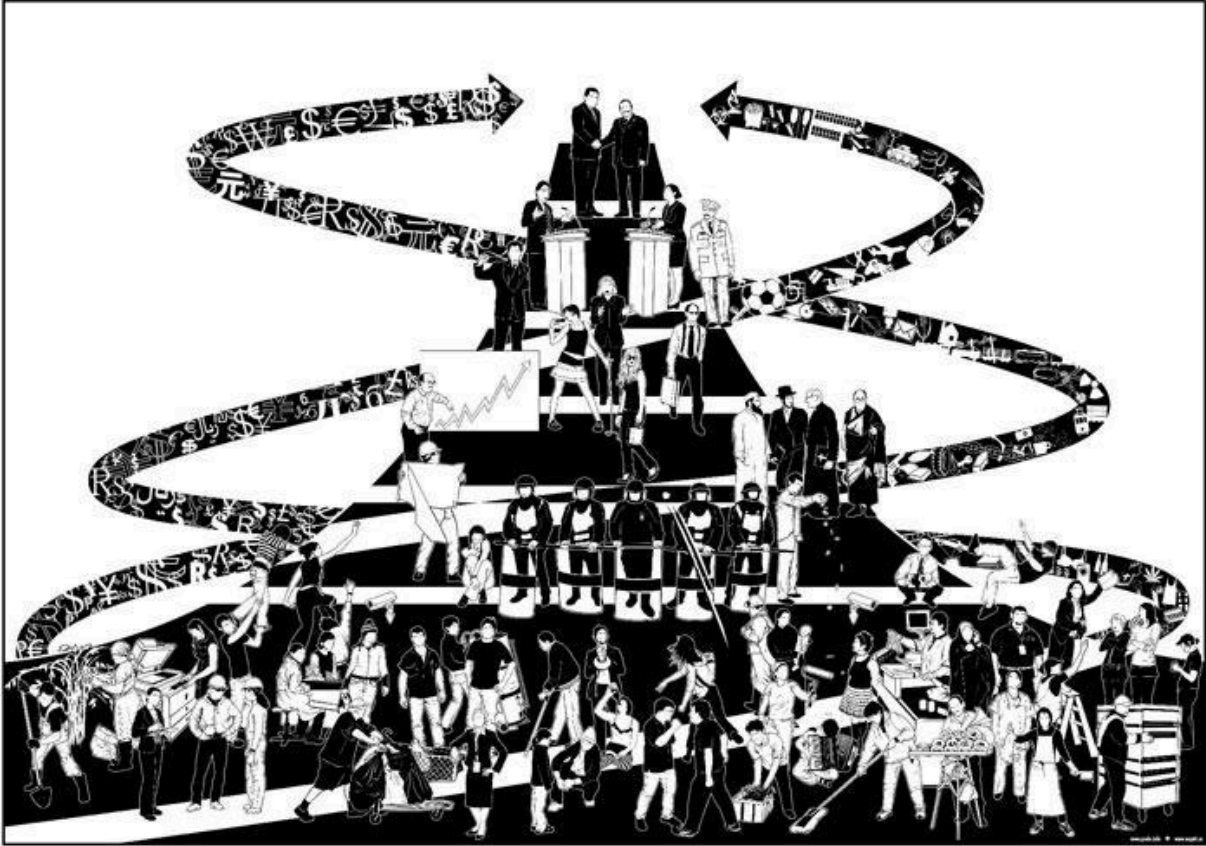


**Human Conflict in the Age of Corporate Oligarchy**



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Fall 2014

**T**here is an unacknowledged ‘global state of emergency,’ and it is a result of the broader *Human Conflict*. Those living quite comfortably in the safety of developed core nations believe things are getting much better, ‘than what once had come before,’ and most importantly, globalization will inevitably curb war (Friedman, p.421). However, ‘what once was’, is poorly accounted for. In addition, what currently is is controversial to measure. At the 2013 InterAction Forum, the broadest confederation of American development NGOs and Humanitarian actors, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres admitted, “We are not entirely prepared”. More conflicts, deeply entrenched poverty, coupled with the targeting of aid workers, will occur alongside decreases in funds and the impacts of global climate change. Yet, across the development enterprise, almost all of academia and technocracy agree that the very worst of human civilization is behind us (Sachs, p.288). There is still massive disagreement throughout the humanitarian enterprise regarding the hierarchy of needs for those 5 billion human souls that live on less than USD 10 a day; 3 billion of which live on less than USD 2.50 a day; and 1.2 billion on less than USD 1.25 (World Bank 2014). There is still a gross conflict of index and orientation as to whether this is an ‘Age of Globalization’, or ‘Age of Corporate Oligarchy’.

Conflict need not be as amorphous as our experts now make it, or as particularistic. Ethnic conflict, like multi-dimensional poverty or climate catastrophes, are symptoms of a deliberate system-wide assault on planet and population. If we analyze these symptoms, we do not get *any* meaningful diagnostics of the disease. The fullness of the pathology is then missed and cannot be treated.

Most human poverty and conflict are manufactured to keep a small web of groups in the lifestyle to which they are accustomed. To keep access to power and resources in an ‘iron web’ of corporate oligarchy (Banerjee, p.238). **The Human Conflict**, (not a series of endless regional conflicts) is absolutely and fully intertwined. If we keep attempting to address them piecemeal, we are enabling a vast protracted bleed. The ‘New Wars’ and the inter-communal bloodlettings we refer to as ‘identity-driven’ are war economies perpetuated in power vacuums and failing states (Kaldor, p. 83); they are also the result of an elaborate and enforced quarantine being tested. A world system built on structural apartheid with fluid boundaries dividing people into economic roles and relationships. A deliberate calculation on how to shunt development and resources from periphery to core (Wallerstein, 1974, p.404).

