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Central Durban (Photo: *Africaimagery*, used with permission)



Durban's International Convention Centre (Photo: Patrick Bond)



PART ONE: DURBAN POLITICAL ECOLOGY

Prefigurative Political Ecology and Socio-Environmental Injustice in Central Durban

Patrick Bond & Ashwin Desai

I stand and gaze and feel—and marvel! Is
 This then the great city that has planted
 Despair in me? What contrasts jolt in this
 Strange Hive: souls kind and hard; pure Good; great Sins!
 This Hope or Mockery, Lord? Or Joy or Pain?
 For here beneath my eyes lie wonder scenes
 That should ring Joy but only fling me Pain!
 —Herbert Dhlomo, 1940s (from Berea Ridge above central Durban)

Sturdy British businessmen
 made this town (and “Coolies”!)
 Light-festoons along the beach
 dribble away the nutriment
 of glaucous hunger-swollen urchins;
 proud men display perverse inverted pride
 as carrier-beasts for lording colonialness;
 the stairs are occupied by ancient odors
 of curry, hospitality and insecurity,
 and the image of incited rampage
 is cherished like a rusted hunting knife
 amid the bustle of rapacity,
 uncertain liberals and pink gins.
 —Dennis Brutus, 1960s

Two of the city’s poets, Herbert Dhlomo and Dennis Brutus, would look at Durban from the western heights today and pass harsh judgment on a political transition that replaced racial barriers with class barriers, on a sports tourism paradise replete with South Africa’s most extreme eco-social contradictions, and on redevelopment processes that further squeeze and pollute poor residents. Yet no one will deny that the city of Durban has prepared an extraordinary setting to host the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Kyoto Protocol from November 28 to December 9, 2011. The Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (ICC) and next-door Durban Exhibition Centre (DEC) are together the largest conference

facility in Africa. Within a few blocks, hotels serving middle- and upper-class clients adjoin the most democratic public space in South Africa, Durban's beachfront, itself rehabilitated just before the 2010 soccer World Cup.

New highway extensions into the city as well as a new airport and beachfront drive give visitors the most luxurious entrance to a South African city (aside from the Johannesburg airport-Sandton fast train). The view as you enter the sports precinct from the wealthy neighborhoods of Durban North is simply spectacular, with golf courses on both sides giving way to two world-class stadia on your right and exceptional beaches on your left to the east. Durban's official plans for hosting the COP-17 allow delegates to begin accreditation next to the new Moses Mabhida Stadium, followed by security checks near the main casino and a beach party at the site of the celebrated 2010 World Cup fanfest. The ICC/DEC will be augmented by large "Africa Pavillion" marquees for business and civil society. Just south are the Workshop Shopping Centre and a still-glamorous City Hall of Victorian vintage, surrounded by palm trees but incongruously designed with Belfast, Northern Ireland as a model.

This site reveals a great deal about both Durban politics and the potential for disruptions to the desired elite outcome of the COP-17. As constituted by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), that outcome is a straight neoliberal trajectory from Copenhagen's COP-15, whose 2009 Accord between the U.S., Brazil, South Africa, India, and China "blew up the United Nations," as Bill McKibbin put it (Bond 2010), to Cancún COP-16's revival of carbon market fantasies (Bond 2011), to Durban where climate finance deal-making appears as the only substantive augmentation to global climate governance. By all accounts, Durban will spell the end of the Kyoto Protocol's binding commitments and differentiated responsibilities. The name of the city will be, for climate science and activism, akin to Oslo's reputation in the Middle East: betrayal, incompetence, and elite failure.

What of socio-political resistance? Even if there is no disruptive blockade, the moment is ripe for comparison to the powerful joining of radical activists, labor, social movements, and environmentalists, who showed that the obscure World Trade Organization's Millennium Round in Seattle in 1999 could give enormous leverage, not only to highlight single issues, but to thread them together with like-minded critics of a universal opponent. Will climate change—and a growing popular critique of the "Conference of Polluters" (COP)—potentially offer a similar site of connecting dots, finding convergences, and forging unity? Will the area around the negotiators create a "laager" in which the paranoid political economy of global conferencing aligns with Durban's distorted political ecology of exclusion and environmental destruction? Or will the strands of dissent in the area help tens of thousands of incoming protesters find unity across traditional divides of community, labor, and environment?

To get a sense of the possibilities in the immediate vicinity of the ICC, we begin by noting contradictions embodied in the sports precinct, ripe for further contestation given the legacy of hosting the World Cup and the envisaged bid for a future (2024)

Olympics. We then move southwest, exploring Albert Park through the eyes of oppressed immigrants, before considering the Indian quarter, including the critical site of Warwick Junction, where in 2009 informal market vendors beat back an attack by the city. From there due east to the beaches reveals a less-encouraging spatial struggle between fisherfolk and municipal officials. Together these struggles clarify future lines of engagement as the climate crisis intensifies Durban eco-social contradictions.

Sports Tourism as Climate Injustice

Just north of the ICC, the world-class Moses Mabhida Stadium—incongruously named after an anti-apartheid Communist Party organizer who was a mentor to South African President Jacob Zuma—cost \$450 million, overrun from an original \$250 million budget. The 70,000-seat Mabhida Stadium is delightful to view, so long as we keep out of sight and mind the city's vast backlogs of unmet needs for housing, water and sanitation, electricity, clinics, schools, and roads, all of which is punctuated by the absurd cost escalation. In 2009, while redirecting municipal resources to the Mabhida Stadium, top Durban officials decided to reduce the annual target of 16,000 new houses built for low-income people to just 9,500, as against a (conservatively estimated) backlog of 234,000 units (Academy of Science of South Africa 2011, 41).

Harder to keep from view is next-door neighbor Kings Park Stadium (until recently known as ABSA Stadium), home of Sharks rugby, which seats 52,000 and which could easily have accommodated the World Cup, since just a year earlier it had hosted the Confederations Cup semifinal.

