

Welcome to Durban (excerpt from new book, 'Durban's Climate Gamble')

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The following is an excerpt from a new book, *Durban's Climate Gamble: Playing the Carbon Markets, Betting the Earth*, launched on November 23, 2011, ahead of the November 28-December 9 COP17 climate change talks by UNISA Press. It is posted at *Links International Journal of Socialist Renewal* with permission.

Contents

- [Welcome to Durban](#)
- [Durban contradictions](#)
- [Durban contestations](#)
- [A contested COP during capital](#)

Durban's Climate Gamble is devoted to exploring two interlocking, overlapping scales of political ecology: local eco-social conditions and environmental justice campaigning in Durban, South Africa and climate justice advocacy against market-based "false solutions" at the global scale. Their fusion at the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) links up myriad battles over ecosystems that mainly revolve around "neoliberalised nature".

For example, the pricing of socio-ecological services has been extreme when applied to carbon sequestration and Durban is a leading site. More generally, the tendency to commodify nature has become the defining philosophical stance behind global environmental governance, with inevitable conflicts of which Durban's are emblematic. For example, "cost-reflective" (unsubsidised) pricing of South African electricity at a time of increased coal-fired power plant construction has generated an intense battle over access to energy in Durban's informal settlements where illegal connections are rife. The struggle over the price of water and sanitation has led to South Africa's famous water wars. The "green economy" (often interpreted as multinational corporate promotion of biofuels and geoengineering) and "Payment for Environmental Services" are set to become conventional wisdom at the Rio+20 summit in mid-2012, but not to ensure that the North's ecological debt to the South is properly acknowledged, but rather to establish a range of financialised investment options that securitise "natural capital".

In contrast, our contributors grapple with how to advance Climate Justice, the name of the new bottom-up global movement facing the greatest challenge in human history. After all, from above, failure is the only way to summarise 16 years of talk by United Nations negotiators from national states influenced by fossil fuel-dependent capital, neoliberal multilateral agencies and the big environmental NGOs from Washington and London. That failure is programmed to continue in Durban, with only climate finance and technology on the agenda as sites where a deal may be

arrived at – yet so far money to make it happen is scarce.

As the world will learn, South Africa also exemplifies climate injustice. Vast CO₂ emissions come from giving the world's cheapest electricity to the world's biggest mining and metals corporations (BHP Billiton of Melbourne and Anglo American of London), which in turn permanently degrade water resources and pollute the air. In April 2010, the World Bank made a US\$3.75 billion loan to Eskom (for the Medupi coal-fired power plant) to feed the greed of coal-burning capital, along with payola for the ruling party, while poor people suffer repeated annual 25 per cent electricity price hikes to repay the loan. Vast opportunities for climate jobs and renewable energy in South Africa have been nearly entirely ignored. Meanwhile, electricity disconnections affect millions of low-income people each year, leading to intense "service delivery protests". And South Africa's President Jacob Zuma (from the African National Congress, ANC) was one of the five leaders who signed the unfair, unambitious and non-binding Copenhagen Accord in 2009.

Yet from the standpoint of climate justice, the choice of the International Convention Centre (ICC) in Durban, South Africa to host the Conference of the Parties 17 (COP17) from November 28–December 9 is intriguing: some of the country's most intense environmental, social and labour struggles are underway here.

Welcome to Durban

Welcome to Durban, a city of 3.5 million people (with a racial division of 63 per cent African, 22 per cent Indian, 11 per cent white and 3 per cent "coloured") living within 2297 square kilometers. Durban's formal metropolitan identification, eThekweni, is regularly used in official discourse but hardly ever in public. Sadly, the colonial legacy continues: the governor of the Cape Colony at the time settlers planned the city, in 1835, was Lieutenant-General Sir Benjamin d'Urban. (The replacement name eThekweni was publicly rejected even by the three-term post-apartheid mayor, Obed Mlaba, as it is the *isiZulu* language meaning of a bull's testicles, a phrase associated with the geographic appearance of Durban's Bluff and port from a prominent ridge where King Shaka trained his army [de Boer 2007]. In spite of many controversial street name changes in the late 2000s, the local rulers did not sort out the overall designation, so like so many official foibles, the name eThekweni remains an uncorrected post-apartheid *faux pas*.)

Welcome to Durban, where activist critiques of local and global elites are well rehearsed. The UN World Conference Against Racism was held here in 2001 and at least 15,000 people demonstrated against the UN at the ICC, because thanks to Bush regime pressure, UN Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson and host Thabo Mbeki refused to put onto the agenda either Israeli racism against Palestine or Western reparations for slavery, colonialism and apartheid. (On the latter, Mbeki rebuffed even African heads of state, including Nigeria's Olesgun Obasanjo [Bond 2006].)