The rational interrelationship then between conflict and development is that those most divested of human rights and dignity by the existing economic engines at the core are and will be doing the fighting and dying in most of the conflicts. To focus on civilization (Huntington); identity mobilization (Kaldor) or so-called human nature (Konner) deludes the identification of the source. There is only ‘cosmopolitanism’ for those with the option to leave their plantation.

## 1. The Source

The source of our oldest and most protracted conflict is the ‘control of the means of human development’ in the realms of the social, economic and environmental spheres. For all of our known human history, a tiny, diverse human faction’s ability to manipulate our imagined identity has prevented any psychosocial realization of potential human solidarity. The aim of this miniscule faction is wealth, power and hegemony. To achieve that end, their historic dominance has revolved around total human division. Not just in labor specialization, but down to as many constructed divisions and sub-divisions as were possible; competing dominations ingrained at every level of the stratification. Most obvious was the creation of evolving plantations (the nation-states) that erected real and imagined barriers. They then coerced our labor, they acquired ownership over productive resources and via an endless war and conflict; they eliminated abundance. Inevitably, via their wanton greed, they now threaten the survival of both planet and species. What remained elusive was how well organized they were in their implementation.

The reason we cannot clearly implement a meaningful plan for peace or ‘Emancipatory Development’ is that we are speaking very different tactical languages. Our competing theories of change have therefore diluted our capability (Fitzduff, xxv). We still lack total consensus on the basic nature of the human species: ‘brutish and short’ vs. ‘capable and cooperative’ (Konner, p. 25) (Kropotkin, p.75). Those supposedly in the fields of change have absolutely no consensus at all who is ‘our enemy’ and who is ‘our friend’; or even whether there is an actual organized nemesis to oppose. Some have even declared an ‘end to history’ (Fujiyama).

In the absence of consensus on achieving equity, those with actual power are still quite grounded in the most Machiavellian manipulations of identity: gender, caste, ethnicity, religion, creed and nationalism being the most pervasive & useful triggers.

