

Capitalism of Dispossession in the Palm Oil Plantations in the Countries of the Global South - Contexts, Struggles and Peasant Resistance

Covid-19 shakes agro-industrial capitalism on the planet

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Summary

This paper presents critical moments from prehistory through civilisation to financial capitalism, represented by the transnational corporations of palm oil monoculture; critical moments due to insurmountable ecological fractures with global impact, occurring in fragile ecosystems of humid tropical forests in Asia, Africa and the Americas. In historical evolution, between different ecological fractures, two major climatic milestones have emerged: (i) The transatlantic invasion in the Americas and Africa (16th century), gave rise to the “Cold Ice Age” with the death of 60 million of the native population. It is the beginning of the Anthropocene. (ii) The reconversion of humid tropical forests by agri-food agriculture has been intensified in expropriated lands without the consent of medium and small landowners organised in associations of land recovery, the defence of the common goods and of human rights with tens of thousands of people murdered in the three continents.



The commodification of land has deepened the ecological, social and economic crises. The unprecedented global pandemic of the covid-19 virus comes from the destruction of the habitats of species of wild animals and plants and the subsequent migration to humans. The neoliberal model is unsupportable in the sustainable conservation of nature and the planet's economy. A change in the capitalist economy is urgently needed.

By Way of Introduction

In the works of Morgan (1972), Godelier (1972), Marx in Capital, Volume I, nature is the precondition of human

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existence. In historical modes of production, Marx analyses the impact of ecological fractures on agricultural activities attributed to capital and the robbery of necessary social work. Evolutionary development starts from the differences and similarities of the primitive Asian and of the eastern Mississippi communities in North America, within the productive forces with an emphasis on the production of surpluses and the forging of collective property towards early forms of private property and its continuity in time. Communities that are subject to the exploitation of their natural resources and the

depletion of nutrients from the soil in unlimited subsistence, as Morgan stated in his monumental work of the Primitive Society.

This paper collects the contributions of Marx to ecology in the industrial era of the 18th century, Moore (2003), Foster (2000) and Harvey (2014). On the other hand, since the sixteenth century, capital has expelled the small landowner from the land or reduced him to the condition of day labourer with no rights, subjecting him to different forms of slavery or servitude. The capitalism of dispossession, unlike the first colonisation in the 16th century, has modified, at its convenience, the political relations between transnational corporations and national governments, subdued and used in the intermediation with the heads of the native communities, substituting laws with coercive and armed violence, accompanied by actions of peasant dispossession, loss of natural heritage and material goods, as well as human lives, without any retribution to nature. Nevertheless, the historical relationship between the capitalist and the salaried worker has been replaced by the relationships between managers of foreign companies and national authorities, through a series of subterfuges to bypass the prior consent of leaders and local communities, on high alert in the face of the imminent risk of dispossession of their property, common property and human rights in non-consensual expropriations.

Critical fragments of environmental history, scarcely reviewed since the industrial era, have been selected. Nonetheless, there are still voids due to an economic emphasis in detriment of ecological metabolism and the unspoken presumption of the delivery of natural wealth to capital. This writing contributes to the urgency of making visible the ecological fractures taking place concurrently with the development of the forces of production, private property, economic and political power in underdeveloped countries, if a better understanding of the current acute climate crisis is desired, after the failure of COP-25 in Madrid and the ending of the Kyoto Protocol (1997-2020).

Hence, the “Cold Ice Age”, the first catastrophic milestone, due to the first European colonisation in the Americas and the forced exile of millions of slaves from Africa, have left legacies of looting, spoliation, infectious diseases, pandemics, contamination and suffering of an incalculable global impact with the disappearance of more than 60 million inhabitants. From the middle of the 20th century to the second decade of the 21st century, the second climate milestone advances the evidence on the diversification of socio-environmental connections between climate and migration multiplies; the deterioration of health due to the appearance and spread of infectious diseases from endemic areas to cities far distant from their places of origin; droughts with extreme temperatures of cold and heat on Earth; the melting of glaciers with different dangers in large cities; sinkings in Jakarta, the south of the United Kingdom, Dhaka, Bangkok, without the rest being exempted from the climate crisis. As can be seen, there are different consequences among the

industrialised countries of the G-20, without political commitment in the global reduction of GHG emissions widely demonstrated at COP 25-Madrid. For O'Connor (2000, p. 13) *The international agreements on the wear of the ozone layer are weak and in terms of global warming they are merely symbolic.*

