

At the Conference of the War Resisters' International in Cape Town, South Africa, July 4-8 2014, on '**Small Actions, Big Movements : The Continuum of Nonviolence**'

Theme Note, full version
for the theme

Resisting the War on Mother Earth, Reclaiming our Home

Resisting the War on Mother Earth Working Group
Final draft, June 24 2014

Please enter this space by dusting off the dust of the long journey you have taken to come here and by sipping some water and clearing your throat; and start by first reading the following quotes and deeply reflecting on them. And as you do so, by recalling your children, your family and your community, and Mother Earth, and by thinking of the future...

I Invocations

Today, our Mother Earth is wounded and the future of humanity is in danger. We confront the terminal crisis of a civilizing model that is patriarchal and based on the submission and destruction of human beings and nature that [has] accelerated since the industrial revolution.
...

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

It is imperative that we forge a new system that restores harmony with nature and among human beings. And in order for there to be balance with nature, there must first be equity among human beings. We propose to the peoples of the world the recovery, revalorization, and strengthening of the knowledge, wisdom, and ancestral practices of Indigenous Peoples, which are affirmed in the thought and practices of "Living Well", recognizing Mother Earth as a living being with which we have an indivisible, interdependent, complementary, and spiritual relationship. To face climate change, we must recognize Mother Earth as the source of life and forge a new system based on the principles of :

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

[From : 'People's Agreement of Cochabamba : Statement from the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, April 22nd 2010, Cochabamba, Bolivia']¹

*

Humanity stands at a precipice of its own making : Catastrophic Climate Change (C3). Crisis and catastrophe have already arrived, with over 300,000 people dying directly or indirectly from climate change per year, and at least another degree of warming is already "in the pipeline." This is still moderate, however, compared to the scale of what may lie ahead, prefigured from Fukushima to Haiyan. If business as usual continues and carbon emissions continue to grow exponentially, between 4 to 12 degrees of warming are predicted as soon as the end of the century. The largest mass extinction event in world history, the end Permian extinction, was precipitated by a 6 degree Celsius global warming.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has reached a historic consensus that the prevention of C3 requires that global warming remain below 2 degrees Celsius. Once this point is passed, earth system feedback loops (such as methane trapped in permafrost and on the ocean floor) are predicted to overwhelm any human efforts at mitigation. Furthermore, they have agreed that staying within this threshold of warming requires a global carbon emissions peak in 2015, followed by a rapid and permanent decline.

In 2014, the jury is definitely out : Business as usual is unable to achieve this imperative peak, and thus unable to remain under 2 degrees warming. All major parties, from individual governments, to the corporate sector, to the NGO sector, the United Nations Conference of Parties (COP) system, have proven themselves utterly incapable of arresting exponential carbon emissions growth. Furthermore, while these parties have differences, together they comprise a gridlocked matrix which holds hostage the possibility of preventing C3.

[From : Ecosocialist Horizons, July 2014 – ‘A Call To Resist And End Mass Extinction : An Ecosocialist Strategy Of Coordinated Nonviolent Direct Actions’, July 2014 draft]²

*

The model we support is not a model of limitless and destructive development. All countries need to produce the goods and services necessary to satisfy the fundamental needs of their populations, but by no means can they continue to follow the path of development that has led the richest countries to have an ecological footprint five times bigger than what the planet is able to support. Currently, the regenerative capacity of the planet has been already exceeded by more than 30 percent. If this pace of over-exploitation of our Mother Earth continues, we will need two planets by the year 2030. In an interdependent system in which human beings are only one component, it is not possible to recognize rights only to the human part without provoking an imbalance in the system as a whole. To guarantee human rights and to restore harmony with nature, it is necessary to effectively recognize and apply the rights of Mother Earth. For this purpose, we propose the attached project for the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth, in which it's recorded that :

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

[From : ‘People’s Agreement of Cochabamba : Statement from the World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, April 22nd 2010, Cochabamba, Bolivia³]

*

Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.

— Arundhati Roy⁴

*

II

Context

Our world is in crisis – but it is also struggling to be reborn. A savage war has been launched on Mother Earth, which is a direct consequence of what scientists and politicians – and all too many of us – call ‘climate change’, using a neutered and ‘scientific’ term that masks its reality. What is happening now is both war on Mother Earth and – this Note will argue – also causing war between the peoples of Mother Earth, wars of a nature and at a scale that we have never known in history. We have to resist what is happening, and arrest it; we have to overcome; we have to reclaim our home, this planet, our Mother Earth; and we have to help Mother Earth recover and rebuild herself and her organic systems.

If we want our children and grandchildren to live well, and in a world without war, and if we want to recover any modicum of respect for the planet we live on and are a part of, we have no choice.

In fact, there is no other choice even if we were to take a narrow perspective, concerned only about our own self-interest of having a liveable planet for human beings and a large variety of life forms.