## 2. Three Camps in the conflict

The camp of alarming importance is the bulk of the human species, which is closing in shortly on 8 billion members. It remains largely impoverished and divided against itself, easily mobilized to war or ethnic violence based on imagined identities enforced by race, nationality and prayer rituals. The bulk of it is concentrated in failed, failing, and generally kleptocratic states that currently host 35-armed conflicts (Alerta 2014). The United Nations has granted all 8 billion humans elaborate configurations of ‘human rights’ and protections and committed all nations to vigorous programs of development around the 8-Millennium Development Goals and nine core human rights treaties that most world governments have adopted. Most of those goals will go unmet. Even in so-called core developed nations, most of these rights are not legally enforced or protected.

The second camp, perhaps the fullest enemy of these human rights and of sustainable development generally, can be called a *Corporate Oligarchy*. A transnational global elite that not only controls supply routes and natural resources; they affect all of the inequity of distribution that so perpetuates poverty. It is a disciplined and vicious network of elites united in nothing except bloc accumulation of capital and power via their political access. In one nation, they appear as warlords and in others as cultivated persons of business and leisure. The most important remain completely out of the public consciousness. This is accomplished via mass distraction in the media via the athletes, celebrity artists, and politicians. As well as ownership of most platforms for mass media (Chomsky). The ‘Corporate Oligarchy’ is extremely diverse

demographically and largely decentralized in their spheres of interests and accumulation. They have eclectic and diverse financial portfolios. No matter what nation-state or territory we are referring to, we can refer back to these regional elites as a local branch of the “Global Oligarchy”; they are ‘Corporate’ only in that their power is best solidified via transnational financial institutions.

The third camp is a far more horizontal network of clustered organizations whose actionable numbers are only slightly greater than the repressive agencies of the oligarchy. Their base is also wide and international though relies largely on volunteer efforts and free association. Though comparatively small in clustered leadership, they periodically mushroom rather rapidly mobilizing humans based on grievance and identity; normally via religion, class, or political creed; this group can encompass a very wide range of revolutionaries: humanitarians, human rights defenders, change agents, peace builders, and social progressives; this would be called *the resistance*. They are resisting human rights violations normally in relationship to the localized symptoms of the Oligarchic Epoch.

Let us be clear; the Corporate Oligarchy guides the financial and political institutions via a multi-generational policy of low-intensity coordination, but they do remain in competition. Humanity exists in an utter state of disunity, which the oligarchs cultivate and pray upon. The resistance is scattered, isolated, delegitimized, and holds onto a small bloc of scattered states quarantined in various ways over the course of the Cold War.

### **3. Primary Conflict Issue**

The elites within principal core developed nations can influence policies via campaign contributions, competitive advantage, patronage, or outright corrupt practices (Banerjee, p.238). Particularly in Beijing, Washington, Moscow, and Berlin, these elites influence the global political playing field. It is important to remember that they are both competitive and use competing identity rhetorics for social cohesion. At times they empower themselves at the expense of the placated populace (USA); often they exacerbate peripheral tensions and enable high crimes and rights violations using state superstructure (Russian Federation). Often they project outward core to periphery, cultivate relationships, and profit off the neo-colonialism embedded in the development enterprise (China). These elites in varying configurations have come under physical assault via armed revolt, especially in the past two hundred years.

*The main issue of the human conflict is that a tiny fraction of the human species has usurped control over more than half of our wealth in a time when 3 billion humans are enduring grinding poverty; when the very climate itself has warmed to provoke dangerous environmental impacts; and nation after nation appears to be becoming undone by civil strife and genocide.*

On the part of the Global Corporate Oligarchy, the main issue is maintaining the current order while dominating the other local oligarchs when opportunity arises. On the part of the resistance, it is to shape meaningful tactics to counteract over two hundred years of general attrition since 1789. On the part of slumbering/suffering humanity, it is an issue of individual survival only when conflict is close at hand.