As is typical for cities hosting large international sports events, Durban experienced a hefty World Cup hangover, mainly due to the ongoing losses from Mabhida Stadium. The World Cup Local Organizing Committee leader, Danny Jordaan, apologized to the country in mid-2011 because, as he put it, “not enough thought had gone into planning of the stadiums to ensure they would be financially viable.” Durban City Manager Mike Sutcliffe disagreed, saying

Durban now has two sports stadiums, when one would have been adequate. (Photo: *Africaimagery*, used with permission)



“I am happy. We made the right decisions.” But in contrast to the money-earning Kings Park Stadium, Mabhida’s annual \$11 million in operating costs were only partially offset by income of just \$8 million in the highest-use year of 2010/11 (Dardagan 2011). Sutcliffe’s efforts to move the Sharks across the road repeatedly failed, so long-term municipal subsidization is required for Mabhida Stadium, as is the case with the ICC and Point’s uShaka Marine Park, the city’s other two large white elephants.

The sharpest protest against the stadium’s operation was by several hundred security workers. On June 13, 2010, immediately after the Germany-Australia game, the workers demanded payment of a promised bonus, since they only received \$27 for twelve hours’ work. This paltry pay is a reflection of the outsourcing and superexploitation now typical in the often-dangerous security sector. Police tear-gassed and stun-grenaded 300 workers, who then joined more than 1,000 other community and social movement activists in a June 16 protest march to City Hall to demand a “World Cup for All.” On July 3, several hundred rallied at City Hall against what might be regarded as the greatest failing of the local subaltern classes: xenophobic tendencies. The inner-city hosts a large immigrant population and just as in mid-2008, the period immediately after the World Cup was rife with attacks on Southern African immigrant workers by South African workers on the grounds that the immigrants take jobs, lower wage rates, overcrowd scarce accommodation in expensive inner-city housing markets, and bring excess competition to overtraded micro-retail township markets (Amisi et al 2011). While these actions appeared futile, in contrast the most successful protest explicitly against the World Cup was carried out in mid-2009 by hundreds of Durban informal traders facing displacement from the century-old Early Morning Market, which city planners wanted to raze in order to erect a nearby shopping mall in time for the World Cup. However, sustained resistance over a year-long period, including a pitched battle with police in July 2009, saved the market. In another form of protest, culture-jamming, Durban’s leading rapper, Iain ‘Ewok’ Robinson (2010), contributed his thoughts on the World Cup with the tune “Shame on the Beautiful Game.”

The main winners in the Mabhida debacle were large corporations and black “tenderpreneurs”—who win state tenders thanks to affirmative action if they are politically well-connected to established white firms—especially in the construction sector. Durban journalist Sam Sole (2010) posed the question of whether Mabhida’s legacy is an “arch of hope” or a “yoke of debt” in a hard-hitting investigation of 2010 World Cup (Packree and de Boer 2007; de Boer 2008; and Mail & Guardian 2010) crony-capitalism. According to Sole, the main beneficiaries were Ibholo Lethu (Our Football Team), the lead consortium for the stadium, which included Craig Simmer¹;

¹Simmer previously worked for Remnant Alton, the firm that failed miserably in its attempt to privatize Durban’s municipal bus service. He had also served as director of the ill-fated Dolphin Whispers development, luxury apartments at the Durban Point Waterfront (*The Mercury* 2010).

Bruinette Kruger Stoffberg (an old Broederbond firm that profited nicely serving the Afrikaner nationalist project); and the construction firm, Group 5/WBHO, part of former state prosecutor Bulelani Ngcuka's Mvelaphanda Group, whose chairman at the time was Housing Minister Tokyo Sexwale. Durban tycoon Vivian Reddy's Edison Power also scored a major electricity contract in the deal.

Another questionable project was the new \$1.2 billion King Shaka International Airport, given that Durban International Airport in South Durban had excess capacity until 2017, and there is no public transport to King Shaka, which is double the distance and taxi fares from central Durban. The premature closure of Durban International Airport proved the single biggest embarrassment for Local Organizing Committee leadership and the Airports Company of South Africa, when King Shaka could not cope with VIP private jets that jammed the airport on July 7, the day of the semi-final between Spain and Germany. More than 1,000 furious soccer fans in eight planes had to be rerouted back to Johannesburg and Cape Town because the VIPs blocked boarding gates, refusing to park their jets away from the runway or fly to other nearby small airports.

The contrast between Durban's extreme sports-tourism extravagances and the worsening living conditions of the vast majority of its citizens is acute. Leading up to and during the World Cup, Durban's underclass engaged in creative and poignant actions to expose their harsh conditions. One such action was the 2008 "eat-in" by hungry unemployed people, who twice simply sat and ate food within a local chain supermarket without paying, resulting in 200 arrests. The ongoing attempts by street children to avoid arrest and deportation also highlighted the discrepancy.

Generational Forced Removals

Given that climate change will have such an adverse effect along generational lines, it is particularly disturbing that some of central Durban's most excluded people are children—especially those whose families have been disrupted by AIDS (and the refusal by the former Mbeki government to provide antiretroviral medicines, leading to an estimated 330,000 unnecessary deaths). If past practices continue, street children will be removed from the area around the ICC for COP-17. Although the municipality was pressured to adopt a more humane approach in preparation for the 2010 World Cup (Packree and de Boer 2007; de Boer 2008; and Mail & Guardian 2010), its intentions were obvious for several years prior. In 2005, for example, the City Manager made this revealing official statement:

Screaming headlines claiming that eThekweni [Durban municipal government] is rounding up street children and ushering them out of the public's eyes to avoid them being seen by tourists provide evidence once again of the shoddy state of

some of our media and their lack of transformation... We can understand outrage if we were rounding children up and dumping them in jails or the outskirts of the city. (Sutcliffe 2005.)

All indications in subsequent years confirmed that dumping children outside Durban *was* common, and in 2009, Sutcliffe, quoted in Durban's daily newspaper *The Mercury*, conceded as much:

When the heads of state are going to appear at conferences, the first thing that security does is move the street children out of the way so they can't be seen. Four years ago we used to deal with it that way, but we are not going to deal with it like that anymore. (Comins 2009.)

