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Trajectories of Climate Justice:

Charting the Path of People-Powered Climate Action

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Note on the Publication

Climate action, far from being universal and self-evident, is a concept fraught with contradictions. While the term aims to harness responses to tackle climate change, climate action emanating from the state has been historically done in the service of capitalist interest and imperialist expansion. Aside from masking profiteering off of nature as "ecosystems governance," there is growing evidence that these types of climate policies are ineffectual in bringing about genuine emissions reduction or installing effective adaptation systems. Moreover, this mode of climate action has only aggravated other ecological problems in frontline communities, who also suffer the inevitable human rights violations and erasures perpetrated by corporations and the state. It has also shunned any discussion on repaying climate debt as a valid and legitimate demand from the Global South.

In this context, IBON International has advanced a **People-Powered Climate Action** as a framework and collective resistance against dominant modes of oppressive climate politics. With climate justice at its core, a people-powered climate action aims to spotlight the unequal ways in which climate change impacts regions, communities, and the people who have done the least to cause our planetary crisis. It also stresses the urgency of consolidating leadership and resources to the peoples of the Global South in outlining the roadmap to genuine climate action.

Through this publication, IBON International hopes to enliven discussions within social movements on how to strategically pursue climate action that is based on the Southern peoples' aspirations, differentiated histories and national interest. It seeks to empower our collective political imagination by critically examining the histories of Indigenous Peoples (***"The Persistence of the Lumad in the age of the Capitalocene"***), illustrating the power of collabouration between feminist grassroots organisations and the working class (***"Brazil's People-Powered Just Transition Movement: Insights from Trade Unions and Feminists"***), and

demonstrating the possibilities of a people-powered Green New Deal (***"Towards an Eco-socialist Future: The Case for a People's Green New Deal"***).

Finally, IBON International hopes that this publication inspires future intellectual work in the Global South, such as framework analyses and benchmarking of community-level climate justice action, experiences, and strategies, in order to critically advocate for the interests of people and the planet. By amplifying Southern voices, we hope to create a space for social and climate justice movements so that they may collabourate and build stronger international solidarities in confronting the social, political, and economic forces driving climate change.

Trajectories of Climate Justice: An Introduction

Alanah Torralba

We live in an era of compounding crises. Between the wars waged in the name of imperialism, a global pandemic and flooding of biblical proportions[1] to the unimpeded rise in living costs across the globe, ours is a world in constant tension. The climate crisis, in particular, is irrevocably altering the world in ways that many governments are refusing to comprehend.

In a terminally globalised world, every local disaster is programmed with consequences that will have ramifications elsewhere. Consider the massive flooding in Pakistan that inundated a third of the country's landmass in August 2022. Undoubtedly climate change-fueled, floods triggered by record torrential rains combined with melting glaciers from the country's northern mountain regions killed 1,400 people as well as displaced 33 million residents. It also left Pakistan's primary sectors such as agriculture devastated.[2] A disaster of this proportion could induce massive food shortages in the country while also causing spikes in global food prices that will be acutely felt by the world's urban poor. In addition, and as if on cue, structural adjustment programs will be expanded into Pakistan as the International Monetary Fund has announced that it will grant the country a USD 1.7 billion bailout loan.[3]

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[1] Hanif, Mohammed. "Pakistan's Biblical Floods and the Case for Climate Reparations." The New Yorker, 26 Sept. 2022, https://www.newyorker.com/news/annals-of-a-warming-planet/pakistans-biblical-floods-and-the-case-for-climate-reparations

[2] Saifi, Sofia, Kazzim, Aliza and Magramo, Kathleen. "Pakistan 'still in danger' and flooding may take up to 6 months to recede, authorities say." CNN.com, 13 Sept. 2022, https://edition.cnn.com/2022/09/13/asia/pakistan-floods-six-months-clear-water-intl-hnk/index.html

[3] "Pakistan: Food prices soar amid floods." DW.com, 30 Aug. 2022, https://www.dw.com/en/pakistan-food-prices-soar-amid-floods/a-62967557

Politically, this is another signal of neoliberalism acquiring the green sheen of climate action. It is proof of the moral bankruptcy of many Global North governments as they still refuse to acknowledge their historical responsibility to climate change and pay reparations to the South for the uneven value exchange driving climate breakdown. For the Global South, this means that demanding finance for the newly minted funding facility for Loss and Damage[4]— irreversible consequences of climate change that range from deaths and economic damage to non-tangible but permanent losses such as the gradual erasure of Indigenous cultures that results from forced migration — will be a politically arduous task. Instead, international financial institutions and multilateral development banks continue to peddle "climate solutions" that commodify nature and exploit communities, which end up aggravating the climate crisis.

"Climate catastrophes, which are occurring on a near-weekly basis, have made it clear that the planet is becoming increasingly uninhabitable."

Climate catastrophes, which are occurring on a near-weekly basis, have made it clear that the planet is becoming increasingly uninhabitable. Multiple scientific analyses have warned that the world is headed for ecological breakdown and massive societal upheaval, unless critical policy interventions that address the roots of the crisis are made now. Whether this world becomes the locus of radical ecological transformation for all or the dystopian playground of billionaires and fascists will be the subject of our collective struggles in social movements.

In the following essays, researchers and academics discuss the infrastructures of injustice that are in-built within the Anthropocene through three themes of climate justice, namely Indigenous Peoples' struggles, Just Transition and the Green New Deal. While in no way exhaustive, these essays argue that people-powered climate action that foregrounds the demands of the historically oppressed and vulnerable peoples of the Global South is the only way to genuinely avert massive climate breakdown, and transform the world in the process.

These essays, united in purpose, ask: how can we build a better world, envisaged beyond the self-limiting notions of feasibility, wherein societies thrive based on sufficiency and harmony; in which the global order is based on fair and just ecological exchange?

[4] "COP 27 Reaches Breakthrough Agreement on New 'Loss and Damage' Fund for Vulnerable Countries." UNFCCC.com, 20 Nov. 2022, https://unfccc.int/news/cop27-reaches-breakthrough-agreement-on-new-loss-and-damage-fund-for-vulnerable-countries

The Lumad in the Capitalocene

In Arnold Alamon's essay **"The Persistence of the Lumad in the Age of the Capitalocene,"** we are provided with an overview of the struggle of the Lumad of the Philippines for self-determination as situated in centuries of imperialism and the era of capitalist industrialisation. He argues that state repression and constant displacement, which could be traced to the expansion of the United States (US) empire in southern Philippines, are the primary drivers of the Lumad's vulnerability to climate change.

The Lumad are the largest Indigenous' peoples in the Philippines. Encompassing 18 ethno-linguistic groups, Lumad, which means native or born of the earth in Cebuano[5], is a political identity that was forged out of decades of struggling for autonomy over their ancestral lands. Like other Indigenous Peoples of the world, the Lumad are victims of cyclical violence: isolated from nature through imperialist expansion in the colonial era, the Lumad have been contending with constant displacement, erasure, and their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. The expansion of US plantations into the Philippines as well as the complicity of the country's elite class are useful in understanding their ongoing history.

During the 333 years of Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines, Mindanao, where the Lumad originate, was mostly insulated from the Spaniards due to the Moro people's fierce resistance[6]. However, in 1898 after the Philippine islands were sold off to the US as part of the Treaty of Paris, Mindanao's sovereignty was finally shattered through a pacification campaign that included annihilating Filipino revolutionaries and an aggressive resettlement program. Primarily motivated by the objective to "civilise" the Moro[7], the US government facilitated the mass migration of Filipino Christians from Luzon and Visayas into Mindanao, many of whom were landless peasants. Upon relocation, the US government openly favoured Christian settlers over the native Muslim and Indigenous populations, and restricted their access to land ownership and government services. This would inevitably produce a profound economic gulf between the Christians, Muslims and Lumad. By transplanting Filipino Christians into places that were mostly inhabited by Muslims and Indigenous Peoples, the Americans seeded an ethno-religious division that would deflect resistance from the colonial government, effectively quelling rebellion in the island.

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[5] Cebuano is the language spoken in the majority of Mindanao, southern Philippines.

[6] "Moro" is the term the Spaniards called the Muslim natives of Mindanao, which dates back to the labels they used on the Muslims during the Crusades. The Muslims of Mindanao resented the term 'Moro' due to its colonial origins but eventually claimed it as their collective identity in the 1970s when the Moro National Liberation Front adopted the term along with 'Bangsamoro (Moroland).' See: https://www.filipinaslibrary.org.ph/articles/the-moro-to-the-spanish-colonisers/

[7] Batoto, Rebino et. al. "A History of Filipino Muslims and Lumads of Minsupala: A Teaching and Learning Guide." Mindanao State University System, 2016, https://www.scribd.com/document/475480864/HIS003-Module-PDF-Confidential-1

In a bid to systematically pilfer the natural resources of Mindanao, the US colonial government issued a series of decrees that would distribute thousands of hectares of land, which included Lumad ancestral domains, to US-owned corporations. The first order of business was to clear vast forests for timber and forest products. Then, US veterans enclosed Lumad ancestral domains to form cattle ranches, in a display of the Americans' unwavering commitment to the colonial project of building Texas-style ranches all over the world.[8]

Bukidnon, a mineral-rich plateau with the right climate for growing various crops, served as the base for the expansion of US plantations in the country. In 1928, the California Packing Corporation, upon seeing that growing conditions in Bukidnon were similar with Hawaii and California, established a subsidiary to grow and process pineapples under the brand name Del Monte. Another US plantation called Dole would follow suit in South Cotabato, while mining and logging companies would soon encroach into the region.

This period would signal the Lumad's constant displacement and isolation from nature. Decimated forests and fenced-in ranches meant that vital components of the Lumad traditional ways of life were lost, forcing many of them into the interior or onto the peripheries of urban centres in search of basic survival. In moving farther away from their original domains, the Lumad were forced to assimilate with the Christian settler populations, where they faced social exclusion, discrimination and erasure.

This would continue and intensify under the regime of a newly independent Philippine state as the US government found a willing accomplice in the elite class in maintaining its neocolonial grip on the country. From the 1960s until the Marcos dictatorship in the 1970s, the US would foreground massive deforestation as an entry point for extractive industries. Crony-owned logging concessionaires cleared as much as 300,000 hectares of forests every year, which resulted in nearly USD 43 billion in profits for the richest families in the Philippines. In a prime example of uneven value exchange, much of the timber and forest products were exported to the Global North and processed into higher-value commodities that would drive their accumulation of wealth. Mining companies also plundered the country's resources, as the Philippines holds vast reserves of copper, gold and nickel.

In stark contrast to the Philippine state's development agenda, the Lumad have outrightly rejected notions of Western prosperity as an

[8] Amin, Samir. "Aid for Development." In: Samir Amin. SpringerBriefs on Pioneers in Science and practise, vol 16, 2014 . Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-01116-5_13

economic philosophy and ambition. They have always resisted the neocolonial state's development aggression, preferring to live harmoniously with nature instead of exploiting it for profit. This clash in values is exemplified through an anecdote between a female Lumad leader and a military officer:

> "Bai Emil, a traditional female leader of the Banwaon tribe of Agusan del Sur recalls that she once admonished a military officer who chided her group's protest against the incursion of corporations into their lands. The officer, in arguing for the entry of logging operations into Lumad land, said that a popular Filipino fast food chain could set up shop in their village, and along with it prosperity and modernity for her people. Without apprehension, Bai Emil rejected this suggestion because the Lumad would rather preserve their peaceful ways of life and forests, which already provided their needs and medicine. We have learned that logging operations only tear communities apart by pitting neighbours against each other for paltry wages and a puny collective benefit, Bai Emil added."

Owing to their refusal to acquiesce to the state, the Lumad have been constantly harassed, intimidated and targeted by security forces[9]. Concurrently, because of their social exclusion, the Lumad are some of the most vulnerable to climate change in the Philippines. In 2011, Typhoon Sendong, which dumped a month's worth of rain along normally storm-free areas within mere hours, caused flash floods that killed many urban poor of Lumad lineage in the cities of Mindanao. Even in cases where the Lumad retained their habitats or forests, their communities are still besieged by economic and environmental strife as the unimpeded expansion of industrial agriculture into the region has created an agricultural emergency, most emblematic in the rise of deadly pathogens threatening the banana sector in Mindanao[10].

"We have learned that logging operations only tear communities apart by pitting neighbours against each other for paltry wages and a puny collective benefit."

[9] "Lumad school director, 2 others killed in Lianga, Surigao Sur." Mindanews, 01 Sept. 2015, https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2015/09/lumad-school-director-2-others-killed-in-lianga-surigao-sur/

[10] Paredes, Alyssa. "Experimental Science for the 'Bananapocalypse': Counter Politics in the Plantationocene, Ethnos," 2021, DOI: 10.1080/00141844.2021.1919172

Amidst the simultaneous violence of state repression and the climate crisis, the Lumad have built modes of resistance that challenge hegemonies, such as through agrarian education and the place-based pedagogy of the Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development (ALCADEV)[11].

The ALCADEV schools' curriculum is rooted in a nationalist, pro-peoples and scientific pedagogy that emphasises agroecology in the sustainable management of their food systems[12]. Through the ALCADEV, Lumad youth are taught that food sovereignty and ecological balance are essential to the survival of their communities. By instilling the singularity of nature in Lumad identity, they are educated to defend their ancestral domains and right to self-determination[13]. In centreing agroecology in Lumad education, ALCADEV created a powerful counter narrative to mainstream education, which dismisses agriculture and tacitly endorses state development aggression. Naturally, the Philippine government has deployed intense militarisation into ALCADEV communities, forcing many schools to terminate operations out of fear of being targeted. No ALCADEV school in Lumad domains is in operation today.

The Lumad's ongoing history is woven into the genealogy of the climate crisis. The US empire's encroachment into Mindanao precipitated the dispossession and perpetual disempowerment of the Philippines' largest Indigenous Peoples' group. Meanwhile, the Filipino elite class' complicity in advancing US capitalist expansion via pineapple and banana plantations and mining subsidiaries was a critical prerequisite for the unabated resource plunder of Mindanao that continues today. Present forms of state development aggression such as unchecked mining permits, public-private partnerships and industrial agriculture, should be viewed as an affront to the Lumad people's right to choose a development pathway that respects their worldview.

Thus, the Lumad's struggle for self-determination should be critically advanced according to their morals on development. The historical resistance of the Lumad to development aggression is part of a cultural and economic philosophy that is predicated on sufficiency, solidarity and a deference to nature. Self-determination for Indigenous Peoples, such as the Lumad, must uphold their autonomy to live by their own standards of well-being, which revokes the dominant ideology of economic growth pursued at the expense of the ecology.

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[11] Paredes, Alyssa. "Experimental Science for the 'Bananapocalypse': Counter Politics in the Plantationocene, Ethnos," 2021, DOI: 10.1080/00141844.2021.1919172

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

Brazil's People-Powered Just Transition Movement

The concept of a Just Transition continues to evolve in practise. Originally generated by trade unions in the US during the 1970s, it has become an idea that covers a multitude of perspectives concerning the social planning required to shift into a climate-resilient and low-carbon world. In Brazil, the concept took root within the labour movement in the late 90s and has since spread to other groups. Recently, amidst intensifying political repression by a far-right government, Just Transition has become an organising tool among the many but differentiated social movements in the country. Isadora Cardoso's **"Brazil's People-Powered Just Transition Movement: Insights from Trade Unions and Feminists"** illustrates how a Just Transition is being invoked as a political framework among progressive forces in Brazil, especially in the context of an expansion in large-scale renewable energy projects in the region of Paraíba.

Even as Brazil's government was sliding into the hands of the far-right in 2016, the country's labour movement was engaging in the Just Transition discourse, identifying it as a key strategy for trade unions. However, under Jair Bolsonaro's regime, advancing dialogue on a Just Transition plan for the Brazilian workforce at the national level was effectively stalled because agencies turned hostile to progressive forces. Violent threats and bureaucratic harassment hounded social movements during Bolsonaro's tenure, blocking the country's influential labour movement from furthering the Just Transition agenda in formal political channels. Instead, Just Transition found its way into social movements working at the local level. Peasant, Indigenous Peoples and women's movements integrated the concept into their respective struggles concerning ecological and climate justice. Trade unions, particularly, seized opportunities for social dialogue at the local level to push for a Just Transition in carbon-intensive industries as well as emerging renewable energy projects. Brazilian social movements are also reclaiming the progressive roots of Just Transition against Global North corporations that have used it to greenwash their exploitative renewable energy projects in the country.

