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# ANTI-CAPITALISM IN CRISIS

Analysing Climate Justice Action's Response to the Urgency of Climate Change



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*Analysing Climate Justice Action's response to the urgency of climate change*

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## ABSTRACT

Since the Fifteenth Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen, Denmark, a global movement for climate justice has begun to emerge from the previous round of the global struggle against capitalism. Acting within the discourse of climate justice presents a new set of priorities, and contradictions for groups like Climate Justice Action (CJA) – a network dedicated to taking direct action to address what it perceives to be the structural causes of climate change. Employing an ideologically structured action framework, this research will demonstrate that a tension has surfaced between those who wish to immediately address climate change and those who advocate for simultaneous systemic change; this tension has led to contradictions between the movement’s anti-capitalist desire and the urgency of the climate crisis. In an attempt to mitigate this tension, CJA has responded in three ways that distinguish it from the previous round of anti-capitalist struggle: it has articulated a set of concrete demands; it has begun to reconsider the role of institutionalism; and it has built an explicitly anti-capitalist climate justice discourse based on its own ideological principles. These changes point to a maturation of the global anti-capitalist movement, and a willingness to make compromises in the context of a global crisis. As CJA moves toward a more pragmatic approach to anti-capitalist politics, how does it ensure that its actions remain antagonistic enough to distinguish them from other reformist actors who use similar tactics? CJA’s strategy is currently concerned with building and defending a climate justice discourse, and has applied this discourse to its upcoming *Global Day of Direct Action for System Change not Climate Change*.

**Key Words:** *climate change, Climate Justice Action, anti-capitalism, direct action, ideologically structured action.*

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

Camp for Climate Action	CCA
Climate Justice Action	CJA
Climate Justice Now!	CJN!
Environmental Non-governmental Organisations	ENGO
Fifteenth Conference of the Parties	COP15
Ideologically Structured Action	ISA
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	IPCC
Political Opportunity Structure	POS
Resource Mobilisation	RM
Social Movement Organisation	SMO
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	UNFCCC
World Trade Organisation	WTO

It was late on 18 December 2009, the last day of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Fifteenth Conference of the Parties (COP15), when reports began to confirm what many already feared: after thirteen days of negotiations the 115 world leaders inside the summit had failed to come to a legally binding agreement that would decisively stop climate change. Copenhagen, re-branded as *Hopenhagen*, was beginning to look more like *Nopenhagen* to the thousands of activists and concerned citizens gathered outside the Bella Centre<sup>1</sup>. After lamenting the summit's failure to reach a "fair, ambitious and binding agreement," Amy Goodman, reporter for *Democracy Now!*, ended her sombre report by optimistically remarking that the COP15 had "inspired a new generation of activists to join what [had] emerged as a mature, sophisticated global movement for climate justice" (Goodman 2009).

It is beyond the scope of this study to engage in a scientific debate regarding the existence of actual anthropogenic climate change; however, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) maintains that the warming of the climate is "unequivocal" based on observations of increased "global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea levels"<sup>2</sup> (Pachauri 2007: 8). In 2007, the IPCC released its Fourth Assessment Report, which defined climate change as "a change in the state of the climate...that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer" (ibid: 9). In this report, the IPCC attributes the increase of global atmospheric concentrations<sup>3</sup> of four 'long-lived green house gases – carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and halocarbons – directly to human activities (Solomon 2007: 2). The report finds that the observed increase in anthropogenic GHG emissions is "very likely" the cause of the observed increase in global average temperatures, thus leading the IPCC to conclude with 'very high confidence' that 'the net effect of human activities since 1750 has been one of warming' (Pachauri 2007: 14).

As a direct result of these findings, the IPCC predicts that between 75 and 250 million people in Africa are expected to be exposed to increased water stress by 2020<sup>4</sup> while endemic mortality associated with diarrhoeal diseases due to floods and droughts are expected in East, South and South-East Asia. Small islands in the Caribbean are expected to have insufficient water supply during low-rainfall periods. Australia and New Zealand are projected to lose a significant degree of biodiversity in ecologically rich sites by 2020, regional differences in natural resources could be magnified in Europe, and food security in Latin America will "very likely" be compromised due to decreased livestock and crop productivity. Heat waves are expected to increase in length and intensity in urban centres in North America resulting in higher mortality rates, and the loss of climatic barriers to species invasions and eroding infrastructure are expected to negatively affect human communities in the Arctic regions (Parry 2007: 13-15). The changing climate and its resultant consequences are not the only environmental afflictions concerning scientists. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment concludes that changes in the world's ecosystems were greater in the second half of the twentieth century than any other time in recorded human history, and that all of these systems have been "significantly transformed through human actions"<sup>5</sup> (MEA 2005: 40).

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<sup>1</sup> The Bella Centre was the official venue for the COP15 summit.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A

<sup>3</sup> 'Atmospheric concentrations' of green house gases occur when emissions are larger than the natural removal process (Solomon 2007: 2).

<sup>4</sup> At the request of the Dutch Minister of the Environment, the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) investigated the scientific foundations of the report's summary and considered the findings to be "well founded" and without "any significant errors." One of the minor inaccuracies found in the report was that in actuality, 90 to 220 million African people are projected to be exposed to increased water stress due to climate change in Africa, by 2020 (PBL 2010: 9).

<sup>5</sup> This loss of life is what Tadzio Mueller, a founding member of CJA, has described as 'the biocrisis' – a crisis of life (*bios*) that is threatening humans' collective survival (crisis) – which is considered to be one of the many "socio-ecological crisis tendencies currently affecting the planet." The biocrisis is intertwined with the climate crisis as both are seen to be "driven by



The purpose of describing these findings is not to debate the scientific weight of the evidence supporting anthropogenic climate change, but rather to give a sense of the urgency and gravity that they impart on groups who are attempting to address the issue in some way. This research will reveal that the climate crisis is not only an environmental issue, but also a political concern; and the debate surrounding the warming of the planet - as well as its causes, consequences and subsequent remedies - is a discussion that is swarming with voices that are trying to be heard. In analysing this debate, it becomes clear that the climate crisis is about more than images of melting icebergs and rising sea levels; it is also a point of contention around which various actors are involved in a multi-layered conflict over how to define the parameters of the climate change debate, and ultimately, how to provide and enact the necessary solutions.

This research is concerned with the grassroots-led climate justice movement that seeks to define the climate crisis as more than an environmental question to be solved. This movement looks instead towards a political understanding of the climate crisis as one that is rooted in the capitalist mode of production and consumption. The climate justice movement is emerging out of the previous decade's global justice movement as the next round of global movements struggling against capitalism, and is doing so within the framework of climate justice. One of these groups is Climate Justice Action (CJA), a network of organisations and individuals who are characterised by their commitment to taking direct action outside of the formal political processes to achieve the systemic changes they deem necessary to adequately address climate change. Working within a climate justice discourse requires CJA to make sense of anti-capitalism in a different way than the global justice movement has in the past. Where the previous decade of radical anti-capitalist social movements existed solely to critique socio-economic structures, the climate crisis has instilled a notion of urgency in the climate justice movement that requires it to think, and thus behave, more pragmatically.

CJA has responded to the urgency of this issue by articulating a set of demands, and has consequently begun to re-consider its relationship with institutionalism both in its own internal processes and through who it chooses to collaborate with. This process of re-consideration is illustrated in two case studies: (a) CJA's Reclaim Power action that took place on 16 December 2009 alongside the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) fifteenth Conference of the Parties (COP15) in Copenhagen, Denmark, and (b) CJA's participation in the 'Global Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth' in Cochabamba, Bolivia in April 2010. As CJA begins to make concessions with its ideological positions, there is a chance that its antagonistic critique of capitalism will be lost amongst the other voices calling for reform and top-down intervention. In order to mediate this risk, CJA is actively building upon climate justice discourse through its own narratives and discussion papers in order to maintain a strictly anti-capitalist discourse. This strategy is observable in the network's preparations for its 'Global Day of Direct Action for System Change not Climate Change' on 12 October 2010, which will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

This research presents a case study of how one group within the climate justice movement – CJA – is responding to the urgency of the climate crisis by answering the following question: how has CJA adapted its approach to anti-capitalism in the context of the climate crisis, and how does CJA seek to ensure that its actions embody radical anti-capitalist, rather than reformist, ideology? In order to answer this question, the following sub-questions must be addressed:

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capital's need for infinite growth" (Mueller 2009: 12) and are therefore often used interchangeably in climate justice discourse, particularly within CJA.

- (a) How can CJA's actions be understood within an ideologically structured action framework, and what is the relationship between sensemaking, ideology and framing?
- (b) What is the history of the climate justice movement and CJA, what common interpretation of the climate crisis do each of them share, and to what degree are these interpretations shared internationally?
- (c) What differences exist within the climate justice movement in terms of how to most effectively address the climate crisis, how does the urgency of the climate crisis contribute to these differences, and how is this tension observable in the debates and actions of the CJA?
- (d) How do the Reclaim Power action in Copenhagen in 2009, and the Peoples Conference in Cochabamba in 2010 illustrate CJA's response to the urgency of the climate crisis, and what are CJA's strategies for ensuring that the Global Day of Direct Action on 12 October maintains a radical anti-capitalist disposition?

## Chapter One

# ANALYSING CJA'S BEHAVIOUR: AN INTERPRETIVE APPROACH TO SENSEMAKING AND IDEOLOGICALLY STRUCTURED ACTION

This chapter will describe Russell Dalton's theory of 'ideologically structured action' (ISA), as an analytic frame through which to analyse CJA's actions. It will be argued that political opportunity structure (POS), resource mobilisation (RM) and framing are valuable analytic frameworks that have previously dominated the study of social movements, but must be integrated with an ISA framework in order to garner a full understanding of CJA's behaviour. Building on Weick's (2005) concept of sensemaking, Dvora Yanow's (2000) interpretive analysis model is employed as a means of operationalizing these frameworks. Finally, the relationship between ideology, sensemaking and framing will be explored in order to rationalise the focus of this research on CJA's sensemaking process and their attempt to transform ideology.

### Part I: Analytic Frames

The theoretical roots of recent social movement scholarship can be traced back to the decline of the 'old' (mainly labour) social movements in Western Europe during the 1960s. This is when it became clear that those theories designed to emphasise a strong lineage between social structure and collective action were no longer relevant tools for the explication of social movement behaviour (Della Porta 1999: 2). New social movements (NSM) drew attention to a universalistic and post-materialist critique of modernity, and developed political programs that were "a complex interaction of identity formation, mobilisation, and political process" (Jung 2010:26; Zald 2000:3). For nearly three decades, between 1970 and 2000, political opportunity structure and resource mobilization dominated social movement scholarship until it became apparent that neither were receptive to cultural concerns or the "rise and fall of philosophies and ideologies" (Zald 2000: 2). It was then that framing theory attempted to fill this void by "bringing ideas back in" in order to provide a link between the social construction of ideas and organisational and political processes (Oliver 2000: 37). Nevertheless, Pamela Oliver claims that "the concept of a frame does not do justice to the ideational complexity of a social movement" (2000:38) and Mayer Zald believes that recent scholarship has led to some "blind spots" that require an enlargement of the social movement analysis agenda (2000:1). As a result, both authors advocate for a social movement analysis agenda that treats ideology as a central concern.