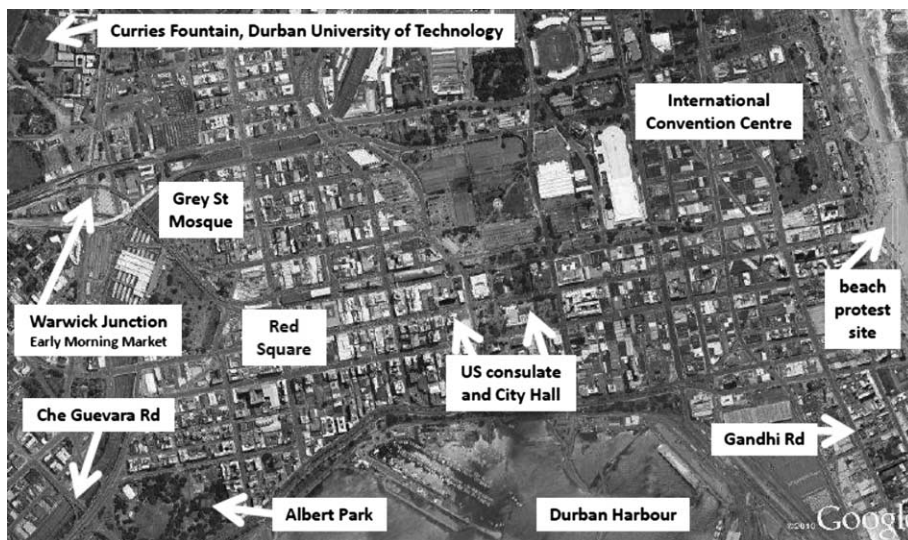
But as the World Cup approached, matters degenerated, for as the *Sunday Times* reported in early 2010,

Street children have accused the Durban metro police of removing them from the city. This week youngsters from nine to 19 told the *Sunday Times* how metro policemen rounded them up daily and dumped them on the city's outskirts, often on busy freeways or at unregistered shelters ... Local NGO Umthombo said the police's methods were inhumane. The organization said the welfare of the children was more important than Durban's image. CEO Tom Hewitt said: "Street children are not a safety and security issue, but a social development issue. Police put children in the back of trucks with adults and gang members. It exposes the kids to more trauma." He said removing children for the World Cup was not about child protection but about cleaning up the streets (Laganparsad, 2010).

Hewitt (2010) elaborated on the problem on Umthombo's website:

Round-ups have often happened in Durban before major international conferences or sports events. Now, with the World Cup in mind, it appears metro police have stepped up their efforts. The children allege that the police sometimes attempt to take them back to their homes, but end up dumping them on the roadside. Seventeen-year-old Wendy Ndlovu said she and two friends were recently left in Amanzimtoti, 30 kilometers away. "[The police] dropped us near the garage. I asked the people where town was and we started walking. We walked all night and we slept in the bushes," said Ndlovu. "[The police] say we can't be here [in the city] for the World Cup and that they will take us to a nice place. But they end up leaving us anywhere or in these scary houses."

So much for repeated commitments by top city officials to treat street children with dignity. With respect to intergenerational justice, street children are among Durban's main victims of economic injustice, the healthcare crisis, and in the future, climate change.



Xenophobia in the Society, Two Deaths in Albert Park

The other central Durban residents who are the targets of similar municipal—and social—disregard are refugees from areas such as Southern Matabeleland in Zimbabwe, who (due to Zulu-Ndebele language similarities) are the majority immigrant group in the city. In the future, they will be among the continent's hardest-hit climate change victims. In the zone southwest of the International Convention Centre, which encompasses the decaying inner-city medium-rise flats around Albert Park, local working-class men have repeatedly expressed their hostility to these and other refugees. In January 2009 this hostility took a fatal turn.

An outbreak of xenophobic violence occurred against African immigrants, and the main attack was allegedly led by the African National Congress (ANC) city councillor from Albert Park, Vusi Khoza. It resulted in the deaths of two people who were thrown from the Venture Africa building's sixth floor. The city authorities' response—permitting Khoza to remain a councillor—and the ongoing court case shed light on how difficult it is for immigrants to find a secure place in central Durban. Southern Africans—especially from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, and Malawi—as well as parts of the Horn (Ethiopia and Somalia) and West Africa (Nigeria) have witnessed an extraordinary rise in hostility from South Africans over the past decade.

This harsh reality shatters the dream enticing African immigrants to the country—a dream, ironically, often encouraged by highly romantic descriptions of what awaits those who come. Here, for the benefit of tourist marketing, one provincial politician sings the praises of the

cosmopolitan appearance of the population, the multitudes of cultures [and] tolerance of the diversity of cultures . . . availability of a diverse kind of goods, particularly when we talk about the arts and crafts, that are very specific in terms of identity—that these are what you will find in an African setting. And it's increasingly getting very cosmopolitan in terms of African states, that you will find actually showing their influence around. So it makes you very much . . . able to say once you are here, you are in a friendly environment (quoted in Bass 2009, 253–254).

Two senior city officials, Sutcliffe (City Manager since 2002, though he is slated for replacement in late 2011) and his assistant responsible for the ICC, Julie-May Ellingson, espouse Durban's official determination to emphasize an "African City" identity with the statement that "Our theatre is Africa, South Africa is the stage, and we (Durban) are one of the main characters" (cited in Bass 2009, 250). Bass quotes Sutcliffe's claim to "creating an inclusive, well-governed, caring, and democratic city" (2009, 250). But the experiences of African foreigners on the streets of the city of Durban—which have been marked by the most vicious form of "othering"—exposes the hypocrisy of these sentiments.

Across the country, the May 2008 xenophobic attacks resulted in the deaths of just over 60 people. According to official reports, some 342 shops were looted, 213 gutted, and 1,384 people arrested (Minister of Safety and Security Charles Nqakula quoted in Crush et al. 2008, 11). The attacks were greeted with shock and horror across South Africa and further afield. How could this be happening in a country with an international reputation for reconciliation and whose people were dubbed the "rainbow nation of God" in recognition of their seeming "miraculous" ability to overcome a three-century-old racial division and oppression? It is also a country that is widely acknowledged for its founding constitution and emphasis on human rights supported by a relatively well-funded domestic Human Rights Commission.

Speaking for the government side, Minister of Intelligence Ronnie Kasrils blamed a mythologized "Third Force" of political saboteurs as well as other right-wing elements and criminals. There was little acknowledgement that xenophobic violence has a longer history in post-apartheid South Africa. When warned by the African Peer Review Mechanism team in December 2007 that "xenophobia against other Africans is currently on the rise and must be nipped in the bud," then South African President Thabo Mbeki replied that this was "simply not true" (Johwa 2008). But from the birth of the new democracy, the danger signals were there. As early as December 1994, African foreigners were attacked by local residents in Alexandra township next to Johannesburg's Sandton financial center, where many witnessed their shacks and houses destroyed, while others were forcibly marched to the police station. The mob mobilization was named "Operation Buyelekhaya" (go back home). According to Jonathan Crush et al. (2008, 21),

attacks on foreign nationals escalated in their brazenness and brutality. In a spate of attacks in 2007, over 100 Somalis were killed and Somali businesses and properties were looted and torched. Certainly there were plenty of danger signs. Government ministers should not have been surprised in May 2008.