Since 2017, Brazil has been registering an increase in installed capacity of wind generation of up to 44%, catapulting it to become the largest market of wind energy for foreign investors. Most of these wind energy investments are found in the northeast region of Paraíba, which boasts of intense solar radiation rates and high wind speeds. Partly due to a lack of government regulation, many of these energy corporations deploy their

> “Social movements in the region have been building collective responses and resistance to the climate crisis, in spite of the repressive political climate.”

projects under the banner of a “Just Transition” while committing grave human rights abuses.

Aided by the politically entrenched Brazilian elite, large Global North corporations have encroached on ancestral domains in Paraíba through the harassment and coercion of smallholder farmers and Indigenous Peoples. Despite the economic benefits being advertised by these corporations, the local population claims that they have gained little to nothing in terms of benefits from these mammoth renewable energy projects as energy prices continue to rise, while wages remain significantly low.

Social movements in the region have been building collective responses and resistance to the climate crisis, in spite of the repressive political climate. In Polo da Borborema, Paraíba, some 20,000 farming families along with 13 workers’ unions and 150 community associations from varying municipalities have formed a united front to resist the takeover of their lands by energy corporations. At the core of this movement is the practise of agroecology — an act affirming the farmers’ integral role in food sovereignty and a Just Transition. In May 2022, over 4,000 women farmers gathered for an annual march to protest centralised and industrial energy businesses and to defend their territorial and food sovereignty. This was also done to register their demands for a feminist-led Just Transition in the country.

Through collabouration and in solidarity with trade unions in Brazil, people’s organisations have resisted the rollout of large-scale exploitative renewable energy projects in the country. Similarly, the movements have denounced the country’s continued dependence on fossil fuels and the government’s lack of action on the climate crisis. Notably, the Brazilian peoples’ movement on Just Transition is also rejecting the notion that green growth is imperative to climate protection. Rather, they are asserting that re-centering quality of life, people’s autonomy and peaceful co-existence with nature are the foundations through which climate action and a low-carbon world should be pursued.

A People's Green New Deal

In approaching the climate crisis through governance, none has captured the imagination of the Global North quite like the Green New Deal (GND). In particular, the US and European GNDs, alongside indeterminate Net Zero pledges, have become an epithet for a country's climate action strategy. In Max Ajl's **"Towards an Eco-socialist Future: The case for a People's Green New Deal,"** we are provided with a dissection of the politics underpinning the various iterations of mainstream GND plans that ultimately fail to propose a radically transformed world. Drawing upon an internationalist analysis of the ecological and climate crises, he proposes a People's GND that is decidedly on the side of the ecology, the proletariat, the working class, and the impoverished peoples of the Global South. A People's GND addresses the climate crisis through its systemic contexts and spotlights climate debt as an agenda and priority, in recognition of its centrality to climate justice as expressed in the landmark document the People's Agreement of Cochabamba[14].

The GND as a political planning framework can be categorised into four models: Green Social Control, Green Anti-Racist Keynesian, Social Democratic, and the People's Green New Deal.

In the first model, Green Social Control, planning proposals are organised around the idea of governing nature. Subsumed within different modes of ecosystem management is the implicit goal of creating surplus value for the Global North by regulating Earth systems. Green Social Control GNDs, as engineered by think tanks linked to the US-European ruling class, are fervently pro-capitalist and industrialist. Through the smokescreen of organising tools such as "sustainable development" and a "circular economy," the capitalist impulse to financialise nature is enshrined in climate policymaking, notably via the 1992 Rio Summit and in subsequent climate treaties such as the Paris Agreement in 2015. Hence, policies arising from this mode of socio-ecological planning are designed to extract maximum profits from nature by integrating the capitalist mode of production into Earth systems. For instance, programs such as REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation)[15], climate smart agriculture[16] and the Blue Economy[17]

[14] "Peoples Agreement of Cochabamba." World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, 22 Apr 2010, https://pwccc.wordpress.com/2010/04/24/peoples-agreement/

[15] Sarmiento, Juan Pablo and Larson, Anne. "Rights abuse allegations in the context of REDD+ readiness and implementation." Info Brief (Nov 2017). DOI:10.17528/cifor/006630

[16] "'Climate Smart Agriculture' causes confusion." Action Aid, 11 Oct. 2017. https://actionaid.org/publications/2017/climate-smart-agriculture-causes-confusion#downloads

[17] "Blue Economy Extraction Drives the Expansion of Ocean Grabbing." Friends of the Earth – Asia Pacific, 10 Jul 2022, https://foeasiapacific.org/2022/07/10/blue-economy-extraction-drives-the-expansion-of-ocean-grabbing/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=blue-economy-extraction-drives-the-expansion-of-ocean-grabbing

emerged from the UNFCCC environment. There is growing evidence that these programs have largely failed to bring about real emissions reductions or genuine climate resilience. Instead, these have only legitimised corporations to pollute the atmosphere[18] and destroy critical biomes[19] while committing human rights violations, and in some cases aggravating biodiversity loss. In addition, Green Social Control conjures fantasies of a "silver bullet" for the world's ecological problems through unproven technological fixes such as carbon capture storage and solar radiation management to preserve the capitalist order.

The second model, Green Anti-Racist Keynesian, is an indelibly US-generated idea that does not deviate too far from the previous framework. Mostly represented by the US Democrat politician Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, these proposals advance a state-corporate style of nature governance that make passing reference to historical environmental injustices within the Black and Indigenous communities in the US. However, noticeably absent is an explicit discussion of class relations, settler colonialism and capitalism as they relate to the genealogy of climate change. Instead, the climate crisis is fashioned into an economic opportunity by heralding the US as a "green tech leader" and boosting massive corporate investments into green economy projects. It codifies unfair exchange value flows between the Global South and North by de-risking investments in renewable energy worldwide, which would see countries trapped in unjust payment schemes that would render them powerless against international tribunals.[20] Moreover, climate debt is altogether eschewed in favour of development aid to appease the legitimate demands for reparations of the Global South.

The Social Democratic model, on the other hand, comprises an array of proposals that draw a relationship to capitalism but fail to enunciate a concrete path, or even the resolve, to dismantle it. By banking on First World working class heroism, this approach articulates an understanding of the uneven distribution of global resources and the unfair, disproportionate impacts of climate change, usually referenced through admonitions of Northern ways of life. To solve the crisis, the Social Democratic model offers a program to decarbonise and decommodify public goods. These include promoting mass transit systems over car ownership, nationalising the energy sector, and driving good-quality employment through greening programs, among others. Such an approach tends to collapse climate breakdown into a mere problem of

[18] Song, Lisa and Temple, James. "The Climate Solution Actually Adding Millions of Tons of CO2 Into the Atmosphere." Propublica.org, 29 Apr 2021, https://www.propublica.org/article/the-climate-solution-actually-adding-millions-of-tons-of-co2-into-the-atmosphere

[19] Clouse, Carol. "The U.N.'s grand plan to save forests hasn't worked, but some still believe it can." Mongabay.com, 14 July 2020, https://news.mongabay.com/2020/07/u-n-s-grand-plan-to-save-forests-hasnt-worked-but-some-still-believe-it-can/

[20] Gabor, Daniela. "The Wall Street Consensus." https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/wab8m/

carbon emissions, rather than a crisis deeply rooted in the domination of the capitalist-imperialist order on all forms of life. It is also unclear in its position on the matter of climate debt, and likewise distances itself from engaging with Global South economies currently dependent on oil exportation.

Finally, the fourth schema, a People's Green New Deal, proposes a socially transformative planning system that envisions an eco-socialist future. Foremost, it affirms that nature holds the supreme power over Earth systems that make complex human societies possible and seeks to advance a rational regulation of the human-nature metabolism. In this approach, national liberation, auto-centred development in the Global South, the wide scale promotion of agroecology, and decreasing the North's aggregate energy use are fundamental to social and ecological transformation. Moreover, it acknowledges the centrality of the Third World poor, especially the rural semi-proletariat, in an eco-socialist revolution. Notably, it asserts the Global South's claim on climate reparations as a critical requirement for climate justice.[21] A People's Green New Deal acknowledges that delinking peripheral and semi-peripheral economies from the imperial core is fundamental to the dissolution of capitalism, colonialism and imperialism, which is the only way towards genuine climate action and a radically transformed world.

Conclusion

The pathway to a better world where the majority do not suffer through apocalyptic climate and ecological breakdown is by no means easy or straightforward. To tackle the climate crisis is to confront capitalism itself. And as is increasingly becoming obvious, capitalism persists because it has invaded every facet of life on the planet. It is present in the constant dispossession and displacement of the Lumad in the Philippines; it is the undercurrent that expropriates land from farmers and Indigenous women in Brazil; and it is the force that inhibits sincere discussions for an eco-socialist planning framework in climate action. In order to move forward, therefore, the climate justice movement must be resolute in dismantling capitalism, colonialism and imperialism; and all the ways that these have poisoned every aspect of our lives.

"To tackle the climate crisis is to confront capitalism itself."

[21] According to the People's Agreement of Cochabamba, climate debt encompasses the Global North's uneven accumulation in terms of emissions, development, adaptation, migration and debt to Mother Earth. Hence, compensation is holistic, which begins with paying Global South countries being battered by climate catastrophes and stretches to building infrastructure that would deal with the social impacts of climate change such as forced migration.

This must also mean rejecting the dominant ideology of limitless economic growth. Although economic growth has uplifted the lives of millions of people throughout history, this has historically been done in an uneven, unreliable and ecologically destructive process. Imperialist expansion which makes economic growth in the North possible has only produced analogous forms of subjugation across the planet.

Notably, economic growth as both an objective and signpost of national vitality is a relatively new phenomenon that only reached its apex of discursive currency in the 1950s, when it dominated the social sciences and politics[22]. This implies that the hegemony of economic growth, and by extension the contentious term "development," as societal goals are not predetermined nor are these prerequisites for the material improvement of peoples' lives. In the Lumad of the Philippines as in the farmers' and women's movements of Polo de Borborema in Brazil, people are gesturing that economic growth and development under the auspices of capitalist and imperialist expansion are an illusion.

The Global North, particularly, has historically pursued economic growth through the erasure of peoples in the South while polluting the atmosphere such that runaway climate change now regularly threatens the lives of the vast majority. To begin the arduous task of disentangling the planet from capitalism, the first step is clear: we need a degrowth in the Global North.

Degrowth[23] proposes to achieve a globally just and sustainable economy by programmatically decommissioning certain areas of production and consumption, while replacing these with low-energy and ecologically compatible systems that guarantee welfare for all[24]. It rests on the idea that Global North energy use must be reduced dramatically in order to prevent ecological overshoot by renouncing the dogma of limitless growth. In the immediate, this aims at a profound reduction of greenhouse gas emissions that would limit global temperature rise at 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2100, averting climate catastrophe. In the long-run, a degrowth paradigm that integrates eco-socialist planning also plots the end of accumulation by imperialist expansion. This will necessarily reduce the GDP of Northern nations, but should in no way trigger austerity measures as a good quality of life can be achieved without aggressive industrialisation and adhering to planetary boundaries[25].

[22] Mathias Schmelzer (2016): The Hegemony of Growth: The OECD and the Making of the Economic Growth Paradigm. Cambridge : Cambridge University

[23] While I understand that the Degrowth movement is not a monolith, I wish to specify that the branch of the movement that I refer to here is that which explicitly renounces capitalism and meaningfully considers the political actors of the Global South in its analysis.

[24] Mathias Schmelzer, Andreas Vetter, and Aaron Vansintjan (2022) : The Future Is Degrowth: A Guide to a World Beyond Capitalism, London, New York, Verso, 320 pp., ISBN 9781839765841.

[25] Daniel O'Neill, Andrew Fanning, William Lamb, et. al (2018): A good life for all within planetary boundaries. Nat Sustain 1, 88–95 (2018). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-018-0021-4

Rather, degrowth from a Global South standpoint, must entail a serious redistribution of wealth through a variety of public policy proposals that decommodify public goods, nationalise modes of production where appropriate, facilitate symbiotic human-nature metabolism, and repay the imperial core's climate and ecological debts to peripheral nations.

Repaying climate debt must be an imperative in any degrowth paradigm that claims to champion climate justice and aims to end the uneven ecological exchange that is driving climate change. As envisioned in the People's Agreement of Cochabamba and as demanded by the contemporary climate justice movement, Global North nations must officially recognise their historical responsibility in causing climate change and assume the costs to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis[26]. This means mobilising climate finance to respond to the growing costs of climate change as well as holding to account each country to deliver on its pledges[27].

As it stands, climate finance[28] is fast becoming the new frontier of sovereign debt[29] and a brewing source of legal entanglements for Southern countries. It is critical to assert that climate debt must be repaid through grants-based financing; it should not come in the form of aid, loans, corporate investments or private insurance. Therefore, while the decision to create a Loss and Damage Fund at COP 27 is a critical win for movements pushing for climate reparations, it will also be a test case on the sincerity of Global North governments to stem the climate emergency. The Loss and Damage Fund must be independent, clearly demarcated from adaptation and mitigation financing. Most importantly, it must be operationalised to respond to the pressing needs of communities already being battered by the climate crisis.

Finally, building climate resilient and sovereign nations in the South necessitates dismantling the military industrial complex. The US military,

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[26] The demands revolve around: restoring atmospheric space to the formerly colonised world through a reduction and absorption of emission by imperial nations; eliminating restrictive policies for the millions who will be forced to migrate due to climate change; assuming adaptation costs for the vast majority whose lives will be impacted by climate risks; honour broader debt to Mother Earth by adopting and implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth

[27] In 2009 at COP 15 in Copenhagen, the US conjured USD 100 billion, a random number, as the yearly goal for the climate finance pool to be achieved by 2020. Already critically below the amount required to mobilise effective climate action, that promise has also been largely unfulfilled. See: https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02846-3

[28] The foremost institution in charge of climate finance in the Paris Agreement regime is the Green Climate Fund. Grants produced within the GCF, in its original conception, are supposedly without the burden of conditionality, as in the practise of development aid. However, banks and financial institutions are exerting influence into the GCF by dictating concessional debts and other equity instruments, casting doubts on whether it will continue to promote a grants-based, free of conditionality mode of climate finance. Moreover, the Fund is notoriously difficult to access, disputing its functionality as a finance mechanism.

[29] Lustgarten, Abrahm. "Barbados Will Be Among First to Receive Climate Money From New International Monetary Fund Resilience Trust." Propublic.org, 05 Oct 2022, https://www.propublica.org/article/mia-mottley-barbados-imf-resilience-trust

> “It is clear that halting massive climate breakdown requires abolishing the systems at the root of our planetary crisis.”

for instance, is the single largest historical polluter in the world as it emits more greenhouse gases than many industrialised nations.[30] The polluting activities of military bases also exacerbate the vulnerability of communities already besieged by the impacts of climate change. In addition, global military expenditure has ballooned to USD 2.1 trillion[31], which could otherwise have been funnelled into a low-carbon transition that currently requires USD 4-6 trillion annually[32]. Furthermore, the insipid prioritisation of military spending over climate adaptation and mitigation projects should be treated as a human rights violation, as in the case of Pakistan’s acquisition of fighter jets from the US at the same time that it was being inundated by massive flooding[33].

It is clear that halting massive climate breakdown requires abolishing the systems at the root of our planetary crisis. Among social and international solidarity movements, working towards this goal entails unequivocally demanding climate reparations, calling for a programmatic degrowth of Northern economies, global wealth redistribution and the abolition of the military-industrial complex, among others. In charting the path to radical transformation, deliberately centering the struggles of the Global South and bolstering people-powered climate action are the trajectories through which a better world becomes possible.

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[30] Kehrt, Sonner. “The U.S. Military Emits More Carbon Dioxide Into the Atmosphere Than Entire Countries Like Denmark or Portugal.” Inside Climate News, 18 Jan 2022, https://insideclimatenews.org/news/18012022/military-carbon-emissions/

[31] “World military expenditure passes $2 trillion or first time.” Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 25 Apr 2022, https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2022/world-military-expenditure-passes-2-trillion-first-time

[32] “Emissions Gap Report 2022: The Closing Window — Climate crisis calls for rapid transformation of societies. United Nations Environment Programme, 2022, https://unep.org/emissions-gap-report-2022”

[33] Beech, Eric. “U.S. State Dept OKs possible sale of F-16 equipment to Pakistan – Pentagon.” Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/us-state-dept-oks-possible-sale-f-16-equipment-pakistan-pentagon-2022-09-07/

The Persistence of the Lumad in the Age of the Capitalocene

Arnold P. Alamon

In December 2011, Typhoon Sendon[34] wreaked havoc in the heartlands of Mindanao, southern Philippines that would irrefutably worsen the precarity of the Indigenous Lumad people. In less than 24 hours, Sendong dumped a month's worth of rain over usually "typhoon-free" areas[35]. An unprecedented amount of precipitation caused tributaries to swell into the Cagayan de Oro and Mandulog rivers which inundated dense urban centres that would kill some 1200 people and displace thousands more urban poor residents[36].