## 4. Secondary Conflict Issues

### ISSUE (I): A Collapsing State System

The Westphalian State system is gradually collapsing. From the unraveling of Sudan and Syria to unleashed Uyghur aspirations in China; to greater Kurdistan; to a Palestinian State and a newly unleashed Islamic Caliphate, the made-up and largely externally coerced lines that the European powers drew on old maps are coming undone. This means more countries (nation proliferation) and certainly more regional conflicts over the populations and resources contained within them. The developed Core will hold tight as it can to the stability of its state delineations while devolution of the periphery accelerates. This will not immediately alter the balance of power, but it will alter the balance of trade because the coercive state mechanisms of semi-peripheral (developing) and peripheral (undeveloped) nations will crumble, making resource extraction back to the core more difficult to facilitate.

### ISSUE (II): Mass Realization of Genocides & Atrocities

Thanks to information technology, not only are larger segments of our human species able to evaluate multiple versions of history previously unavailable; they can issue and witness minute-by-minute live stream reports and documentation of ongoing genocide and atrocity. On the one hand, an early desensitization comes from this on the proletarian level of core nations. On the other hand, it allows the human masses access to each other's suffering that was previously unimaginable. For the first time using widely available technology, a human can access unfathomable human catalogues of data. We can rapidly broadcast our grievances. Most importantly, we can internationalize conflict by calling for reinforcements; or draw tactical lessons from the killing fields and struggles of what they are calling the '**Age of Genocide**' (Powers).

### ISSUE (III): Ideological Bankruptcy

The 'Age of Genocide' is dubbed so because it was believed that in no other period of human conflict had such a massive and systematic bloodletting been carried out deliberately against civilians; 50-80 million just in WW2. The dominant narrative issued in the competing political paradigms is that the worst of the atrocities were carried out due to the excesses of Slavery, Colonialism, and the three World Wars<sup>1</sup>, or because of ideology (religious or secular).

There was a variety of ideological underpinnings guiding both the arch-Oligarchs and the principal factions of the Resistance. **Fascism, Socialism, and Liberal Democracy** being the three paramount schools most states derived their systems from. The theocracies and monarchies of the earlier periods still existed but were confined to the periphery and semi-periphery of the state system. Political Islam re-emerged in full force in 1979. The so-called Age of Genocide was not a civilizing epoch punctuated by unprecedented conflagration; it was a purge. It was the state

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<sup>1</sup> I will say 'three' world wars with the so-called Cold War as the third because certainly it was rather atrocious for all of the millions killed in the multitude of proxy conflicts.

system marshalled to eliminate both the resistance and discredit the theory of change; particularly the **theory of revolutionary socialism**.

However, it would not take long for Oligarchs to discover that politics and ideology were just an architecture.

That the concept of Core formation; marshaling state superstructure to break dependence and project power could be obtained with any of the ideologies. Demonstrated throughout the last 100 years was that not only could an Oligarchy be cultivated in the most revolutionary of states; those oligarchies could be just as brutal and repressive as any before them. By the time the Communist Party of China embraced capitalism in 1978 and became a Core power; by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, which turned the country into a semi-peripheral mafia-style super state; by the time it was understood that the USA was subsidizing 1/3 of its population not to work while keeping 1/139 citizens in prison camps. Ideology wasn't good for very much besides idle intellectual banter or pretext.

The issue then was that most of the resistance that survived this epoch has been thoroughly exhausted by the hypocrisy of the ideological pronouncements that complemented the catalogue of the ongoing genocide now exposed. The ideological war is mostly over (Kaldor, p. 89); the final consensus amongst both the oligarchy and resistance alike is that disambiguation is possible within the human rights framework as a lasting list of demands. In the bankruptcy of ideological frameworks, the dominant and most bloodthirsty element of the resistance has embraced Jihadist variants of Islam. All other factions are for the most part utilizing human rights as their platform.

#### **ISSUE (IV): Imposed Scarcity of Resources & the Worsening Climate**

In short, as the population increases, we are met with the grim reality that there may not be enough clean water or means to feed ourselves, although we are currently not quite feeding the human race very adequately (Rogers, Kazi, & Boyd, p.53). There is also a finite timeline on extractive energy resources used to propel the current globalized economic machine.