Exactly a year later, at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, 30,000 activists protested UN commodification of nature: "bluewashing" of corporate polluters through the Global Compact, "Type Two Partnerships" with multinational capital, neoliberal social and economic policies and UN-endorsed water privatisation and carbon trading (Bond 2006). Other protests were held regularly at the Durban ICC against World Economic Forum sessions and against Pretoria's neoliberal "New Partnership for Africa's Development" when the African Union replaced the Organisation of African Unity in 2002.

There is a rich history of international eco-social solidarity for climate activists to draw upon. South Africans and global allies fought racial apartheid and won in 1994 and activists demanded access to

anti-retroviral AIDS medicines in the late 1990s, defeating Big Pharma, the World Trade Organization and the Bill Clinton and Thabo Mbeki regimes by 2004 so that today more than a million South Africans have access to medicines that a decade earlier cost \$15,000 per person per year. Indeed, the first high-profile martyr of this cause was Durban's Treatment Action Campaign educator Gugu Dlamini in Umlazi in 1998 and the first sustained critiques of Mbeki's AIDS denialism occurred in 2000 at the ICC's International AIDS Conference.

Political history was made here with the initial resistance by Zulu King Shaka to British settlers in the early 1800s and a century later with Mahatma Gandhi's (1928) political innovation, /Satyagraha/, truth-force civil disobedience used to advance Indian ethnic rights. South Africa's modern trade union movement began here in Africa's largest harbour with the 1973 dockworkers' strike. The rise of the country's "new urban social movements" began in the Chatsworth community in 1998 (Desai 2002). Over the past 15 years, South Durban activists have led the way on environmental justice activism, with the closure of the Umlazi landfill a major 1996 victory for activists headed by Bobby Peek (who subsequently founded the Friends of the Earth affiliate, groundWork). Shackdwellers emerged as a major movement when in 2005 Abahlali baseMjondolo was founded at Kennedy Road (Kell and Nizzo 2011). Nearby, at the Bisasar Road landfill, a five-year campaign was waged by Sajida Khan (until her 2007 death) against South Africa's first big Clean Development Mechanism (Bond, Dada and Erion 2009) which in turn led to the founding of the Durban Group for Climate Justice international network in 2004.

Activists in other major South African cities also host ongoing protests on climate, energy and related issues. For example, Earthlife Africa and the Anti-Privatisation Forum regularly engage in actions at the headquarters of the vast state electricity company Eskom and the coal-to-oil multinational Sasol, South Africa's two largest CO₂ emitters. And in mid-2011 Greenpeace dumped loads of coal outside Eskom's front door to protest its fossil fuel addiction. Cape Town and the Eastern Cape surfing village of Jeffreys Bay have periodic anti-nuclear demonstrations.

South African activists founded Climate Justice Now! South Africa in 2009 and joined with mainstream groups (even the pro-corporate World Wildlife Fund) in a "C17" network of civil society activists. Their aim: to successfully host an alternative summit—"People's Space"—at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), including a mass march on December 3, 2011 from the Curries Fountain athletics field next to DUT through Warwick Junction's market, up to the US consulate and City Hall, past the ICC and ending several hours later at the Indian Ocean for a "Going Away Party for the Beach" concert and protest.

Among the Durban-based groups promoting a stronger political message within the broad tent are SDCEA, groundWork, the Centre for Civil Society, the Ecopeace party and Democratic Left Front, Earthlife eThekweni, Timberwatch, the Diakonia faith center, Streetnet, Umphilo waManzi and allied community, environmental and labour organisations. Their aim is to ensure that delegates to the COP17 get the message: cut a genuine deal or face South Africa's famed social protests, which are among the world's most prolific. To make the point, various sites across Durban will illustrate climate contradictions and social conflicts.

Sites of significance for climate activists abound, beginning in the north at the King Shaka International Airport. For example, the source of Durban's main water supply is the Inanda Dam, whose methane from rotting vegetation is, like many tropical and subtropical dams, a substantial greenhouse gas source. Acquisition of land for the late 1980s dam is still contested by the Qadi people, who are victims of both displacement and a corrupt apartheid-era state relationship with a co-opted chief. Near the dam is the Phoenix settlement where a century ago Gandhi established a printing press and intentional community to further /Satyagraha/, which he took with him when he left South Africa in 1914 and which was responsible for ridding India of the British empire.