Ideologically structured action, according to Zald (2000), is "that behaviour which is guided and shaped by ideological concerns" (3-4). Ideology can be understood as "a system of meaning that couples assertions and theories about the nature of social life with values and norms relevant to promoting or resisting social change" (Oliver 2000: 43). In his *Introduction to Social Movements* (1973), John Wilson highlights the functionalist role that ideology plays in justifying and motivating social movement behaviour by showing that ideology serves as both a "clue to understanding" and as a "guide to action," thus creating a vision of the "process by which desired changes can best be achieved" (91-92). To apply an ISA framework to this research is to suggest that the CJA's distinct political values and its subsequent perceptions of the climate crisis predispose it to particular strategies and tactics that it may consider to be suitable independent of structural factors that are likely to influence the probability of success (Dalton 2003: 747). It is important to mention that the application of an ISA framework to this study does not require an absolute consensus on the ideological core, even if the movement appears to be generating coherent ideological positions, as commitment to the ideological core is likely to fluctuate depending on the phase that the movements finds itself in (Zald 2000: 43). Regardless of any ostensible ideological

inconsistencies, it is the position of this study that ideologically related concerns shape the behaviour of CJA participants on all levels.

Russell Dalton, the first to use the term ideologically structured action, views social movements as commonly having to make the dichotomous choice between “fundamentalist, expressive activities and pragmatic instrumental activities where both are accepted within the boundaries of democratic politics” (2003:744). Although Dalton et al. consider this to be an overstated dichotomy, it is evocative of the debate between scholars who argue that pragmatic concerns take precedence over ideological considerations and vice versa. A POS approach is concerned with the connection between contention, political power and institutions; and examines “broader environmental shifts” that create ruptures at the elite level and render regimes more vulnerable, or perhaps, more receptive to challenge<sup>6</sup>. Jai Jung’s (2010: 25) recent research on protest cycles suggests that political opportunity is only a determining factor in the “initial phase of social movement mobilization, rather than throughout the movement’s lifespan” – a position that will be adopted in discussing the history of the climate justice movement and the emergence of CJA in the following chapter. RM theory compliments this programme by examining the importance of organisational processes and the movement’s ability to acquire and maintain resources. Dalton illustrates the value of integrating the POS/RM framework with the ISA agenda by emphasising the guiding role that ideology plays in justifying and motivating social movement behaviour. By moving ideology from its traditional role as a descriptive mechanism in social movement studies to a causal mechanism that explains agendas, tactics and movement outcomes, he argues that a “social movement organisation’s (SMO) ability to take advantage of POS and its ability to acquire resources are profoundly conditioned by the worldview of the SMO leaders” (Dalton 1994 in Zald 2000: 6). ISA, therefore, can be seen as building upon the valuational and cognitive elements that inform the rational choice assumptions of POS/RM analysts (Zald 2000: 4).

According to Pamela Oliver (2000), the relationship between ideology and framing has been distorted to some degree by the tendency to insert the term “framing” whenever a movement-related idea is referred to. This research will echo her assertion that the concept of framing is still a relevant and useful tool for analysing the role that ideas play in social movement behaviour. However, it does not adequately represent the ideational complexity of social movements and tends to “reduce the richness of culture to recruitment strategies” (Oliver 2000:38; Zald 2000; Steinberg 1998). Oliver subsequently provides a useful distinction between the two concepts by looking at framing as a process and ideology as content (2000:45). Framing processes refer to the ways in which actors attempt to control how a message is understood by invoking one set of meanings over another, while ideology draws attention to the content of “whole systems of beliefs,” their multiple dimensions, and how ideas are interrelated.

This is a crucial distinction to make when analysing the process of transformation that occurs when a person is persuaded to adopt a new ideological perspective. CJA’s ultimate goal is not to convince people to boycott a shoe company, or buy fair-trade coffee (changes that can easily be integrated into existing belief systems), but rather they are attempting to persuade people to adopt a new ideology, which is indeed an entirely new system of meaning. Ideologies are complex, deeply held sets of beliefs that people are socialised into over extended periods of time. While framing may convince people that an issue can be explained by an ideology, Oliver maintains that “framing processes do not persuade people to adopt whole new ideologies. At best they may initiate the journey” (ibid: 47). Conversion to a new ideology is a process that begins by framing an issue in a certain way and eventually moves on to reconstructing systems of meaning (ibid). In summation, the concept of

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<sup>6</sup> Lecture attended by the author: Doug McAdam, 25 May 2010, Boston, Massachusetts, United States.

framing itself does not possess the conceptual tools necessary for describing CJA's behaviour, as it attempts to persuade others to adopt a new ideology.

In order to analyse how ideologies are transformed, it is necessary to understand CJA's process of sensemaking. Coming from an organisational studies background, Weick et al. (2005) consider sensemaking to be the site at which "meanings materialize" and situations, organisations and environments are talked into existence through the process of "forcibly carving out phenomena from the undifferentiated flux of raw experience" (409-411). Organisational members do not passively respond to internal and external circumstances, but rather "engage in a sensemaking process that leads to the development of subjective interpretations of reality" (Balser 2002: 367). This process of conceptually fixing and labelling meanings is an essential interpretive task of social movements as they attempt to make sense of the chaotic world in which they operate. Applying an interpretive analysis to this research will therefore focus on the 'meaningfulness of action' and how these meanings – as well as the values, feelings and beliefs that these meanings express – are communicated to a wider audience (Yanow 2000: 14).

The relationship between sensemaking, ideology and framing is a linear one, in that sensemaking allows individuals and groups to turn raw experience into subjective interpretations of reality, which in turn lead to the development of systems of meaning regarding the nature of social life that result in values and norms relevant to promoting or resisting social change, otherwise known as ideology. Framing is a tool that social movements use to emphasise the importance of one system of meaning over another. It is beyond the scope of this research to analyse CJA's framing strategies for portraying the climate crisis in a certain way, this process will be interpreted as part of CJA's direct actions. Rather, this research will examine how CJA's ideology is transformed through its sensemaking processes as it responds to the challenges of working within a climate justice framework, and how CJA is attempting to maintain an anti-capitalist position by building its own narrative of climate justice discourse. This process of building a discourse goes far beyond the simple act of framing, and instead attempts to influence the sensemaking processes of other actors.

## **Part II: Methodology**

This research will utilise Dvora Yanow's (2000) interpretive analysis model to operationalise the analytic frameworks described above. This model is comprised of three steps that allow the researcher to identify relevant interpretive communities, extract local knowledge from these communities, and to use this knowledge to analyse the actions of the interpretive community under examination.

According to Yanow, the first step in conducting an interpretive analysis is to identify interpretive communities who share a common view of the issue under analysis (30). Chapter 2 will identify the overarching interpretive community in this study – the climate justice movement – and Chapter 3 will then identify the various interpretive communities within the climate justice movement, including CJA, by revealing the ideological tensions that exist within the movement. In the process of identifying the various interpretive communities within the climate justice movement, the architecture of the climate justice debate will also begin to reveal itself (ibid: 28).

The second step is to identify the specific human artifacts through which the interpretive community expresses its shared meanings (ibid: 30). Since meanings are, by nature, abstract, inaccessible and difficult to observe, an interpretive approach begins by identifying those objects of analysis that are more concrete, more accessible and more observable to the researcher (ibid: 20). Therefore, the data of interpretive analyses consist of human artifacts: the words, symbolic objects and acts of a relevant group as well as the meanings that these human artifacts hold (ibid). Human artifacts, therefore, can be understood as not only instrumentally rational but also as

expressive concrete manifestations of abstract values, beliefs and feelings. Document analysis, interviews and observations comprised the central interpretive methods for data collection in this research. The sources of these methods include:

1. Sources written by, or about CJA, and the wider climate justice movement: (a) news accounts: from newspapers, radio, interviews, and magazines; (b) internal correspondence: emails, newsletters, memos, meetings minutes; (c) movement publications: magazine articles, journals, newspapers, flyers, narratives and websites; (d) academic journals and articles<sup>7</sup>: those concerning climate justice groups or climate justice in general; and (e) movement materials: posters, banners, stencils, slogans.
2. Oral sources: a) conversational interviews with key actors within CJA and the wider climate justice movement.
3. Observation: a) of acts and interactions: tactics, processes b) of objects and movement materials: puppets, clothing, costume, props, pictures, video.

The third step is to use this local knowledge in order to examine how differences and similarities between interpretive communities in the climate justice movement are manifested in their respective actions. Yanow suggests that by analysing the context of the action outside of its immediate sense of instrumentality, the meaning behind the action can be deciphered (2000: 77). Having established the meaning of an action, it is possible to observe changes in CJA's ideology not only through what it says, but also through what it does. The three case studies presented in this research – the Reclaim Power action, the Peoples Conference, and the Global Day of Direct Action – demonstrate CJA's re-consideration of previous ideological principles, and its attempt to control climate justice discourse.

In order to determine which actions were “significant conveyors of meaning” to CJA, it was first necessary to identify “regularly repeated patterns of activity” that were situation-specific and at a specialised time or place (ibid: 77). Yanow suggests that significant patterns of activity can also be identified by their ability to “construct a framework of meaning over and beyond the specific situational meanings” (ibid). Chapter 4 will identify actions that convey meaning for CJA by examining actions that took place at a specialised time and location, such as the COP15, the Peoples Conference, and Columbus Day (the symbolic day chosen for the Global Day of Direct Action). Chapter will 4 will also discuss the framework of meanings that were constructed by these actions: the Reclaim Power action and the Peoples Conference represent a re-consideration of the role of institutionalism in climate justice politics, and the Global Day of Direct Action represents a CJA's attempt to create and maintain an explicitly anti-capitalist climate justice discourse. All of these instances are direct responses to the urgency that the climate crisis has infused in radical anti-capitalism.

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<sup>7</sup> Several academic sources used in this research are written by founding members of CJA or other climate justice groups but are not produced by or explicitly linked to these networks.

## Chapter Two

# GREEN IS THE NEW RED: THE NEXT ROUND OF ANTI-CAPITALIST STRUGGLE AND THE POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The first section of this chapter will provide a description of what the climate justice movement looks like by asking: What are its antecedents? What is the structure of the organisations and networks that make up its constituents – including CJA – and what is its shared interpretation of reality? Part II will provide a historical account of the formation of CJA and the emergence of the climate justice movement in relation to two international events: the 2007 G8 meeting in Heiligendamm, Germany and the UNFCCC’s COP15 in Copenhagen, Denmark in 2009. This chapter will show that international summits are critical arenas that provide a context where global social movements are able to coalesce, and at certain times, provide and even facilitate the opportunity for new global movements to emerge, as was the case with the climate justice movement. A historical analysis such as this not only provides a wider context within which to understand the emergence of the climate justice movement and the creation of CJA, but it also provides the opportunity to consider the role of POS in the initial phases of the movement’s mobilisation.