There are people who have walked this path before us, and who are walking it today. Indigenous peoples around the world have lived in peace with Mother Earth for thousands of years, and are today also, in many places – such as in Bolivia, but also elsewhere – giving vision for the path we must all walk. Similarly, peasant farmers and artisanal workers all over the world feel her pulse and live their lives accordingly.

Perhaps the most historic coming-together in recent times, of such peoples and of those who wanted to learn from them, has been the World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, convened in Cochabamba by the Plurinational State of Bolivia in April 2010,⁵ and from which were issued several documents of historic significance, including a ‘People’s Agreement of Cochabamba : Statement from the World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, April 22nd 2010, Cochabamba, Bolivia’,⁶ a ‘Proposal [for a] Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth’,⁷ and an ‘Indigenous Peoples’ Declaration from the World Peoples’ Conference on Climate Change and the Rights Of Mother Earth’.⁸

Before Cochabamba, there were the historic *encuentros* convened by the Zapatistas, in Chiapas, in Mexico, in the 1990s, which – coming as this initiative did, from a mass grassroots movement - had a radical and electric impact on the understanding of both humanity and neoliberalism, on the discourse of relationships between human beings and Mother Earth, and on the understanding of ‘war’; and also, fundamentally, on who generates social knowledge.⁹

But there are many others who are walking this path in our times too, like the multitude of grassroots movements all over the world who are fiercely resisting the extractive and exploitative wars on Mother Earth and her non-exploitative children, and many others who are coming to terms with the fundamental problems with a growth-oriented, grossly inequitable development paradigm.

Just as examples, there are the anti Keystone XL Pipeline movement, the Tar Sands Campaign, and Rising Tide, all on Turtle Island / North America; in India, the long-drawn and historic *Narmada Bachao Andolan* (‘Save the Narmada Movement’), the struggles of the Dongria Kond and other affected Adivasi (indigenous) communities against the Niyamgiri mining project by Vedanta, in Odisha, and the struggles of peoples affected by the Koodankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Kerala; and so many similar other movements all over the world.

All these endeavours offer us visions for the paths we all must walk – collectively, and transcommunally, towards an actively shared future.

We also need to look carefully at movements that have not yet taken positions on the roles of

capitalism and of 'consumptionism' in the wars that are emerging, such as 350.org, Greenpeace, and others. We need to build bridges, in time and in space, with all those who are willing to learn and change, to narrow our differences by working together, to build our collective understandings about living earth-dictated lives, and together to walk the long, hard path to achieve this. The future is being born within us.

War is no longer what it used to be; it is taking new shapes, as are – and must - the struggles against war. In these emerging conditions, and to struggle against the wars that are emerging, we must become warriors – not in the narrow sense of perpetrators of war but as peoples on a path of what the Mohawk scholar-warrior Taiaiake Alfred has termed "peace, power, and righteousness";¹⁰ and where "this journey and this warrior's path is a kind of *Wasáse*, a ceremony of unity, strength, and commitment to action".¹¹

There is no way to peace; peace is the way.

- A J Muste¹²

III

Towards understanding where we are

We are not yet 100% sure of exactly what the future is going to look like, but a definite and very strong possibility is the onset of cataclysmic changes within the next few decades. This possibility is strong not only because of the gridlock referred to in the second quote at the beginning of this Note, on the question of the necessary policy decisions with respect to climate and to implementing them, but also because of the sheer rapacious dynamic of high capitalism and the unpredictable, non-linear nature of the impacts of changes now taking place in the planet's climate. All these currents are today beginning to interwine. Also

It is vital also to grasp and to internalise – in this meeting, as in our lives - that this is not about the future; there is now so much evidence that to tell us that this descent has already started, but where it is so far only being manifested sporadically. The 'perfect storms' are yet to come. And when they come...

That these cataclysmic changes are almost certainly going to take place is clear, for instance, from the most recent IPCC report and also from the most recent assessment of climate change and its impacts on even the USA by the US government.¹³ There are also other related crises we hear less about, like the unprecedented and dangerous rise in ocean acidity, which is threatening a large number of marine life forms, and the penetration of heating of the ocean depths.

We do not as yet fully understand the combined effects of all these tectonic shifts, and so an urgent task for us is to connect the dots, which these reports do not fully do – and especially in terms of the social. What is happening is not just about 'the climate changing' or the economy, or the threat to life – severe as these are. It is fundamentally also about what will take place as this happens. Among political institutions, it is ironically – though tellingly – perhaps only the US military that has come closest to putting this on the table :

... the projected impacts of climate change will be more than threat multipliers; they will serve as catalysts for instability and conflict.¹⁴

And where the new wars will be not only inter-state, such as discussed by Gwynne Dwyer in his otherwise great book,¹⁵ but also internecine and inter-community.

We today also have a new situation and actor in place, that is however expectably not mentioned in these reports : The all-but-freehold ownership of huge tracts of land in several climate-vulnerable countries in the South – in some cases, larger than smaller countries - that have recently been acquired by certain governments and transnational companies for

agricultural and industrial purposes, and who will, under the logic of capitalism and empire, can be expected to defend their 'rights' over that land till the bitter, and if necessary with the force of arms.