Due east across the main highway from the Phoenix settlement is the Umhlanga edge city where the continent's largest shopping mall, Gateway, exhibits luxury goods for those mainly white shoppers who, at the time of South Africa's democratisation in 1994, escaped the hustle and bustle ("crime and grime" in their words) of a fast-integrating central Durban. Gateway, built on a rubbish dump that closed in the mid-1990s, is the sixth-largest electricity consumer in Durban. Further west is the notorious Cato Ridge site where Thor Chemicals dumped illegally imported mercury waste (whose residues now make Inanda Dam fish too toxic for human consumption) and the Assmang manganese smelter, which consumes a vast share of Durban's electricity and which has killed numerous workers in explosions and manganese poisoning.

Moving back east to central Durban, we soon encounter the harsh smells and perfume rods of the Bisasar Road dump and Africa's largest landfill, the subject of community protest when the World Bank prevented its closure in the early 2000s in order to commodify the methane the dump produces to sell to the emissions markets, as Khadija Sharife describes below. Placed in the black Clair Estate neighbourhood during apartheid, it should have been closed when Nelson Mandela came to power, as African National Congress pamphlets in the 1994 election promised the community it would be, but because of the methane-electricity investments there is now no prospect for closure before it fills up around 2020.

Next to Bisasar is a shack settlement, Kennedy Road, once well organised by the group Abahlali baseMjondolo before it was attacked in September 2009 when the group was evicted and replaced by local African National Congress powerbrokers. But subsequent violent battles with municipal contractors responsible for disconnecting electricity in mid-2011 showed that the ruling party never quite gained hegemony in Kennedy Road. Abahlali, meanwhile, won a major Constitutional Court victory against provincial housing legislation that would have led to more forced removals. In early 2010, Abahlali held a major march for shackdwellers' rights in central Durban despite efforts to divert the march away from City Hall.

From Bisasar, traveling east a few kilometres past the Big Box retail stores to the end of the Umgeni Road, leaves travellers at Warwick Junction, described by Bond and Desai in [in this book]. Next door is the Durban University of Technology, host of the People's Space alternative summit (university chancellor Ela Gandhi is Mahatma's granddaughter and directs the Satyagraha Centre there). Continuing towards the sea, the arch of the Moses Mabhida Stadium is unmistakable and a few blocks due south is the International Convention Centre. Two blocks further southwest are Durban's City Hall, the much-maligned central business district and the US consulate atop Old Mutual's main central Durban building. This gives US officials a commanding view of the Durban harbour a couple blocks south; these consular staff were responsible for intensifying port security against counterfeit goods and in the process ridding the harbour of the "security risk" of fisherfolk in 2004. Due west atop the highest hill in central Durban is the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Centre for Civil Society, occupying the top floors of the Memorial Tower Building.

From there we enjoy clear views east across the harbour to the Island View refinery, which is notorious for a fatal explosion in 2007, described in the SDCEA article "Durban Feels the Heat", in the pages of Durban's Climate Gamble. Island View marks the beginning of Africa's largest petro-chemical complex, intensely watchdogged by SDCEA, whose traditional targets include the Engen refinery, Mondi paper, the Sapref refinery and the Toyota assembly plant. In 2009, a major climate summit was hosted by SDCEA, which also organised early protests against the World Bank's funding of Medupi. Activism continues in South Durban—one of the world's most dangerous petro-chemical complexes—including one of the "1000 Cancúns" protests in December 2010. Activists occasionally win, as the victories in the Chatsworth electricity struggles and the Bul-Bul dump attest.

Durban contradictions

The city is rife with contradictions and social conflict. Officials have failed to incorporate climate change in economic development planning, leaving citizens far more vulnerable than they should be:

- Gambling that the city's future will be based on tourism, major sports events (the World Cup in 2010 will very likely generate an Olympic bid for 2024) and international trade is dubious given what we now know about the need for national and global carbon taxes.
- The municipality's attempt to profit from climate change through Clean Development Mechanism carbon-trading gimmicks at three landfill sites is not only unworkable because of the repeated failure of the emissions markets (and in the case of the La Mercy landfill, a technical failure), it is also immoral because it allows global North countries and companies to maintain greenhouse gas emissions while neglecting green alternatives to waste disposal at home.
- The city's failure to fund genuine climate jobs, public transport and the just transition away from fossil fuel addiction is another example of short-sightedness, among a string of stupid decisions and failed gambles that often involve public subsidies. The list of bungled projects and missed opportunities includes the Point and ICC, the loss of Blue Flag status designating clean beaches, the attempted razing of the Early Morning Market, bus privatisation, mass electricity service disconnections and a ballooning housing crisis, evictions of fisher-folk from the port, non-consultative street renaming and vast cost-overruns at the unneeded Mabhida Stadium.