### Part I: The Antecedents, Structure, and Shared Interpretations of the Climate Justice Movement

The antecedents of the climate justice movement are two distinct movements that have, until recently, worked independently from one another; these are the environmental movement and the global justice movement. The environmental movement materialised between the 1970s and 1990s. It was birthed from the political vacuum that was created by the decline of Western Europe’s ‘old’ labour movements (Jung 2010: 26) and steadily evolved from a grassroots movement into a regular item on the political agenda during this time (Brulle 1996: 71-72). Environmentalism has taken a number of discursive forms – conservationism, preservationism, ecofeminism – however, ecological questions and socio-economic questions have remained almost entirely separate until being driven together by recent political events (ibid).<sup>8</sup>

The global justice movement emerged in the 1990s as a ‘movement of movements’ and was most readily connected to the shutting down of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) talks in Seattle in 1999, as well as its categorical rejection of neoliberal<sup>9</sup> globalisation and institutionalism. Bringing together a diverse set of actors from the global South and North, the global justice movement became a collective voice that refused to articulate any concrete demands, choosing instead to communicate “one ‘no’ among many ‘yeses’” (Mueller 2010). Moreover, the global justice movement found value in its nebulous composition, and resisted establishing any concrete organisational structure; rather, it existed as a loose global network of groups and individuals often

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<sup>8</sup> One anomaly is “political ecology” discourse which “sees the source of ecological problems in the structure of society” and can be traced back to the work of Kropotkin in 1899, who argued that “industrialism is unsustainable because of its excessive strains on the natural environment” (Brulle 1996: 71). Brulle points out that from its earliest development, political ecology diverged into three distinct subcategories: ‘social ecology’ which blames human hierarchy for the domination of nature, ‘environmental justice’ which blamed the disregard of community health by governments, and the ‘People of Colour Environmental Movement’ which revolved around a discourse of environmental racism (1996: 71-72). None of these discourses specifically address the role that capitalism plays in environmental destruction.

<sup>9</sup> Neoliberalism is a set of economic policies that emerged out of the liberal school of economics, most famously associated with Adam Smith’s 1776 “*The Wealth of Nations*.” Neoliberalism refers to a set of economic and political principles including: (1) the rule of the market and ‘free enterprise’ without government intervention, (2) privatisation of public services such as education and health care, (3) deregulation of private enterprise, (4) austerity in public spending, (5) the replacement of the ‘public good’ with ‘individual responsibility’ (Martinez n.d.).

materialising only at international summits and other high-profile events, and drawing tens of thousands to the streets on each occasion.

To some degree, the structure of the climate justice movement still resembles that of the global justice movement, insofar as it largely consists of a global network of individuals and grassroots organisations that collaborate sporadically and informally. However, as the following chapters will illustrate, this is beginning to change as more mainstream environmental non-governmental organisations (ENGOS) are brought into the collaboration process and efforts are made to formally institutionalise the achievements of the movement. Nevertheless, the climate justice movement can be seen as a fluid entity comprised of formally recognised international ENGOS, such as the Global Justice Ecology Project, Friends of the Earth International, and Carbon Trade Watch, as well as a few major international networks such as CJA, Climate Justice Now! (CJN!), Rising Tide North America<sup>10</sup>, and Mobilization for Climate Justice, which represent radical grassroots groups working at the national and local level.

CJA is a predominately European network that consists of groups<sup>11</sup> and individuals who are committed to taking direct action outside of traditional political channels with the aim to address climate change, and is one of the major actors within the European climate justice movement. CJA yields the capacity to inform and mobilise tens of thousands of individuals. In some sense, the network largely exists as an online network; CJA's most valuable asset is its LISTSERV, which contains the email addresses of 15,000 individuals around the world and is used to disseminate information and calls to action. In a real sense, the network consists of over 65 member organisations, but is maintained on a consistent basis by a few individuals based in the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Italy and France, using tools such as email and online forums to communicate. On a bi-monthly basis, CJA International meetings bring together the core participants (although the meetings are open to anyone who wishes to join) and typically last for two to three days. In between international meetings, CJA operates on a working group structure that adjusts depending on the network's level of activity – i.e., if an action is being planned in the near future – and the subsequent tasks that need to be completed.<sup>12</sup> The working groups are typically disabled after the tasks are completed and are replaced by new groups and tasks when needed.

CJA came together between September and March 2008 as a collaboration between environmental and anti-capitalist movements in response to the COP15 that was planned for December 2009 (CJA 2009). Throughout 2008 and 2009, a series of international meetings led to a set of working principles and network goals that represent the “shared trajectories of CJA and the ‘movement of movements’ that had been dominant throughout the late 1990s” (Pusey 2010). CJA acknowledges that because the network has such broad membership, not all organisations share identical policies or positions on climate justice politics, yet Bertie Russell, a founding member of CJA, maintains that despite some cautious wording, CJA's goals are innately radical and represent a political understanding of the climate crisis.

In line with its goals and principles, CJA has articulated a set of demands that can be categorised under two broad headings: climate justice and de-growth. As an explicit demand, climate justice broadly asserts that there is no solution to the climate crisis without “a massive redistribution of wealth and power” while de-growth generally refers to “the need for collectively planned economic shrinkage” (Mueller 2009: 15). Under these categories, CJA articulates a number of demands, such as: that fossil fuels be left in the ground, that industrial agriculture be replaced with local systems of food sovereignty, that the ecological debt owed by the global North

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<sup>10</sup> Rising Tide North America also includes Rising Tide Mexico, although the two function independently.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix B for a complete list of member organisations in the CJA network.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix C for an example of the working group structure that was created for the Reclaim Power action in Copenhagen in December 2009.



to the South be recognised, that local communities regain control over resources, that over-consumption be reduced, and that indigenous peoples' rights be respected (Mueller 2009: 15; CJA Call to Action 2009). These demands are perceived to take on a distinctive meaning depending on the context in which they are utilised. In an effort to clarify what the concept of climate justice means in the European context, a discussion paper entitled '*What does climate justice mean in Europe?*' was prepared in Amsterdam in February 2010 and defines the term as follows:

“Climate justice means recognising the capitalist growth paradigm, which leads to over extraction, overproduction and overconsumption stands in deep contrast to the biophysical limits of the planet and the struggle for social justice...Fundamentally, we believe that we cannot prevent further global warming without addressing the way our societies are organised...”

Shortly after the creation of CJA, the global climate justice movement is considered to have been born in Øsknehallen, Denmark at the '*Where Next?*' meeting on 19 December 2009. This meeting, organised by CJA and CJN!, brought together actors working on a broad range of issues from nearly every continent; some of these included La Via Campesina<sup>13</sup>, ATTAC<sup>14</sup>, representatives from Filipino fishing communities and the UK Camp for Climate Action<sup>15</sup> (Russell 2010). What emerged from these discussions is considered to be a new common ground based on 'system change not climate change' for social movements seeking to act collectively around the discourse of climate justice. From this common ground, it is possible to distil the climate justice movement's shared interpretation of the climate crisis: (a) the climate crisis is inherently not an environmental issue, but a political issue; (b) governmental institutions do not have the power or legitimacy to address the crisis and (c) only profound systemic change can address the climate crisis in a meaningful way. Realistically, these diverse actors do not share the exact same understanding of what 'system' or 'change' mean, yet Russell (2010) argues that these discussions "necessitated a fundamental shift in terms of what it means to struggle 'against' climate change."

## **Part II: The catalysing effect of the G8 and COP15 on the emergence of the climate justice movement in Europe**

Since the WTO talks were interrupted by the rising global justice movement in Seattle in 1999, international summits have provided an important political opportunity for global movements to coalesce, collaborate and, in very unique cases, catalyse the emergence of new movements. This section will demonstrate the crucial political opportunities that the 2007 G8 meeting in Heiligendamm, Germany and the 2009 COP15 in Copenhagen, Denmark provided for the emergence of the climate justice movement. To be specific, the G8 required the global justice movement to conceptually realign itself within a climate justice discourse, while the COP15 provided the opportunity to act within the framework of this new discourse and to subsequently overcome the institutional inside/outside barrier created by previous summits.

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<sup>13</sup>La Via Campesina is "an international movement of peasants, small to medium sized producers, landless, rural women, indigenous people, rural youth and agricultural workers," representing 148 members from 69 countries from Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas (La Via Campesina 2007).

<sup>14</sup> ATTAC describes itself as an "international network within the global justice movement" active in 40 countries with 1,000 local groups (ATTAC n.d.).

<sup>15</sup> CCA is a nation-wide group in the UK with at least 14 local groups who are united by their willingness to take direct action to address climate change (Camp for Climate Action n.d.).

After thinking separately for nearly three decades, the force that eventually brought the socio-economic and ecological questions together into one conceptual framework was, ironically, not social movements but rather the 2007 G8 meeting in Heiligendamm, Germany (Building Bridges Workshop). At this point in time, the global justice movement in Europe had a highly refined protest repertoire based on de-legitimising governments and the neoliberal capitalist system and was well-rehearsed in collectively saying ‘no’ to the outcomes of international summits. The G8 in Heiligendamm disrupted the global justice movement’s familiar pattern of activity by suddenly adopting a position on climate change that was initially unintelligible to the movement. In an interview with *The Guardian* (2009), Tazio Mueller describes the revelation that global justice activists were confronted with at this time:

“We tried to de-legitimize the G8 by criticising it as a traditional neoliberal institution, but it turned out that the G8 had sort of moved and were now talking about climate change and how they were this nice friendly institution solving this big collective problem of humanity.”

As the global justice movement began to make sense of this experience, it became increasingly clear that the climate crisis had shifted the neoliberal, and thus, the anti-capitalist landscape. The greening of capitalism was understood by the global justice movement as a critical indication that the “business as usual” phase of neoliberal capitalism had come to an end, and that the Green New Deal – a proposal that is perceived by the movement to re-start the cycle of growth via a ‘green’ phase of capitalism – had taken its place (Mueller 2009b: 36).

In Weick’s opinion, sensemaking tends to occur when “the current state of the world is perceived to be different from the expected state of the world, or when there is no obvious way to engage the world” (Weick et al. 2005: 409). When this occurs, Weick suggests that to make sense of a disruption a person’s first response is to look for reasons that will “enable them to resume the interrupted activity and stay in action” (ibid). This is precisely the course of action that the global justice movement took; it began to adapt its previous reasons for challenging neoliberalism to fit the new climate-friendly version that it had encountered at the G8 in 2007. The climate justice movement was not initiated at the G8 summit in Heiligendamm, but it was the beginning of a new theoretical common ground that would later lead to the transformation of the global justice movement into the climate justice movement. Mueller explicitly acknowledges this by pointing out that what “appears as a new movement from one vantage point...is at the same time simply the next phase of global social struggles in an age of what ten years ago was simply called ‘globalisation’” (Mueller 2010).

