Climate activism quandaries: Eco-socialist responses to Durban’s COP17

Patrick Bond & Min-Jung Kim
- Climate Crisis
- Solution for Climate Crisis
  - UNFCCC
  - AFRICA
  - SOUTH AFRICA
- CASE STUDY – Durban
  - Direct pollution
  - CDM Project
- COP17 SOCIAL Movement and C17 Movement
1. Climate Crisis

- **Karl Marx**, “Nature is the subject-object of (human) labour.”
  - “The discovery of global warming was patently a social product, a consensus of judgments arising in countless discussions among thousands of experts.”

- Science vs. politics on climate change
- IPCC Fourth Assessment Report
  - Temperature in Africa will rise 1.5 times global levels
  - Reductions in crop yields: as much as 50% by 2020 in some countries
  - Increased water stress: 75-250 million people by 2020s, 350-600 million by 2050s
  - Cost of adaptation to sea-level rise: at least 5-10%
- Economic crisis + climate change -> environmental injustices
2. Solution for Climate Crisis

◆ Global level: UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

- John Dales, 1968, *Pollution, Property, and Prices*
  : “Market, pollution rights”,
  : "transferable property rights ... for the disposal of wastes"

- Garrett Hardin, 1968, *The Tragedy of the Commons*

- Proponents of pollution trading - free market environmentalists,
  1990 USA Clean Air ACT = Emissions trading scheme in sulphur dioxide

- 1997 Kyoto Protocol - Carbon Trading
  : Article 4 of Protocol: Joint Implementation (JI)
  : Article 12 of Protocol: Clean Development Mechanism (CDM),
  : Annex I ⇔ Annex I ⇔ Non-Annex I
2. Solution for Climate Crisis

◆ Global level : UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

- Price pollution

◆ Hot issues

- IPCC(2007) : Regulations and standards, Taxes and charges, Tradable permits, Voluntary agreements, Subsidies and other incentives, Research and development
- (Global/local) Government command & control vs. market mechanism
- Summit at Rio+20
- Green Economy <= >financialization of nature/privatization of the nature
Africa: AFRICA CARBON FORUM, 18-20 APRIL 2012

- The Forum is a regular event held under the Nairobi Framework, an initiative established in 2006 to help developing countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, to improve their participation in the CDM. This year’s event was the largest Africa Carbon Forum to date, with over 800 participants attending from 80 countries, including 34 African countries. The Forum included: updates on recent developments in the international carbon markets; information on challenges; opportunities to dialogue with project developers and technical specialists; discussions on best practices and lessons; sessions on strategies and measures; CDM project showcases; and matchmaking and deal facilitation opportunities.
2. Solution for Climate Crisis

- Global economic outlook

(Economic outlook 2010)
2. Solution for Climate Crisis

- Global CDM project

- The CERs amount of expected international

- Certified Emission Reductions: CERs

- China (51.72%)
- Republic of Korea (6.60%)
- Mexico (3.35%)
- Brazil (8.79%)
- Chile (1.96%)
- Argentina (1.86%)
- South Africa (1.16%)
- Indonesia (1.16%)
- Malaysia (1.14%)
- Qatar (1.13%)
- Others (7.08%)
2. Solution for Climate Crisis

◆ South Africa: CDM project

- Many sites of emissions in Africa – e.g., methane from rotting rubbish in landfills, flaring of gas from oil extraction, coal burning electricity generation, coal to liquid and gas to liquid petroleum refining, deforestation, decomposed vegetation in tropical dams
- “Pretoria's own climate change strategy argues that 'the CDM primarily presents a range of commercial opportunities' and indeed 'could be a very important source of foreign direct investment”
(Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism: DEAT, 2004: 2)
2. Solution for Climate Crisis

- Climate change and accumulation crisis

SA Condition → Accumulation Crisis → Accumulation Change - CDM project → Foreign Investment

Climate Change Crisis → Carbon Reduction
3. Case study – Durban area

◆ Direct pollution

- South Durban is home to approximately half a million people and is also the location of South Africa’s largest chemical industry cluster including 2 major oil refineries Engen and Sapref, 2 big paper mills such as Mondi and Sappi Saicorr.