As a result of these contradictions, the Association of Science in South Africa (Assaf) was commissioned to work with the municipality's climate adaptation office to produce, in August 2011, a major report, *Towards a Low Carbon City: Focus on Durban* (Assaf 2011). If they took the title seriously, new Durban mayor James Nxumalo and an incoming manager (not yet chosen as of this writing in mid-2011) would be faced with a formidable challenge: switching the city's economic strategies in the direction promised and facing up to the threat we face—especially the threat that Durban's major industries pose—as a result of runaway greenhouse gas emissions. We needn't reiterate, here, concerns about future rising sea levels and the vulnerability of Durban's beachfront and valleys to extreme storms (as witnessed in 2007, 2008 and 2011), flooding that will overwhelm dirty Durban's decrepit stormwater drainage system, landslides on our hilly terrain, droughts that draw new "climate refugees" from the region into what is regrettably a xenophobic populace, the disruption of food chains and other coming disasters.

However, what might be termed South Africa's "mitigation-denialism" deserves elaboration, since the Assaf report is now a prime case. Not only did planning minister Trevor Manuel announce in August 2011 that he expects the North to pay South Africa up to \$2 billion per year through the Green Climate Fund he co-chairs—when in reality it is South Africa which owes a vast climate debt to Africa given our world-leading rate of CO₂ per GDP per person—but Assaf seeks to persuade politicians that Durban can "entrench its reputation as South Africa's leading city in terms of climate change actions" (/sic/). This is pure hubris, because Assaf's 262-page study shies away from any critical mention of high-carbon Durban's unprecedented public subsidies for long-distance air transport, shipping, fossil-fuel infrastructure, highway extension and international tourism. For example, the Assaf study tells us nothing about the \$35 billion that "Back of Port" planners have in mind for the South Durban basin. The project will displace residents of the 140-year-old Clairwood neighbourhood to allow further expansion of the harbour and its ships' dirty bunker fuel. It proposes a new highway leading to more container terminals and supertoxic petrochemical facilities as well as a new pipeline (through black neighbourhoods) to Johannesburg that will double the amount of oil transported from the petrochemical complex. There is also a planned expansion of the automotive

industry and construction of a huge new harbour on the old airport site. Yet this project warrants no mention in Assaf's report.

Further north, Assaf says nothing about the damage done by building the \$1.2 billion King Shaka International Airport way too early and way too far north of the city, nor—aside from a throwaway reference in the governance chapter—about the mostly empty \$430 million Moses Mabhida Stadium built for the 2010 World Cup, next door to the city's world-class rugby stadium. All these mega-investments certainly make Durban "South Africa's leading city in terms of climate change actions"—but opposite the way Assaf claims.

In a failure of analytical nerve, the Assaf scientists appear too intimidated to discuss these expensive mistakes in polite company, much less argue for a detox-rehab of Durban's carbon-addicted corporates. Yet it makes no sense to avoid the harsh reality of fast-rising emissions in sectors that make our city exceptionally vulnerable when carbon taxes do finally kick in, given how far Durban is located from the world's main markets and given adverse implications for tourism. At one point, buried in a dry table, are the names of Durban's biggest emitters measured by consumption of /municipal/ electricity: the Mondi paper mill, Sapref and Engen oil refineries, Toyota, Frame Textiles and the Gateway and Pavillion shopping malls.

But the city's biggest contributor to climate change via the national grid's coal-fired power plants is the deadly manganese smelter, completely forgotten in Assaf's study even though the mining conglomerate Assore's 2010 annual report concedes, "Electricity consumption is the major contributor to Assmang's corporate carbon footprint and reflects energy sourced from Eskom grid supply, particularly by the Cato Ridge Works". Nor in Assaf's chapter on "The national context" do we learn that South Africa is building the world's third and fourth largest coal-fired power plants, Eskom's Kusile and Medupi, with a \$3.75 billion loan from the World Bank in spite of fierce opposition from civil society. Not mentioned, either, are apartheid-era Special Pricing Agreements that give BHP Billiton and Anglo American Corporation the world's cheapest electricity (\$0.02 per kiloWatt hour), about 1/8 what ordinary households pay. Nor is there a word about the millions of poor South Africans disconnected from electricity, unable to absorb the 130 percent price hike Eskom has imposed since 2008 in order to service loans on the coal-fired generators.