From 7 to 21 December 2009, the UNFCCC held the COP15<sup>16</sup> in Copenhagen, Denmark. The conference, attended by 120 heads of state, 10,500 delegates, 13,500 observers and more than 3,000 members of the media, was quickly described as “the most important negotiation the world will ever see” and effectively “raised climate discussions to a new level” (UNFCCC 2009; Kovel 2009). While the COP15 was an obvious attraction for mainstream ENGOs and civil society organisations, it also presented what radical alternative groups considered to be “a unique place in terms of summit mobilizations,” not only for the guaranteed media attention, but also for its physical setting in one of Europe’s radical political strongholds (Building Bridges Workshop). Recognising the unique opportunity that the COP15 presented for acting within the newly emerging climate justice framework,

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<sup>16</sup> The COP process is a product of the 1992 Summit of the Environment and Development, commonly known as ‘Earth Summit’ where over 100 heads of state gathered in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to discuss problems of environmental protection and socio-economic development. The most high profile COP was in Kyoto in 1997 where the Kyoto Protocol was produced and carbon reduction strategies such as ‘cap and trade’ were first introduced (United Nations 1997).

activist networks within Copenhagen called a meeting to discuss potentially unifying the global justice and environmental movements into an amalgamated block of resistance at the COP15 (ibid). It was at this meeting that CJA was born and the political opportunity of the COP15 was collectively seized by environmental and global justice activists. Naomi Klein, when asked what she found to be most interesting about the COP15, confirmed the latter statement by speaking about the cross-pollination that the conference had inspired:

“What’s most interesting at COP15 is a convergence between the traditional green movement, and what we might call the red movement...They’ve tended to be in separate camps, coming together occasionally, but not part of one cohesive movement. What we’re seeing is a new kind of environmental movement with its pole in the global south; it’s angrier, it’s about people not polar bears, identifying climate change as the single greatest threat to human development”(UpTakeVideo).

The collaboration between the environmental and anti-capitalist movements around the COP15 not only provided an opportunity to act collectively within the framework of climate justice discourse, it also led to the disintegration of the institutional barrier between official organisations working inside the COP process and groups mobilising on the streets. In the past, the political perimeters at summits have tended to follow the physical inside/outside barrier between recognised officials and radical activists. The collaboration between CJA and Climate Justice Now! (a network of organisations who work within the official COP process to block what are considered to be harmful policies) on the Reclaim Power action created the possibility of overcoming this boundary on 16 December 2010 (Russell 2010). Russell (2010) suggests that the relationship between CJA and CJN! added significantly to the political potential of the action as it created the possibility of internal disruption of the negotiations and the ability to overcome “the sterile inside/outside binary that the actions could so easily have fallen into.” Adding to this opportunity was the perceived failure of the COP15 to act as a legitimate and effective international decision-making body. The leaking of the ‘Danish text’<sup>17</sup> in the first week of the conference had the effect of infuriating developing countries as well as disillusioning critical NGOs that were still engaged in the COP process for pragmatic reasons (Vidal 2009; Russell 2010).

In sum, the 2007 G8 in Heiligendamm was the catalyst for the emergence of a new theoretical common ground that combined environmental and socio-economic issues. The COP15 provided the political opportunity for environmental groups and the global justice movement to concretise this newly acknowledged common ground by acting collectively on the organisation and execution of the Reclaim Power action. The collaboration between these two groups also led to the disintegration of the institutional barrier between officially recognised groups inside the Bella Centre and radical groups protesting on the street, and effectively changed the way that these entities relate to one another. The G8 and COP15 provided unique political opportunities, much like Seattle in 1999, where a diverse assortment of groups, coming from different backgrounds and with different interests, could find a common ground and give rise to a contemporary round of global social movement activity.

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<sup>17</sup> The ‘Danish text’ was drafted outside of formal negotiations in a secret meeting between what is known as “the circle of committed,” understood to include Denmark, the United States and the United Kingdom. The document was interpreted by developing countries as “setting unequal limits on per capita carbon emissions for develop and developing countries in 2050; meaning that people in rich countries would be permitted to emit nearly twice as much” and as departing from the 2007 Kyoto protocol which requires richer nations to reduce the bulk of their emissions in recognition of their historical contribution to climate change (Vidal 2009).

### *Chapter Three*

## **IDEOLOGICAL DISCREPENCIES AND COMPROMISING WITH THE REALITY OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS**

As the previous chapter outlined, the climate justice movement represents the next round of struggle against capitalism, having emerged directly from the global justice movement of the 1990s and early 2000s. The urgency of the climate crisis and the drawing in of mainstream ENGOs has created tensions within the climate justice movement, as some see it moving away from its radical anti-capitalist roots, toward liberal reformist messaging. This chapter will show that the climate crisis has infused the movement's anti-capitalist desire with an urgency that sometimes leads to "contradictory and often unintelligible positions" between its radical anti-capitalist ideology and what are essentially reformist actions.

### **Part I - Reformists versus the radical left: indentifying the tension within the climate justice movement**

The introduction to this research presented the argument that the climate crisis is a point of contention around which multiple actors are engaged in a debate over how to define the causes and subsequent remedies of climate change. To an onlooker it may seem as if groups from all points along the political spectrum have taken up this debate; however, from the perspective of the radical left, mainstream actors are operating within a "post-political space" where the climate crisis is only understood within the limits of scientific discourse and debate is limited to discussing "the finer points of the governance mechanisms to be implemented" (Pusey 2010). In other words, mainstream debate surrounding climate change fails to address what the movement considers to be the root cause of climate change – capitalism. Pusey and Russell, two scholars actively involved in the struggle against capitalism, call this lack of antagonism the "liberal carbon consensus" that places scientific discourse at the centre of the climate change debate and fails to challenge "the inevitability of neoliberal capitalism as an economic system" (ibid). As a result, mainstream discussions of climate change are considered to be reduced to "nothing but quantitative variations on a predetermined identity" to the exclusion of all dissenting voice and leading to the homogenisation of difference (ibid).

The climate justice movement criticises mainstream NGOs and corporations for having adopted the liberal carbon consensus in their approach to the climate crisis, and aims to provide a more nuanced consideration of the climate crisis. From the perspective of radical anti-capitalists, the climate crisis is not only associated with devastating environmental, social and economic repercussions, but is also considered to be contributing to the erosion of the hegemony of the 'political middle-ground.' From a radical anti-capitalist perspective, the climate crisis represents a field of new possible macropolitical scenarios where "green is the new red" and the 20<sup>th</sup> century social question is replaced by the 21<sup>st</sup> century ecological question as the "major source of conflict" (Foti 2009). This conflict is perceived as an ideological battle where the struggle is not only to win the debate, but is also to specify the field of contention itself and the prize is the ability to define the new political middle ground (Harvie 2009: 3).

The middle ground can be considered a theoretical tool that demarcates the line between relevance and irrelevance, validity and marginality, and is comprised of a relatively stable set of norms against which all other ideas are measured and given value (ibid). In a more practical sense, Alex Foti (2009) emphasises the enormous power that ideologies have in situations of crisis, as they provide the 'ideal blueprints' for how to rebuild the

previous phase's failed economic and social institutions. Accordingly, the climate justice movement has re-defined the climate crisis from being a purely ecological issue to being a crisis of values, in which capitalism is seeking to "maintain and extend its system of value over all existence" and anti-capitalism is competing to "change what it means to value existence in all its forms" (Pusey 2010). In their article "*The Climate Crisis or the Crisis of Climate Politics?*" Andre Pusey and Bertie Russell (2010) outline the current state of climate justice politics: "This is not a struggle against climate change, or even the biocrisis more generally. It is crucially an affirmative struggle, not a struggle against green or any other capitalism, but a struggle for the constitution of alternatives."

Regardless of the climate justice movement's critique of mainstream organisations, the notions of irreversibility and urgency that are called to mind by the scientific discourse surrounding climate change have created a tension between the movement's anti-capitalist desire and the immediate need to stop climate change (ibid). The tension essentially arises from the incompatible temporalities that climate change and revolutionary systemic transformation evoke; one implies an immediate reactionary response, while the other invokes a deep-seated long-term transformation of society (Mueller 2009a: 14). Although most participants in the climate justice movement support some level of anti-capitalist critique of the climate crisis, there are two observable interpretive communities within the climate justice movement: this first can be called a *reformist* community that wishes to address the climate crisis by lobbying third parties to take immediate action on the climate crisis, and the second can be called the radical left, which is attempting to follow anti-capitalist principles and foster grassroots transformation. This division is most clearly illustrated in the debates coming out of the UK Camp for Climate Action (CCA).

The CCA is a nation-wide "grassroots movement of diverse people taking action on climate change" that hosts a yearly week-long climate camp for "anyone who's fed up with empty government rhetoric and corporate spin" and culminates in a day of direct action against a "climate change target" (Randerson 2009). Being one of the most widely attended climate justice events in Western Europe<sup>18</sup>, the discussions and debates that emerge from these gatherings are extremely valuable sources of local knowledge that illustrate the tensions that exist within the movement, as well as the challenges that radical anti-capitalist movements face in trying to execute a successful revolutionary programme in the context of a crisis.

In January 2010, the CCA prepared and distributed '*Criticism without Critique: a climate camp reader*' detailing in thirty-four pages the "period of introspection" that the CCA intended to go through between January and February 2010. The authors consider the camp to be at "a cross-roads in its development, to continue down a path of ever increasing liberal, reformist approach, or to be the noisy radical, pointing out all the white elephants in the climate change debate" (Camp for Climate Action 2010a: 4). The primary concern echoed continuously throughout the reader is that "the camp risks losing contact with its anti-capitalist, anti-authoritarian roots and appearing as a gathering that lends its support to top-down, state centred responses to the crisis" (Camp for Climate Action 2010b: 6). The charting of this debate in a widely dispersed reader is not only an attempt to explicitly acknowledge the ideological contradictions that exist within the movement, but is also expected to have "profound impacts on who is and who is not involved in the future" (Shift Magazine 2010: 7). The tension between the reformist and the radical left at the climate camps manifests itself, according to Pusey and Russell, "not only in discussions but also in the political demands and actions taken by the CCA" (2010). As the following section will illustrate, acting in a way that addresses the urgency of the climate crisis, while at the same time

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<sup>18</sup> It is estimated that the last climate camp drew over 5,000 participants from across the UK, drawing a diverse crowd of participants – from families, to anarchists, to professionals (personal discussion with anonymous CJA participant).

embodying a revolutionary anti-capitalist critique, is a challenge that the radical left is beginning to recognise and address.