This is aside from the enormous and extensive presence across the world – North and South - of military bases on other peoples' lands, established and occupied by imperialist powers – and who again will defend their occupation till the bitter end.

A catabolic spiral down ?

Finally (in this listing), there is the huge question of 'peak oil', the crisis that many expect will engulf our capitalist and massively extractive and over-consumptive world, and – crucially – how the unfolding of this crisis will interact with all of the above. Read the following extensive and graphic quote not in terms of oil and energy alone but also in terms of how it will interact with all that has been said so far – and/ but where we give this long quote not because we necessarily fully agree with it (indeed, this argument is very debatable, and needs to be critically debated) but in order to give a graphic picture of the kind of unravelling that might take place, and also to provoke thought and discussion of the **kinds** of changes that are arguably now looming :

Today, worldwide energy and financial crises - that some call peak oil and peak debt - are beginning to permanently strangle globalization and growth. At the fulcrum of this historic tipping point lies the hard fact that civilization is running low on the only concentrated source of power we know of, whose energy return on energy invested (net energy) is large enough to sustain relentless growth. Today, the unparalleled economic take-off fueled by the Age of Fossil Fuels is reaching its apex. The rapacious flight to the top was powered by the Earth's dwindling hydrocarbon reserves. From these lofty heights, the drastic drop-off ahead appears perilous. As fossil fuel extraction fails to meet global demand, economic contraction and downward mobility will become the new normal and growth will fade into memory.

But how long can this go on ? ... In a growth-less economy, the profit motive can have a powerful catabolic impact on society. The word "catabolism" comes from the Greek and is used in biology to refer to the condition whereby a living thing feeds on itself. Catabolic capitalism is a self-cannibalizing economic system.

Without fuel to generate growth, catabolic capitalists stoke the profit engine by taking over troubled businesses, selling them off for parts, firing the workforce and pilfering their pensions. Scavengers, speculators and slumlords buy up distressed and abandoned properties - houses, schools, factories, office buildings and malls - strip them of valuable resources, sell them for scrap or rent them to people desperate for shelter. Illicit lending operations charge outrageous interest rates and hire thugs or private security firms to shake down desperate borrowers or force people into indentured servitude to repay loans. Instead of investing in struggling productive enterprises, catabolic financiers make windfall profits by betting against growth through hoarding and speculative short selling of securities, currencies and commodities.

Social benefits, legal and regulatory protections and modern society itself will also be sacrificed to feed the profit engine. During a period of contraction, single-minded catabolic capitalists put their lawyers and lobbyists to work tearing down any legal barriers to their insatiable appetite for profit. Regulatory agencies that once provided some protection from polluters, dangerous products, unsafe workplaces, labor exploitation, financial fraud and corporate crime are dismantled to feed the voracious fires of avarice.

Society's governing institutions of justice, law and order become early victims of this catabolic crime spree. Public safety is stripped down, privatized and sold to those who can still afford it. As budgets for courts, prisons and law enforcement shrivel, private security firms hire unemployed cops to break strikes, provide corporate security and guard the wealthy in their gated communities. Meanwhile, the rest of us will be forced to rely on alarm systems, dogs, guns and - if we're lucky - watchful neighbors to deal with rising crime. Meanwhile, privatized prisons will profit by contracting convict labor to the highest bidders.¹⁶

As a consequence of all of this, we suggest that large sections of the human species are going to be faced with new, and cannibalistic, versions of what Mary Kaldor has called "new wars".¹⁷ This will be a direct result of a hugely intensified 'race to the bottom', for progressively scarce resources in most regions of the world (Europe, as well as Africa, Asia, and Abya Yala / South America) and the aggressive exercise of 'national self-protection' by

countries across the world with imperial powers also exercising their regional or global economic and military power in terms of their perceived national interests.¹⁸ War today is not only waged militarily; it is also, fundamentally, political, economic, and social.

Disorganisation and disintegration ?

But there is more. The result of the interaction of the impacts on local, national, and regional contexts of progressively intensifying, non-linear (and therefore unpredictable) reactions of nature, the intensification of local and regional conflicts, and the predictable attempts by nation-states, by transnational corporations, and by the rich to impose 'order' by military force, will - we argue - be totally new manifestations of both state and social disorganisation and breakdown in large parts of the world, the weaponisation of human rights,¹⁹ and in turn widespread social conflict, war, and violence. In turn, this turmoil is likely to cause, in many parts of the world (and significantly, in most of the most heavily populated parts of the world, including the coastlines of 'advanced' countries), the breakdown of all known forms both of social organisation and of government – and also of social movement, simply because all these institutions, born as they were during the 18-20th centuries under very different conditions, are not equipped – as yet, anyway - to deal with the conditions that seem likely to emerge. As a result indeed, they - in their presently known forms – are likely also to lose their relevance, slowly but inexorably, in turn raising the question of what can replace them.

Within this, intensively militarised and defended enclaves of the rich will certainly arise, but society as we have known it for the past several hundred years will collapse, in large parts of the world.

