycle of resistance. Powerful national movements have to be supported, encouraged and institutionalised systematically. There are no short cuts if the scale of transformation, pace and urgency has to be realised for accelerated and deep just transitions now. Such movements have to build capacities to create new ecological societies, advance climate justice projects, but through democratic systemic reforms start realising the making of democratic eco-feminist-socialist societies now;
- Finally, climate justice forces have to rally and actively support the building of a climate justice bloc of governments, workers, peoples and movements. More active solidarities have to be built that cut across global south and north to ensure climate pariahs can be undermined from within and from outside. Most importantly such a bloc has to accelerate the realisation of a global deep just transition and the making of a new planetary climate emergency institutional architecture, an earth democracy, for a world entering permanent crisis and uncertainty.