These gaping holes are too wide for even Durban's most skilled greenwashers—like municipal climate adaptation manager Debra Roberts—to hide. To her credit, she joked that "You want to get me fired for publicly agreeing with you," and then did just that when at the ICC launch, I drew attention to these white-elephants-in-the-room. Assaf chief executive Roseanne Diab replied that the city's main mitigation focus should be Durban's anarchic truck-freight transport mess, which she claimed can be tackled by air-quality regulation. That might be the case if South Africa had the USA's Clean Air Act, which considers greenhouse gases to be pollutants—something our South African Air Quality Act doesn't. And it might also help if the municipality had an effective air pollution monitoring unit, but in March 2011 it was stripped of most of its staff by Durban City Manager Mike Sutcliffe.

Likewise, Assaf enthusiastically promotes landfill methane gas-to-electricity conversion at Durban's Bisasar Road dump without observing (as do most academic articles) that Africa's largest Clean Development Mechanism is actually one of the world's primary cases of carbon-trading /environmental racism/, worthy of a front-page article in the Washington Post in 2005 on the day the Kyoto Protocol took effect (Vedantam 2005). In its enthusiasm for such financing, the Assaf study also forgets that the COP17 will witness the demise of Kyoto, the treaty that mandates these kinds of carbon-trade investments in places like Durban. Blithely, Assaf scientists recommend "innovative market-based financing mechanisms" such as "the voluntary carbon market"—while downplaying the emissions-trading fraud, corruption, speculation and collapse now rife across the world.

Regrettably, Assaf believes in a few other “false solutions” to the climate crisis, such as biofuels (Durban is a sugar cane centre) and the dangerous co-incineration of tires in cement kilns. And in another disturbing development, Assaf’s emphasis on residents’ behavioural change risks a blame-the-victim mentality: e.g., justifying denial of flush toilets for poor people to avoid increased electricity use at the sewage works. Remarked Diab at the Assaf launch: “We must encourage people to stop using their cars and start using public transport”—yet Assaf was silent about how city officials let a crony-capitalist firm, Remant Alton, privatise and wreck the municipal bus system.

Not a total write-off, Assaf’s report at least encourages Durban to “produce local, buy local” at a time of inane currency-induced trading patterns that have little to do with rational comparative advantages between competing economies. The report condemns suburban sprawl and much post-apartheid planning, while endorsing the “polluter pays” principle, which, if ever implemented, would radically improve the city’s environment. All obvious enough, but what hope for implementation given Durban rulers’ pro-pollution bias? “Climate smart,” according to Roberts, means a city’s “low-carbon, green economy provides opportunities for both climate change mitigation and adaptation and fosters a new form of urban development that ensures ecological integrity and human well being”. Precisely. But if Diab is correct that “poor public awareness” is a major barrier to addressing the most serious crisis humanity has ever faced, Assaf scientists now contribute to that very problem with their bland, blind greenwashing of climate-dumb Durban.

Durban contestations

From such contradictions arise intense contestations, which usually turn violent from the top down. Police are regularly let loose on communities that attempt to stage non-violent marches. Shackdwellers, market traders, homeless children, organised labour and residents’ organisations are treated with contempt by city officials. In the three years prior to the COP17, to take an arbitrary date, protests were passionate, especially against polluting industries and a neoliberal, repressive municipality that regularly denies demonstrators their rights to protest. Consider some of these in chronological order.

In January 2009, the Qadi people at Inanda Dam revolted over their uncompensated land claim and were denied permission to protest at the Dusi Canoe Marathon. Durban University of Technology (DUT) staff and students went on strike over salary and fee grievances. In February, DUT was joined by University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) students. There were municipal service protests in Ntuzuma and protests against police violence in Umlazi. In March, the DUT students protested again, as did bus commuters and the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance, angry at the lack of state regulation of the oil industry. In April, community activists tackled inadequate housing in KwaMashu and Lamontville, while traders at the Warwick Junction Early Morning Market put the city on notice that a shopping mall would not displace their century-old institution.

In May there were protests against forced removals and inadequate housing in Siyanda, Marianhill and Lamontville, while the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) tackled Shell Oil and Warwick traders continued their anti-displacement protests. In June, there were demonstrations by victims of electricity disconnections and shack fires at Kennedy Road and of substandard housing in Lindelani, as well as conflicts over conditions in the Umlazi hostels. The local chapter of Zimbabwe’s Movement for Democratic Change protested at [the Department of] Home Affairs and won concessions.