Non-linear system collapse ?

As ocean waters rise and the atmosphere warms up, and climate change escalates, and critical resources such as land, water, and food are depleted, and as climate changes start acting in a non-linear fashion, we will move – in this likely scenario - into a historically totally new stage of unpredictable and equally non-linear system collapse. This in turn will unleash forces in equally non-linear combinations that we as yet know nothing about and therefore today, as yet, have no ways of addressing; for the so-far somewhat linear, predictable systems and processes of social organisation, planning, government, and decision-making that we so far know and depend on are likely to be completely inadequate.

There is one dynamic that we can safely predict, however – and precisely because it is linear : In a context where they already play major roles in the military-industrial complex that runs the USA and other military 'powers', and judging from their practices even today, under conditions of neoliberalism, it can be assumed that corporations - backed by consumers and the elites in both the North and the South – will, in the emerging circumstances, also become intensively active in the new, unregulated scenario, guarding their enclaves and fiefdoms with private militias; as will local and regional neo-feudal 'nationalist' gangs and warlords that already exist in many parts of the world, and that will be only encouraged to rise in the given chaotic, disintegrating, everyone-to-himself situation.

Intensification of divides, conflicts, and wars ?

We also need to be acutely aware that these dynamics will unfold in different ways in different contexts, and there are also likely to be huge differences in the ways that different parts of the world, and peoples, will be impacted – and in which they will suffer.

The harsh reality that is widely 'known' but is however barely reflected in our actions is that a disproportionately high number of peoples who have not and are not waging this war on Mother Earth – and who have even fought to protect her - are being and will be hit the hardest. There will likely be massive impact on food production in Africa and in all countries of the South that will be hit by drought, leading to massive impacts on subsistence farming communities. Forest-dwelling peoples, coastal farmers and fisherfolk, low-footprint mountain dwellers, and ordinary peasants and indigenous peoples – all these and more such peoples, who are in fact closest to living sustainably, are already paying the heaviest price and they are the ones who will lose out the most. In Africa as in much as Asia, this means not 'minorities' but the majority of populations. The recent German Watch report on climate

vulnerability puts this reality forward in a graphic manner.²⁰

On the other hand, the small – minute; 1% - minority of the rich, and the corporations they run and own, are already planning for bunkering themselves off, both from the cataclysmic events that are coming and from the desperate majority at the receiving end. There are even macabre plans galore for profiting on the crises, by designing and selling 'survival solutions', of course only to those who can afford these.

This possible situation of vertical and (forced) horizontal divides, should it arise, requires our completely rethinking our understanding of what constitutes 'war' and 'violence' – and equally, 'social organisation' and 'government'. We need to start doing that from today.

IV

The tasks before us

The purpose of laying out this seemingly apocalyptic scenario is simply to put it on the table, so that it gets attention, alongside our also very necessary discussions of resistance, insurgent action, and practices of alternative, prefigurative politics. It is not to suggest that this is the only possible future, but most definitely it is to raise this as a distinct possibility – and one, if it arises, will overarch everything else; and one therefore, if we are to look responsibly at the question of war and of peace in our times, that we must also look at from now, and frontally. And indeed, precisely because it is about a likely larger scenario, it requires us to then also locate all our other strategies within and in relation to this.

If the world is indeed allowed to proceed into the stage of general outbreaks of resource and ethnic-political wars/conflicts due to the climate-energy crisis in this way, then it will be too late to stop as it would have proceeded with too much momentum, and the climate and the man-made dimensions of destruction will by then have such unstoppable force as to wipe out the very foundations of a survivable planet. So it is not enough to simply anticipate this possibility; we have to begin to focus our energies from now to stop it from taking place.

Historically, it has been social movements above all that have generated new social knowledge – seeming to sense the wind, and often to anticipate underlying changes that are beginning to take place in society, and coming up with new conceptions and proposals for addressing the emerging future. Given the key roles that they play in all societies in protecting and promoting social interests, it is obvious from this scenario that it is essential that social movements and all other concerned social actors to both anticipate this possible future - and not just to 'understand' this future but also to see what has to be done to resist, stop, and end what is coming, looking several decades ahead. We must not wait any more for governments to do this. This must include stopping current militarism and wars and the domination of the world by the US and its allies, including the supporters and beneficiaries of economic globalisation, for the purpose of maintaining the current world order; fundamentally changing existing production and consumption patterns; and it must include proposing and urgently building entirely new social institutions that can cope with the enormous flux that is coming.

What do we need to do in order to address these questions ?

This then is the task before us at this historic conference of the War Resisters' International – one of the great social movements of our times - and also its great potential : To together discern what has to be done in order to understand climate change as war – war both on vulnerable peoples and on Mother Earth, with all the vulnerable life she nurtures; to comprehend the consequences of this new war; to begin to delineate what we must do to counteract it; and to put forward meaningful and strategic plans that can address this emerging future..