## **Part II – The ideological significance of action: militant lobbying or direct action?**

Direct action is defined by Gene Sharp in his article '*The meaning of non-violence: a typology*', (1959) as a process in which groups or individuals commit either to (1) acts of omission - refusing to perform acts that the group or individual is expected to perform by custom, or required to perform by law, (2) acts of commission - the insistence on performing acts that the individual or group does not usually perform, is not expected to perform, or is prohibited to perform by law, or (3) both (45). The aim of direct action may be to change or abolish existing attitudes, values, social patterns, customs or social structures, or conversely, may be in defence of these same norms, or a combination of the two (ibid). By nature, direct action is also extra-constitutional in the sense that it proceeds as if the state is nonexistent, and in certain cases, may not even make a "grand gesture of defiance" (Graeber 2009: 203). The composition of a direct action may take any shape or scale, what is important is that a direct action is intended to be anything but symbolic; its means are, as much as possible, expected to embody the ends that it strives to achieve (ibid). To borrow an example from David Graeber, if a community is in need of a source of water, a direct action would entail digging a well even if the act is in defiance of the law, whereas an indirect action would mean petitioning the mayor to build a well for the community (2009: 208).

Direct action is considered to be the only viable means for undermining capitalism, as it is implicit in the radical left's ideological assertion that neoliberal capitalism is a lived experience that re-organises material processes of individual lives in a way that perpetuates a social reality that neoliberalism alleges to be human nature (Harvie 2009: 5). This line of argumentation claims that people are not persuaded to adopt the logic of neoliberal capitalism, but are rather trained by the hegemony of the existing neoliberal system to view themselves as isolated, rational, benefit maximisers, thus creating a cycle of neoliberal self-affirmation (ibid). The radical left's critique of neoliberal capitalism is, therefore, not limited to the management of industrialised production and consumption practices, but is also concerned with the management of individuals and the way that people live their lives (ibid). Logically, addressing the climate crisis from this perspective does not involve changing elite thinking or lobbying the government to take action on climate change; it locates contention in the consciousness of the individual and the transformation of the social body (ibid). The radical left's insistence on the use of direct action is thus a direct reflection of its ideological position on the climate crisis – that capitalism is the root cause of climate change, that governments do not have the ability to address the crisis, and that only grassroots social movements have the ability to mediate this.

The definition of direct action described above is what might be considered a classical definition of direct action - the product of at least a century and a half of anarchist reflection (Graeber 2009:204). Recently, the term has been expanded in common usage to include "any form of political resistance that is overt, militant, and confrontational, but that falls short of outright military insurrection" (ibid). This definition revolves around the level of militancy of the structure of the action, rather than its intended goal. Actions that tend to be simultaneously militant and symbolic are easily confused with direct action, even though they are thoroughly indirect, based on the classical understanding of the term (ibid: 205). If the community in the example above were to blockade the mayor's house until he constructed a well, it may be considered direct action even though it lobbies the same individual and leaves the underlying social structure unquestioned. Pusey and Russell (2010) point out the "flawed logic" behind this type of action:

“The approaches of some direct action groups illustrate an underlying complicity, and indeed reliance, on the liberal post-political environmental consensus and are therefore radically reactionary as it obstructs the development of divergent and conflictual trajectories...The actions taken by these groups are often interpreted as being more ‘radical’ or ‘militant’...this appears to be no more than a battle of rhetoric, based on a flawed logic of what it means to be taking more radical or militant action” (emphasis added).

Many critics of the CCA, most of them coming from within the camp itself, have lamented the fact that the CCA has fallen into the tendency of “militant lobbying” as it has struggled with how to translate its anti-capitalist consensus into a radical programme of direct action (Jordan 2010: 28). Some of CCA’s previous targets for ‘direct action’ have included the Drax coal-fired power station (2006), the British Airport Authority (2007), Kingsnorth coal-fired power station/E.ON Energy Company (2008), the city of London (2009), E.ON Ratcliffe (2009), and most recently the Royal Bank of Scotland (2010) (Camp for Climate Action 2009). Although the coal and aviation industries are of obvious environmental significance for the climate camp, many have argued that single issue-based campaigns such as these focus their attention on individual consumption and “climate criminals” at the expense of drawing attention to the broader social processes inherent to capitalism, and how these processes are related to the climate crisis (Shift Magazine 2008).

Symbolic actions such as these more accurately fall under the category of civil disobedience - a form of dissent that challenges the legitimacy of the legislative element of the state while simultaneously expressing a fidelity with the state apparatus by recognising its rulemaking prerogative as legitimate and generally binding (Bleiker 2002: 37). It is important to note that the lines between direct action and civil disobedience are not as clear as this chapter may suggest; if one takes the classical definition of direct action to its limit, it becomes an almost unattainable ideal that cannot be performed under any framework of legality or at any time or place where public opinion is a factor (Graeber 2009: 208). While some direct actionists involved in the climate justice movement may dismiss this discussion as unnecessarily academic and sectarian (ibid), the underlying issues explored here illustrate authentic concerns that radical groups like CJA reflect upon when planning and executing mass-mobilised direct actions.

### **Part III – Addressing the danger of revolutionary quietism in times of crisis**

The question of whether to use reformist or revolutionary tactics is an old debate on the left that first emerged in response to the realisation that the social revolutions of the mid-nineteenth century would not come to pass (Mueller 2009a: 15). This debate aligned itself along two trajectories: one that advocated for a “maximalist” or “anti-political” position where capitalism would decisively be destroyed, and the other that emphasised a transformist politics of reformist transition (ibid). More recently, this debate has been recast in the internal debates of Social Democracy where Trotsky’s transitional demands take centre stage. In his 1938 pamphlet “The Transitional Program,” Trotsky insists upon the need to find a bridge between “present demand and the socialist program of the revolution” (Trotsky 1938: 2). Trotsky’s transitional demands are distinct from reformist demands, in that they call for the righting of particular wrongs in a society, while doing so in a way that exposes the shortcomings of the capitalist system by making seemingly reasonable demands that the capitalist system could not possibly deliver without making fundamental changes in the way it operates (*Lefties* 2007). An example of a transitional demand is the 1970’s London Squatters’ appeal for the government to supply “Housing for All” -

a demand that was not likely attainable, but sounded reasonable and exposed the inadequacies of the current capitalist system (ibid). Crucially, transitional demands also differ from revolutionary demands in that they call for changes that could be achieved without the overthrow of the capitalist system (ibid). In Wolf's opinion, the climate justice movement's rejection of transitional demands in their entirety means "not learning any of the lessons that the left should have learnt by now...and repeats an unfortunate tendency on the left to disdain mere 'improvements' ...while being entirely out of touch with historical reality" (Mueller 2009a: 15). He also points to the danger of "revolutionary quietism" that the climate justice movement risks slipping into if it is incapable of "effectively indicating a significant and achievable first step" (ibid).

The CCA is a prime example of what happens when a revolutionary program based on direct action is executed in the most elaborate way: it creates a kind of 'micro-utopia' that serves as a model for the revolutionary's visions of what a 'free society' should look like (Graeber 2009: 210). It is widely recognised that anti-capitalist theory has a difficult time connecting itself to the practical realities of daily life, and more readily exists as a "future utopia" in the minds of climate justice activists, or "every now and again" at anti-capitalist events (ibid: 32). Lenin addressed this tendency in his plan for a 'Revolutionary Realpolitik'<sup>19</sup>, where he claims that the disjunction between the final aim and the movement "not only distorts the assessment of everyday questions...but also makes the final aim itself Utopian" (Lukacs 1924). As a result, the Utopian or the climate justice activist considers the aim to be a process of *being* rather than *becoming* (ibid). This tendency to disconnect the revolutionary aim of the movement from the reality of everyday life makes it difficult for the radical left to conceive concrete steps that would lead to a revolutionary societal transformation – instead, the revolution remains as an image in the mind of the activist that does not compromise with reality. What the radical left is beginning to realise is that in the context of what it considers to be a global crisis threatening the survival of the planet, it has become crucially necessary to begin making ideological compromises with reality and to begin articulating concrete 'yeses' in addition to its well-rehearsed affirmative 'no.' In an effort to compromise with the current of the climate crisis, CJA has begun to re-consider some of the global justice movement's previous ideological principles – mainly the need to articulate clear demands that will lead to alternative solutions to the climate crisis, and the need to re-consider the role of institutionalism both in the allies the movement chooses to collaborate with and in its own internal processes. The following chapter will analyse these developments as indications that CJA is attempting to build its own bridge between the present demands of a dying planet and the desire for a revolutionary programme of direct action.

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<sup>19</sup> The Revolutionary *Realpolitik* of the Social Democrats was aimed at addressing the fact that the workers' movement failed to realistically and concretely propose practical aims for how socialism would function once the revolution came to pass. Revolutionary *Realpolitik* therefore, asks questions such as: how can socialism become socially possible? How can it be achieved? What class relations and economic forms must be confronted when the proletariat is finally met with the task of realising its aim? (Lukacs 1924)



## Chapter Four

# OPENNESS, QUESTIONS AND NEW CONNECTIONS: CJA'S RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The main objective of this research is to question how CJA is adapting its anti-capitalist agenda to fit within the context of what it considers to be an urgent global crisis, as well as to examine how it seeks to ensure that its actions maintain a revolutionary, rather than reformist quality in the process. Section I will present three ways in which CJA has responded to the challenge of acting within the context of climate change: first, by articulating a set of concrete demands, second by re-considering the role that institutionalism will play in the movement, and third by building up an explicit anti-capitalist climate justice discourse. The process of re-considering the role of institutionalism is evident in two key moments of CJA's activity: the Reclaim Power action that took place alongside the COP15 in Denmark, Copenhagen and the "Global Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth" in Cochabamba, Bolivia in April 2010. The final section will show that the anti-capitalist climate justice discourse that CJA has built will serve as the ideological foundation for the upcoming "Global Day of Direct Action for System Change not Climate Change" on 12 October 2010.

## Part I – Demands, institutionalism and discourse: CJA's response to anti-capitalism in the context of crisis

### a. Articulating Demands

In the context of what CJA considers to be a series of global crises threatening the survival of life on the planet, it has been acknowledged that it is no longer appropriate for the anti-capitalist movement to simply "dismiss something because it is 'capitalist,' without providing any alternatives" (Mueller 2009a: 16). This section will demonstrate that CJA is attempting to move past this tendency by articulating a set of demands that embody its anti-capitalist aspirations.