Between June and July 2009, the Early Morning Market protests grew more intense. Public sector doctors were on strike and National Union of Mineworkers’ members fought for higher wages from

Mabhida Stadium building contractors, as did Durban bus drivers, who demanded the retention of routes that the failed privatisation threatened to close. Residents joined the bus drivers protesting Durban transport in July and the South African Municipal Workers Union struck the municipality. Hungry, the South African Unemployed People's Movement, protested in two major downtown food stores, eating while sitting-in, suffering more than 100 arrests but making a visceral point. In August, Warwick traders continued their struggle against eviction. Other public sector workers on strike included the Communications Workers Union against the Post Office, Telkom workers versus Telkom and social workers against the provincial government. There were protests by Lamontville residents against poor housing, while nearby, Clairwood and Bluff residents protested truckers.

In September, Durban's tow truck drivers protested Johannesburg competitors in the context of weak regulation. In October, the Abahlali baseMjondolo movement—evicted from Kennedy Road the previous month in an attack—won a court victory over the provincial Slums Act. In Chatsworth, communities protested the toxic BulBul dump, eventually leading to prosecution of the corporation running the landfill and ultimately winning closure in 2010. Mangosuthu University of Technology students protested fees and ratepayers associations complained about electricity price increases. In November, residents of Wentworth and other South Durban communities marched in central Durban against low-quality, high-priced service delivery, while residents of Hammarsdale and Mayville also demonstrated for better services. Marrianridge activists demanded housing and Phoenix residents were in up in arms over poor treatment at the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospital. UKZN workers began regular protests against the increasingly common and exploitative practice of labour broking.

In 2010 protests were even more intense, given labour unrest mainly over wages and outsourcing. In January, Mangosuthu Tech and DUT students demanded lower tuition fees. South Durban residents protested municipal regulation of truckers, while Umlazi hostel residents demanded urgent upgrading. In February the students continued demonstrating. In Verulam, traders attacked the municipality over rental policy. In the south, SDCEA began national protests against the \$3.75 billion World Bank loan to Eskom. Inner-city flatdwellers and bus commuters also protested municipal policies. In March, there were outsourced labour protests against UKZN security and transport operations and against food prices at the DUT, as well as by Abahlali baseMjondolo against state repression. In April these were joined by UKZN students demanding better accommodation and an end to financial-based exclusions, while the South African Municipal Workers Union embarked on a strike and the South African Communist Party marched against rampant state corruption. In May the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union had a successful wage strike that paralyzed the harbour, leaving hundreds of boats at sea, unable to unload.

In June, there were two protests against the World Cup: by Stallion Security companies over pay at the first match held in the R3.4 billion Mabhida Stadium and then by Durban communities against the white elephant stadium. In July, communities gathered to protest xenophobia (and its causes in state and business policies) and fisherfolk were arrested after being denied access to the main piers. In August, the massive public sector strike began, affecting especially health facilities and schools, as well as Home Affairs. There were also protests against sweatshops in the vicinity of Durban and in Umlazi there were service delivery protests. In September, UKZN student accommodation protests were followed by South Durban environment demonstrations in November and December, the latter as part of the "1000 Cancúns" called by Via Campesina.

Student protests over fees and exclusions began the 2011 year in Durban, compelling a DUT shutdown in early February—repeated in July-August—and ongoing protests at several UKZN campuses. By late March, police action against students with tear gas and rubber bullets led to scores of injuries and the escalation continued for another week. In April, water cannons and rubber bullets were also used against Mangosuthu Tech students in Umlazi. From March to June, numerous mass protests were registered in relation to the May municipal elections, including Inkatha against

the breakaway National Freedom Party and African National Congress, as well as internecine African National Congress battles.

In June, KwaDukuza was the site of major protests by—and repression of—commuters angered by rising transport price hikes. There were 155 arrests and police killed one protester. In July, hundreds of fisherfolk protested against municipal and provincial restrictions on fishing and thousands of metalworkers and Congress of South African Trade Union activists marched against police brutality and workplace exploitation in Pinetown and central Durban. Between July and August, protests over municipal disconnections of electricity occurred at Sea Cow Lake near the N2 highway (leaving one municipal subcontractor dead), at Kennedy Road in Clare Estate (with police shootings) and in Chatsworth where Westcliff Flatdwellers succeeded in reversing a downgrading of electricity from 60 to 40 amps.

Although aside from the BulBul dump closure, the only genuine victories (aside from wage struggles)—won in late 2008 by Abahlali baseMjondolo and mid-2009 by Warwick Early Morning Market activists—were defensive in nature; the vast majority of protests mentioned above are inspiring reflections of resistance. And there were probably scores more expressions of protest across the city during this period not covered by journalists and hence by the Centre for Civil Society Social Protest Observatory. (Durban's two main English papers, The Mercury and Daily News, have been victims of cutbacks in coverage, as its Independent Newspapers owners reduced coverage and sent profits abroad.)