In a poignant moment that demonstrated the intertwined narratives of the Lumad people and climate breakdown, floodwater coming from the loose topsoil of the pineapple plantations in Bukidnon, which are appropriated Lumad ancestral domains, along with logs harvested from the same mountains, came crashing down on urban poor communities. It is believed that many of those who perished in the floods were of Lumad lineage, albeit without official confirmation. The Lumad, who have had to endure decades of constant displacement, have been known to join the urban poor in the cities because of the economic and political disenfranchisement they suffer in their ancestral lands[37].

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[34] International Code Name: Washi

[35] Rasquinho,Olavo et.al, "Assessment on Disaster Risk Reduction of Tropical Storm Washi" Tropical Cyclone Research and Review Vol. 2 Issue 3, September 2013, pp. 169-175. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2225603218300808#:~:text=In%20December%2C%202011%2C%20the%20world's,people%20(110%2C806%20families)%20affected.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Alamon, Arnold. 2014. "Sendong as a political economic disaster: a preliminary theoretization," in the Mindanao Forum Vol. XXVII, No. 1. Iligan City: MSU-IIT.

The climate change-induced catastrophe that hit Cagayan de Oro and Iligan is emblematic of the worst injustices being reproduced by the climate crisis on Indigenous Peoples such as the Lumad. Like many Indigenous Peoples of the world, the Lumad of Mindanao have been twice victimised by colonisation and the oppression being perpetuated in the age of the Capitalocene[38]. Born out of a global economic order that derives its logic from endless production for profit[39], climate change amplifies the inequalities that have beset historically excluded groups such as Indigenous Peoples[40]. In the Philippines, the Lumad are suffering the worst consequences of "atmospheric colonisation."[41]

The Lumad Identity

Lumad as an identity emerged from decades of collective struggles against imperialist expansion and state-sponsored development aggression, among the 18 ethnolinguistic peoples in Mindanao, southern Philippines. They are estimated to be between two to three million, representing the largest of the total population of the Indigenous Peoples in the country. The term "Lumad" is a Cebuano word that means 'native of the land.'

During the height of intense state repression in the 1980s, diverse ethnolinguistic groups from the non-Muslim and non-Christianised peoples of Mindanao formed an assembly to recognise their shared experiences of historical oppression and collective aspiration for autonomy[42]. It was in forging the Lumad identity that they consolidated their struggle for self-determination, which is founded on a profound understanding of their relationship with nature and their place in the ecology.

The history of the Lumad's struggle for self-determination must also be situated within the colonial foundation of climate change. It starts in the centuries-long colonisation by Spain and reaches its pinnacle during the

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[38] Environmental historian and historical geographer Jason W. Moore argues for the term 'Capitalocene' rather than Anthropocene in naming the era that gave rise to the climate and planetary crises. He argues that the technologies and economies embedded in capitalism's longer history, rather than the processes birthed during the "age of man" as the Anthropocene posits, molded the endless accumulation that has driven climate change and planetary crisis. See: Jason W. Moore. 2017. "The Capitalocene, Part 1: on the nature and origins of our ecological crisis," in The Journal of Peasant Studies. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2016.1235036

[39] Whyte, Kyle Pows. 2017. "Is it colonial déjà vu? Indigenous Peoples and climate justice" in Adamson, Joni and Michael Davis ed. 2017. Humanities for the environment: integrating knowledge, forging new constellations of practise. New York: Routledge.

[40] Baird,Rachel. 2008. The Impact of Climate Change on Minorities and Indigenous Peoples. Minority Rights Group International.https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/Submissions/Minority_Rights_Group_International.pdf

[41] Fitz- Henry, Erin. 2022. "Climate change is white colonisation of the atmosphere. It's time to tackle this entrenched racism." Theconversation.com. https://theconversation.com/climate-change-is-white-colonisation-of-the-atmosphere-its-time-to-tackle-this-entrenched-racism-185579

[42] Alamon, Arnold. 2017. Wars of extinction: discrimination and the Lumad struggle in Mindanao. Iligan City: RMP-NMR.

colonial rule of the United States (US), the country with the historically largest greenhouse gas emissions. The US colonial period was instrumental in setting up the production model that would institutionalise the dispossession of Lumad ancestral lands in the service of private accumulation aided by the neocolonial elite-led state.

The Legacy of Colonialism on Lumad Displacement and Vulnerability

During 333 years of colonial rule, the Spaniards transformed the economies of the two major island groups of Luzon and Visayas from subsistence to production for profit. From subsistence economies with egalitarian systems of property ownership based in a few riverine communities, a three-tiered economy that was integrated within the encomienda system[43] was established. In this economic structure, the Spanish colonial rulers or the *peninsulares* were at the top while their conscripted principales who did their local bidding occupied the second tier. At the bottom were the majority, the landless peasantry who were enslaved for the gains of both colonial powers and the landed gentry.

Alongside the continuous Christianisation of the Indigenous Peoples of Luzon and Visayas, the encomienda system divided society into a small but wealthy landlord class and a poor landless peasantry that was dependent on the graces of both their colonial and economic masters. This social stratification became entrenched into this system of accumulation[44]. Mindanao, the third major island group of the Philippine archipelago, was essentially insulated from both Christianisation and the economic exploitation of the Spaniards largely due to the resistance of its local Moro people. However, when the islands were sold off to the US in the Treaty of Paris in 1898, heralding the rise of a new global superpower driven by its own economic logic, Mindanao became belatedly sutured into the new global economic order.

Through an aggressive pacification campaign that targeted Filipino revolutionaries that waged war against Spanish colonisers, the US gained control of the Philippine islands, including Mindanao, during the Philippine American War of 1899 to 1902. In Mindanao, the Americans would engineer an aggressive resettlement program of mostly Christian Filipinos from the other main islands that would finally defeat the Moro and Indigenous resistance movement[45].

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[43] The encomienda system is a Spanish labour system that ravaged the Indies and conscripted the formerly free Indigenous Peoples to become landless peasants in a mechanism of generational debt peonage.

[44] Corpuz, OD. 1997. An economic history of the Philippines. Quezon City: UP Press

[45] Rodil, B.R. 1994. The minoritization of the indigenous communities of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago. Davao City: AFRIM Inc.

By heralding Mindanao to be the proverbial land of promise, the Americans facilitated the mass migration of Filipino landless peasants from as far away as the northern tip of Luzon, in what is now known as Batanes. This resulted in pacifying the rebellion without having American soldiers themselves fight the displaced Moro and Indigenous populations. The settler-migrants, backed by the colonial government, now did their bidding through armed vigilante groups. By pitting Mindanao's original inhabitants, the Moro and its large Indigenous population, against settler Filipino Christians, the Americans were able to secure control over Mindanao and prime the untapped resources of the island for extraction.

The Pillage of Bukidnon

When the Americans arrived at the lush Bukidnon plateau, they were reminded of their cattle ranches back home. This inspired veterans to transplant their American notions of success by building cattle ranches into the deep canyons and grasslands of Bukidnon. In order to secure their territories, ranchers enclosed these lands and subsequently hired cowboys to guard the perimeters effectively blocking the Lumad from vital agricultural plots and water sources. Through oral histories of local Lumad communities, stories of the inhumane violence inflicted on their people to threaten them against "intruding" into their own domains abound. To this day, the Lumad still recount of how the ranches made them feel devalued as human beings[46].

The US deployed its economic agenda in Mindanao systematically. First, it enforced ownership of all public land via the Regalian doctrine, a legacy of Spanish colonialism. Since Bukidnon was filled with verdant forests, the US government first issued logging concessions to clear the land[47]. Once the forests were cleared, US plantation owners implanted their businesses into the plains of Bukidnon and South Cotabato.

Upon discovering that conditions were similar in the pineapple plantations that they operated in Hawaii and California, the California Packing Corporation established its subsidiary, the Philippine Packing Corporation. In 1928, they began planting and canning pineapples under the brand name del Monte. Through a series of declarations issued by the colonial government, del Monte soon seized thousands of hectares of Lumad domains, displacing the original inhabitants and driving them further into the interior[48]. The same privileges were enjoyed in South

[46] Alamon, Arnold. 2017. Wars of extinction: discrimination and the Lumad struggle in Mindanao. Iligan City: RMP-NMR.

[47] Rodil, B.R. 1994. The minoritization of the indigenous communities of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago. Davao City: AFRIM Inc.

[48] Lao, Madronio. 1987. The economy of the Bukidnon Plateau during the American period in Philippine Studies Vol. 35. No. 3 (1987) 316-331.

Cotabato by Dole, another American plantation company[49]. Mining enterprises would follow suit after logging and agricultural plantations had been established.

This period ushered in the Lumad's isolation from nature. As logging companies encroached on their lands, decimated forests signalled the loss of a valuable Indigenous resource that was intrinsic to the Lumad traditional way of life[50]. Driven off their lands, the Lumad would eventually be pushed into the interior and urban centres, sparking their constant displacement. They would be forced to assimilate with the Christian settler population as they found seasonal work in cattle ranches, logging concessions, and agricultural plantations. For the Lumad, living away from their ancestral lands meant that they were no longer living near the forests which provided them not only with daily sustenance but also medicine and life-giving elements.

"As logging companies encroached on their ancestral lands, decimated forests signalled the loss of a valuable Indigenous resource that was intrinsic to the Lumad traditional way of life."

Alternatively, there were those that elected to move further into the slopes to maintain their Indigenous ways of life. However, the expansion of extractive industries also meant that it was only a matter of time before they, too, would be forced out from their newfound domains.

The plunder of Indigenous resources such as forests, rivers and minerals by the American colonisers created direct and indirect victims among the Lumad of Mindanao, many of whom revolted against the colonial powers.

The Beginning of the Lumad's Resistance

While the Americans successfully instigated in-fighting among Filipinos, the Indigenous of Mindanao and the Moro were able to build alliances among their communities by sharing cultures and rituals that depicted the Americans as their common enemy. The recognition of the US government as a singular target was crucial in the sporadic resistance against the colonial powers that characterised this period.

[49] Gaspar, Karl. 2000. The Lumad's struggle in the face of globalization. Davao City: AFRIM, Inc.
[50] Alamon, Arnold. 2017. Wars of extinction: discrimination and the Lumad struggle in Mindanao. Iligan City: RMP-NMR.

In June 1906, a tribal ward led by Datu Mangulayon in Davao caught the attention of General Edward Bolton, the highest American government and military official in the area[51]. A new ritual dance had been summoning large crowds, which alarmed the Americans who were already dealing with sporadic but fierce resistance in the region. The Labi dance, which was designed by the Manobo and Lumad Datus in collabouration with the Moros of Lupon, Davao Oriental, told of the story of a god descending from the heavens who would bless the people with an abundant harvest and liberate them from colonisers[52]. It became a powerful narrative that united the Moros and Lumad in viewing the American colonisers as the singular target of their resistance.

Bolton headed to Datu Mangulayon's district to investigate the commotion. In a unified move, the Lumad and Moros conspired to murder Bolton during his visit. According to research, the American official was kneeling while drinking fresh coconut juice when he was struck swiftly by Datu Mangulayon with a bolo[53]. In the succeeding months, American soldiers went on a manhunt for the Datu and retaliated by imposing a "huez de kutsilyo"[54], just as they did in the island of Samar during the Philippine-American war. In August 1906, American newspapers reported that the Datu was captured and beheaded, his severed head supposedly delivered to the US. However, research has revealed that Datu Mangulayon managed to escape through the care and protection of Datu Tomaros, a Moro from Lupon, Davao Oriental, where the dance of resistance originated[55].

The story of Datu Mangulayon is important because he was essentially a proto-Lumad leader who did not submit to foreign powers. It is one of the first accounts of Lumad resistance against colonial powers and shows that collabouration among tribes was not unknown during this time. This act of defiance would serve as precedent in the coming years of intense state repression under the newly formed Philippine Republic.

The Imposition of the Neocolonial State's Development Aggression

Even amidst liberation movements and a changing global landscape in the aftermath of World War II, the oppression of the Lumad continued under the various administrations of the independent Philippine

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[51] Tiu, Macario. 2003. Davao 1890-1910: Conquest and Resistance in the Garden of the Gods. Quezon City: UP CIDS.

[52] Ibid.

[53] A local machete.

[54] Roughly translated as "justice under the knife." This was a policy that saw the murder of able-bodied male adults and children by Americans in retaliation for their military losses.

[55] Tiu, Macario. 2003. Davao 1890-1910: Conquest and Resistance in the Garden of the Gods. Quezon City: UP CIDS.

Republic. Despite this period of decolonisation, the Lumad were relegated further into the peripheries of society and suffered through violence under the Philippine state government. Moreover, the massive push for the logging industry via the state's development agenda fueled environmental degradation that has undoubtedly contributed to climate change and the subsequent vulnerability of the Lumad.

Even after the Philippines gained independence from the US, economic policies were essentially unchanged. Members of the Filipino elite marshalled their businesses into providing raw materials to US corporations, which inhibited the country's ability to develop its own nationalist industries. Under a complicit Filipino ruling class that comprised of landlords, capitalists, and politicians, the development agenda of the nation-state viewed Indigenous ancestral domains as resources that could be easily exploited for foreign capitalists[56].

"Crony-owned logging concessionaires bulldozed their way into Lumad territories, as both the state's development agenda and the Philippine military sanctioned illegal encroachment of ancestral lands."

The massive deforestation that began during the US colonial rule reached new levels in the Marcos dictatorship. By granting logging concessions to his cronies, Ferdinand Marcos Sr. presided over an all-time high of 300,000 hectares worth of forest cover cleared every year between the 1960s and 1970s. Crony-owned logging concessionaires bulldozed their way into Lumad territories, as both the state's development agenda and the Philippine military facilitated the illegal encroachment of ancestral lands. For the 200 families who were granted timber licensing agreements, this meant USD 42.85 billion in profits[57].

During Martial Law, the Lumad suffered through violent dispossession and intense militarisation of their communities. As a result, many Lumad would flee their homes and become refugees or "bakwit" in the urban centres of Mindanao, where they were met with discrimination and social exclusion.[58]

[56] Rivera, Temario C. 1994. Landlords and capitalists: class, family and state in Philippine manufacturing. Quezon City: UP CIDS.

[57] ESSC, 1999. "The Decline of the Philippine Forest." https://essc.org.ph/content/archives/80/

[58] Bakwit is the local term for Lumad folk who were forced to "evacuate" from their original domains due to rising military occupation.

These collective experiences of oppression under the Marcos dictatorship set the motion for various groups to coalesce into one identity. In the post-dictatorship era, the term Lumad emerged during the ministries organised by the Tribal Filipino Program of the Social Action Center of the Catholic Church. Lumad would become a rallying point and the articulation of a collective identity, distinct from the Moros and from the settler Christian majority. It was also a collective response to decades of marginalisation and oppression that stemmed from US rule and intensified under different administrations of the neocolonial Philippine nation-state.

In the succeeding years, this united front bore victories. For instance, the post-dictatorship 1987 Philippine Constitution, recognised the economic, social, and cultural well-being of "Indigenous cultural communities," including their right to own their ancestral domain. Ten years later, the Philippines passed the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA), a landmark legislation that recognised Indigenous Peoples' right to take back their ancestral domain and demand Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) to those who wish to enter their territory. It predated the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous People's Rights (UNDRIP) by a decade and is considered a pioneering document for Indigenous People's all over the world.

In addition, through cultural work that championed the Lumad cause, the plight of the Indigenous Peoples of Mindanao began to enter public consciousness. The headway created by Indigenous Peoples from the Cordillera of the north in asserting Indigenous rights no doubt helped build this emerging solidarity and consciousness.