Comprehensive surveys pointed to strong and growing xenophobic attitudes (Mattes et al. 1999). While xenophobic sentiments against African immigrants were pervasive and had trespassed into the organs of the state and translated into violence, the May 2008 attacks were different. The previous violence was limited to one episode in one locale, while the 2008 attacks spread across the country, putting tens of thousands on the move. At least 15,000 Mozambicans left the country in a convoy of buses, with scores dead and injured and thousands seeking sanctuary in camps and makeshift shelters.

Even those who fled unspeakable horror in their home countries, which made returning home inconceivable, were targeted. In the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), an estimated 5 million people were killed in recent years, in part because of the multinational corporate search for coltan, which is used ubiquitously in cell phones and other common electronics and is extracted with the assistance of warlords. One formerly South African firm, AngloGold Ashanti, had operations in a 2,000-square-kilometer tract of land around Mongbwalu after dubiously acquiring exploration rights there in 1996 during the reign of dictator Mobutu Sese Seko (Deibert 2008). In 2005, Human Rights Watch revealed AngloGold Ashanti's 2005 payments to warlords of the National Integration Front, the leader of which was prosecuted in The Hague's International Criminal Court on war crimes charges. "Our central purpose is to find and mine gold profitably," explained its then chief executive, Bobby Godsell (2005), adding that "[m]istakes will be made." The South African state strongly supported Johannesburg capital to enter the area during the early 2000s (Bond 2002). The blowback of regional subimperial power, for the South African state and capital, was a flood of terrorized refugees generated as a result of Pretoria's foreign policy on behalf of Johannesburg mining houses' hunger for minerals extraction.

Durban witnessed this blowback when a group of 47 refugees from the eastern DRC who needed shelter in the aftermath of the May 2008 attacks ended up at Albert Park, a rundown field at the southwestern side of the Central Business District, surrounded by dilapidated flats. In the park, they were constantly harassed by police. The refugees begged the city to turn the place into an official camp. Local NGOs—some of them in the pay of the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)—tried to convince the group to disperse. City authorities used particularly cruel and insidious language in discussing the issue. For Sutcliffe the issue was very simple:

The families have a choice of either going back to their countries or to places in the community they were living in before the July problems. The municipality cannot suddenly prioritize their housing needs when we already have 200,000 [local] people with housing needs in the city itself (Mdletshe 2008).

The refugees, in fact, had not demanded formal housing; all they wanted was to have a sanctuary in Albert Park. It was an insinuation that could only isolate the refugees further and act as a cover for the city's inability to make good on its promises of housing the poor. Sutcliffe's rationale for a speedy removal had another basis: "I have instructed the metro police to remove people from the park because the surrounding community has complained about crime." (Magwaza 2008.) The fact that none of the refugees was fingered for any crime did not seem to matter. But there was another factor: the 2010 World Cup, less than two years away.

The city arrived in early November 2008 in the form of Durban Solid Waste and a strong contingent of metro police. This time the rationale was that the park needed to be cleaned up. One of the 47, Aziza Wilondja, a mother of six who had stayed in the park for four months, spoke of how their clothes and identity documents were "confiscated":

The police took our things and put them in the garbage vehicle. They brought down our tents and threatened to beat us (Magwaza 2008).

Initially collectively gathered in a bid to hang onto the bare rudiments of their lives, the refugees were now forced to leave Albert Park and embark on separate, individual journeys. For the City Manager, they were a "problem" that had to be made to disappear, warning that while the support of NGOs and the public was to be commended, "we also have to take care that we do not perpetuate the situation longer than necessary. A growing refugee problem is something we must try and avoid at all costs" (Bond, Hinely, and Meth 2008). Following direct orders from Sutcliffe to remove the Congolese,² the police officer in charge, Constable Kwesi Matenjwa, spoke on tape to the University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Civil Society about the forced removal and confiscation of goods (including official refugee papers) in revealing detail about the squeeze associated with the World Cup: "2010 is going to be here, so the people from the so-called other countries, when they come to this country, they must have this image that South Africa, the city of Durban is clean, that there are no vagrant people, there are no traders in the streets" (Bond, Hinely, and Meth 2008).

The following month, the Albert Park area witnessed new signs of antagonism directed against immigrants. In one attack, local South Africans entered Jamba House on St. George's Street and proceeded to throw all the foreigners out. Jamba House had been the scene of several police raids. Residents allege that police would simply confiscate whatever they had. Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR), an

²This level of intervention was not uncommon. At Durban's main beach in July 2010, police officers who arrested one author for distributing an anti-xenophobia leaflet before the World Cup's Ghana-Uruguay match—it was termed "ambush marketing"—confirmed in a taped conversation that the City Manager had explicitly ordered, "No distribution of pamphlets, especially which mention xenophobia." The reasoning, according to a police superintendent, was that "[y]ou are reminding [people] of xenophobia" (Bond 2010).

independent human rights NGO, had taken up a number of cases after residents produced receipts for the goods. Once the residents were out on the streets, police harassed them until they finally disappeared into the night.

Zimbabwean migrant Eugene Madondo, aware of the situation, felt uneasy but thought it was simply the excesses of the festive season. As dusk fell, he took refuge in his room at Venture Africa, another nearby block of flats mainly housing migrants.

Then came this attack on January 4th, 2009. It was on a Sunday at half past 10 pm. I saw a group of people carrying the weapons like bush-knives and knobkerries. They were carrying hammers, too. They were blowing the *vuvuzela*. They were chanting the slogans in Zulu languages, and some of them were singing. I saw them coming in the direction of the flat where I stay, Venture Africa. (Desai 2009.)