While every oligarch network is very 'interested' in profiteering off 'green, clean and renewable' solutions, there remains skepticism that these sources of renewable energy will emerge fast and efficiently enough to compete lucratively with oil and natural gas. Very few oligarchies have multi-generational perspectives.

The adaptation process will not take place quickly enough before peak oil occurs. Population will exceed productive capability and a new global famine will result (Malthus, p.61). The wars that have occurred in the past sixty-five years over extractive energy resources will shortly be taking place over clean water and arable land. The technologies we feel so happy deploying in Sub-Saharan Africa, such as spirueleena, drip agriculture systems, and Malaria nets, will also come to Middle America. The issue of the climate is now one that most of the national factions accept. That has little to do with the speed they can recalibrate the machine.

## **ISSUE (V): Linguistics and False Consciousness**

The issue that will prevail throughout all of the conflicts we examine is that resistance has been purged as legitimate discourse and often possible.

Throughout the world, the socialization process has gone on for some many generations in all three zones verbally lack language to articulate alternatives or access to the popular education needed to trigger solidarity. Solidarity then manifests in relation to the nation or ethnic group, not the species. Lacking language, lacking consciousness, humans will continuously revert into their national and 'tribal' formations. This remains the fundamental question of the successful transformation: how can mass capacity be achieved in the face of this mass socialization? The most important deception of the false consciousness propagated is that without a government, people would all loot and murder one another. Logical frameworks built on this postulate stipulate then that the state system and by default the world system are necessary.

## **ISSUE (VI): Human Rights Approach**

The Oligarchy has everything to lose because they have mostly everything in their possession while humanity is regularly asked to truncate our life span to get them even and ever more. This is not just an indictment of the wealthy and insatiable. This is also about the organized traffic of over 37 million chattel slaves, black market weapons, narcotics and perpetuation of terror. The manufacturing of genocide and war (Uvin, p.155). This is about competing power centers, perhaps thousands of sub-Oligarchies that are all functioning without coordination and will eradicate us. Many of them are completely insatiable.

In 1945, the United Nations was established as a bankrupt global governance system. In between, many developments have shaped the tactical discourse. The State of Israel was founded in 1948; the largest and most protracted attempt to colonize land without state support. International Human Rights were first codified in 1948. China in 1949 was liberated by Mao and the Communist Party, bringing the most populous nation on earth under socialism. Cuba went next in 1959; the largest island in the Caribbean was liberated via a guerrilla movement. An incubator for development technology and a global platform for the non-aligned movement.

In 1963, two UN documents emerged effectively on Cold War lines, breaking human rights into two primary documents: a separation of the Civil/Political from the Economic, Social & Cultural. Symbolically, they form the two theatres of war upcoming between the resistance and oligarchy of every nation. Achieving CPR negative rights is to be the theatre of militant non-violent resistance. ESCR positive rights are to be the focus of mass capacity training and the emerging parallel state structures of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It is very important to understand that this is a long game. The world-system has been consolidating since 1500 (Wallerstein). What happens next in this conflict has a great deal to do with what tactics the new resistance embraces. The barbarism of Jihad or the militant nonviolence of Gandhi. The economic development of the Washington Consensus or that of BRAC and Havana. It also involves to what degree the oligarchy violates our collective rights or

accelerates attempts to turn the 'bottom billion' into a productive & profitable resource. A billion new slaves; waged workers and uneducated consumers.

The 3 billion poor are a vast labor reserve on one side or another of history. However, this is not a phenomenon purely orchestrated from the global core developed nations. These are not the only seats of their power. There is an aristocracy in every ghetto, a kingship of every slum, and of course bosses on every plantation, camp, and factory. The new phase of the struggle is to fight for every single open mind, every single inch of previously liberated turf and roll out a technology for emancipatory development the light of which cannot be snuffed out by their bullets and their iron heels. For this is in fact an existential conflict for us all.

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