Workshop description : The workshops around this theme, **Resisting the War on**

Mother Earth, aim to be a **exploratory, reflective, and self-critical space** where participants at the WRI Conference in Cape Town can draw on their wide range of experience in different parts of the world, across experiences and interests, and critically and collectively explore this subject. **The goal of the workshops will be :**

*** To share experiences and understandings and to deepen our individual and collective understandings of the emerging situation, and especially of the War on Mother Earth, and -**

*** To come up with and agree on concrete proposals for how the participants, and WRI, can individually and collectively take steps to resist the War on Mother Earth and to reclaim our home, in and from our respective home locations and also collectively, worldwide.**

The workshops will be **strongly participatory**, where we will expect all participants to help articulate both the key questions that need to be answered and also some answers – at the workshop, and after.

The activities – spread over Days Two to Five of the WRI Conference - will end with a session to decide on how to take forward these ideas and those generated during the theme workshops.

V

Towards discussion in Cape Town – and elsewhere ?

The first thing to remind ourselves is that **we are not talking about the future**; we are already well into the crisis - and with all its social consequences. We already have countless concrete examples, which we must share between ourselves (and must definitely not assume common knowledge of), and root our discussions in this concrete reality :

- Large migrations inland of peoples from along coastlines in many parts of the world - such as in Bangladesh and along India's east coast, among others - because of increasingly impossible conditions of life, and with the consequent increase in competition for land and water resources in the areas where they are moving to, and social conflict (see, for instance, 'Call climate change what it is : Violence', by Rebecca Solnit²¹)
- Massive flooding in Europe, in many south Asian countries, and elsewhere, and with increasing frequency and severity
- Repeated massive hurricanes across the Pacific countries like the Philippines, and even in the 'developed' world, such as in Turtle Island (North America)
- The historically unprecedented scale both of the Fukushima tsunami in March 2011 and of Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013
- The accelerating meltdown of the Arctic and of western Antarctica, and the consequent projected increase in the height of the oceans by 3 metres – which will flood many low-lying and low-gradient coastlines in a number of countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, and Turtle Island / North America
- Issues of energy access, with over 1.3 billion people still without electricity access and over 2 billion lacking adequate less-polluting sources
- Compounding all this, the increasing appropriation of huge tracts of valuable land and water resources in other parts of the world, and especially in the South, by transnational corporations and by large industrialised or industrialising countries
- Contemporary and emerging actions and tactics of corporations in relation to procuring and protecting 'rights' of exploitation, and the collaboration and multiple complicit roles of the state

- The emerging threat to food security of the poor due to the increasing non-viability of small holder or peasant farming in developing countries, due to the constantly and increasingly changing climate but also due to enormous water, air, and soil pollution, and the often hostile policies by dominant sections towards their low-energy, low consumption lifestyles and practices.
- Even large-scale farming will be less viable due to desertification and changes in the growing season.
- The emerging crisis of usable water resulting not only from the increasing unevenness of its availability due to climate chaos, but also as a result of its commodification, privatisation, and corraling by the rich and the powerful – and where these are trends that are increasing taking place in tandem
- ???

We can all surely add to this list from our own experiences. Please jot down your own thoughts and suggestions here :

-
-
-
-
-

To repeat, what is politely called 'climate change' – and what is causing climate change - is thus in fact war on large sections of humanity by a small minority of exploiters from within our own species, and also an unprecedented war on Mother Earth.

*

To address these questions, we need to start at the beginning. We need first to recognise and accept that we come from different worlds, and so we need to develop and to practice a culture of transcommunal respect. We need to listen to each other, and especially to the voices of indigenous peoples, who have been calling for some decades now for a different understanding of our world, of ourselves, and of our relationships with the world.

To address these questions, we need first to develop **a comprehension of just what a 'War on Mother Earth' means :**

- Cultures, lifestyles, and economies in terms of consumption – as war on life – but where this forces ordinary people to become complicit ?
- Corporate looting, as war on Mother Earth and life ?
- The resulting climate crisis ? (Or is there in fact more than one climate crisis ?)
- The role in this war of the military and of the military-industrial complex ?
- The role of the increasingly all-pervasive, corporate-controlled 'media' in shaping the popular understanding and discourse, hiding the true nature of the crises and their underlying drivers ?
- The changing equations between governance, growth, and profit-oriented business – where the two are now increasingly complementing each other ?
- ???
- ???

Please add in your own suggestions here, and raise them for discussion :

-
-
-

In addition, and in particular, to address these questions, **we need to develop a full understanding of what 'non-linear climate change' means, and of what the particular nature of the consequences of such changes are.**

To address these questions, we also need to develop **a deeper comprehension of what other directions there are** – but also a critical understanding of the 'alternatives' that are being put forward and what they really mean, such as 'Coal in the hole', 'Oil in the soil'.