To recall, the demands expressed by CJA include leaving fossil fuels in the ground, replacing industrial agriculture with local systems of food sovereignty, recognising the ecological debt owned by the global North to the South, returning control over resources to local communities, reducing over-consumption, and respecting indigenous peoples' rights (CJA Call to Action 2009; Mueller 2010). These demands could be directed toward governments or international institutions, thus rendering them radically reformist, and indeed the next section will demonstrate the fact that they have been incorporated into traditional processes to some degree. However, Mueller believes that the demands more importantly contain a "compositional effect," that is, they provide a set of issues around which grassroots social movements can coalesce and work collectively (Mueller 2009a: 16). The demands are also antagonistic enough to prevent their immediate co-optation by other forces such as governments and NGOs. In fact, demands such as leaving fossil fuels in the ground are so antagonistic that they cannot be achieved without dismantling the capitalist system, thus separating them from Trotsky's transitional demands and making them revolutionary by nature. While revolutionary demands prevent CJA from slipping into reformist messaging, it continues to keep the network at the margins of the political debate, thereby preventing the network from taking what Wolf considers to be a crucial achievable first step forward. Nevertheless, the expression of concrete revolutionary goals is a significant attempt to transform the abstract image of the revolution into a more tangible ambition. One reader of Mueller's article '*Walking while asking Questions 2.0*' summarised the significance of these demands by commenting: "Such clear demands could offer the chance for [the] movement to leave the

ambiguity of anti-capitalism. Demands make a course of and results of action tangible” (Soup 2010). The expression of a set of demands not only makes the course of action tangible, but it is also a distinctive point of differentiation between the climate justice movement and the previous round of global anti-capitalist struggle.

## b. Reconsidering institutionalism

The global justice movement’s adoption of a unified ‘no’ among a multitude of ‘yeses,’ allowed it to claim that “another world is possible” without having to articulate what that world would like, or how it would be created (Mueller 2010). With the advent of the climate crisis, the greening of capitalism, and the global justice movement’s subsequent adoption of climate justice discourse, a notion of urgency has infused a new round of anti-capitalist struggle with the desire to act rather than simply attack. According to David Graeber, the primary difficulty that radical movements face when they attempt to act on behalf of their ideological beliefs, is that in order for a revolutionary programme to be successful, it must, to some degree, become institutionalised; it cannot exist in isolation from the rest of the world, nor can it have purely confrontational engagements with the wider community (2009: 210). Since the *raison d’être* of the global justice movement was essentially to be in confrontation with mainstream society, it was possible to reject institutionalism in all its forms. CJA on the other hand, has become conscious of the need to articulate concrete steps toward what it considers to be ‘real’ solutions, and has thus recognised the need to re-assess its relationship with institutionalism:

“Because [the waning of neoliberalism] has highlighted the weakness of the anti-neoliberal movement, its inability to institutionalise, i.e. render permanent, its gain and victories, there has lately been a change in the way that the relationship to institutions is being thought of in the global movements. Where a crass anti-institutionalism used to rein – which, to be clear, was *entirely appropriate* to the situation – today we encounter openness, questions and new connections” (Mueller 2010; italics in original).”

The second manner in which CJA is responding to the challenges of anti-capitalist climate politics is by reconsidering the overall function of institutionalism in two critical ways: (a) by collaborating and negotiating with NGOs and governments who previously would have been looked upon with distrust and cynicism, and (b) by acknowledging the need to build up alternative institutions within the climate justice movement itself.

## c. Building climate justice discourse

The task of establishing a common climate justice discourse through narratives, discussion papers and negotiations with allies, is something that CJA takes seriously. This task is multi-functional: it prevents the co-optation of the movement’s terms; it generates and maintains unity within the network; it preserves an antagonistic disposition by specifying what can and cannot be said on behalf of the movement; and finally, it allows the network to develop positions and strategies on relevant issues. Crucially, it also creates an ideological foundation upon which narratives can be built that will allow CJA to infuse its upcoming Global Day of Action with its own sensemaking process.

Previous unity statements, such as the network’s goals and principles and the ‘*What does climate justice mean in Europe?*’ discussion paper, demonstrate a general agreement within CJA on what is meant by climate justice in Europe. However, there appears to be a continuous desire to further develop these principles in order to

obtain “a realistic sense of where CJA is at and what its long term objectives are.”<sup>20</sup> A practical reason for this is a lesson learned from the CCA: it failed to “make the politics of the camp explicit,” meaning “there has been no guide to what can and cannot be said” (Groat 2010: 13). The first way that CJA is attempting to ensure that its actions remain radically anti-capitalist is to ensure that its politics are clear, so that when statements are made on behalf of the network it is representative of a collective voice. The desire to control what can and cannot be said on behalf of the movement is a subtle, yet significant shift from the ideological principles of global justice movement that was united by a common ‘no’ but recognised and found value in the diversity of ‘yeses’ that the movement had to offer. As CJA has opened itself up to new questions and connections, it has also found the need to specify in rigid terms what it stands for. CJA’s upcoming ‘Global Day of Direct Action for System Change not Climate Change’ is an attempt to put these collective meanings into action by creating a narrative to act as the ideological foundation of the actions on this day.

## **Part II – From Copenhagen to Cochabamba to the World: response strategies in action**

### **a. Reclaim power**

Beginning at a legalised starting point that was openly announced to the media and police, CJA and the climate justice bloc marched to the conference area with the aim of entering the UN Area from various directions, while groups inside the COP15 disrupted the official sessions and walked out in order to join CJA in front of the Bella Center (CJA Call to Action 2009). The goal was to replace the conference with a Peoples Assembly<sup>21</sup> that was intended to be an opportunity to discuss ‘real solutions’ and to send a clear message to the world about climate justice (ibid). CJA was not successful in reaching the UN Area due to opposition from the Danish police, nor was CJN! successful in leaving the Bella Centre to join the Peoples Assembly that eventually took place on the street outside the gates (Fernando 2009). Regardless of any appraisals criticising the success of the Reclaim Power action, the action was a physical manifestation of CJA’s willingness to reconsider the role that institutions can play in the next phase of anti-capitalist politics. As Chapter 2 described, the collaboration between the environmental and anti-capitalist movements around the COP15 provided the opportunity to overcome the pre-existing institutional barrier that existed between organisations working inside the official COP process and radical groups mobilising at the street level. The uniform response of the police to protesters inside and outside the Bella Centre - where NGO representatives attempting to leave the Bella Centre were treated with the same brutality as those on the streets - is seen as a confirmation of the new political lines that were drawn by the Reclaim Power action (Russell 2010). Russell plainly indicates that “Any reading of Copenhagen that draws simplistic lines between those ‘inside’ and those ‘outside’ will fall far short of developing an understanding of where [CJA’s] affinities lie” (ibid). This is a significant adjustment from the previous round of anti-capitalist struggle, where NGOs were looked upon with distrust and cynicism, and represents a re-consideration of previous ideological principles in the context of the climate crisis.

The People’s Assembly that took place on the street outside the Bella Centre can also be considered as CJA’s first attempt to build an alternative institution to that of the UNFCCC’s COP process. Although the action

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<sup>20</sup> Anonymous Participants, CJA International Meeting, 2 May 2010, Bonn, Germany.

<sup>21</sup> Peoples assemblies are also known as citizen’s assemblies in other parts of the world where members of the public come together in a formal process to identify issues that are of significance to them, pass resolutions, and identify future work that will continue past the assembly. The word ‘citizen’ was changed in favour of ‘people’ to avoid the exclusion of individuals who are not legally recognised as citizens (Author’s personal conversation with anonymous CJA participant).

has been criticised for its failure to actually enter the Bella Center, the attempt itself is perceived to represent a “fundamental challenge to the process of Copenhagen from above and all it entails” (Pusey 2010). The People’s Assembly was intended to be a space for a range of groups, coming from various institutional and political backgrounds, to acknowledge the common ground that was beginning to emerge around climate justice discourse. It also provided a physical space within which to recognise and solidify the new political lines that had been drawn as a result of the Reclaim Power mobilisation<sup>22</sup>.

## b. The global conference on climate change and the rights of Mother Earth

Following the perceived failure of the COP15 in Copenhagen, Bolivia’s President Evo Morales, called for an alternative climate summit – the ‘Global Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth,’ otherwise known as the ‘Peoples Conference’ – to take place in Cochabamba, Bolivia from 20-22 April 2010. The invitation called on “social movements and Mother Earth’s defenders...scientists, academics, lawyers and governments” alike to “analyse the structural and systemic causes that drive climate change and to propose radical measures to ensure the wellbeing of all humanity” (Morales 2010). The conference attracted 35,352 participants<sup>23</sup> as well as 56 official government delegations (Solon 2010). On 22 April 2010, the conference produced a “Peoples Agreement” that “stems from an integral vision of climate change incorporating the issue of the structural causes of the climate crisis” and synthesises the conclusions of the 17 working groups during the conference (Trombly 2010). On 30 April 2010, the Bolivian government forwarded a submission to the UNFCCC summarising the outcomes of the conference and the Peoples Agreement, and on 7 May 2010, Morales presented these results to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the G77 at the United Nations.<sup>24</sup> CJA, along with a small group of European activists from other networks attended the conference and organised a workshop titled ‘Building Bridges across Continents with Grassroots Climate Justice Movements.’ CJA introduced itself with a letter welcoming the opportunity of the Peoples Conference as “one important step on the long journey towards a post-capitalist society” explaining that CJA’s representatives were “happy to have this opportunity to discuss, learn and plan with other climate justice activists around the world” (CJA 2010).

The Peoples Conference represents a crucial shift in the way that radical anti-capitalist groups, such as CJA, relate to institutional actors. Much like the Reclaim Power action (albeit on a larger scale), the Peoples Conference brought together a wide variety of institutional and non-institutional actors to discuss what are perceived to be the structural causes of climate change. What is extraordinary in the case of the Peoples Conference is the willingness of radical anti-capitalists to collaborate with particular governments on these issues. Mueller points out that not since the Third International<sup>25</sup> have “progressive governments and social movements been brought together on such equal footing, outside the...UN-framework and in the context of such an explicitly anti-capitalist discourse” (Mueller 2010). The participation of CJA and other anti-capitalist networks in the Peoples Conference, is indicative of a re-consideration, if not a fundamental shift, in the way that radical anti-

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<sup>22</sup> CJA’s allies who were working inside the Bella Center and were prevented by police from joining the Peoples Assembly were connected via cell phone to the process taking place on the street (ecolabs1 2009)

<sup>23</sup> 9,254 of these participants came from 140 countries outside Bolivia, mostly from Latin and North America, as well as some participants from Europe and Asia. It is suspected that European, Asian and African participation were complicated due to the eruption of the Icelandic Volcano which grounded flights for several weeks in various parts of the world (Solon 2010).

<sup>24</sup> Speech delivered by Evo Morales to G77 on 7 May 2010. Transcript available at:

<http://pwccc.wordpress.com/2010/05/07/speech-by-president-evo-morales-to-the-g77-at-the-united-nations/>

<sup>25</sup> The Third International, also known as the Comintern, formed in March 1919 as a result of the 1917 Russian Revolution and initially comprised a number of small European political parties. By 1921, parties affiliated with the Comintern has the support of the majority of European workers in six countries – France, Italy, Norway, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia - as well as a significant minority in Germany, Sweden and Poland (Zetkin 1919).

capitalist movements conceptualise and relate to the role of governments within the framework of climate justice discourse.