To get to Venture Africa, the mob had to march past the police station. Closed-circuit television footage caught the marchers on the streets. An employee at the LHR office close to Venture Africa repeated that people “heard the mob, saw the mob.” The owner of Venture Africa was contacted, and he phoned the police to intervene. The police told him the mob was the legitimate work of the Community Policing Forum (CPF). Here is Eugene Madondo’s account of what followed:

[The mob] forced their way up. Six floors . . . When it started, I was sleeping, but I was SO scared. I heard the noise of the people screaming. The doors were being broken. They were hitting the doors with the hammers. When I noticed they were even breaking the doors, I thought of running away, so I opened the door, only to see that my neighbor was being thrown from the sixth floor—DOWN! Before I could lock the door of my room, I was approached by this group of people—a lot of them; there were a LOT! The men were in front, and the women were behind shouting, “*Shaya! Shaya!* [Beat them! Beat them!]” They asked me where I’m from. I told them I was from Zimbabwe. They shouted, “*Shaya kwere-kwere! Shaya!* [Beat the foreigners!]” One of them hit me on the head with a knobkerrie. The blood started to flow. I felt weak. I screamed for help. My attacker was joined by other guys. They hit me with blows on my stomach. They even hit my genitals. I felt so weak. I fell down. I thought it was over. I heard one of them talking in a Zulu language. They said, “Let’s throw this dog outside the window” in Zulu. Five of them, they lift me up, pushing me through the window. I tried to hold the window frame, calling for help. They broke the window frames, pushing me down from the fifth floor. Lucky enough, I fell on top of these two other guys who were already dead on the floor. When I was down there, and they saw that I was not dead, they carried on throwing stuff and hitting me with empty beer bottles and all those objects. I didn’t even notice these guys were dead. I told them, “Come on guys. There’s a storeroom nearby that we can crawl to.” The blood was coming too much from my head. I could feel the pain in my spinal cord and my head. I lost my conscious[ness]. (Desai 2009.)

The two dead friends that Madondo landed on were Omar Said from Somalia and Victor Zowa from Zimbabwe. After a lengthy stay in the hospital, Madondo made his way back to the scene of death. His room had been ransacked. Many of his fellow tenants had vanished fearing another attack. Madondo sought help from LHR and the Refugee Social Services. The first thing he was asked to do was go to an identification parade.

I went there, alone. Most of the witnesses who are not victims are scared. They have fear. They think they will be killed by the perpetrators of the attacks, because most of them are out on bail. On May 19th was the Investigation Parade where I managed to point to some of the perpetrators, including Vusi Khoza, himself. Vusi, what can I say about Vusi? He is so evil. He is lacking a sense of living together. Before the attack he used to come to Venture Africa pointing the fingers [at] the foreigners who live in the flats... He is not good, that man. And, he doesn't want to repent, or apologize. He is trying by all means to destroy the evidence by killing the state witnesses.

When I pointed him out in the ID parade, he could not see me because of the screen. He was in position fifteen. They said, "Number fifteen, please step forward." When he did that, even though he could not see me, he shook his finger to let me know to feel threatened and have bad feelings. But, I don't hate him. All I don't like is how he treats other people, especially the foreigners. All I need is for him, especially him, Vusi, to be trialed for what he did and he must get a sentence... The situation at home is causing us to leave our home countries. So, if you take refuge in another country and you find out that the situation in that country is even worse than back home, and local people are out to kill you, then where actually do we go? (Desai 2009.)

Word was out that Madondo was in Port Shepstone. In fact, after the attack he still carried on living in the Albert Park area. It was an act of defiance. Madondo survives in part by sacrificing his family life. His wife, Fungai, and young son, Ashley, have long gone back to Zimbabwe. As the date for the case approached, Madondo went into protective custody. He relies on the protection of the very police who have harassed him through his stay in the city. Khoza, one of the alleged central instigators of the January attack, was also on the prowl in the Albert Park area. Through 2010 he remained ANC ward councillor and chaired the Metro Police Civilian Oversight Committee. On June 26, 2009 the eThekweni Municipality sent out a notice advertising an African Unity Six, a Side Soccer tournament to be held under the banner "Fighting Xenophobia and promoting African Unity through Soccer." The letter was signed by Khoza.

In the small space of the inner city, tensions accumulate, concentrate, and erupt. The Community Policing Forum has equated crime with the presence of African immigrants. Using this institutional base, they have raided flats where immigrants live on the basis of daily board and have thrown them out. It has been revealed that slum landlords are charging \$100 a month for a small subdivided space, often

without water and electricity, in what were once warehouses and dilapidated office blocks. Once immigrants are on the streets, the police move in to harass and force them to keep moving until finally they leave the area altogether. According to the LHR, the police have taken to raiding flats and simply confiscating immigrants' property, regardless of whether they have receipts of purchase.

A block east of Albert Park, refugee support organizations at the Diakonia Centre, a multi-faith site of progressive activists for several decades, have their hands full. Both the LHR and the Refugee Support Services are contracted by the UN High Commission for Refugees. On any one day, the queues are long and resources short. Their work is about papers, legalities, and treating each case in an individual way. Some of the organizations were opposed to the concentration of the 47 DRC immigrants at Albert Park. They could not fathom the strategy of the immigrants: how their stubborn presence exposed the lack of support from the city authorities; how their tents staked out a place in the heart of the inner city; how their continuing resistance in the face of their tents being pulled down and harassment by the police drew attention to ongoing official xenophobia; and how their black plastic bags, which provide them shelter, further exposed the lack of state support. The UNHCR-supported NGOs interpreted the Congolese refugees' actions merely as a "game" that the immigrants played to demand a camp in order to eventually facilitate their rendition to a "First World country." In their view, the rudimentary shelter was not an act of desperation and fortitude but one of opportunism and conspiracy.

While support for refugees focuses on technicalities and individualized cases, the city uses professionalization to deal with them. Kwa-Zulu Natal Refugee Council leaders Baruti Amisi and Pierre Matate (2009) point to the fact that in its early years, the commemoration of World Refugee Day was organized by the refugee community itself. However, for the last two World Refugee Days, service providers supported by the government took over the work the refugee community previously did. This changed the complexion of the commemoration "into one for the poor and the refugees often without food or drink, and usually in a tent; and another one for the agencies in comfortable venues such as City Hall, with expensive food and drinks." As Amisi and Matate (2009) report, the service providers developed a commemoration "to celebrate themselves."