To address these questions, we need also to develop **a comprehension of what NOT waging war on Mother Earth would mean....**

And to address these questions, we also need to develop an understanding of **how we can arrest and then end this war ... :**

- In general, by at all times taking actions and living our lives in ways that protect the climate; such as :
 - By being producers as well as consumers
 - By taking and/or joining actions to halt carbon emissions increase in the short term (2015)
- By working to restructure the economy; such as –
 - By working to establish economic and social systems where our activities are always connected with their overall consequences
- By restructuring social, economic, and political institutions to meet the changing circumstances
- By thinking out and building new institutions, to meet the changing circumstances
- By taking the responsibility of being constantly engaged with social and political institutions
- By protecting indigenous peoples
- By reclaiming land and water
- In general, by making it our responsibility to reclaim control over natural resources.

Please add in your own suggestions here, and raise them for discussion :

-
-
-

During our Theme activities, and in relation to the above, we propose that we critically examine and discuss the following proposals that are already out there on the table :

- **Jeremy Brecher's** proposal of climate insurgency²²
- **Ecosocialist Horizons'** call for a Climate Satyagraha²³

Please add in your own suggestions here, of similar broad proposals, and raise them for discussion :

-
-

We need also to critically look at and consider existing radical non-violent actions and movements, as mentioned above and more, to see what lessons we can learn from them and what needs to be improved – movements such as :

- The anti Keystone XL Pipeline movement
- The Tar Sands Campaign
- Rising Tide,

all on Turtle Island / North America; and for instance in India :

- The long-drawn and historic *Narmada Bachao Andolan* ('Save the Narmada Movement');
- The struggles of the Dongria Kond and other affected Adivasi (indigenous) communities against the Niyamgiri mining project by Vedanta, in Odisha'
- In general, the struggles of the indigenous peoples and forest peoples of the country, such as led by the All India Union of Forest Working People;²⁴
- The struggles of peoples affected by the Koodankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Kerala;

and others.

Please list your own suggestions here of such movements and actions that we can and should learn from, and raise them for discussion :

-
-
-

Finally, we also need to explore not only the goals of such a campaign, but also the relationship between tactics/strategies and goals - eg the limits of protest; what can be achieved by noncooperation; what can be achieved by interventions (which disrupt existing ways of doing things); how alternatives can be built and 'mainstreamed' so that they are not just tiny fringe activities with little impact; etc.

And also contingent issues of insurgency and resistance and power : Should the intention of the movements that we build and that we join be to challenge existing authorities, to build a counter-hegemony, to change governments, or to build alternative economic institutions ?

And to do all this, we all need to be willing to think anew, to have the courage to change our minds to see things in a different way, and even as we build strategy, to also struggle to understand the new circumstances in which we today live and that are only intensifying - and therefore how we are going to live and struggle through the storms that are coming....

When 30 climate protestors from 18 countries protested drilling at an Arctic oil platform operated by Gazprom, they represented the people of the world taking a symbolic stand against climate destruction, the corporate climate destroyers, and the governments that back them. But the action of the [Arctic 30](#) may be prophetic of something more : **The emergence of a global insurgency that challenges the very legitimacy of those who are destroying our planet.**

[From : Jeremy Brecher, December 2013a – 'Climate Protection : The New Insurgency'; emphasis given]²⁵

How can we overcome ?

- Do we see whatever movement or strategy emerging from this meeting as being essentially oppositional, or do we want to influence governments and other power-holders ? Or are we talking of building a new society 'outside' of the old?

- In other words, are we talking inherently of an insurgency, challenging the existing power structures ('direct challenge to established authority') ?

How are we going to reclaim our home ?

How can we build anew ?

How are we going to build bridges with other like-minded movements - indigenous and others ?

To address these questions, **we need also to look beyond Cape Town**, and talk about what we want to do – and must do – together, after Cape Town.

And to address these questions, we need also to 'talk' to the other Themes in this conference, and to talk **with** them –

- by taking direct part in their discussions, formally and informally
- by inviting representatives of theirs to come and take part in our activities
- and by reporting back to the Plenary sessions on our deliberations and discussions.

Finally, we must also give ourselves enough time in Cape Town to build an organic reconceptualisation of War and of 'Climate', and of how we can reclaim and rebuild our homes on Mother Earth.

*

Annexures :

1. 'Resisting the War on Mother Earth : List of Resource Documents'

Proposed Structure for Workshop, and our hopes for it :

To repeat : Participants at this Workshop have come from different parts of the world with different conditions and futures, and are also 'located' in different ways within your local and national contexts, and are therefore likely to have different perspectives. We must therefore all attempt to listen carefully and to learn from each other, and also to speak from our hearts and with respect for each other, and to give others the opportunity to speak openly.

Our suggestion is that we should be open to principled differences, and must try together to find ways to better link the areas where we agree – our “many yeses” – and even if we are working in different ways, rather than focusing on where we disagree. We would like to strongly urge this !

[to come]

Notes

¹ Anon (Participants at the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, Cochabamba, Bolivia), April 2014 – 'People's Agreement of Cochabamba : Statement from the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, April 22nd 2010, Cochabamba, Bolivia'. Accessed js 09.06.2014 @ <http://pwccc.wordpress.com/support/>

² Ecosocialist Horizons, July 2014 – 'A Call To Resist And End Mass Extinction : An Ecosocialist Strategy Of Coordinated Nonviolent Direct Actions', July 2014 draft; available @ [TO COME].