This is not to say that CJA participants are uniformly in support of the network's participation in the conference; there is an ongoing discussion within CJA regarding how the network should relate to events such as this, and how the Peoples Conference can be used to CJA's advantage. One CJA activist expressed his confusion with how to deal with the fact that there now appears to be "good states" and "bad states" by pointing out the obvious but conveying fact that "Angela Merkel is not Evo Morales" and perhaps there are different ways that CJA should interact with each of them<sup>26</sup>. Part of the ambiguity arises from the fact that Morales' government is embedded in Bolivian social movements that CJA consider to be allies, thus creating a whole new genre of institutional processes that include and empower social movements as active participants in official governmental processes<sup>27</sup>. In this context, anti-institutionalism and other ideological considerations rooted in anarchist principles hold very little relevance in the Latin American reality, which consequently raises questions as to whether CJA should also adopt this position. Nevertheless, the political reality for Latin American social movements is not the reality for European movements, effectively raising a number of contradictions that CJA is currently unable to resolve without further deliberation, thus forcing them to "walk while asking questions"<sup>28</sup> (Mueller 2010). The desire to resolve these contradictions is present in CJA's ongoing discussion paper "*What does climate justice mean in Europe?*" (2008) but the analysis does not go beyond recognising Europe's historical and present role in creating and perpetuating the climate crisis, thus leaving the question of governments and institutions unexplored. Those present at the May 2010 CJA International meeting in Bonn, Germany agreed that the "institution/movement relationship" will be "one of the major questions in the future."

While the Peoples Conference opens up an important discussion regarding CJA's engagement with governmental bodies, it also demonstrates a substantial step toward the creation of an alternative international institution that represents the broader climate justice movement. The presentation of the Peoples Agreement to the UNFCCC and UN Secretary General is an unprecedented effort to formally recognise and institutionalise the collective voice of social movements and civil society with regards to climate change, not to mention a collective voice that is explicitly critical of capitalism. Although there are many questions that remain in need of answers – what effects this institution will have on the future development of climate justice politics, what relationship alternative institutions will have with traditional institutions, how decisions made by alternative institutions can be implemented – events such as the Peoples Assembly at the Reclaim Power action, and the Peoples Conference, indicate a noteworthy transformation, and indeed a maturation of the previous phase of anti-capitalist social movement activity. These changes create a space for CJA to begin moving past the ambiguity of capitalism, but they also expose CJA to the possibility of being co-opted into mainstream climate politics if it does not carefully maintain a radically antagonistic position. The following section will examine CJA's strategy for managing this tension.

### c. Day of direct action for system change not climate change

On 31 May 2009, Latin American indigenous social movements called for a global mobilisation '*In Defence of Mother Earth and Her People and against the commercialization of life, pollution and the*

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<sup>26</sup> Anonymous participants, CJA International meeting, 4 May 2010, Bonn, Germany.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*

<sup>28</sup> The saying "walking while asking questions" comes from the Mexican Zapatista's idea of "*caminamos preguntado*" which alluded to the fact that the group needed to act pragmatically at the same time as it resolved its theoretical contradictions (Mueller 2010).

*criminalization of indigenous and social movements.*’ The date chosen for this event was 12 October in an effort to reclaim the day that many North Americans celebrate as Columbus Day<sup>29</sup> (CJA Call to Action 2010). The ‘*Where Next*’ meeting, which was hosted by CJA and CJN! as a follow-up to the Reclaim Power action, resulted in a clear agreement among the parties that a global day of action for ‘system change, not climate change’ should occur in 2010 (CJA 2009). Taking both of these together, CJA committed to mobilising for a “day of direct action for climate justice on 12 October 2010” (ibid). CJA’s decision to support the indigenous movements’ call for a global mobilisation is recognition of the fact that limiting the climate justice movement’s mobilisation to yearly international summits has the negative effect of diminishing the energy of participants in between summits, while forcing CJA to be purely reactionary. In addition to this strategic insight, choosing to link Columbus Day, colonialism, capitalism and climate justice is an explicit attempt by CJA to seize the symbolic opportunity of the day and to infuse the direct actions with a symbolism that is representative of its ideology.

Infusing an action with symbolism does not make it radical or direct, and although CJA does not encourage any specific targets, it is likely that many of the direct actions that take place on this day will target symbolic ‘climate criminals and false solutions.’ In an attempt to ensure that the anti-capitalist message is not lost or misinterpreted, CJA has prepared a four-page written letter detailing the network’s understanding of the historical significance of the day and its connection to the present-day crisis. The letter openly acknowledges the fact that capitalism is a “complex web of social relations that took centuries to emerge” and therefore, it is not realistic to expect to “bring down the entire system, or build a new world, in a single day;” any action undertaken with this in mind will be understood as having some sort of symbolic value (ibid). CJA’s response to this problem is to operationalize the symbolism of the day by rooting the purpose of the action in the symbol itself. Rather than making the aim of the day to reduce emissions or close down a coal factory, the purpose of the day is described as “an unveiling of the root causes of the climate crisis” and an attempt to strengthen the movement for climate justice by acting as “an affirmation that – wherever you live and whatever your struggle – we struggle against capital and for other worlds, together” (ibid). Instead of singling out a particular target or form of action (CJA only specifies that it is not a day for “lobbying others to act on your behalf” but to “actively close things down and open things up”), the letter focuses on the intention of the actions, which is to “reclaim power and take control of our lives and futures” (ibid). The writing of a narrative to go along with a call to action is indicative of CJA’s attempt to not only frame the issue of climate change in a certain way by connecting it to a symbolic day, but also to provide an ideological script that will affect the sensemaking processes of those who read it. The physical action becomes secondary to the narrative itself, as it could be any action that enables a person to understand and be conscious of the connection between colonialism, capitalism and the climate crisis.

As CJA begins to move from the outskirts of political debate, to join NGOs and governments in their call for what are considered to be ‘real’ solutions to the climate crisis, it has begun to make ideological compromises that require the network to develop a strategy to maintain its radical anti-capitalist character. Rather than strategising about the structure of its actions, CJA is currently concerned with building up and defending a strictly anti-capitalist climate justice discourse that it uses to give meaning to its pre-existing repertoires of action. Articulating a set of demands, working with institutional actors, building alternative institutional structures and writing dogmatic texts are practices that the previous round of anti-capitalist struggle would have resisted as sectarian and counter-productive. CJA’s openness, as well as its willingness to ask questions and make

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<sup>29</sup> 12 October 1492 marks the day that Christopher Columbus first arrived on what is now known as the Americas. This is a national holiday in the United States, and is also recognised by many as the formal beginning of colonialism (CJA Call to Action 2010).

connections with new allies, demonstrates the maturation of the anti-capitalist movement as it attempts to emerge from a state of revolutionary quietism.

## *Concluding Thoughts*

The IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report paints a picture of a chaotic world that exists in a not-so-distant future. Scientists, government officials, NGOs and social movements are engaged in a debate about what this future will look like and how humans should respond to the challenges it may hold. Confronted with the urgency and irreversibility of these catastrophic projections, global movements struggling against capitalism have begun to apply their critique of the socio-economic system to the climate crisis, and have subsequently found new common ground with environmental movements around the discourse of climate justice. Having observed the failure of governments to reach a fair, ambitious and binding agreement at the COP15, many mainstream organisations joined CJA in their assertion that only a "powerful climate justice movement can achieve the structural changes that are necessary" (CJA Call to Action 2010). While many of these actors share a desire for a strong climate justice movement, there is at times, a tension between the urgent need to stop climate change, and the antagonistic critique of capitalism that the movement is rooted in. This tension raises a number of contradictions and questions for how the climate justice movement can act in a way that is appropriate in the context of a crisis, yet still maintain an anti-systemic dimension. In an effort to mediate this tension, CJA has responded by making three observable changes from the previous round of anti-capitalist struggle; these include articulating a set of demands, reconsidering the role of institutionalism, and building up an explicit anti-capitalist climate justice discourse that is intended to give ideological direction to the movement's actions and affect the sensemaking processes of the wider public.

CJA has expressed its set of demands in recognition of the fact that in the context of what it considered to be a global crisis, it is no longer appropriate to criticise socio-economic structures without proposing any alternative solutions to the way that society is organised. While the global justice movement existed solely to say 'no' to neoliberal globalisation, climate change has forced the climate justice movement to become more pragmatic and to being saying 'yes.' With a concrete, albeit far-off, set of goals in hand, CJA has begun to think in more practical and strategic terms.

The Reclaim Power action organised by CJA on 16 December 2009 in Copenhagen was the physical manifestation of the new common ground around which the anti-capitalist and environmental movements have coalesced. Acting within the common framework of climate justice, ENGOs and radical groups exposed the false inside/outside political barrier that previous summits have erected between officially recognised organisations and activist networks. The new political lines that were drawn by the Reclaim Power action are a clear illustration of the radical left's willingness to reconsider the role of institutional actors in the climate justice movement. Furthermore, the People's Assembly that took place outside the Bella Centre is an indication of the climate justice movement's desire to build an alternative institution alongside the UNFCCC COP structure, as well as to recognise and solidify the movement's achievements in the process.

CJA's participation in the Peoples' Conference hosted by the Bolivian government in Cochabamba, presents a remarkable shift from the global justice movement's categorical rejection of governments as illegitimate allies in the struggle against capitalism. The close relationship between Morales' government and Bolivian indigenous social movements, as well as the government's explicit anti-capitalist critique of the climate crisis, has raised fundamental questions about how CJA will interact with governments and international institutions in the future. While many of the network's participants are unsure as to the appropriateness and usefulness of engaging in a government sponsored event such as this, the creation of the People's Agreement has been widely acknowledged as a valuable document that can stand alongside the Copenhagen Accord as a