However, the Mining Act of 1995, which guaranteed foreign mining companies with water, timber, and easement rights, repatriation of profits, and the control of over 81,000 hectares of land as well as generous tax breaks[59], sparked a mining boom in the country. Mindanao, which is known to have top reserves in precious metals and minerals, has nearly 500,000 hectares of mining concessions that are mostly found in Lumad ancestral territories[60]. The simultaneous implementation of the Mining Act with the IPRA negated any progressive potential of the latter to materially improve the lives of the Lumad as mining expansion made its way into integral Lumad communities, further displacing thousands and militarising communities. Since 1995, the province of Surigao del Sur has suffered through compounding environmental degradation[61], as entire mountains have been flattened by open-pit mining.

[59] Panalipdan. 2014. Undermining patrimony: large-scale mining plunder in Mindanao and the people's continuing struggle and resistance. Quezon City: Rural Missionaries of the Philippines.

[60] In terms of mining reserves globally, Mindanao ranks 4th in copper, 3rd in gold, and 5th in nickel.

[61] Catoto, Roel. 07 December 2021. "Drainage system of mining firm overflows causes flood in Surigao del Sur." Mindanews, https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2021/12/drainage-system-of-mining-firm-overflows-causes-flood-in-surigao-del-sur/

At present, the country's mining industry continues to expand, fueled by the increasing profitability of electronics production and the incursion of transnational mining corporations. These include BHP-Billiton based in Australia, Anglo American Corporation (United Kingdom), X-Strata (Switzerland), Sumitomo Metal Mining Company (Japan), Red 5 Ltd. (Australia), Medusa Mining Ltd. (Australia), Toronto Venture Inc Resource Development (Canada), Mindoro Resources Ltd. (Canada), Century Peak Metals Holding Corporation (China), St. Augustine Gold and Copper Ltd. (US), Apex Mining Co. (Philippines), Cadan Resources (Canada), Sinophil Mining and Trading Corp. (China), Skynix (China), Indophil (Australia), and Holcim (Switzerland), among others. The intrusion of these companies into Lumad domains has been consistently protected by the Philippine government through the provision of defence forces or paramilitary groups that are notorious human rights violators.

ALCADEV: Indigenous Schools That Propose an Alternative

In response to their relentless marginalisation as well as to build on their Indigenous identity, the Lumad formed their own schools to teach their young the importance of protecting their ancestral lands and traditional ways of life through the pioneering Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development (ALCADEV). It sought to preserve the Lumad's self-sustaining economic activities, which follow principles that are similar to agroecology. The recourse to agroecology, a socio-ecological approach to agriculture that includes sustainable farming practises and collective models of production, was a material response to the food insecurity that the communities faced because of the escalating militarisation and violence due to intensifying mining operations in their lands.

Since its inception, ALCADEV schools have been red-tagged incessantly by government officials, alleging that the schools are training grounds for insurgency[62]. In one of his infamous tirades, former President Rodrigo Duterte even threatened to bomb ALCADEV schools[63], as paramilitary forces, known to have been conscripted by the Philippine military, surveilled and harassed these school communities. This came to a head in September 2015 when known paramilitary soldiers murdered school director Emerito Samarca, Lumad leaders Dionel Campos and Bello Sinzo in plain sight of teachers, students and the community. More recently, ALCADEV volunteer teacher Chad Booc[64], who along with four other advocates, was brutally murdered by state security forces after

[62] Nepomuceno, Priam. 2018. "AFP chief insists Lumad schools used as NPA breeding ground." Philippine News Agency. https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1055549

[63] Lingao, Amanda. 2017. "Duterte Threatens to bomb Lumad schools." https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2017/07/25/Duterte-threatens-to-bomb-Lumad-schools.html

[64] Umali, Lakan. 2022. "Chad Booc was my friend. The AFP killed him." Rappler.com. https://www.rappler.com/voices/ispeak/first-person-chad-booc-friend-afp-killed-him/

being flagged at a military checkpoint. To date, the entire network of schools that teach living alternatives to the state's destructive development agenda have all been forcibly closed in Mindanao.

Lumad, Indigenous Peoples and Climate Justice

The wanton destruction of the Lumad's ancestral lands owing to the confluence of colonialism and state-sanctioned development aggression has also placed them in an even more dangerous position during climate change-induced disasters. Displacement and violence in the hands of an elite-led nation-state are imperilling the very existence of Lumad communities. It is a reality that they bear over and above the structural barriers that keep them in poverty and incapacitated to adapt to climate change.

"The present-day vulnerability of the Lumad to the climate crisis is inarguably tied to the history of colonialism."

Similar to the experience of Indigenous Peoples elsewhere, the present-day vulnerability of the Lumad to the climate crisis is inarguably tied to the history of colonialism. For instance, in North America, when European settlers first arrived in Native American lands, they imposed strategic practises of erasure that destroyed Indigenous knowledge, cultural and political systems[65]. These processes of erasures installed carbon-intensive economic activities that allowed structural poverty to take root in Indigenous communities as well as dissolved knowledge systems that promote adaptive mechanisms to climate change[66]. The enduring legacy of colonialism did not only build regimes of poverty that drove Indigenous communities to the margins, it also forced entire communities to abandon Indigenous adaptive ways of living in favour of assimilative practises.

The role of a country's elite class should also be critically examined when considering the sources of Indigenous Peoples' vulnerability to climate change. In Indonesia, for instance, when the Dutch colonial period ended, the Melanasians of West Papua were automatically assimilated into Indonesia even though West Papua was inhabited by a culturally distinct and unique people. In 1962, the United Nations recognised that the West Papuans had the right to decide on their independence – an option that

[65] Whyte, Kyle Pows. 2017. "Is it colonial déjà vu? Indigenous Peoples and climate justice" in Adamson, Joni and Michael Davis ed. 2017. Humanities for the environment: integrating knowledge, forging new constellations of practise. New York: Routledge.
[66] Ibid.

the repressive Suharto regime and all administrations have thwarted because of the economic value of the largely untouched region.[67] Similarly in the Philippines, the country's elite was instrumental in selling off the country's resources and peoples, its Indigenous populations in particular, to colonial powers and foreign capitalists.

Conclusion

The history of the Lumad tells of decades of violence, erasure and constant displacement. After a long line of colonial rulers from the Spanish to the Americans to the Japanese, the Lumad continue to suffer the plunder of their ancestral domains under the Philippine-nation state. The present Philippine government has failed to recognise the Lumad's right to self-determination and in many instances has even instigated attacks against them in order to secure the state's economic interests in their lands.

It is for this reason that calls for climate justice must not only address the historical debt of the Global North but also hold to account the ruling class in the South. Because global capital's logic instrumentalised the durable and flexible mechanisms of social control that are inherent in the nation-state, the continued dominance of elite rule in many Global South governments has also meant that the interest of global capital is enshrined within the nation-state. Elite-led nation states have been instrumental to global capital's relentless production cycle for profit in the age of the Capitalocene. The chauvinism that minority populations such as the Lumad endure are also animated by the same attitudes of discrimination under the power of a dominant majority population, often propelled by the politically entrenched elite. Furthermore, it is the elite in this country that propagate ecologically harmful ideologies such as state development aggression.

At the core of Indigenous Peoples' assertion for autonomy is the question of who should benefit from resources of their lands. In the case of the Lumad, colonisers and the Philippine nation-state have seized their lands for private profit or have plundered them under the guise of "national patrimony." In asserting their right to self-determination, the Lumad are contending that as the rightful owners of these lands, they must be able to utilise these resources in accordance with alternative development models that uphold their Indigenous ways of living and worldview.

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[67] Johnny Blades. 2020. "West Papua: The Issue That Won't Go Away for Melanesia," in Lowy Institute. https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/west-papua-issue-won-t-go-away-melanesia

Hence, it is critical to recognise and h that the notions of development that the Lumad harbour differ from that of the elite-led state. Bai Emil, a traditional female leader of the Banwaon tribe of Agusan recalls that she once admonished a military officer who chided her group's protest against the incursion of a logging company into their lands. The officer, in arguing for the entry of logging operations into Lumad land, said that a popular Filipino fast food chain could set up shop in their village which could bring in prosperity and modernity for her people. Without apprehension, Bai Emil rejected this suggestion because the Lumad would rather preserve their peaceful ways of life and forests, which already provide their needs and medicine. We have learned that logging operations only tear communities apart by pitting neighbours against each other for paltry wages and a puny collective benefit, Bai Emil added.

It is this preference to practise their traditional ways of life, preserve their community and guard the stewardship of their forests and lands rather than succumb to the state's development agenda that must also be included in the discourses surrounding climate justice, reparations and the Lumad.

Brazil's People-Powered Just Transition Movement: Insights from Trade Unions and Feminists

Isadora Cardoso Vasconcelos

In 2015, after over 20 years of negotiations within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the world witnessed a breakthrough in climate politics through the adoption of the Paris Agreement. The importance of the treaty is manifold. Primarily, it includes fundamental equality and justice principles in its preamble and articles for the realisation of its central climate goal: keeping global temperatures well below 2ºC above pre-industrial levels through the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). A significant triumph for social movements was the articulation of precepts on climate justice, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, gender equality, human rights, the rights of Indigenous Peoples' and the imperatives of a Just Transition (JT) for the workforce, among others. This victory, hard-won through years of strategic work by trade unions, feminists, youth activists and government allies, signalled that climate action should no longer be pursued through mere technological and bureaucratic fixes.

The Brazilian state occupied an important diplomatic role in the climate negotiations leading up to the Paris Agreement. According to Pereira & Viola[68], Brazil built a leadership reputation within the international climate governance system by facilitating dialogue among different

[68] For an extensive analysis of Brazil's domestic and foreign climate policy and politics, covering the period from 1992 to 2019, see https://formacoes.oc.eco.br/docs/Pereira&ViolaBrazilianDiplomaticFailure2021.pdf

groups of countries, and proposing a mitigation model to curb its deforestation rates. Its proposals operationalising the Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDRRC) principle have informed Brazil's position as an emergent country in that political space. These were mostly achieved throughout the Workers' Party rule until 2012.

> "The project to implement ambitious climate action in Brazil was derailed by the climate change deniers, elitists, misogynists in government, and the racist president-elect himself."

Since 2016, however, the country's democracy has been under threat after a coup d'état overthrew Workers Party's president Dilma Rousseff. Three years later, the country elected Jair Bolsonaro, a far-right politician who, among many of his anti-environment measures, abolished the Secretary of Climate Change and Forestry as well as slashed the Environmental Ministry's budget[69]. Bolsonaro's government regressed Brazil in its policy frameworks and institutions, especially in the fields of social, racial, gender, environmental and climate justice, and human rights.

Specifically, the project to implement ambitious climate action in Brazil was derailed by the climate change deniers, elitists, misogynists in government, and the racist president-elect himself. Since 2018, Bolsonaro's government has propagated disinformation against Indigenous and traditional peoples, criticised and obstructed environmental regulation on predatory fishing, logging, mining, and agribusiness. This, in turn, favoured illegal activities and the consequent rise of criminality, including the rise in murders of environmental defenders[70]. In 2021, a three-fold increase in invasions, illegal exploitation of resources and damage to heritage in Indigenous lands across 22 states of the country was registered compared to 2018[71]. The growing cases of attacks against Indigenous Peoples and environmental defenders highlights a culture of impunity and environmental racism in Brazil that is being worsened by the absence of state protection for the most vulnerable populations[72].

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[69] https://formacoes.oc.eco.br/docs/Pereira&ViolaBrazilianDiplomaticFailure2021.pdf
[70] https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/last-line-defence/
[71] CIMI, 2021 https://cimi.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/relatorio-violencia-povos-indigenas-2021-cimi.pdf
[72] CIMI, 2021 https://cimi.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/relatorio-violencia-povos-indigenas-2021-cimi.pdf

Brazil is also at its worst political moment on climate action. While the country's electricity matrix is majorly composed of renewables (83%), mostly attributed to hydro-generated energy (65% of the overall matrix), Brazil is facing a water crisis heightened by climate change[73]. This, combined with the far-right federal government's priority to privatise the energy sector is bringing skyrocketing energy prices for ordinary citizens, while also emitting record rates of greenhouse gases.

Bolsonaro's administration also passed more neoliberal laws, which has promoted exploitative labour conditions[74] and predatory environmental extractivism. In response, workers' movements in Brazil have consistently protested the federal government's policies domestically but also internationally. At the 2022 International Labours Organisation's (ILO) meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, workers' representatives denounced the Bolsonaro administration as "genocidal and authoritarian" despite the very real dangers they faced back home. As put by Antônio Neto, president of the Brazilian Central of Trade Unions[75], "the Brazilian government, which produced a pandemic genocide with almost 670 thousand deaths, promotes a tension in our democracy".

The astronomical number of deaths in Brazil due to Covid-19 is also symptomatic of a racist biopolitics consuming the country[76]. In 2020, the federal government propagated disinformation about the pandemic, downplaying and even denying its fatal effects. A study showed that Black and mixed-race (pardos) folks accounted for 55% of deaths, while white people were only at 38%.In addition, poorly educated Black or mixed-race patients were nearly four times more likely to die of Covid-19 than those with higher education. These socio-economic inequalities have made it clear that Black lives do not matter in Brazil, especially under Bolsonaro's government.

Bolsonaro's government, which is by and large Christian fundamentalist and anti-human rights, unsurprisingly also targeted women's feminist movements. Despite the persistent attacks on gender rights, the country's feminist movements have been active and vocal in their resistance. The World March of Women in Brazil (Marcha Mundial das Mulheres) has been mobilising protests, legal actions, capacity building and grassroots organising against Bolsonaro's repressive regime. In May 2021, they coordinated demonstrations across 200 Brazilian cities and at

[73] DIEESE, 2021 https://www.dieese.org.br/notatecnica/2021/notaTec263transicaoJusta.html

[74] On the reform of the work's legal framework approved in 2017, see the original text in: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2017/lei/l13467.htm.

[75] See more on the reportage by Jamil Chade from June 2022 under https://noticias.uol.com.br/colunas/jamil-chade/2022/06/07/governo-e-acusado-de-genocidio-e-autoritarismo-na-oit-itamaraty-rebate.htm?fbclid=IwAR0CWjyv4IsEa38NbvGxLJ8hfL8Hnp2qWkhmp1k4QIvemUByVjV7EwMLCuA

[76] https://ponte.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/NT11-An%C3%A1lise-descritiva-dos-casos-de-COVID-19.pdf

least 14 countries, demanding the ouster of Bolsonaro amidst his grave mismanagement of the pandemic, anti-poor policies and the absence of a response to the climate crisis. Participants marched against racial violence, militarisation of communities, and the looting and destruction of land, forests, and bodies of water. "Salles [then Environmental minister] destroys nature, Bolsonaro attacks our lives, and the answer is only one: #ForaBolsonaro!" as chanted by protesters in Ubatuba, southeast Brazil[77].

Despite an increasingly hostile civic space, women and workers' movements have been connecting their struggles with climate change in recognition of the marginalised status of their constituents, especially poor people of colour, who are more vulnerable to climate-related risks. More recently, Brazil civil society has been witnessing the integration of climate themes in the material demands of workers and women feminist's movements towards social, economic, and environmental justice.

A Brief History of the Just Transition Discourse in Brazil

A Just Transition, differentiated and contested in practise, has been one of the frameworks guiding social movements worldwide as well as in Brazil. Its roots can be traced to the 1970s with the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers' trade unionists (OCAW) in the United States, who demanded dignified, healthy jobs and living conditions against the intensifying polluting activities of their employers, which were affecting the workers and their expanded communities. According to the OCAW, better working conditions must also constitute environmental protection. Over the years, through international collabouration, Just Transition as a term expanded in meaning and has progressively been utilised as a framework by other workers' unions in the Americas, especially throughout the 90s[78].

In 1991, the 15th Congress of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions was held in Caracas, Venezuela, where environmental questions became a focus. In the same year, the Brazilian Syndicalist Force (Força Sindical) promoted the 1st International Eco-Syndicalist Forum, as a follow-up to its previous congress. The Forum was also part of the mobilisation of various local and transnational social movements towards the Rio '92 Earth Summit. This was a signal that the workers'

[77] Entire news about the protests on https://www.marchamundialdasmulheres.org.br/mulheres-foram-as-ruas-denunciar-o-governo-genocida-de-bolsonaro/

[78] For a more detailed history of the concept of Just Transition the struggles of the OCAW see: https://www.uncclearn.org/wp-content/uploads/library/report-jtrc-2018.pdf

movement in Brazil had started to demand the reflection of environmental issues in their labour struggles, under the motto that no dignified jobs could exist under unsustainable environmental conditions[79].