But it must also be acknowledged that protest sometimes carries the highest personal price. Durban can be an extremely dangerous place for activists, dating back decades. Earlier high-profile assassinations of political philosopher Rick Turner (1978), Griffiths Mxenge (1981) and Victoria Mxenge (1985) were carried out by apartheid hit squads. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed thousands of murders of both ANC-aligned and Inkatha activists, though the preponderance of evidence implicates the P.W. Botha and F.W. de Klerk regimes' collaboration with Inkatha, including arming its leadership. But somehow even after the ANC-Inkatha rivalry was won by the former at the ballot box and after the Zulu nationalists faded badly as a rural political party with a few strongholds among Durban hostel-dwellers, the method of settling local political scores with bullets continued.

On July 11, 2011, for example, Durban's leading ruling party official, Sbu Sibiyi, was assassinated at his home, four months after ANC councilor Wiseman Mshibe was shot dead. In early August 2011, Gundu Makhanya, a Chatsworth leader of the National Freedom Party, was killed, with allegations that the Inkatha Freedom Party was responsible. Across the province, several other National Freedom Party leaders were killed in weeks before and after. The other leading party with African township support, the Congress of the People, suffered extreme harassment by the ANC just before the 2009 national elections. In early 2009 in Umlazi township, a hail of 50 AK-47 bullets killed traditional leader Inkosi Mbongeleni Zondi, grandson of Bhambatha Zondi, the Zulu leader who led a rebellion against Natal colonial officials in 1906.

A month later in the suburb of New Germany, the local leader of the South African National Civic Organisation, Jimmy Mtolo, was shot on a Saturday morning by an assassin who came into his office ostensibly seeking help with housing. His daughter, ANC member of parliament Ntombikayise Sibhidla, complained about police failure to find the murderer. A few weeks later, in April 2009, the next assassination victim was SDCEA leader Ahmed Osman, gunned down on his stoop in cold blood on a warm late-summer evening, in the midst of fighting companies responsible for toxic waste releases in Clairwood. In 2008, SDCEA's Des D'Sa was nearly killed in a firebombing of his flat. In 2007, ward councilor and former SDCEA member Rajah Naidoo was the victim of a similar hit.

In August 2008, demonstrations in the centre of town in front of the ICC led to the death of 22-year-

old University of South Africa political science student Mthoko Nkwanyana, who was protesting high tuition fees alongside 400 others; police used tear gas so aggressively that he died in the skirmish. This was reminiscent of a similar protest at UKZN's Westville campus in 2001 when Michael Makhabane was killed by security guards during a peaceful protest of more than 500 students, again against high fees. Another youth, Marcel King, was killed in June 2004 in Phoenix township, not far from Gandhi's settlement, shot between the eyes by security guards hired by the Durban municipality to disconnect illegal electricity hookups. According to his brother Jonathan, "My mother was involved in a confrontation with a security guard who had just hit her because she had tried to climb on to the back of his van. Marcel tried to pull her away but the guard cocked his gun and began firing".

In July 2007, civil society activist Sajida Khan died because Durban municipal toxins, floating across Clare Road from Bisasar Road dump, gave her two bouts of cancer. The most famous post-apartheid death cannot be attributed to government, opposition parties, business or gangs, though: activist Gugu Dlamini was killed in December 2008 by Umlazi residents who stigmatised her AIDS education work and stoned her to death. Activists mourn them all, as well as two giant leaders of struggle and independent progressive politics who died peacefully in late 2009 and early 2010, respectively, Dennis Brutus and Fatima Meer.

A contested COP during capitalist crisis

The contributions in the pages [of Durban's Climate Gamble] explore environment, segregation, capital accumulation and power. We begin with Patrick Bond and Ashwin Desai on the spatial squeeze Durban is witnessing, with Desai and Goolam Vahed describing the trajectory of nearest residential neighbourhood to the ICC. Writ large, it's a case study of environmental injustice insofar as a great many low-income people are suffering displacement from homes, streets and even fishing piers in the area adjoining the ICC. Desai then covers emblematic street-level aspects of the cityscape in an essay on sightseeing Durban and Bond reviews the myriad eco-social struggles over the city's hydrological system, which will be one of the first victims of climate change. Next, from the notorious petro-chemical hub of Wentworth, a rigorous community-based analysis conjoins environmental justice struggles across the metropolis. The South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) envisages an anti-capitalist alliance of the various eco-social campaigns that make Durban so compelling, notwithstanding difficulties in stitching together the component parts so far.