The killings in January 2009 were the acme of high-intensity xenophobia in Albert Park. To some extent the court case reduced tensions, since it made headlines and put on notice those who are keen to attack foreigners that there could be a price to pay for overt attacks. But there is still a low-intensity threat on the streets, one that emerged again in July 2010 when new xenophobic attacks were reported across the country after the World Cup. The attacks continue regularly in the course of service delivery protests that turn xenophobic. Yet despite all this violence, Thabo Mbeki repeated his xenophobia denialism in October 2010:

So I am saying that if there was xenophobia, I would expect it to be expressed against people who might stand out as being different from me and also, given our history, these are the people that oppressed us. But you don't have any evidence of racism among our people. . . Let us get to the root causes (of) this thing and communicate it to the rest of the continent, which I am certain . . . would confirm the statement that our people are not in the grip of xenophobia (Ncana 2010).

Similarly, wrote African National Congress spokesperson Jackson Mthembu (2010) as the World Cup wound down,

The reported xenophobic attacks by South Africans on foreign nationals, particularly from the African continent, after the conclusion of the 2010 Fifa World Cup in South Africa, is baseless and without any rational [*sic*].

ANC National Chairperson Baleka Mbete remarked, "These reports are irrational have no basis whatsoever" [*sic*] (Mthembu 2010).

Meanwhile, in a semi-gentrification strategy, Durban's housing department—notoriously corrupt as witnessed in the case of the Mpisane tenders, which resulted in enormous profits for the developers but low-quality housing and also an investigation into \$500 million worth of fraud—is supporting plans to revamp blocks of flats into sectional title units that will sell from between \$36,000 and \$57,000. African immigrants without access to papers and credit will not be able to take advantage of these developments. Furthermore, the relocation of Metro Police Headquarters in 2010 made Albert Park increasingly inaccessible to immigrants. It is one of the last of the common spaces where African immigrants can meet, lay in the sun, have a view of the harbor, and receive a meal from individual do-gooders or faith organizations.

An "African City" without Small Traders; a Port without Fisherfolk?

This process of squeezing out "undesirables" also included a near fatal threat to two other vulnerable groups: fisherfolk on the beachfront and informal traders at the Warwick Avenue Market, which for a century has been the home of African and Indian small fresh-produce vendors, bovine head cleaners, and a host of other informal traders (for a history of the area see Maharaj 1999). The Warwick Avenue Market has seen battles over space stretching across many decades. Official hostility peaked on June 18, 2007 when 500 traders were arrested for minor infractions on a single day. By 2009, city authorities announced plans to replace Warwick Avenue's informal markets with a shopping mall to be constructed by one of the crony business partners for which Durban has become notorious. Caroline Skinner (2009) puts the struggle in context:

The market has 673 trading sites, and over 50 market gardeners sell their produce there. These traders supply other informal traders throughout the city, and are thus an important part of the city-wide fresh produce distribution chain. On a busy day, it is estimated that as many as 8,000 street and market traders operate out of Warwick. There are many others working to support this trade, such as barrow operators and suppliers of tables, paraffin, and shopping bags. There was no call by the council for expressions of interest when this valuable public land was to be released, nor was there a public tendering process. Also, no existing traders are included in the share ownership of the Black Economic Empowerment consortium driving this development.

The city used various arguments to justify the decision to push out traders, including ridicule by City Manager Mike Sutcliffe of local academics for supporting the market. Why would anyone want to go to such an area? Sutcliffe (2009) asked:

For most of the day the area is dirty, there are far too few ablutions and commuters are very vulnerable, with this being the most dangerous set of intersections in South Africa. There are no banks, post offices and sufficient public services in the area to serve the number of people who deserve access.

Of course it was under Sutcliffe's watch that this state of affairs has been allowed to prevail and get progressively worse. While bemoaning the lack of finance to develop this critical part of the city, money does not appear to have been an issue for the development of the massively over-budget Moses Mabhida stadium, the uShaka Point Development, and the ICC itself, all requiring tens of millions of rands of municipal operating subsidies. The vast new flyover highway roads that now take most single-driver auto commuters over Warwick Junction—constructed with World Cup infrastructure funding—cost more than \$200 million, but municipal facilities have not improved for the 350,000 working-class people who line up at Warwick's taxi stands each day. In 2009, traders and their allies put up incredible resistance to the destruction of the market and forced the city later that year to back down on its plans for the mall. But this could be a pyrrhic victory, since the city refuses to allocate any resources to improve the market or make it more accessible. Still, because it is a place where people can purchase inexpensive, locally grown fresh vegetables, the Warwick Avenue Market has become one of Durban's most important political-ecological nodes.

A few kilometers due east, on the city's beachfront, fisherfolk are restricted to smaller and smaller areas of the coastline.³ They were once able to fish, the South Pier harbor mouth (400 meters long), but as filmmaker Sjoerd van Grootheest

³For more on the fisherfolk struggle see <http://vimeo.com/10840958> and <http://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/xmlui/handle/10413/276>.

(2010) discovered, the U.S. Consulate intervened to ban fishing anywhere in the harbor on grounds of port security. By November 2009, new restrictions were put in place, increasing to the point that by July 2010, fisherfolk were only allowed to fish from one small, ineffectual pier (“Snake Park”). The fisherfolk have not responded well to this threat to their livelihood, reports van Grootheest (2010):

Granted, the fishermen have built up a reputation due to the use of drugs and alcohol by some, at times resulting in conflict and violence on the public space of the beachfront and the piers. The fishermen, hardly a solid or tight community (they come from all over and depend on their catch in differing degrees) have a reputation problem.

According to anthropologist Keith Hart (2011), the hostility partly follows from

the Durban Municipality’s long-term plans for the sea front (associated with the City Manager, Mike Sutcliffe, an ex-Marxist geographer), which were partly served by World Cup related activity. . . The City plans to demolish the hospital and replace it with a luxury hotel or similar. It has encouraged a lot of investment at this end of the beach including uShaka Marine World, the Point Venice-style housing development, a planned yachting marina, and so on. The World Cup saw the extension of the promenade to its limit, and this involved demolition of shacks, informal eateries, etc.

There has been a big police effort in the last five years making the area a lot safer than it was. The idea is that South Beach will become the natural up-market end of the shore near to the city center at the expense of North Beach, where there is now a casino. Durban was ranked in the top ten family beach resorts in the world by *Lonely Planet* last year. Its climate is subtropical and particularly attractive in the Southern winter compared with either Cape Town or Johannesburg. The city faces an eroding tax base. Its port is still the largest in the Southern hemisphere, but many high-end businesses are relocating to the Northern Coast around Umhlanga, and the airport is now 35 km north of the city in what was once Zululand. Tourism is the city’s main hope for economic growth, and surfing is intrinsic to that.