The growing concern on environmental issues among trade unions in the Americas and Brazil prompted the integration of Just Transition in their orienting agendas. In the 2000s, Just Transition started to be specifically incorporated into the official documents of the International Confederation of Free Trade Union Organisations (ICFTU)[80].

By 2009, Brazilian workers' union Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT) established an environmental secretary, whose goal was to include climate change in its action plan[81]. This was a landmark development among regional trade unions as CUT is the largest central workers' union in Brazil and Latin America, with 7,847,077 associated workers and 23,981,044 workers in its base. It also represents workers from all branches of economic activities in the country, spanning the public and private sectors. The union's historical achievements and current struggles are mainly geared toward social equality, international solidarity, and just working conditions[82]. Hence, the work of CUT on climate change represents a remarkable (re)appropriation of socio-environmental issues by the working class in Brazil and Latin America.

In 2012, Brazil hosted the Rio+20 of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. This marked another important event for the dialogue between environmental and labour movements regarding climate change. Alongside the conference, the second Trade Union Assembly on Labour and Environment was held to address issues such as sustainable access to energy; green jobs and Just Transition, trade union action and climate change[83]. By the end, the assembly released a resolution demanding the ILO to promote a dialogue about Just Transition, and urge governments to end fossil fuel dependence, while delivering social protection, enhancing public participation, economic diversification, training and education to affected workers, with special attention to women and the youth[84]. Two years later, the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) launched the Development

[79] See more: https://fsindical.org.br/memoria-sindical/sindicalismo-e-meio-ambiente-a-forca-sindical-na-rio-92

[80] The ICFTU was an international trade union headquartered in Brussels, Belgium which dissolved in 2006. It merged with the World Confederation of Labour to eventually form the International Trade Union Confederation, largest confederation of trade unions in the world today.

[81] For a more detailed chronology of Just Transition development within the workers' unions in Brazil and the Americas, see https://www.cut.org.br/acao/download/3719ee96b667057b112a1fd5d12d2542.

[82] https://www.cut.org.br/conteudo/breve-historico

[83] http://rio20.net/en/iniciativas/ii-trade-union-assembly-on-labour-and-environment/

[84] See more under https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/resolution_-_2nd_trade_union_assembly_on_labour_and_environment.pdf.

Platform of the Americas (PLADA), which positioned Just Transition into the environmental axis of the region's development. This was the result of an understanding that "a Just Transition is the priority proposal of the trade union movement in face of the negative consequences of climate change on people"[85].

These developments were critical in building momentum for Just Transition to become an imperative in the Paris Agreement. Likewise, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) launched its Guidelines for a Just Transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all[86] in 2015. By 2018, as democratic backsliding was unfolding in Brazil, COP 24 in Katowice, Poland, launched the Silesia Declaration on Solidarity and Just Transition[87], which further recognised the need for a Just Transition in the workforce, the importance of adequate social dialogue in such a process, and the need to include Just Transition policies in the NDCs. A year later, CUT held its 4th National Training Conference, where Just Transition – expanded to connote the democratisation of access to land and the fight for decent work with the transition of the world energy matrix towards sustainable economies – was one of its main themes[88].

Through the above chronology, it is apparent that Just Transition is being progressively addressed and qualified within Brazil, especially as it has been articulated by CUT leaders on the national and local levels, and in the international arena, such as in climate conferences[89]. Presently, however, the shrinking civic space induced by Bolsonaro's government in the last four years has impeded social dialogue on Just Transition at the national level. Nevertheless, the prominence of the agenda at the global scale has been driving the (re)appropriation of Just Transition not only by trade unions but also other Brazilian social movements, such as peasants and women's movements. The political challenges imposed by the 2016 coup and the consequent diminishing space for civil society organisations and social movements to organise under Bolsonaro's presidency, have significantly hampered the progress of the Just Transition discourse and praxis in the country. This is happening against a backdrop of worsening climate impacts as evidenced by record-high deforestation, floods and landslides that particularly affect slum dwellers, and extreme droughts and fires in different biomes ranging from the Amazon Rainforest to the Cerrado.

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[85] http://www.world-psi.org/sites/default/files/documents/research/en_plada_doc.pdf
[86] https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/publications/WCMS_432859/lang--en/index.htm
[87] https://www.ioe-emp.org/index.php?eID=dumpFile&t=f&f=134978&token=91237abd5b4e38c1e7c2e4364b2b8e7095d8e0fd
[88] https://conferencianacional.cut.org.br/em-carta-trabalhadores-afirmam-o-lugar-de-transformacoes-de-resistencia-e-de-sonhos-e-a-formacao-cutista/
[89] https://www.cut.org.br/noticias/cut-e-representantes-da-sociedade-civil-defendem-trabalhadores-na-cop-26-f67c

Reclaiming Just Transition for Workers

Despite its roots in the trade union and progressive movements, Just Transition's increasing popularity within the "climate bubble" has also meant that contradicting forces have misappropriated the term in a bid to lend their agenda a green legitimacy. For example, fossil fuel multinational industries such as British Petroleum[90] and Shell[91], as well as big polluting governments, have co-opted the concept. Owing to its arguably malleable definition, Just Transition has been invoked within the UNFCCC – which encourages both public and private stakeholders to invest in mitigation and adaptation action – to signify competing definitions that may not always favour climate protection or workers' rights. This implies that Just Transition is still a disputed idea and process.

"Just Transition's increasing popularity within the 'climate bubble' has also meant that contradicting forces have misappropriated the term in a bid to lend their agenda a green legitimacy."

While I do not address this discursive dispute, it is important to recognise the dangers that such misappropriations pose to the implementation of an energy transition centred on justice principles. Such seemingly benign co-optation tends to deviate from the core values of a Just Transition which could turn its practical application into a mere technical process of economic modelling and "green" technologies fixes. A glaring example is the way that the European renewable industry invokes a Just Transition as a corporate public relations strategy when presenting its mammoth "sustainable energy" projects in the Global South[92]. In reality, these companies have not been delivering participatory, redistributive, gender-balanced consultations and processes, as the latter section on the women's movement in northeast Brazil will show. To reclaim the progressive roots of the term, I chose to explore the formulation and demands for a Just Transition by the workers' sector, as it is the one originally concerned with the fairness and equity of the transition process.

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[90] https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/sustainability/improving-peoples-lives/just-transition.html

[91] https://www.shell.com/energy-and-innovation/the-energy-future/a-fair-and-just-transition.html

[92] For example, Italy's Enel Green Power, whose renewable parks are increasingly present in Northeast Brazil, use JT in their work https://www.enelgreenpower.com/learning-hub/energy-transition/just-transition

As a response and strategy against such neoliberal misappropriation of Just Transition, the labour movement in Brazil, especially CUT, has set out a project of reclaiming the concept by ensuring that labour rights are a central part of any discussion on Just Transition, especially on the implementation and regulation of new "green" energy industries. Meanwhile, the definition of Just Transition has been expanding due to the work of allied sectors, such as the environmental, women's and climate justice movements. These broad definitions carry overarching principles, which include: (re)distribution of benefits to the people and areas directly and most affected by energy transitions; participation in decision-making of workers in old and new energy industries and affected community members that are economically dependent on such industries; and the abolition of sexist, racist, neocolonial, binary exploitative relationships between workers and employers, as well as between humans and common goods, such as energy.

In reclaiming the concept and redirecting the Just Transition debate to centre on rights, quality jobs and equality, trade unions in Brazil have also sparked a discourse challenging the current neoliberal development model that is based on unabated economic growth and technological hyperfixation. Unionists are asserting that in order to achieve sustainable growth, the needs and rights of people and the environment must be prioritised and that workers and communities should own common goods while the State manages key sectors, including energy.

The Workers' Union Perspectives on Just Transition: The case of CUT in Brazil

The CUT began incorporating Just Transition into its agenda in the late 2000s, around the same time that CSA-TUCA (Confederación Sindical de Trabajadores/as de las Américas) promoted conversations on the topic. Under the Paris Agreement regime, the Just Transition agenda began to be intentionally incorporated into the inner circles of CUT. As years progressed, the union consolidated core elements that informed their approach to a Just Transition, namely: the creation of jobs in low-emission sectors; support for communities' social dialogue; support for carbon-intensive sectors in transition; promotion of social protection and human rights; support for technology and innovation; formalisation of jobs in new areas; and the advancement of social and environmental justice[93].

Trade unions in the last few years have seized opportunities for social dialogue wherever they might arise. In particular, local-level opportunities to promote Just Transition and advocate for workers and

[93] See more under https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/220411-_web-booklet-just-transition-cut-eng.pdf

affected communities are important because the indiscriminate installation of renewable parks by large-scale companies is already a reality across the countryside, many of which are being done in the name of a "Just Transition." However, these dialogues have been restricted to the municipal and state levels because efforts to advance public dialogues with the federal government have been futile under Bolsonaro's administration. Without a policy framework to guide energy transition initiatives in the country, the country's political-financial elites have been commandering the operation of these projects, leaving the affected workers and communities virtually powerless.

It is worth mentioning one recent legislation on the issue. In the state of Santa Catarina, a carbon-intensive area in the south[94], a Just Transition Plan and Programme was decreed in early 2022. In its text the plan is supposed to "prepare the coal mining region for the probable end, by 2040, of the activity of thermoelectric generation using national mineral coal without abatement of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions, with the consequent end of the exploration of this ore in the region for this purpose, in a timely, responsible and sustainable manner"[95]. However, among the 11 members of the program's managing council, workers' unions will only have one seat, which casts doubt on the sincerity of the government to foster democratic participation[96]. This overall policy gap on Just Transition has left many regions in Brazil locked into carbon-intensive industries and has made areas with high potential for renewable energies[97] susceptible to territorial conflicts and the further exploitation of marginalised groups.

There are two final important considerations to keep in mind when approaching Just Transition from a working class perspective: first, not all workers, let alone unionised workers, are on the same page on how to push for it; second, it is crucial to contextualise how Just Transition should be operationalised in each case, given the differences in economic, cultural, territorial, gender and working conditions of each area affected by an energy transition process. Hence, a Just Transition in Brazil must be studied, proposed, and implemented according to contextual specifics and through communities' ownership of the process.

While there exists no standard guideline implementation for such a complex process, CUT's principles have been clear on the need for a sound Just Transition policy framework in Brazil. The urgency is to inform

[94] See more under https://wwfbr.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_dieese_carvao_mineral_2021_en_v2_1.pdf

[95] http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2019-2022/2022/Lei/L14299.htm#art4

[96] The other representatives include 6 from the federal government, 1 from the state's government, 1 from affected municipalities, 1 from carbon industries' union and 1 from the national mineral carbon association: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2019-2022/2022/decreto/D11124.htm

[97] https://www.cut.org.br/acao/download/16cd6d4ed82067fd63868f8ddf8a97b2

and mobilise larger parts of the population on Just Transition, especially those most affected by energy industries, in order to formulate a set of demands and codify these into legislation. The urgent task is to prevent the legal vacuum to further benefit influential corporations whose neocolonial agenda will likely introduce exploitative provisions that would exacerbate socio-environmental inequalities, especially where dirty energy projects are decommissioned and renewable energy will be implemented.

Given the victory of the centre-left Workers' Party presidential candidate Lula da Silva in 2022, a nationwide dialogue towards building a sound Just Transition policy is expected to follow. Within this window, such participatory dialogue could seek to transform the following: working conditions currently based on exploitation and surplus accumulation of people's time and the environmental commons towards sustainable and dignified working and socio-environmental relations; extractive production and consumption systems which only serve the material accumulation of a few which could be redirected towards collective sufficiency and wellbeing; racist, colonial and sexist divisions of labour towards equal job opportunities for all.

Women's Perspectives on Just Transition: The case of the March for Women's Life and Agroecology in Polo da Borborema, Paraíba

The boom in renewable energy plants in Brazil has been particularly concentrated in the northeast region of the country, particularly in Paraíba. Owing to several factors such as intense solar radiation and high wind speeds[98], the region has been attracting foreign capitalists to invest in wind and solar parks. However, the lack of federal regulation on energy projects and weak law enforcement have made these areas susceptible to corporate encroachment of land through unjust contractual negotiations. Often, these socio-political conditions favour large-scale companies from the Global North[99] who exploit, even harass, rural smallholder farmers into seceding their land for the installation of windmills and solar panels in their territories[100], in a process that has been called "green grabbing"[101].

Between 2005 and 2017, Brazil registered a 44% increase in installed capacity of wind generation, overtaking China and becoming the world's

[98] Check for more information: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0140196320302305 & https://www.osti.gov/etdeweb/biblio/21397661

[99] "The market is dominated by multinationals such as Spain's Iberdrola (owner of Neoenergia, the largest private group in Brazil's electricity sector), Italy's Enel Green Power and France's Voltalia Energia", available at https://theintercept.com/2022/08/01/energia-eolica-conflitos-territorios-agricultura/

[100] For an investigative reportage on the unequal conditions for the implementation of renewable energy industries in northeastern Brazil, see https://theintercept.com/2022/08/01/energia-eolica-conflitos-territorios-agricultura/

[101] Energy transitions and colonialism: http://cadtm.org/energy-transitions-and-colonialism

largest Southern market. Despite the increased production capacity, energy bills have risen, and the poorest households are paying the highest prices. The lack of transparency of renewable power corporations, combined with low-quality energy management in the country are some of the factors that hinder the efficient use of renewables in Brazil. The installation of wind and solar parks has often been mired in exploitative agreements between big firms and small landholders, who frequently end up losing the right to their own land and related family farming social benefits upon signing purposefully inaccessible leasing contracts[102]. Cases of human rights violations, including the absence of feasibility studies, no free, prior, and informed consultations and consent by local and traditional communities affected by these new energy companies, including hydroelectric, solar and wind power plants, are also rampant in Brazil, especially in the northern and northeastern regions[103].

Civil society groups representing people and territories facing the impacts of renewable energy parks in the country have been building collective responses and fronts of resistance. In the region of Polo da Borborema, Paraiba, northeastern Brazil, more than 20,000 small farming families persisting through agroecology have been opposing the takeover of their territories by large-scale wind corporations. Polo da Borborema has brought together around 13 workers' unions from 13 municipalities and more than 150 community associations. In May 2022, over 4,000 women farmers from the region and neighbouring states gathered in an annual women's march. This time, they marched in protest of the industrial and centralised energy production projects disrupting their lives and well-being, as well as in defence of territorial and food sovereignty[104].

This women's movement is unmasking the neocolonial, patriarchal and exploitative practises (re)produced in renewable energy projects, as illustrated by the state's connivance with Global North corporations and the ruling elite. "What we are denouncing here is the way wind farms are taking over our territories and how the relationship between companies and farmers is unequal. Our territory is from the family farming, the peasant production, the agroecology project, and the trade union movement, so we will not let a renewable energy project, which harms nature and women's lives, interfere with our way of life" said Roselita Vitor, one of the march's leaders[105].

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[102] For an investigative reportage on the unequal conditions for the implementation of renewable energy industries in northeastern Brazil, see https://theintercept.com/2022/08/01/energia-eolica-conflitos-territorios-agricultura/

[103] Here a few examples: https://mais.opovo.com.br/jornal/reportagem/2022/05/25/tremembes-temem-perder-acesso-e-rejeitam-eolicas-no-mar.html; https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/feb/06/urban-poor-tragedy-altamira-belo-monte-brazil; https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2021/10/19/energia-limpa-mas-nem-tanto-osparqueseolicos-que-abalam-vidas-e-destroem-casas-em-pernambuco

[104] https://aspta.org.br/files/2022/05/Carta-pol%C3%ADtica-Final.pdf

[105] See more under https://racismoambiental.net.br/2022/05/02/mulheres-agricultoras-marcham-na-paraiba-contra-impacto-negativo-da-energia-eolica-na-zona-rural/

Their political letter "Women in defence of the territory: Agroecological Borborema is no place for wind parks" (Mulheres em defesa do território: Borborema agroecológica não é lugar de parques eólicos)[106] clearly opposes the ways in which renewable energy projects have been propagated in the region. These projects have been concentrated in the hands of big foreign companies, without regulation by public policies or entities. They have existed only "to appropriate and control lands and territories for the accumulation of private profits by large international economic corporations while generating enormous and irreparable social costs for the populations. The companies occupy the lands, redesign the communities, enclose the productive and living spaces, and completely change the concept of place and landscape that mark our local culture"[107]. As such, socio-environmental impacts and the effects of climate change have only aggravated, making peasants' subsistence from family farming ultimately unviable.