³ Anon (Participants at the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, Cochabamba, Bolivia), April 2010a (as above).

⁴ Arundhati Roy, January 2003 – 'Confronting Empire'. Text of speech given at the World Social Forum, Porto Alegre, Brazil, on January 27 2003. On Z Net, January 28 2003. Available at <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=51&ItemID=2919>

⁵ Evo Morales Ayma (as President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia), January 2010 – 'Invitation to the Peoples' World Conference On Climate Change And The Rights Of Mother Earth', dt January 5 2010.

Email: info@cmpcc.org; accessed js 09.06.2014 @ <http://links.org.au/node/1447>. Just as added information for those who don't know this, Evo Morales is himself an indigenous person, belonging to the Aymara nation, and although Bolivia has always had a majority indigenous population (despite colonisation by the Spanish, and unlike other countries in Abya Yala ('South America')), he is the country's first indigenous President. For more background to the call for the Cochabamba Conference, see : Jai Sen, March 2010b – 'Be the Seed : An Introduction to and Commentary on the government of Bolivia's Call for a 'Peoples' World Conference On Climate Change And The Rights Of Mother Earth', @ http://cacim.net/twiki/tiki-read_article.php?articleId=64, <http://www.choike.org/2009/eng/informes/7620.html>, and <http://www.zcommunications.org/be-the-seed-by-jai-sen>. Also in Spanish @ <http://www.choike.org/2009/esp/informes/153.html>.

⁶ Anon (Participants at the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, Cochabamba, Bolivia), April 2010a – 'People's Agreement of Cochabamba : Statement from the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, April 22nd 2010, Cochabamba, Bolivia'. Accessed js 20.10.2013 @ <http://pwccc.wordpress.com/support/>; and :

⁷ Anon (Participants at the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, Cochabamba, Bolivia), April 2010b - 'Proposal [for a] Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth', from the 'World Peoples' Conference on Climate Change and Mother Earth's Rights' organised by the Plurinational Government of Bolivia in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in April 2010, accessed js 20.10.2013 @ <http://pwccc.wordpress.com/programa/>

⁸ CAOI and ors, April 2010 - 'Indigenous Peoples' Declaration from the World Peoples' Conference on Climate Change and the Rights Of Mother Earth' (translation of '*Declaración de Los Pueblos Indígenas del Mundo*'); issued 26.04.2010). Final Declaration of the Working Group 7 on Indigenous Peoples at the Cochabamba World Peoples' Climate Conference. Original in Spanish available @ <http://www.minkandina.org/index.php?news=312>.

⁹ Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), May 1996 – 'Invitation-summons to the Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism, Mexico, May of 1996'. Accessed js 22.09.10 @ <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/chiapas1996/en/invite.html>; Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), 1997 - 'Summons to the Second International Encounter For Humanity and against Neoliberalism (26th July to 3rd Aug. 1997)'. Available @ http://216.239.39.104/custom?q=cache:QWpaVO0UpRkJ:www.pangea.org/encuentro/convocatoria_in.h

[tm+zapatistas+world+include+other+worlds&hl=en&ie=UTF-8; and](#) : Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos (for the Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee of the General Command of the Zapatista Army for National Liberation - EZLN), September 2008 – 'Zapatistas Call for Worldwide Festival of Dignified Rage'. As accessed on js 23.11.08 on <http://www.pscelebrities.com/whitelightblacklight/2008/10/zapatistas-call-for-worldwide-festival.htm>.

For a discussion of the resonance of the Zapatista movement, see : Alex Khasnabish, 2013 – 'Forward Dreaming : Zapatismo and the Radical Imagination', in Jai Sen, ed, 2013 – *The Movements of Movements : Struggles for Other Worlds*, Part I. Volume 4, Part I, in the *Challenging Empires* series (New Delhi : OpenWord); and : Xochitl Leyva Solano, 2013 – 'Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Neo-Zapatista Social Movement Networks', in Jai Sen, ed, 2013 – *The Movements of Movements : Struggles for Other Worlds*, Part I. Volume 4, Part I, in the *Challenging Empires* series (New Delhi : OpenWord).

¹⁰ Taiaiake Alfred, 1999 – *Peace, Power, Righteousness : An Indigenous Manifesto*. Don Mills, Ontario : Oxford University Press.

¹¹ Taiaiake Alfred, 2005 – *Wasáse : Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Peterborough : Broadview Press), p 19.

¹² As quoted in *The New York Times*, November 16 1967. This quote is often attributed to Mahatma Gandhi (and apparently, also to [Doris Twitchell Allen](#)), but according to Wikiquotes, it was [A. J. Muste](#) – a pacifist and activist - who first said this. See <http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Peace>.

¹³ IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2014 - *Climate Change 2014 : Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*. IPCC Working Group II Contribution to AR5. Accessed js 09.06.2014 @ <http://ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/>; and : National Climate Assessment, 2014 – 'Climate Change Impacts in the United States'. <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/>.