◆ CDM Project
South Durban’s emissions hot spots

Freight traffic (often illegal)

Container terminals

Hazardous petro-chemical plants

Mondi paper mill

Toyota car assembly

Sapref: BP/Shell

Engen: Petronas (oil company)

Africa’s largest oil refining complex

Island View refinery

Container terminals

Single buoy mooring: SA’s intake

Freight traffic (often illegal)
3. Case study – Durban area

◆ Engen : FCCU
3. Case study – Durban area

◆ SAPREF Plant -October 2006
3. Case study – Durban area

🔹 Fire at Engen refinery – November 2007
3. Case study – Durban area

- Fire at Engen refinery – October 2011
3. Case study – Durban area
3. Case study – Durban area

- Jodache Naidoo: 4, has stomach cancer.
- Nathanael Bedessy: 3, died last year from leukaemia.
- Sade Schwartz: 13, being treated for brain cancer.
- Tasleem Omar: 3, sick with leukaemia.
3. Case study – Durban area

- **CDM Project**

  - **Bisasar Road**: non-white residential area
  - **Waste of industry, house**
  - **Sanitary landfill**
  - **Landfill gas**
  - **Using electricity**
  - **Environmental impacts**

- **2001 UN CDM Project**
  - Economic impacts; green business, carbon finance
3. Case study – Durban area

- Bisasar Road CDM entrance
3. Case study – Durban area

- Bisasar Road CDM turbines
3. 사례연구 - 더반지역
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3. Case study – Durban area
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◆ Sajida Khan (1952-2007)
Kyoto Credits System Aids the Rich, Some Say

By Shankar Vedantam
Washington Post Staff Writer
Saturday, March 12, 2005; Page A12

Sajida Khan, who has fought for years to close an apartheid-era dumpsite that she says has sickened many people in her predominantly brown and black community outside Durban, South Africa, was dismayed to learn recently that she faces a surprising new obstacle: the Kyoto global warming treaty. Under the protocol's highly touted plan to encourage rich countries to invest in eco-friendly projects in poor nations, the site now stands to become a cash cow that generates income for South Africa while helping a wealthy European nation meet its obligations under the pact.

The project's sponsors at the World Bank call it a win-win situation; Khan calls it a disaster. She said her community's suffering is being prolonged so that a rich country will not have to make difficult cuts in greenhouse gas emissions at home. "It is another form of colonialism," she said. Such complaints are being increasingly heard from environmentalists and even some business leaders around the world, said Ben Pearson, director of Clean Development Mechanism Watch, an Australia-based environmental group that monitors Kyoto's impact -- and the criticism could be the unkindest cut of all for the treaty, which took effect on Feb 16.
4. COP17 SOCIAL Movement and C17 Movement

http://cdmscannotdeliver.wordpress.com/
- Climate financing crisis and the CDM’s crash
- A critical geography of the global CDM
- **South Africa’s** landfill CDM, fraud, division and racism
- **Niger Delta** oil flares, illegal pollution and oppression
- **East African** trees and the green Resource Curse
- Manipulating gas in **Mozambique**
- Disempowering hydropower: **Ethiopia, DRC and Kenya**
- ‘Climate-smart’ agriculture in **Kenyan and Mozambique**
Durban’s COP17
‘Conference of Polluters’
28 Nov-11(9) Dec 2011
International Convention Centre
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties

Zuma “...the conference a huge success”

Bolivia’s former UN ambassador Pablo Solon “...Zombie, a soulless undead”

Chief US State Department negotiator Todd Stern “the Durban platform was promising because of what it did not say.”

Tom Goldtooth of the Indigenous Environmental Network “Durban offered the world climate racism, ecocide, and genocide of an unprecedented scale”

COP17 confirms: no end to global warming under capitalism
COP 17
Gambling on the future of the Planet
NO RIFFRAFF!
...THE STAKES ARE TOO HIGH!

BIG POLLUTING NATIONS
BIG DEVELOPING POLLUTERS
BIG NUKES
BIG GAS
BIG OIL
BIG COAL

YESSIR!

CLIMATE JUSTICE!

THE TIMES 29-11-11
ZAPIRO
4. COP17 SOCIAL Movement and C17 Movement

Occupy COP17: United against climate change

- I heart Kyoto/ Save Kyoto vs Zombie called Kyoto, a soulless undead
- Ambitious climate agreement vs Climate justice
- Mass action – Climate Justice, Class analysis
- Climate Action Network(CAN) vs Climate Justice Now(CJN)
- Million Climate Jobs= Democratic Left Front – C17
- Equity, Common but differentiated responsibilities
- Would Cosatu unions ally with environmentalists and communities, taking the leadership gap through mass action and ensuring class analysis is added to environmentalism so as to promote climate justice?

- Would the unions most exposed to carbon and changing climate policy—especially in the mining, metals and transport sectors—lead the search for a transformative vision of a post-carbon economy?

- Will labour activists be at the forefront and use the climate crisis to also question the capitalist mode of production and its profit accumulation agenda?

- As now appears likely, will a divided union movement be used against its logical allies who are critical of elite climate policy?