> "[The] women's movement is unmasking the neo-colonial, patriarchal and exploitative practises (re)produced in renewable energy projects."

The manifesto also denounces the damages that wind parks have caused upon the farmers' houses and the local Caatinga biome, which is known to be susceptible to desertification. More importantly, the political letter targets the specific impacts of these industries on women and girls. For instance, the construction of windmills has created more dust on the communities' homes, leading to more housework for women, who are socially expected to perform the brunt of household chores. Women are also tasked with the collection of water via water storage cisterns, the primary means of securing drinking water in the region. However, these cisterns are often damaged by the installation of windmills, which compounds the labour expected of women and girls. There has also been a reported increase in moral and sexual harassment with the entry of these company representatives and craftsmen, many of whom are foreign to the community. Additionally, these windmill projects have affected public health as many residents have complained of perpetual dizziness, insomnia, loss of concentration, nervousness, stress, anxiety, depression, and deafness associated with living close to wind power plants.

[106] Full text available here: https://aspta.org.br/files/2022/05/Carta-pol%C3%ADtica-Final.pdf
[107] https://aspta.org.br/2022/05/02/em-marcha-as-agricultoras-da-borborema-paraibana-dizem-nao-aos-parques-eolicos/

Alternatively, and in line with a few of the Just Transition principles of CUT Brasil, with whom the movement is connected[108], the women from Polo da Borborema demand: the implementation of decentralised, fair and democratic renewable energy production projects that benefit local people, instead of companies; broad dialogues in society about the energy transition and renewable energy production, inclusive of affected communities, and transparent about the costs for the operationalisation of such industries; a debate about and the design of a legal framework to regulate contracts on the land use by energy companies, so that farmer-families can be informed of its consequences; the incorporation of clauses for the social control of the enterprises; free, prior and informed consultations and collective deliberations to take place with affected communities so that they can decide whether or not to lease their land.

No Just Transition in Racist, Patriarchal Brazil: Forward-looking Perspectives

As the above cases show, the Just Transition discourse in Brazil is currently being stalled in the formal halls of the federal government but is actively being pursued by trade unions and women's movements on the ground. In the first place, Bolsonaro's racist and sexist government has treated the climate crisis as a hoax. Moreover, it has criminalised social movements as well as threatened the lives and liberty of human and environmental rights defenders. The far-right government had opposed any opportunity for a public debate on the imperatives of a Just Transition. In response, trade unions and women's movements have been qualifying and sustaining a people-centred, rights-based approach on a Just Transition.

The movements have done this by bringing this discussion into communities and territories affected by old and new energy projects in Brazil. Because Just Transition is a concept undergoing constant development, any designed Just Transition plan should be context-specific and locally owned, especially by the workers within the old and new energy industries. This is imperative so that their labour rights and conditions can be negotiated on the grounds of dignity, quality of life, justice for all, and free association. Communities living in the affected territories should also be prioritised in the elabouration of local Just Transition plans, by recognising the gendered and racialised division of labour within the energy industries, among other societal sectors, and within family settings in these territories.

[108] https://www.asabrasil.org.br/26-noticias/ultimas-noticias/10041-a-juventude-tem-assumido-a-luta-politica-no-nosso-territorio-afirmam-liderancas-do-polo-da-borborema-durante-encontro-de-balanco

The lack of initiative from the federal government on a Just Transition, and the advancement of neoliberal projects under the guise of a Just Transition motto are motivating trade unions and social movements to act on radical and progressive proposals. Amidst capitalist-fueled crises, including the climate emergency, there is a need to reject private accumulation in the transition to a low-carbon economy, and re-centre quality of life conditions and peoples' autonomy and integrate care for the environment. From a global viewpoint, the renewable energy market remains just as exploitative as its fossil fuel counterpart. Inequalities are still being perpetrated in the rush for an energy transition and the proliferation of renewables. As the example of the women's movement in Polo da Borborema illustrates, Northern rich countries facilitated by Brazilian elites with political power are exacting dispossession and lopsided economic dependency in and within the Global South under the banner of "green transitions".

Similarly, the question of gender equality must be answered in any Just Transition plan of action. As set forth by diverse Southern grassroots movements in a 2021 Friends of the Earth publication, "transitioning to a renewable energy system does not automatically lead to a Just Transition"[109]. The shift into a just system of production, distribution, management, and consumption of energy implies reclaiming of commons as a right, but above all as a fundamental part of human life. Thus, we need a transformation in the way we approach "nature", so as to acknowledge our dependence and intrinsic relation to "it". The same goes for human relations. A feminist and a rightfully queer vision of a Just Transition recognises our interdependence with other folks and our communities[110]. It dignifies labour by making all of its forms visible and valuable, without discrimination or binary divisions based on gender, race, origin, or class. It also brings back work to an approachable and community level, unalienating labour in the process. This visibility is important so that we can reclaim our lives, choices, and time and make our work benefit our communities, our environments, and ourselves.

Last, but no less important, is the need for a debate and a transition in production and consumption models of energy in the country. It is critical to discuss and implement how new energy systems are distributed, so that they can be efficiently used as well as transparently and collectively managed.

The opportunity to discuss and implement a plan for a national framework on Just Transition is greater than ever in Brazil. Hence,

[109] Check the publication on https://www.foei.org/publication/if-its-not-feminist-its-not-just/

[110] More on feminist principles of a just transition on https://capiremov.org/en/analysis/just-energy-transition-is-a-feminist-agenda/

contextualised local action plans should be led by affected workers and their communities, paying careful attention to gender, racial and class justice in these processes. The goal on the horizon is to ensure territorial autonomy, break away from (neo)colonial, racist and sexist labour divisions, and rescue communitarian ways of life while rejecting the imperialist Just Transition models sold by the North through their "green" corporations in the South.

Towards an Eco-Socialist Future: The Case for a People's Green New Deal

Max Ajl

A Green New Deal (GND) is foremost a planning framework. But, it also implies politics: a way of acting upon the world in order to change it and to make it better, or at least cleaner. Mainstream GNDs generally do not mention class or capitalism. In the camp of radical, progressive, and transgressive GNDs, differences are less about the existence of capitalism, but rather its structure: is it polarising on a world scale, or a more-or-less fractal system within nation-states, a decentralised network of exploitation? Accordingly, these rely on different models of transformation: electoral, reformist, gradual, or mass-mobilising and revolutionary?

Prevailing Green New Deal models, and ecological planning proposals more broadly, can be classified into four general types: Green Social Control, Green Anti-Racist Keynesian, Social Democratic, and the People's Green New Deal. These strategies differ according to their approaches to capitalism, ecological visions, orientations to the Third World poor, and programmatic orientations to internationalism and the national question. In what follows, I elabourate on each of these proposals. I then show how a People's Green New Deal approaches the climate crisis in its broader systemic context, and shows how a pro-ecology, pro-working class, pro-sovereignty framework, which deals with biodiversity, pollution, colonial debts, industrial agriculture, imperialism, primitive accumulation, and labour exploitation is necessary in order to change the world.

Green Social Control

The first set of proposals emerges from explicitly pro-capitalist forces like the European Union, the Australian Breakthrough – National Centre for Climate Restoration, the Climate Finance Leadership Initiative, the World Economic Forum, and the Stordalen Foundation – think-tanks and political organs linked to the Euro-American ruling class. Their proposals are organised around a set of notions concerning the financialisation of nature, sustainable human development, and circular economies.[111] These hinge on a political strategy based on corporate-state-community linkages.

Conceptually, these various proposals refrain from clearly naming capitalism – let alone imperialism – as having historically caused the climate crisis. They name a particular historical epoch of industrialisation, linked to an undifferentiated Anthropocene, rather than the more specific notion of Capitalocene, which links ecological degradation in general and the climate crisis in particular to a specific mode of production based on the endless accumulation of surplus value.[112] Because such visions are resolutely pro-industrial and pro-capitalist, they rely on re-working a set of institutions and matrices to enfold capitalism into the Earth-system. Overall, these frameworks rest on the fateful decision made at the 1992 Rio Summit to include ecosystem services within the market system. This ushered in the era of "nature" as the major new horizon of private accumulation, a market worth up to 10 trillion USD.

A prominent organising tool in this system is sustainable human development — a vague wish to increase human development while embedding it into the ecology.[113] However, sustainable human development, like sustainable development before it, is a concept so malleable that it can be reshaped to any meaning and any end.[114] It gestures at the damage to humanity and non-human nature caused by the current system of production, consumption, and distribution, but steers clear of redistributive remedies in order to deal with that system's shortcomings, which are not its errors but its programming. It burdens non-human nature or the impoverished with the cost of increasing capitalism's profits. It has a cousin in the idea of a circular economy —the

[111] Max Ajl, A People's Green New Deal (London: Pluto Press, 2021), see Chapter 1 for references.

[112] The idea of the Anthropocene – with various proposed starting dates – argues that at a certain point in recent history, humankind as a whole began to be a major driver of global environmental change. For that reason, the geological epoch is labelled the Anthropocene. The idea of the Capitalocene suggests that rather than "humanity" being a major driver of ecological change, we should clarify in the naming of the new geological age that it is capitalism and the capitalist class which is driving these changes.

[113] PU UNDP, "The next Frontier-Human Development and the Anthropocene," Human Development Report 2020, 2020.

[114] K. Rajasekharan Nayar, "Politics of 'Sustainable Development'," Economic and Political Weekly, 1994, 1327–29.

idea that we can simply recycle sufficiently so that industrialisation no longer creates entropy. Instead, waste from industrial or agricultural processes will be fed into the next stage of production —a fantasy which contradicts the law of entropy and imagines that we can reconfigure gold dust into ingots usable for microchips or rust into iron usable for girders. The capitalist project conjures wild techno-fixes where none exist.[115]

Its agricultural counterpart is in the idea of nature-based climate solutions. These "solutions" bank on a variety of ways that allow "nature" to take up the bulk of the work of absorbing CO2 emissions which industrial, colonial, and imperialist capitalism have unleashed on humanity.[116] To execute this vision, governments and corporations have devised a wide sub-variety of proposals and schemes legitimised through multilateral agreements.

In the United Nations-backed REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation), for instance, people are paid to do the 'work' of withdrawing CO2 from the atmosphere through forest restoration or afforestation. The "work" here is the human labour accompanying the bio-physical drawdown of carbon, which is a one-off affair.[117] It cannot conceptualise the social labour of living in and off of forests as an ecologically protective life-making and natural reproduction activity that any just society should ensure is part of what it must remunerate as socially necessary labour.[118] Another ecologically dangerous notion is the idea of commodifying eco-systems service, where the risk is simplification and substitution. These proposals proffer the Copernican notion that nature is fully transparent and knowable; that we can have full knowledge of natural systems and how they can be part of a healthy biosphere. Because this knowledge procedure is twinned with commodification, it may try to unbundle natural processes that cannot actually be disassembled and devalues certain processes, thus opening the way to destruction and larger biospheric ripple effects. Furthermore, these proposals are organised around aggressive deployment not merely of reforestation but afforestation – not only putting trees where models claim they used to be[119] – but also where they have never been, risking immense damage to water tables and biodiversity. In addition, reforestation and afforestation projects often

[115] Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, The Entropy Law and the Economic Process (Harvard University Press, 1971).
[116] UNDP, "The next Frontier-Human Development and the Anthropocene."
[117] Archana Prasad, "Global Capital and the Reinvention of Nature," in Rethinking the Social Sciences with Sam Moyo, ed. Praveen Jha, Paris Yeros, and Walter Chambati (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2020), 180–97.
[118] David E. Gilbert, "labourers Becoming 'Peasants': Agroecological Politics in a Sumatran Plantation Zone," The Journal of Peasant Studies 0, no. 0 (July 15, 2019): 1–22, https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2019.1602521.
[119] Those modes are not in fact truly reliable.

Their ecological proposals are not built bottom-up based on the needs of those directly facing the violence of climate change and capitalist expansion but are top-down efforts to accelerate primitive accumulation.

have minimal ecological benefits.[120] Other proposals are for Half-Earth "biodiversity corrals," with massive potential costs for Third World pastoralists.[121] Accompanying these proposals are notions of extensive intervention in diets, especially meat reduction through lab-grown meat. It is a consumption-side intervention which not only rejects any notion of sustainable small-scale, cooperative, or Indigenous ranching or husbandry in the First World, but also risks massive intrusion into Third World meat production, which is often non-industrial and part of smallholder integrated farming systems. Finally, biofuels play a prominent role in these proposals. While pro forma these proposals note the potential distributive trade-offs – more land for bio-fuels could mean less peasant land devoted to feeding – in reality they claim that biofuels will be a necessary input for certain sectors. Heightening demand can only result in primitive accumulation through the dispossession of smallholders or other land-users.

In terms of planning, these proposals are resoundingly mute on the national question and internationalism. They are also disinterested in the national-popular development of the Third World, except when it is framed as a new terrain for green-field investment to be secured through new investor rights arrangements[122]. Its social agents are corporations, the national security state/ military, and the wealthy within given sets of racial or national groups. Their ecological proposals are not built bottom-up based on the needs of those directly facing the violence of climate change and capitalist expansion but are top-down efforts to accelerate primitive accumulation. Finally, these plans are increasingly larded with references to Indigenous biodiversity management and agency in natural climate solutions. In

[120] On false forestation models, see William J. Bond, Open Ecosystems: Ecology and Evolution beyond the Forest Edge, Illustrated Edition (Oxford, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019); on the effects of tree-planting, see sources cited in Max Ajl and Rob Wallace, "Red Vegans against Green Peasants," New Socialist, 2021, http://newsocialist.org.uk/red-vegans-against-green-peasants/; on afforestation, see Pushpendra Rana et al., "Predicting Wasteful Spending in Tree Planting Programs in Indian Himalaya," World Development 154 (2022): 105864.

[121] Edward O. Wilson, Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life (W. W. Norton & Company, 2016); Bram Büscher et al., "Half-Earth or Whole Earth? Radical Ideas for Conservation, and Their Implications," Oryx 51, no. 3 (2017): 407–10.

[122] Daniela Gabor, "The Wall Street Consensus," July 2020, https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/wab8m/.

reality, Indigenous Peoples as internally differentiated and raising struggles of national liberation in the imperial core and Palestine do not appear in these documents. Ultimately, these are market-driven "green transitions" which trample on the well-being of the great majority of humanity.

Green Anti-Racist Keynesianism

A second variety are the anti-racist Keynesian GNDs, reflected in the work of left-liberal Congress-people in the United States like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC), the vehicle of the meteoric rise of GND discussions. Notably, despite the great deal of attention her proposal received, its actual policy proposals are not being championed within the progressive political sphere precisely because of the pro-market and pro-capitalist underpinnings of these documents. For one, they envision maintaining the hierarchical division of access to wellbeing, namely: class society with labour exploitation. The AOC-GND called for a state-corporate-'front line community' partnership, which lavished attention on the historical injustices against Black and Indigenous populations. On the surface, this called for "ecological justice" for historically deprived communities in the US. However, the conceptual framework of these programs refers to social or community or ethnic/ancestral groups without any real discussion of their relationship to the means of production. That is, this GND was a proposal that tackles the ecological crisis without discussing class relations, neo-colonialism, or capitalism.

Ecologically, this program was based on a reductionist view of the capitalist and imperialist drivers of ecological destruction into a mere problem of excess CO2 emissions. Moreover, it conveniently neglects the broader biodiversity, water pollution, and other ecological crises borne out of industrial capitalism's refusal to take responsibility for the waste it spews out into the biosphere. This GND version opens the door to silencing any engagement with a rational, conscientious and socialist planning of the interaction between humans and non-human nature, precisely by occluding it from the analysis. Indeed, by sidestepping the other damages – mine tailings sullying landscapes, fireflies evaporating from the night sky, flamingos eating metal-soaked fish, frogs gobbling phosphogypsum-licked insects – the daily ecological crises surrounding us are sure to continue and worsen.