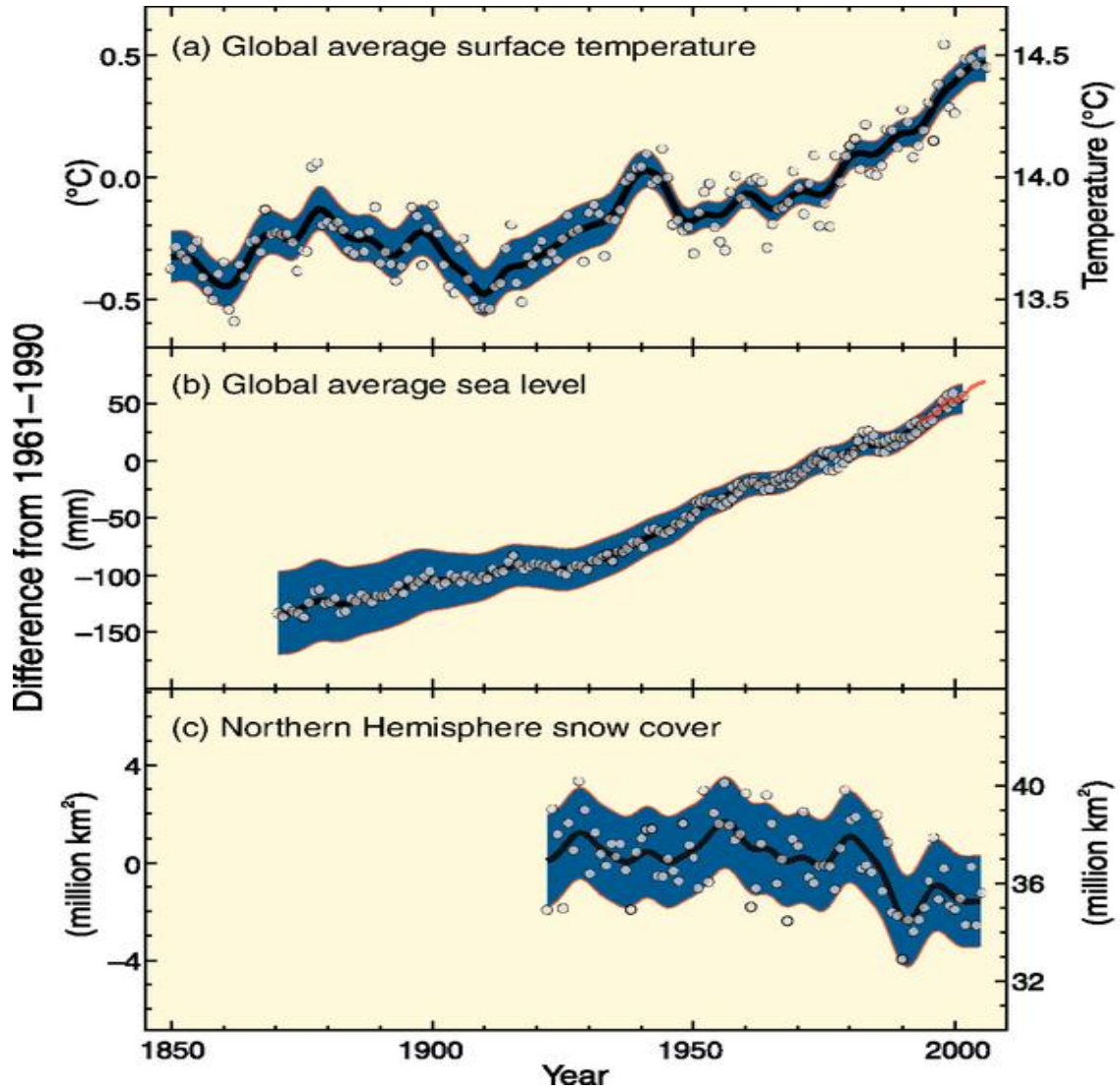


representation of civil society's position on the climate crisis. Moreover, the radical left's participation in the Peoples' Conference represents the climate justice movement's maturation from a nebulous informal network of activists to one that is beginning to move past the ambiguity of anti-capitalist ideology. Nevertheless, CJA's relationship with governments - and institutionalism more generally - has generated a number of contradictions that CJA is attempting to reconcile as it determines how to act pragmatically while maintaining a radical anti-capitalist stance on the climate crisis.

If CJA is offering its support to alternative summits hosted by governments, and allying with reformist mainstream ENGOs, how does it ensure that its demands are not counted among the cacophony of voices calling for greener capitalism and stronger government regulation? CJA's current strategy for attempting to ensure that its actions embody an anti-capitalist disposition is to create dogmatic ideological expressions upon which direct actions are subsequently planned and executed. Writing unity statements, discussion papers and narratives are an attempt to imbue CJA's direct actions with a radical character that is intended to preserve the ideological position of the network while affecting the sensemaking processes of those who observe them. There is no evidence to suggest that CJA has considered radicalising its actions, but rather is biased toward refining and perfecting its ideological positions in order to separate itself from other direct action groups who share similar tactics but who are radically reformist by nature.

Amy Goodman was correct in observing that the COP15 had inspired a new generation of activists to join a mature and sophisticated climate justice movement. The climate justice movement has demonstrated an ability to make sense of the changing political and economic arena and to adapt its ideological principles accordingly. Where an aimless critique of capitalism and a rigid rejection of institutionalism used to exist, a new movement with the desire to act and create alternatives to the existing socio-economic structure has taken its place. This research has shown the many questions and contradictions that the climate justice movement will need to address in the near future, and certainly new questions will arise however, CJA will continue to 'walk while asking questions.'

Appendix A



## Appendix B

### LIST OF CJA MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

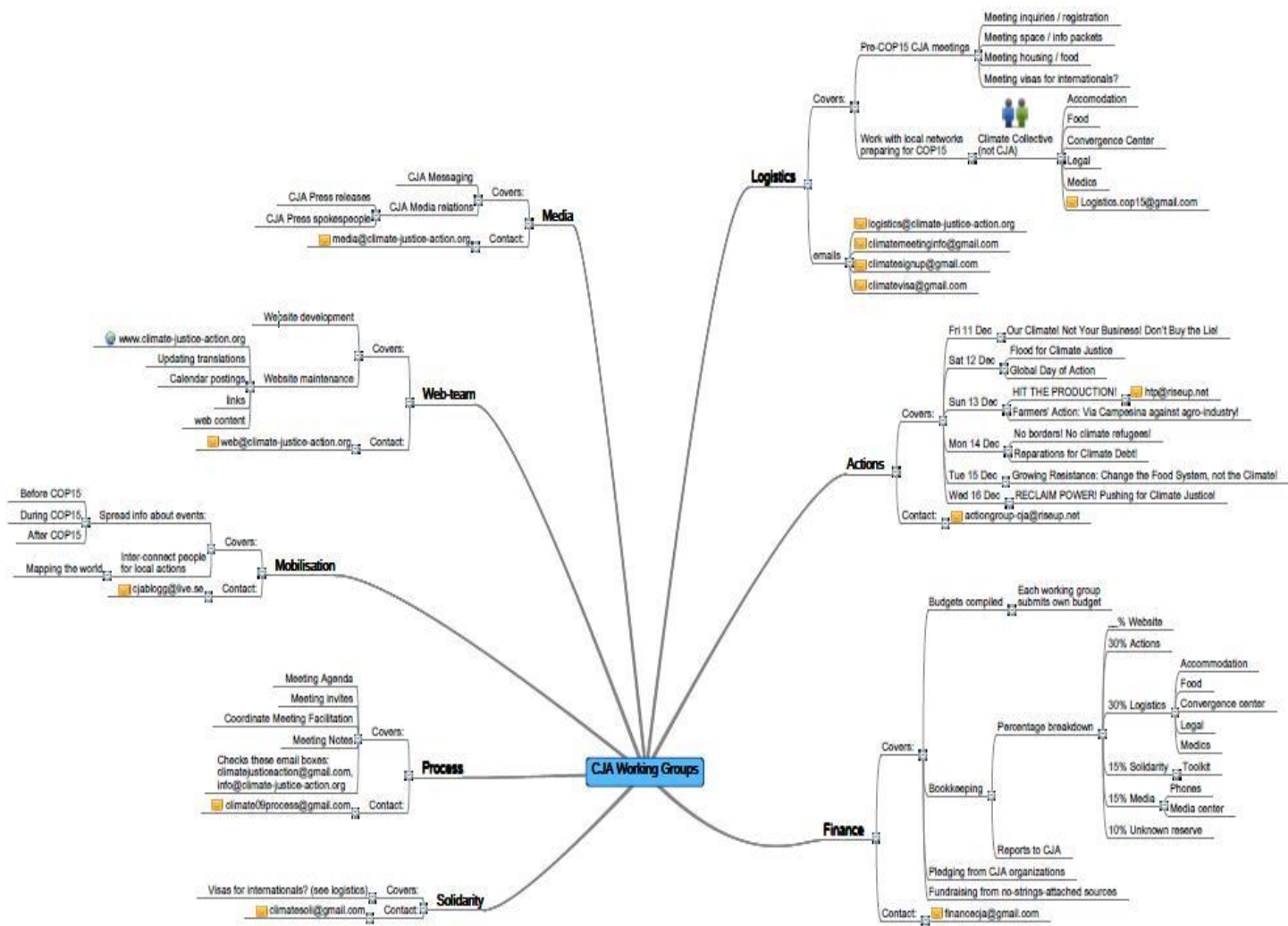
Available online at: <http://www.climate-justice-action.org/about/organizations/>

Africa Contact (Denmark)	GroenFront! Dutch/Belgium branch of the EarthFirst Network
Anders Bekeken (Netherlands)	Hyökyaalto Finnish climate action group
Avanti – Projekt undogmatische Linke (Germany)	Human Rights Defenders Network, Huriden Nigeria
A SEED Europe (Netherlands)	Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF)
A World to Win	Indigenous Environmental Network (international)
Canadians for Action on Climate Change	Institute for Social Ecology, Plainfield, VT U.S.A.
Camp for Climate Action Aotearoa	Jubilee South
Chesapeake Citizens	Kenya Young Greens
Climate Camp Cymru	Klimakollektivet – Climate Collective (Denmark)
Climate Camp Ireland	Klimax, Sweden
Climate Justice Action Milano	KlimaX Copenhagen (Denmark)
Climate Watch Alliance (Nepal)	KlimaX Jylland (Denmark)
Carbon Trade Watch	Klima!Bewegungsnetzwerk (Germany)
Collectiu Eco-Actiu, Catalunya	Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Centre
Committee for Third World Debt Cancellation	(Ihahrdev, Nigeria)
Corporate Europe Observatory	
Earth First!	
Earth Peoples	
Eco WALK the Talk	linksjugend [´solid] Germany
Ecologistas en Acción	nAci – No Automobile Club Italia (organization of no-owners of car)
Ecodharma Project, Catalunya	Paz Verde
Egality for Climate Justice Action (UK)	Platform UK
Escanda	Precarious United for Climate Action
European Youth for Action (EYFA)	REBRIP Rede Brasileira Pela Integração dos Povos
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)	Rising Tide UK
F.A.R.M.A. Collective (Greece)	Rising Tide North America
FASE (Brazil)	Sanctuary Magazine
FYEG (Federation of Young European Greens)	Society For Threatened Peoples International
FelS – Fuer eine Linke Stroemung (For a Leftist Movement)	Terra de Direitos, Brazil
Focus on the Global South	Trapese ( popular education network )
GAIA Denmark	UK Climate Camp
Gegenstrom Berlin Germany	Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF)
Global Climate campaign	Yasuni-ITT
Global Forest Coalition	Zero Carbon Caravan (British Isles)
Global Justice Ecology Project USA	

## Appendix C

### CJA WORKING GROUPS STRUCTURE FOR RECLAIM POWER ACTION

Available online at: <http://www.climate-justice-action.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/CJA-Working-Groups.pdf>



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