¹⁴ CNA Military Advisory Board, May 2014 – 'National Security and the Accelerating Risks of Climate Change'. Alexandria, VA : CNA Corporation. Accessed js 09.06.2014 @ http://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=9&ved=0CGgQFjAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cna.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2FMAB_2014.pdf&ei=4x6WU6jcO5KHyaSDkoHAAw&usq=AFQjCNE-Tg3RTAPNurKoVuqbXch6SuAckQ&sig2=aiGo2wYostlSTotnMJ8pFQ&bvm=bv.68445247.d.aWw.

See also : Nafeez Ahmed, June 2014a - 'Social science is being militarised to develop 'operational tools' to target peaceful activists and protest movements', in *The Guardian*, Thursday 12 June 2014, @ <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/earth-insight/2014/jun/12/pentagon-mass-civil-breakdown>; Nafeez Ahmed, June 2014b – 'Pentagon bracing for public dissent over climate and energy shocks', in *The Guardian*, Friday 14 June 2013, @ <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/earth-insight/2013/jun/14/climate-change-energy-shocks-nsa-prism>; and : Jed Morey, May 2014 – 'Pentagon Unilaterally Grants Itself Authority Over 'Civil Disturbances'', May 14 2013, @ <http://www.longislandpress.com/2013/05/14/u-s-military-power-grab-goes-into-effect/>.

¹⁵ Gwynne Dyer, 2010 – *Climate Wars : The Fight for Survival as the World Overheats*. Oxford, UK : Oneworld Publications.

¹⁶ From : Craig Collins, July 2012 – 'Meet Cannibalistic Capitalism : Globalization's Evil Twin', on *TruthOut*, July 30 2012, accessed js 10.06.2014 @ <http://truth-out.org/news/item/10572-meet-catabolic-capitalism-globalizations-evil-twin>. See also the author's companion piece : Craig Collins, August 2012 – 'Cannibalistic Capitalism and Green Resistance', on *TruthOut*, August 31 2012, accessed js 10.06.2014 @ <http://truth-out.org/news/item/11173-cannibalistic-capitalism-and-green-resistance>.

¹⁷ Mary Kaldor, 1999 - *New and Old Wars : Organized Violence in a Global Era*. Stanford University Press; for a discussion, see : Martin Shaw, 2000 – 'The contemporary mode of warfare ? Mary Kaldor's theory of new wars'. Review essay from *Review of International Political Economy*, vol 7, no 1, 2000, pp 171-80. Accessed js 09.06.2014 at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Users/hafa3/kaldor.htm>.

¹⁸ These paragraphs are based on the Event Outline for a workshop titled - 'Confronting the Consequences of Climate Change : Conflict, War, Resistance, and Movement in the Coming Half Century – Looking Ahead : What Do We Need To Do ?' and organised at the World Social Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, on February 9 2011 by [CACIM](#) together with ABN - African Biodiversity Network, Climate SOS, GGJ - Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, IEN - Indigenous Environmental Network, and NFFPFW - National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers. Available @ <http://cacim.net/twiki/tiki-index.php?page=CACIM+at+WSF+2011>.

¹⁹ Referring to both the armed / weaponised defence of perceived human rights by ordinary peoples under the emerging conditions and also the use of 'the defence of human rights' as an excuse for imperial (and weaponised) interventions – as is already the case.

²⁰ German Watch, November 2013 – *Global Climate Risk Index 2014 : Who Suffers Most from Extreme Weather Events ? Weather-Related Loss Events in 2012 and 1993 to 2012*. Authors : Sönke Kreft and David Eckstein. Accessed js 11.06.2014 @ <http://germanwatch.org/en/7659>.

²¹ Rebecca Solnit, April 2014 – 'Call climate change what it is : Violence', in *The Guardian*, April 7 2014. Accessed js 21.05.2014 @ <http://climate-connections.org/2014/04/09/call-climate-change-what-it-is-violence/>.

²² Jeremy Brecher, December 2013a – 'Climate Protection : The New Insurgency', on Foreign Policy in Focus, December 10 2013, @ <http://fpif.org/wanted-global-insurgency-protect-climate/>.

²³ Ecosocialist Horizons, July 2014 (as above).

²⁴ The All India Union of Forest Working People (AIUFWP) was formed in June 2013, and was earlier known as the NFFPFW (National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers). For their position on issues of climate change and related matters, see : NFFPFW (National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers), June 2009 – 'Dehradun Declaration 2009', a Declaration by the Indigenous and Forest Peoples of India, taken at the Second National Conference, held in Dehra Dun, India, June 10-12 2009; dated June 12 2009. Posted by Delhi Forum on June 19 2009, 4:43:32 pm GMT+05:30, as 'Important - Dehradun Declaration of Forest Peoples on Environment Justice'. Available at <http://www.wrm.org.uy/countries/India/Dehradun.html>, accessed vr 27.01.10.

²⁵ Jeremy Brecher, December 2013a (as above)