In terms of internationalism, this is the international class war of capitalism. The few documents which outlined this strategic approach conjured a fantasy of the US as a clean-tech behemoth leading the free world to a renewable energy future. In the words of the AOC-GND, the

US is to become a 'green tech leader.' Again, there are critical convergences between the first openly capitalist version and the second. For example, since 'green tech leadership' replaces an older Third World and especially Latin American call for climate debt reparations, it is clear that this segment of US ruling class planning wishes market relations to endure. The most elabourate plans can be found in the 'Wall Street Consensus': a plan for a world-wide build out of renewable energy based on alchemising low-risk, low-yielding capital held in bond markets into low-risk, high-yielding investments in renewables, which would lock countries into long-term payment arrangements that would see them surrendering sovereignty to international tribunals.[123]

The language of "green tech leader" reinforces rather than bucks the current demonisation of China, a tacit recognition of the geo-systemic competition underpinning debates over ecological modernisation. Moreover, the AOC-GND, the Biden plans and the EU GNDs were pocked with "national security" references, signalling a potential boost in military spending under the pretence of climate protection. Notably, all versions are silent on climate debt, referring instead to neo-colonial development aid as a sort of piecemeal placation of the Global South. Lastly, even from the supposedly anti-racist and even pro-Indigenous/pro-land rights perspectives, these GND proposals scarcely mention Indigenous Peoples' role in the political architecture of pluri-national Latin American states.

Social Democratic GNDs

The third approach is the most diffuse. In general, it could be identified as social democratic insofar as it even clearly articulates a relationship to capitalism. This broad sweep ranges from the Bernie Sanders GND in the US, the Iberian degrowth friendly GND, and off-shoots, rivulets, and tributaries of these approaches. While it is capable of appealing to a wide range of possible constituencies, there are some shared central points. For instance, proposals seldom call directly for the overthrow of capitalism, and seldom directly name imperialism or neo-colonialism, preferring to collapse international and polarised oppression into vague references to climate justice. In some cases, proponents claim that capitalism could be targeted for dissolution some decades into the future,[124] while others are simply setting out schematics for green Keynesian counter-cyclical planning.[125] Meanwhile, there is a grandiose babble of a class-blind "war communism" that aims to blow up pipelines

[123] Daniela Gabor, "The Wall Street Consensus," July 2020, https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/wab8m/.

[124] Kate Aronoff et al., A Planet to Win: Why We Need a Green New Deal (Verso Books, 2019).

[125] Noam Chomsky and Robert Pollin, Climate Crisis and the Global Green New Deal: The Political Economy of Saving the Planet (Verso Books, 2020).

but not capitalism — neglecting that stopping the flow of pipelines is the policy of the US state in Russia, Venezuela, and Iran. Ironically, these dramatic calls for disruptive direct action disdain to name or support a single anti-systemic movement, with the exception of Palestine.[126]

This approach rests primarily on the heroism of the First World working class, understood quite expansively outside the ranks of the classical industrial proletariat.[127] This approach gestures at uneven access to global physical resources but is usually less attentive to any possible South-North value flows. Those flows affect northern class composition and are the solder used to bond northern working classes to the northern capital—a political rather than teleological process. The Social Democrat GND's code may softly approach this question through an emphasis on northern "ways of life," which it correctly admonishes must change enormously, and accordingly emphasises allegedly non-carbon-intensive-labour of social reproduction like teaching or healthcare or childcare. However, it conveniently overlooks the imperialist composition of labour markets and technological inputs into these processes. Forced labour migration, based on neo-colonial labour reservoirs and labour export policies, maintained by neo-colonial or semi-colonial violence, as in the case of Filipino nurses, or Caribbean home health aides, is a constituent element of what is softly presented as the "labour of social reproduction." Such labourers do not simply arrive in the North; they are driven out from the South, even as they are raised and educated by Southern working classes.[128]

In terms of planning, these social democratic GNDs are focused primarily on decarbonisation and the replacement of carbon-dioxide-emitting private goods with decommodified public goods. Mass transit systems instead of automobiles. Inter-state or inter-national rail in lieu of so much flying. Stopping gentrification and real estate speculation through green public housing programs. Driving high-quality job growth through unionised retrofits of existing housing, or organising the energy sector. Finally, nationalising then euthanising the petroleum sector.

Ecologically, the focus tends to slide easily into carbon reductionism, claiming that the totality of the global ecological crisis can be collapsed into the question of carbon. It also tends to prescribe carbon emissions

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[126] Andreas Malm, Corona, Climate, Chronic Emergency: War Communism in the Twenty-First Century (Verso Books, 2020). Notably, such figures claim to support Palestine while their allies and publishers like Sebastian Budgen agitate against the Arab-Iranian material and logistical support lines for Palestine's national resistance movement.

[127] Admittedly, some workerist-northern-nationalist approaches are indeed focused solely on the unionised industrial northern workforce, but without entering into the US union movement's historical support for US imperialism.

[128] Salimah Valiani, Rethinking Unequal Exchange: The Global Integration of Nursing Labour Markets (University of Toronto Press, 2012); Max Ajl, A People's Green New Deal (London: Pluto Press, 2021), 103–4.

as, “the most immediate,” but they are in fact far from the most urgent crisis of social reproduction or under-reproduction of nature flaying swathes of the Third World. There is also little mention of biodiversity, nitrogen run-off, deforestation, coral reef destruction, overfishing, and other ecological pathologies born out of industrial capitalism.

References to ecological damage are mostly registered through the costs of mineral extraction but then this current tends to run towards extremely ecumenical on technology. That is, technology is fashioned as something neutral like a printing press, knife, or Kalashnikov. Yet, technology is premised on a specific configuration of prices for its inputs and its ecological effects, and is produced and imagined based on the whims of the specific class in charge of its development. It would be illogical for technology to be purely and categorically socially neutral. And yet biofuels, carbon-capture-and-storage (CCS), lab meat using monoculture inputs, and biofuels are all on the menu. These ‘high-tech’ fixes are promoted despite mammoth risks, lack of feasibility, clear evidence of smallholder displacement due to shifts from growing corn or wheat to sugarcane for biofuels. In the case of CCS, it might even enhance oil production and in the longer-run keep large oil pools from being “stranded” if global ecological-governance regimes shift to make it difficult to produce oil. There is likewise no engagement with food sovereignty or agro-ecology, which ironically represent some of the actual needed technical and mass forces required for Third World just transition.

In terms of the Third World, there is little organic relationship with the leading national liberation/ecological decolonisation forces: Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Zimbabwe, Yemen, or Palestine. Those advocating this perspective in the imperial core, in fact, are usually silent on US regime change efforts in the periphery. In a few instances they outrightly reject solidarity and refuse to meaningfully understand the challenges being faced by peripheral forces by demonising them with rhetoric of authoritarian populism, petro-populism, or other slurs.[129] The electoral-gradualist approach to social democracy is a form of imperialist opportunism, and its proponents have been more than willing to abandon the Palestinian cause when necessary in order to advance the GND legislative agenda.[130]

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[129] Thea Riofrancos, Resource Radicals: From Petro-Nationalism to Post-Extractivism in Ecuador (Duke University Press, 2020), 173; Naomi Klein, On Fire: The (Burning) Case for a Green New Deal (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019), 251; Benjamin Selwyn, “A Green New Deal for Agriculture: For, within, or against Capitalism?,” The Journal of Peasant Studies 0, no. 0 (January 29, 2021): 1–29, 795.

[130] For example, Riofrancos and Aldana-Cohen, the two most prominent leftist agitators for a “progressive” GND, argued against any political position in support for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (itself, the very minimal floor and not the ceiling for support for the Palestinian liberation struggle): https://docs.google.com/document/d/1d_FBOWt5JqyFvQn5BQuqDBvLe67rLCXKbl0CABhJHx4/edit .

When it comes to broader internationalist commitments, workerist economism dominates. Diffuse "supply chain justice" emphases predominate through an echo of historical Cold War anti-Communist economism. Such perspectives increasingly – and belatedly – acknowledge the polarised nature of the world system, including through unequal terms of trade, or decreased buying power for Third World exports against First world exports. They accordingly and narrowly focus on 'fair' prices within extraction but are mistaken in not seeing that historical efforts to achieve greater parity in pricing only advanced at the inter-state level through the New International Economic Order, and the radical nationalist states which underpinned that effort.[131] These social democratic viewpoints are essentially hostile to Third World states, and do not respect the politics of peripheral national liberation and the need to keep economics –sometimes referred to vaguely as justice concerns, yet which cannot be achieved under monopoly capital domination – subordinate to political force. In parallel, there is no conversation with the leading efforts from the periphery to call for climate debt reparations, dominant voices call merely for milder debt cancellation efforts. Finally, there is no desire to meaningfully engage with peripheral oil exporters.

> "Nature can exist without humans but the reverse is impossible because humans occupy a specific niche in nature that makes complex societies possible."

A People's Green New Deal

A fourth option engages with the radical end of the degrowth spectrum, gives the national question its proper due, and proposes a revolutionary option seeking a rupture with capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism. It centres the peripheral semi-proletariat as the essential revolutionary class for worldwide eco-social transformation, with the core playing a secondary but still essential role in social transformation.

This approach seeks to fully renounce capitalism. Ideologically, it aims towards social planning of most spheres of production and social ownership, whether through the state or cooperatives. It looks towards a rationalised perspective on regulating the human-nature metabolism, understanding that whether from an anthropocentric or non-anthropocentric viewpoint, non-human nature holds the trump card. This

[131] Mohammed Bedjaoui, Towards a New International Economic Order (London and New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1979).

approach affirms that nature can exist without humans but the reverse is impossible because humans occupy a specific niche in nature that makes complex societies with sophisticated technologies and social interchange and interdependence possible. As even right-wing economic planning organisations are beginning to understand, the current state of nature's relatively hospitable niche for humans could shrink or collapse very quickly. Social planning extends to substantively rational engagement with the natural world, albeit without question informed by a great many perspectives, knowledge, and epistemologies — a world where many worlds can fit.

Most importantly, this approach is anti-colonial and anti-imperialist. It understands national liberation as the cornerstone of worldwide eco-socialist transition, which would likely appear jagged and messy in appearance through radicalised projects with warring internal tendencies.[132] This struggle would necessarily be against the economic and political machinations and intrusions of monopoly capital – imperialism – and would fight for national liberation. As the Guinea Bissau revolutionary Amilcar Cabral understood it, these could not be pronounced as anything different from a revolution and socialist planning.[133]

Its social subjects are primarily the Third World poor, who are heterogeneous and internally differentiated. The semi-proletariat, or those with one foot in the countryside engaged in rural social production and reproduction, and one foot in the city, are central agents in change, alongside slum-dwellers. Likewise, the gender contradiction would be addressed through the socialisation of reproductive labour, which extends far beyond care into the labour of provisioning, rights specifically for women in their capacity as child-bearers and carers.[134] It is imperative to address such gendered labour because it refers to women's substantial, if not predominant, role in the social reproduction of the natural environment, a process that is entirely excluded from the cognition of the Eurocentric spectrum of green capitalist or social democratic environmental management plans.[135] Concurrently, it also implies a vital responsibility for Indigenous formations, which already have an outsize role in global biodiversity conservation.[136]

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[132] Sam Moyo, Praveen Jha, and Paris Yeros, "The Classical Agrarian Question: Myth, Reality and Relevance Today," Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy 2, no. 1 (2013): 93–119, http://ags.sagepub.com/content/2/1/93.short; Catherine Kenrick, Enrique Oteiza, and J. Ann Zammit, Autoafirmación Colectiva: Una Estrategia Alternativa de Desarrollo (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1983).

[133] Amilcar Cabral, Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings of Amilcar Cabral (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979).

[134] Lyn Ossome and Sirisha Naidu, "The Agrarian Question of Gendered Labour," Labour Questions in the Global South, 2021, 63–86.

[135] Habib Ayeb and Reem Saad, "Gender, Poverty, and Agro-Biodiversity Conservation in Rural Egypt and Tunisia," in Cairo Papers in Social Science, vol. 32, 2 (Cairo: AUC Press, 2013), 128–58; Prasad, "Global Capital and the Reinvention of Nature."

[136] Victor M. Toledo, "Indigenous Peoples and Biodiversity," Encyclopedia of Biodiversity 3 (2001): 451–63.

Programmatically, it rests on distinct but converging political and social outcomes in the North and South. It is based on the logic of delinking peripheral and semi-peripheral economies from the core, while centering the liberation of those exploited within or effectively excluded or marginalised from peripheral production. Building more sovereign and self-reliant productive apparatuses can only occur through the mobilisation of the popular classes. Hence, 'a people's' GND is needed for a deep transformation within the world system. In the medium-run, it looks towards relatively auto-centred development programs in the periphery that interlock through regional self-reliance and coalesce via regional developmental blocs. Self- or auto-centred national development through delinking does not prescribe autarky. Furthermore, any country presently attempting such a path would have to be prepared for Western financial-economic siege warfare.[137] Finally, auto-centric accumulation strategises around class forces whose needs drive the planning process and relative balances. This means increasing productive forces towards sovereign industrialisation and supplying consumer goods to the working class, as against the dominant model based on a narrow accumulation of profit and shallow and narrow markets.

"Building more sovereign and self-reliant productive apparatuses can only occur through the mobilisation of the popular classes."

Auto-centred national construction implies distinct yet converging northern and southern political paths. Because northern and southern working populations have different insertions into global geopolitics and different relationships to the means of production, strategic opportunities, kinds of placement within global value relations, and potential for political action, they will have varying tasks in each political moment. This is not to deny an internationalist politics, but to assert that an internationalism has to be constructed by departing from an accounting of real differences.

Accordingly, in the South this approach must herald a new internationalism: whether it is echoing Bandung-era positive neutralism, or the TriContinental-Cuban vision of a more robust and offensive internationalism based on explicit support for national liberation projects. Necessary, in the current context, is the understanding that the

[137] Samir Amin, "A Note on the Concept of Delinking," Review (Fernand Braudel Center) 10, no. 3 (1987): 435–44, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40241067.

binary is not merely in terms of capitalism vs. socialism, but differentiating between states with socialising and/or multi-polar tendencies, versus those that are enfolded into the political apparatus of northern monopoly capital. Northern anti-systemic and ecological movements have to take on a burden of transition stemming from political insertion in the North. Simply put, this must mean anti-sanctions and anti-imperialist campaigns.[138] It necessitates navigating the 'national question' of oppressed peoples and minorities internal to formally sovereign nation-states. In some cases, this means full support for decolonisation; in others, it may imply a more nuanced support for national or cultural self-determination while warding off the threat of balkanisation, possibly in multi-national and re-constituted nation-states. More importantly, this means paying the Southern demand for climate debt of 6% of northern GNP per annum.[139] This is part-and-parcel of a path to planetary developmental convergence.

A People's GND is an ecological variant of the need for a balanced and auto-centred development program, which integrates ecological cost-and-benefit analyses into short, medium, and long-run planning. This would mean careful re-appropriation of the Chinese model of balanced rural-urban growth.[140] Sectorally and socially, it relies on the peasant path to socialist development. Agriculture must undergo serious land-to-the-tiller agrarian reform and an organic process of cooperativisation, drawing on Chayanovian models of slow accretion rather than more rapid and unwanted coercive measures. It must also pay sufficient attention to gendered patterns of land inequality and mechanisms of women's loss of effective title. Agriculture could then be the basis for accumulation of high-quality use-values from below, shattering the colonial/neo-colonial pattern of primary commodity export agriculture that has driven ecological and social degradation. National food sovereignty would be the goal, which would allow countries to control their sovereign currency and protect it against debauchment via imported inflation and financial siege warfare.[141]

Control of the national food system would lead to ecological protection because agro-ecological forms of production, which are capable of out-

[138] See how the northern left has militated against such a perspective in theory and practise: Aijaz Ahmad, "Imperialism and Progress," Theories of Development: Mode of Production or Dependency, 1983, 33–73.

[139] "People's Agreement of Cochabamba," World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth (blog), April 24, 2010, https://pwccc.wordpress.com/2010/04/24/peoples-agreement/

[140] Sandeep Chachra, "A Future of Urbanity: Cities and Countrysides for All," in Rethinking the Social Sciences with Sam Moyo, ed. Praveen Kumar Jha, Walter Chambati, and Paris Yeros (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2020), 215–23; Max Ajl, "The Hypertrophic City versus the Planet of Fields," in Implosions/Explosions. Berlin: Jovis, ed. Neil Brenner (Berlin: Jovis, 2014), 533–50.