A container ship in Durban Harbor (photo: Patrick Bond)



Tourism should include the sight of fishing at the port entrance and on the three long piers adjacent to the main hotel strip, but battles have unfolded because world-class surfers typically jump from those piers to catch waves, occasionally fouling lines or even getting hooked. As Hart (2010) notes,

The surfers complain that the fishermen leave detritus (animal, vegetable and mineral) where they were. Durban municipality worries about its status as a surfing destination, but even more about the effect on high-end punters of confronting this “mess.”

The city went to great lengths in 2010 to redesign the sandy reef next to the piers, pumping sand to create better waves, even though the same year the redevelopment chaos and alleged arrogance of municipal officials were responsible for the city's long-standing “Gunston 500,” since renamed “Mr. Price Pro,” world surf tournament moving 25 kilometers north to Ballito. Fisherfolk justifiably complain that the mainly white, upper-middle class surfing fraternity has completely free use of the piers (no user fees), while they pay an annual license to fish. Although it would have been a simple effort to organize surfers to pay cleaners—perhaps even the homeless kids in the Umthombo shelter who have taken up surfing to great acclaim—so that hooks and bait would not litter the piers, instead atomistic behavior prevailed. Rather than share the space, persuasive surfing advocates successfully lobbied to have the fisherfolk banned.

Surfers don't have it all their way, however, and too many have emerged from Durban's beautiful beach with runny stomachs and ear infections. On many a hot day, *E. coli* counts soar, especially during periods of sand dredging or after heavy rains, which wash polluted water and silt into the four major rivers that flow into the sea: the Umngeni (which supplies the bulk of the city's piped water via the Inanda Dam), the Umbilo and Umhlatuzana (which both drain into the port), and the Umlaas, which runs between the two main refineries in South Durban. The 2010 *State of South Africa's Rivers* report (Department of Water Affairs 2010) demonstrated that each has “poor” water quality at the point they course through the vast informal settlements on the outskirts of the city, beyond the city's “sanitation belt” where Durban officials have decided it is not cost-effective to provide decent toilets. Even in the close-in shack settlements, the municipality provides very few toilets—one per thousand residents is not uncommon—for fear of legitimizing the illegal occupations. Hence rainwater washes feces from informal settlements into the rivers, with *E. coli* counts by national authorities found to exceed 1 million per 100 ml on the Umngeni near Kennedy Road's shack settlement (the safe limit is 130/100ml) (Department of Water Affairs 2010). In addition to lack of sanitation at source, according to the city's leading environmental reporter, Tony Carnie (2008a), the municipality itself “has been singled out as one of the ‘most significant’ polluters of some rivers because of the failure to repair burst sewer lines and poor management at some waste-water treatment plants” (see also Carnie 2008b and 2008c).

The problem of high *E. coli* counts in the seawater became so serious that from 2008-2010, Durban's "Blue Flag" beach status—signifying internationally accepted water quality and amenities—was revoked, resulting in a national scandal. As opposition council member Geoff Pullan (2010) argued,

Unfortunately, the record will show that eThekweni, which had Blue Flag beaches from 2001 to 2008, has not been able to regain its high level of seawater quality. Not being able to improve the quality of water run-off into the sea will be the legacy that the present administration will be remembered for.

Conclusion: Climate Justice for Durban?

To be chosen as host city for the COP-17 was a remarkable accomplishment in light of the ecologically destructive nature of the area immediately adjacent to the International Conference Centre venue. The much more beautiful city of Cape Town was rejected, according to a guest post on former City Manager Andrew Borraine's blog, because of

the high levels of security required. . . The CT International Conference Centre falls way behind the ICC complex in Durban. You can lock it down completely and keep the over-the-top protesters well away from the high-level attendees.

Borraine, formerly a Johannesburg NGO worker who helped Alexandra Township civic associations defend intense, early 1990s protests against apartheid, later became a facilitator of public-private partnerships. "Cape Town's proposal," he noted, "took into account the need to be able to lock down certain areas for government delegations and VIPs" (Borraine 2010). But Durban's was more convincing, and in August 2011, Sutcliffe warned environmental activists (Greenpeace in particular) that if heads of state come to Durban for the COP-17 as they did to Copenhagen, not only will there be a lock down around the ICC, the "city does not move" (as quoted in Khumalo 2011). The test will be the Global Day of Action on December 3, when thousands of climate activists march from Curries Fountain to Warwick, past the Grey Street Mosque and "Red Square" of heroic anti-apartheid mobilizations, to the U.S. Consulate and City Hall, by the ICC, and finally to the beach for a protest rally, concert, and civil disobedience.

Just over a decade earlier at the end of August 2001, a march of 15,000 to the ICC led by Fatima Meer and Brutus against the UN World Conference Against Racism came close to barging in on the lethargic delegates (Desai 2002). Conference critics complained that no serious UN discussion was underway about reparations for slavery, colonialism, and apartheid, nor was there adequate UN action against Israeli racial oppression and occupation of Palestine. In addition, a great deal of the 2001 activism was directed at the way South African class apartheid had emerged since

Mike Sutcliffe (Photo: Avusa Syndication, used by permission)



1994, with resulting amplification of racial differences. Ten years on, Durban's contradictions are more extreme than ever.