Subsequent contributions take the premise that Durban's COP17 is mainly about the financing of climate management, publicly sourced in the Green Climate Fund and privately through carbon markets, with some mix envisaged by global elites during a time of severe and worsening fiscal austerity. Del Weston suggests that the host government will be incapable of promoting emissions cuts globally, given its own fossil-fuel addiction. Khadija Sharife provides details about the Durban experience of the Clean Development Mechanism technique and debates over timber offsets in Africa. Larry Lohmann considers the deeper contradictions of carbon markets. Oscar Reyes describes foibles in the new sectoral climate investment strategies. Finally, Yash Tandon warns that the Green Climate Fund co-chaired by South African planning minister Trevor Manuel - the continent's leading neoliberal - could devastate Africa.

In sum, there is no question that Kyoto Protocol proponents, including the South African government, are failing to generate the support required for a new round of post-2012 legally binding commitments. So the reputation of the Durban COP17 is already assured: *failure*. Moreover, if the climate-financing quandaries play out as expected, then the most durable accomplishment of Durban will be a deepened commodification strategy. At the same time, sophisticated financiers

understand that the ongoing world capitalist crisis—in mid-2011 reflected in the S&P downgrading of Washington's credit rating, rising default fears on the European periphery and new problems with China's Keynesian financing of infrastructure, overlaid upon stressed-capitalism catastrophes such as nuclear reactors, oil spills, flooding and all manner of social upheavals—throws into question the capacity of markets to assist in climate management.

To illustrate, on August 10, 2011, the *Wall Street Journal* asked New York University business professor Nouriel Roubini, "What can government and what can businesses do to get the economy going again or is it just sit and wait and gut it out?" His answer was, as usual, insightful:

"Businesses are not doing anything. They claim they're doing cutbacks because there's excess capacity and not adding workers because there's not enough final demand, but there's a paradox, a Catch-22. If you're not hiring workers, there's not enough labour income, enough consumer confidence, enough consumption, not enough final demand... In the last two or three years, we've actually had a worsening because we've had a massive redistribution of income from labour to capital, from wages to profits and the inequality of income has increased. And the marginal propensity to spend of a household is greater than the marginal propensity of a firm because they have a greater propensity to save, that is firms compared to households. So the redistribution of income and wealth makes the problem of inadequate aggregate demand even worse... Karl Marx had it right. At some point, capitalism can destroy itself. You cannot keep on shifting income from labour to capital without having an excess capacity and a lack of aggregate demand. That's what has happened. We thought that markets worked. They're not working." (Heaven 2011; Wall Street Journal 2011.)

Nor can they work in the reorganisation of central Durban or in climate management for reasons we will observe in the pages [of *Durban's Climate Gamble*]. First, limits of market-centric strategies are being reached for Durban's neoliberal municipal state, notwithstanding massive national commitments to sports tourism, international conferencing, the petrochemicals industry, Durban's municipal services policy and export-led growth (all of which have adversely affected the socio-ecological balance in central Durban). Attempts by this local state to channel investment through unprecedented capital grants and operating subsidies are not only creating white elephants (even municipal-controlled retail and restaurant space across the renovated beach front has been unlettable since the World Cup), but also more pollution—including accelerated climate change in air travel, tourism and shipping—and more gentrification-style squeezing of poor people, street children, immigrants, informal traders and fisherfolk. Limits are appearing both because capital isn't following the state's expensive pushing and pulling and because of resistance from below.

Second, the limits of the market for solving climate crises via carbon trading are now clearly evident, what with the 2011 collapse of the European Emissions Trading Scheme—through hacking and credit-theft in January and thanks to a general lack of confidence in subsequent months—and the 2010 demise of Chicago's carbon exchange. As for potential new markets, the biggest is California, but the California Air Resources Board's announced emissions trading system was hit hard by a series of 2011 legal challenges from progressive environmentalists and may be completely redesigned to avoid trading. Australian and Korean prototypes are being delayed. Although offsets, Reducing Emissions through Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) and Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) gimmicks continue to spread, the underlying basis for these is shriveling, especially if in Durban the Kyoto Protocol's emissions cuts targets are not formally extended past 2012 and Kyoto's CDMs are ultimately shelved. Of course the worst-case outcome is also worth contemplating, because it is apparently the basis for a growing Northern consensus: Kyoto's binding emissions cuts fail to be respected and extended into a post-2012 era, but the Kyoto carbon trading mechanisms are preserved.

This trial of carbon capital and the demise of the Kyoto Protocol together leave a huge opening for climate justice. The forces arrayed in Durban will generally support the most progressive framing of climate politics possible and the stage is set for a dead inside space and a very live time outside the UNFCCC.

Patrick Bond, Durban

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P.S.

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