[141] Erebus Wong et al., "Legacy of China's Land Revolution of 1949: An Unfinished Dialogue with Sam Moyo," in Rethinking the Social Sciences with Sam Moyo, ed. Praveen Kumar Jha, Walter Chambati, and Paris Yeros (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2020), 289–305.

yielding conventional production in the periphery especially on degraded land, will be the preferred agricultural system. Albeit a more labour-intensive exercise than industrial farming practises[142], agroecology also brings with it a slew of benefits for farmers, land, and society at large. For instance, it can go beyond producing the needed foodstuffs and restore or add to the fertility of the soil. It can even build soil itself while creating 'low-tech' resilience through soil that is more resistant to drought and flood. Consequently, such agricultural systems can draw down an immense amount of carbon from the atmosphere, whether through agroforestry, agro-pastoralism, or other forms of landscape management. They can also preserve biodiversity and landscape complexity.[143] Furthermore, the principles of agroecology inherently entrust small-scale and Indigenous farmers for economic self-management, thereby consecrating land security among farmers, especially those in the majority world.

In this scenario, an agricultural surplus would not be merely for foodstuffs. These can also be useful for trade since modulated engagement with the international trading system would be ideal to secure hard capital for technological upgrading. Technical upgrading would include agriculture but would differ from previous approaches – again, with China as an exception[144] – by rejecting the use of dominant western tools as default and only adopting appropriate-scale agricultural technology based on rational logic. The key here is to apply a rational accounting of technical needs, which not only subsumes capital-labour ratios, or liberating labour, but also uses industry to upgrade agriculture while also safeguarding the ecology. Such an approach implies a revolutionary approach to people's technology. It would go hand-in-hand with mass mobilisation approaches to people's science. Especially in the countryside, this means directing the "scientisation" of increasingly large sectors of the population by weaving together the strands of popular mobilisation, popular pedagogy, appropriate-scale technology, and economic-ecological self-management.

Gender would enter through popular/state assistance towards women's control over reproduction, in contrast to dominant Malthusian approaches.[145] Social reproduction, especially childcare and care of the elderly, would be socialised when wanted or needed. Particular attention is needed to gendered access to land or associated institutions during popular agrarian reforms.

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[142] Peter Rosset and Miguel A. Altieri, Agroecology: Science and Politics (Practical Action Publishing, 2017).

[143] Angus Wright, Ivette Perfecto, and John Vandermeer, Nature's Matrix: "Linking Agriculture, Conservation and Food Sovereignty" (Routledge, 2012).

[144] Dwight Perkins, Rural Small-Scale Industry in the People's Republic of China (University of California Press, 1981).

[145] Lisa Tilley and Max Ajl, "Eco-Socialism Will Be Anti-Eugenic or It Will Be Nothing: Towards Equal Exchange and the End of Population," Politics, February 4, 2022.

Industrialisation would be prioritised, becoming central without forcing a surrender to it. In contrast to other GND models, entropy would be minimised or avoided by investing in remediation and clean-up technologies, searching for substitutes for industrial production where possible, and remaining clear on the ecological consequences of industrial projects so that people can make free choices among different technological paths. On the matter of defence, these needs are the normal mechanism through which sovereign industrial and economic planning more broadly is distorted.[146] However, asymmetric defence technology alongside already partially-emerged semi-peripheries affords options which were simply closed off to the Soviet and Chinese industrial planners. Industrialisation and manufacturing would not only be oriented to basic needs, but would have to be ecologically modulated. This would mean promoting the use of biotic rather than abiotic material (wood and its derivatives and analogues rather than metal and plastic, for example, including in building techniques). Such an ecologically "soft" infrastructure-technological path includes the use of advanced carving and processing techniques for lumber which allows for a relative decentralisation of production and industrialisation and a sharp decrease in its ecological load. Although inquiry and experiments efflorescence, for example around laminated bamboo and localised cutting, as well as the localised, integrated, and possibly democratic land management implied by the use of land-based and decentralised materials, this vision remains to be worked out in practise.[147]

Finally, when it comes to energy, this approach rests on decreasing the northern aggregate energy use. It must happen alongside massive build-outs of renewable energy and storage, decentralised where possible but never more than necessary in the South. Every person on Earth, with adjustments for different needs based on climate, has the right to the same amount of per capita energy. Northern energy use cannot be replicated in the South even on a short-term horizon. This technology build-up needs to be based on state-owned or commons-based intellectual property; it cannot be a mechanism for renewed lopsided South-North value flows.

Conclusion

A People's GND contrasts sharply with the northern discussions around climate politics. It takes uneven accumulation as the problem, and national liberation, enfolding agrarian reform, sovereign industrialisation, and auto-centred development as the solution. Politically, the movement

[146] Vladimir Kontorovich, "The Military Origins of Soviet Industrialization," Comparative Economic Studies 57 (April 23, 2015); Chris Bramall, Chinese Economic Development (Routledge, 2008).

[147] AJI, A People's Green New Deal, 2021, 104–15, and sources cited.

of movements and movement of forces implies a new Third World convergence – perhaps "A New Bandung."[148] Such a movement would point towards the social, popular, and national control of economic planning, including popular-social management of the human impact on and interaction with non-human nature that is informed by a rainbow of epistemologies and ideologies. It would need to rest on bio-regional planning as opposed to industrial agriculture, and agriculture as landscape management rather than alien imposition. Finally, such an approach rests on a convergent anti-imperial politics in the periphery and the core. It must centre the recognition that the particular burden of transition on northern social-political forces, including those engaged in climate, is to make repairs for the ecological and social debts incurred during centuries of mercantilism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. Forging such a front and sketching out its program remains to be the challenge of the day.

[148] Paris Yeros, "A New Bandung in the Current Crisis," Agrarian South (blog), 2021, https://www.agrariansouth.org/2021/07/25/a-new-bandung-in-the-current-crisis/.

Preliminary Notes on People-Powered Climate Action

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Since its emergence more than three decades ago, "climate justice" has been employed to describe how the social and economic cost of climate change is disproportionately borne by communities and peoples who are least responsible for it. There is a considerable wealth of resources and literature on the different dimensions of climate justice, including its articulations on questions of class, gender, ethnicity, and race. In recent years, just transition, degrowth, and ecosocialism have defined the discursive debates within the broader climate justice movement.

Yet, climate policymaking still largely neglects the context and priorities of peoples and communities from the South. Global climate governance is fraught with a power imbalance caused by a long history of colonisation and imperialism, enabling the North to maintain its hegemony. In some ways, this has led to climate action pathways that are not only disconnected from the lived realities of peoples in the South, but also perpetuate the colonial plunder of their resources and communities. Such is true in the case of developing countries that are pressed to scale up their ambitions despite developed countries repeatedly failing to provide the needed finance for transition. Their natural resources, such as forests, soil, and waters, are also commodified to pay for the climate debt[149] of developed countries.

[149] The concept of climate debt was first defined in 2010 during the World's Peoples' Conference on Climate Change and Mother Earth Rights. Climate debt, according to the submission of Bolivia to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is the overconsumption of the available capacity of the Earth's atmosphere and climate system to absorb greenhouse gases and at the expense of the equitable rights to the absorption capacity of the atmosphere of other countries.

It is in this context that localised, people-powered initiatives are becoming increasingly important in reclaiming agency and resisting the oppressive forces of corporate and state interests in climate action. There is enough evidence demonstrating that Indigenous Peoples and local communities have always known the ways to live harmoniously with nature and have developed expert knowledge about local ecosystems and have learnt to thrive in them[150]. Today, these knowledge and practices are threatened by the driving motive of the dominant development framework.

Through years of close collaboration with movements from the global South and engagement in different climate governance arenas, IBON International has developed People-Powered Climate Action or PPCA. PPCA is an action framework that places the most affected peoples and areas at the front and centre of climate action. It synthesises the priorities of communities in the frontlines of climate change and multiple crises, and charts the roadmap to people-led, rights-based, and decolonial climate action. Its grassroots grounding means that its claims and assumptions are constantly revalidated and reconfigured in the people's daily struggles. Ultimately, PPCA is an integral part of the broader peoples' demand for system change and resistance against monopoly capitalist expansion and the intensification of the exploitation of the global commons.

PPCA is grounded on the long-standing principles commonly shared within the global climate justice movement:

1. **Human rights**: Climate change impacts an array of internationally-guaranteed rights, including the right to life, self-determination, development, food, health, water, and clean, healthy and sustainable environment, among many others. Inadequate response of States to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and regulate businesses under their jurisdiction and the implications of certain mitigation actions raise significant impacts on the enjoyment and exercise of these human rights. The guarantee of basic rights, rooted in the respect for the dignity of the person, makes human rights principles a bedrock of climate justice.

2. **Common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities**: The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities (CBDR-RC) enshrined in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, remains an important pillar of international cooperation on climate change. Those who have done the most damage to the

[150] Voskoboynik, Daniel Macmillen. 2018. The Memory We Could Be. New Society Publishers.

climate, and benefited from the process economically, have the obligation to take the lead in emissions reduction efforts and to provide developing countries the necessary finance and technology to help them achieve their climate goals.

3. **Right to development**: The right to development (RTD) is a comprehensive articulation of economic, social and cultural rights, and political rights that can be invoked both by individuals and peoples. Most significantly, it acknowledges the collective obligation of States to create a just and equitable international environment for the realisation of the RTD. RTD and CBDR-RC are inextricably linked, as Principle 3 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development expounds: developed countries have the responsibility in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command. For developing countries, RTD in the context of the ever shrinking available carbon budget[151] means asserting their right to develop their productive forces in order to provide the material conditions for meeting the basic needs of their populations without remaining dependent on foreign capital and imports.

4. **Gender justice**: The climate crisis is not gender-blind: Women and girls bear the greatest impacts of climate change, amplifying existing gender inequalities and threats to their livelihoods, health, and safety. But while women and girls experience disproportionate impacts from climate change globally, the effects are far from universal. Taking into account how various systems of exploitation and oppression operate together and reinforce one another, climate change becomes more acute for indigenous women, rural and urban poor women, migrants, women in conflict and disaster-prone areas, LGBTQIA, and Afro-descendent women and girls.

5. **Southern leadership**: Climate change poses a major threat to the Global South, including its people, ecosystems, and economies. This reality has led to Southern countries becoming sources of transformative models of development and climate action that are rooted in their unique contexts. It is for this reason that the leadership and participation of Southern movements in global climate governance have become indispensable. Empowering people to take part in the formulation of solutions and decisions that affect their lives is a key tenet in resolving the climate crisis.

[151] Carbon budget refers to the cumulative amount of carbon dioxide emissions permitted over a period of time to keep within a certain temperature threshold. Based on the IPCC target of limiting global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius, scientists estimate that the amount of carbon dioxide that can still be emitted is at 380bn tonnes, and this budget will be blown in just nine years.

Informed by the fundamental principles of climate justice, PPCA facilitates a process of collective action, connecting local struggles to global policy advocacy. It links up localised and community-driven efforts to international climate campaigns, strengthening and amplifying the peoples' power to press for alternative solutions to the climate crisis. PPCA proposes a four-point platform of action for peoples' movements struggling for climate justice and social change:

Fair and equitable global effort to achieve real zero. The immensity of the problem posed by climate change means that efforts must be scaled to ensure that emissions are substantially reduced below the business-as-usual trajectory and realise countries' mitigation potential. According to climate scientists, the remaining carbon budget to achieve the warming limit of 1.5 degrees Celsius and avoid the worst climate catastrophes is at 380 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide[152]. Under a business-as-usual scenario, this budget would be blown in nine years. This underscores the urgency to increase ambitions to ensure that the planet does not breach its warming threshold and to mitigate further ecological breakdown. But, to use the remaining carbon budget—and ensure that it is shared equitably—requires a fair approach to emissions reduction.

Climate justice necessitates equity in ambition by allocating the carbon budget in a way that reflects countries' varying degrees of culpability for the climate crisis. The CBDR-RC principle should inform how countries apportion their fair share of emissions reductions. This means that countries with the highest historical accumulation and that have caused the most damage should take the lead in reducing emissions, without false solutions, colonial appropriation of the South's resources, and corporate control over technologies and knowledge. A fair allocation of the global carbon budget should be articulated from a long-term, redistributive justice perspective that upholds the right of countries to chart their own development pathways.

Reparations. Recent studies suggest that by 2030, the economic costs of climate change in developing nations will reach around USD 290-500 billion[153]. This demonstrates the clear need for forms of compensation to flow towards developing nations for the harms

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[152] Forster, P., Rosen, D., Lamboll, R., & Rogelj, J. (2022). What the tiny remaining 1.5C carbon budget means for climate policy. Carbon Brief. Retrieved February 27, 2023, from https://www.carbonbrief.org/guest-post-what-the-tiny-remaining-1-5c-carbon-budget-means-for-climate-policy/

[153] Eckstein, D., Künzel, V., Schäfer, L., & Winges, M. (2019). Global Climate Risk Index 2020. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Retrieved February 27, 2023, from https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-climate-risk-index-2020.

inflicted by climate change. Climate reparations, however, must be fulfilled beyond the normative framework of aid wherein developed countries—the culprit of the climate crisis—can posture themselves as altruistic benefactors.

Providing reparations is an imperative for developed countries that have benefited from the abuse of the global commons that underlie present economic disparities between nations. It must be framed as a debt, both moral and financial, owed to those most affected by the climate crisis. Reparations should be entrenched in the principle of CBDR-RC, recognising the historical and ongoing acts of exploitation by the global North and the grave impacts of climate change on the rights of people in the global South.

The demand for climate finance is framed as the North's reparation for their climate debt to the global South, but the same is true for the demand to remove patents on technologies to foster the rapid and widespread transformation of energy, manufacturing, transport, agricultural, and urban systems towards low-carbon systems. This should go along with the removal of trade rules that promote corporate interests and reinforce the unjust economic relations between countries.

Democratic ownership and control over productive resources. Climate change is the result of a larger, global system of capital extraction and exploitation. Under capitalist regimes, profit becomes the central goal of economic activity, which leads to the prioritisation of short-term financial gains over long-term environmental sustainability. It enables ecologically destructive activities to proliferate, causing irreversible harms to vulnerable communities and ecosystems.

At present, the richest 1% in the world own more than 40% of all land, physical properties, and financial assets. By virtue of their control over strategic productive resources, the world's elites are able to determine patterns of production and distribution in the world. But the interests of these captains of industries are not the same as the public interest. Indeed, under this system, the production of goods and services is not intended to fulfil basic human necessities and improve human welfare but to generate profit for their businesses and to further accumulate capital.

To transition to sustainable development and effectively address the climate crisis, policies must go beyond tinkering at the edges and

instead lay the groundwork for deeper transformations. The range of property rights regimes must move decisively away from an overwhelming emphasis on private property rights towards more democratic, cooperative, and community-based forms of resource ownership and management. This will restore peoples' sovereign control over the resources that they need for collective survival and development.

Democratic decision-making and social planning. The peoples' leading role in climate policy-making and implementation is critical to achieving meaningful climate action. It is imperative that those who are most affected have a greater voice in decision-making processes. Democratic ownership and control of resources to be genuine and not just formalistic must empower people to decide or participate in decisions on how resources are used according to their needs, priorities, and goals.

To this end, the locus of decision-making should be devolved to the lowest level of governance with the competence to deal with the issues concerned, as close as possible to the people most affected. Policies must be based on local knowledge and experience, as well as prioritise the wellbeing of communities and ecosystems. Under these terms, people can take ownership of climate action and ensure that their best interests are represented in policy-making processes.

Participatory social planning can better regulate and allocate the utilisation of resources to avoid unproductive, resource-wasteful, and socially or ecologically harmful activities. Through it, the economy can be directed towards achieving self-reliance; prioritising domestic demand and local consumption over export markets, with international trade based on peoples' needs; increasing public welfare, creating jobs, and sustaining livelihoods while minimising energy, resource use, and waste in the process.

Democratising climate policymaking and governance also means recognising the role of environmental defenders in protecting the planet from extractive industries and big polluters as a critical component of advancing climate action. Despite their indispensable work in protecting the environment and the rights of those who depend on it, they often face risks. This includes threats, harassment, and intimidation, which raises the importance of enshrining basic human rights norms and principles in climate policies. Doing so will not only ensure the protection of environmental defenders; it will also create an enabling atmosphere wherein civil society can strive to protect the planet and advance climate justice.

With the failure of official international processes to deliver climate justice, more people recognise the need for alternative frameworks for dealing with the climate crisis. In this context, it is urgent to promote an alternative compact that comes from the grassroots: one that is not just a checklist of demands but a framework around which people and communities around the world could set their goals and plan and link their own actions. IBON International's PPCA is a contribution towards the elaboration of a transformative framework conscious of the imperatives of our movement.

About the Contributors

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