Ironically, central Durban's urban economic oppression was amplified by an energetic bureaucrat, Sutcliffe, who in a profile told the *Mail & Guardian* he considered himself a "Marxist geographer" (Tolsi 2008). Under his rule, the road that goes due west from Albert Park through to the bourgeois suburb of Glenwood was changed from Moore to Che Guevara—but residents regularly defaced the new sign (as would, perhaps, Che himself). Again, ironically, in 2008 the American Association of Geographers awarded Sutcliffe the Gilbert F. White Distinguished Public Service Honors and the James R. Anderson Medal of Honor in Applied Geography. Sutcliffe's sponsor for the award, Kevin Cox—a faraway Marxist geographer who supervised Sutcliffe's 1984 Ohio State University Ph.D. thesis—described these awards as

among the most prestigious recognitions in geography ... his training as a geographer has been at the center of much of his accomplishment. Over a lengthy career as political activist and trusted member of the ANC government, Mike has proven himself to be an applied geographer par excellence and with a strong pro-people bent (Cox 2008).⁴

⁴According to the Association of American Geographers (n.d.), the Anderson Medal of Honor reflects "the most distinguished service to the profession of geography." The idea of "Public Service," is "of inestimable value to the community. Leadership in the wide spectrum of community affairs offers exceptional opportunities to the geographer to earn distinction. This effort should have been sustained over a period of time, have gained more than usual recognition by co-workers, public officials and fellow citizens, and have clearly influenced the progress of the community." (AAG n.d.) "More than usual" is correct. Wikipedia's entry on Mike Sutcliffe begins as follows:

Michael Sutcliffe is municipal manager of the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality (population 4 million), which includes the city of Durban, South Africa. As well as being the municipal manager for the region, he is also currently the most disliked person in the greater eThekweni area. Deployed to the position in 2002 by the ruling African National Congress, he oversaw the municipality's successful preparations for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, and was involved in controversy regarding street renamings, the loss of the city's Blue Flag beach status, illegally banning protests, banning posters, serious human rights abuses in the city's housing program, the failed privatization of the city's bus system, allegations of spin-doctoring, the failed uShaka Marine World, threats to withdraw advertising from newspapers employing journalists critical of the municipality, lack of action against environmental destruction, favoritism toward ANC-aligned individuals and businesses, unlawful and at times violent violations of the basic rights of street traders and shack

The vulnerable people (including children) currently under harshest attack from Durban's neoliberal-nationalist municipal government are also those urban residents—sheltered in shacks or slum hovels, seeking to make a living at society's margins—who are likely to suffer most under climate change. Defensive measures, such as the Warwick Junction's Early Morning Market struggle, are only a holding pattern, because the origins of the commodity chain through which fresh fruit and vegetables enter Durban will be threatened in coming decades by worsening droughts and floods, as will subsistence agriculture in rural KwaZulu-Natal or Zimbabwe's Southern Matabeleland (thus prompting a new migration wave, of "climate refugees"), as will the catches of desperate fisherfolk when the ocean warms. Moreover, as the 2008 xenophobia incidents and 2009 campaign against the Warwick Avenue Market's displacement showed, enormous efforts are required for local market activists and immigrants to unite with other constituencies under threat, in no small part, because of decades-old racial and ethnic tensions.

The idea of a broad front of Durban's oppressed appears as a far-off aspiration. And yet those who seek such an alliance—the organizers in SDCEA and other "Durban Social Forum" and "Climate Justice Now! KwaZulu-Natal" groups—are continually reminded of city leaders who surprised power and often made enormous progress: Shaka Zulu who kept colonialists at bay two centuries ago; Mahatma Gandhi's *Satyagraha* strategies and tactics a century later in Durban's Phoenix township; the ANC's founding president John Langalibalele Dube and its first Nobel Prize-winning president Albert Luthuli; martyred communist leader Johannes Nkosi; Monty Naicker who in the late 1940s allied Indians with the ANC; the founder of the Black Consciousness Movement Steven Biko; United Democratic Front leaders Victoria and Griffiths Mxenge; the 1973 dockworkers; the Chatsworth community activists who revived class politics in the late 1990s; Abahlali baseMjondolo who organized shackdwellers from 2005; those who built the Diakonia Council of Churches liberatory legacy; and intellectuals like the assassinated political theorist Rick Turner and more recently sociologist Fatima Meer and poet Brutus—now dead but remembered with enormous regard by activists. Occasionally, as at the World Conference Against Racism in 2001, there is hope that these traditions of Durban activism find like-minded opportunities for solidarity with visitors.

dwellers and corruption. According to the *Sunday Times* he is about to be arrested on corruption charges. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mike_Sutcliffe, accessed August 10, 2011).

On the latter charge, according to a mid-2011 report, "The [regional] African National Congress called on [provincial local government minister Nomusa] Dube to order a forensic investigation after the auditor-general found that the city had irregularly spent \$80 million, and the audit implicated Sutcliffe and three officials in irregular housing contracts worth \$500 million over 10 years" (Nair, 2011).

Were they with us, what would the most advanced of these activists and strategists be doing in central Durban in late 2011? What would their demands be? How would they approach the COP-17? They would probably consider with utmost seriousness the world Climate Justice movement's "Cochabamba People's Agreement" of April 2010, adopted at a conference of 35,000 in Bolivia. The core demands in that document are as follows:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by half by 2017 to stabilize temperature rises to 1°C and 300 parts per million of CO₂;
- Acknowledge the climate debt owed by developed countries (6 percent of GDP per year);
- Respect indigenous people's Human Rights and the rights of Mother Earth;
- Establish an International Court of Climate Justice;
- Reject carbon markets and commodification of nature and forests through REDD;
- Change consumption patterns of developed countries; and
- End intellectual property rights for technologies useful for mitigating climate change.

These demands cut against the grain of the UNFCCC at least four times: far greater emissions cuts than the present balance of forces in negotiations will permit; the UNFCCC's failure to take seriously climate crimes and the climate debt owed to victims of climate change; the UNFCCC's commodification of everything from intellectual property to forests (and charismatic species within them); and the UNFCCC's failure to consider decommissioning the dangerous carbon markets. While the closest that the UNFCCC will come in Durban to a deal on financing is clarification on the disappointing Green Climate Fund, there is every likelihood that the worst possible outcomes of compensation monies originally pegged at \$100 billion per year will be realized, insofar as carbon markets will fill half the fund (with all that that entails), and decisions will be made to press ahead with financing "false solutions" instead of committing to the deep emissions cuts and economic transformation that is required to solve the crisis.

Durban's hosting is why the most powerful memories from the COP-17 could be very local; the city itself confirms that a prefigurative politics of injustice is already playing out in the oppression of so many people in the vicinity of the ICC, leaving us as pained as Herbert Dhlomo and as irritated as Dennis Brutus about the uncertain

liberals who continue to legitimize the UNFCCC as its delegates polish the chains of global climate apartheid. And it is why those international climate activists who correctly worry about losing the last chance to keep alive the binding emissions-cut requirements of the Kyoto Protocol will likewise be furious in December when their fears are realized. The question is whether these kinds of people will find common cause, as have so many others in Durban.

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