In countries of the Global South, food security, a central axis in local economies, put at risk by the authoritarian and violent substitution of agro-industrial agriculture, has thrown native populations into the deepest chasms of inequality and hunger. Hence, the history of underdevelopment continues to repeat itself, with the exception of geographic and socio-cultural differences in peasant populations in Asia and Africa. For Galeno (2004):

The region [The Americas] continues to work as a servant, existing at the service of other people's needs, as a source and reserve of oil and iron, copper and meat, fruits and coffee, raw materials and food destined for Rich countries that profit, by consuming them, much more than Iberian America earns by producing them (p. 15).

The capitalism of dispossession has traveled extensive journeys in infinite spaces and times throughout the Americas, Africa and Asia in five centuries of dispossession in the territories occupied by small and medium-sized properties, scattered among humid tropical forests, rivers and ravines, to convert them into millions of hectares of monocultures of agro-industrial raw materials, defying the laws of nature; a discouraging fate the Earth awaits with the advance of the climate crisis to a possible no-return, at the risk of the evident disappearance of the human species between 2050 and 2100, if it does not occur before 2030.

Furthermore, capital does not shy away from conflicts over the reduction of tropical rain forests, or from any other

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climatic event, no matter how catastrophic. The appearance of the global pandemic covid-19 in late December 2019, and its subsequent unstoppable expansion on all continents, put the economies of developed countries in check. The European and United States governments were slow to react; perhaps, they had become accustomed to seeing dengue, malaria, H1N1; the

aridity of the soils and the scarcity of water and other environmental tragedies, always distant from their own borders. Since WWII, global economies had not been restrained, nor had they faced an invisible and unexpected enemy of sudden death among human populations.

At the time of writing this article, President Trump has accused China of manufacturing the covid-19 in a laboratory for political purposes. However, for decades, science has warned of the danger of new infectious outbreaks of the coronavirus family in humid tropical forests subjected to their extermination by deforestation and the exacerbation of GHG emissions, preceded by forest fires and logging, and the enormous use of pesticides among other ecological imbalances.

The First Neotropical Forests, Risks and Evolution of their Commoditisation

During the Cretaceous period (145-65 million years), the first neotropical forests spring up. Such epoch includes the last mass extinction on the planet, marked by the disappearance of dinosaurs and the origin of the evolutionary period from plants to flowers. In Jaramillo (2012) towards 65 Mya, angiosperms germinate, their development and expansion culminates in the dominant clade of modern forests. It has floristic relevance in the transformation of neotropical terrestrial ecosystems, since it divides the history of neotropical forests into two major periods: Cretaceous with the appearance of angiosperms and the Cenozoic due to their complete dominance. Scientists at the *Institut de Recherche*

*pour le Développement*¹ (2011) for the first time have described the evolutionary history of palm trees. This plant meets the characteristics of tropical rain forests. With the molecular dating method, based on DNA sequences, tropical forests date back 100 million years in Laurasia—the ancient continental mass of the Northern Hemisphere—and not in Ecuador, in 65 million years, as was assumed.

The tropical rain forest currently covers 7 percent of the earth's surface; it has complex structures and enough water, warm and humid conditions throughout the year. The undergrowth includes heights between 5-20 feet from the forest floor. It houses shrubs and dwarf palms. The species adapt to few luminescence conditions; whilst the lower canopies depend on the higher canopy. It is typified by its complex biodiversity structures, represented in thousands of invertebrate species, many of them without being described by science and among them, flora, liana species and epiphytic plants. According to the ecological literature, more than 200 different tall tree species can grow on one hectare of land, between 25 and 35 m with emergent trees up to 60 m in height with tree canopies with dense and wooded cover. It is complemented by an undergrowth forest formed by various layers of soil and inhabited by complex ecosystems with a diversity of wild plants, insects and microbes. On the other hand, *Le Institut de Recherche por le développement* (2011) states that tropical forests have more than 50 percent of known plant and animal species in terrestrial ecosystems; the richest on the planet, they cover one third of the world massifs in Africa, Iberian America and the Hindu-Pacific basin.

Since pre-Columbian times, in the cosmogony of Amerindian peoples, the human being has been and is part of nature... Indigenous peoples, unlike capitalist societies, do not identify with the notion of progress in industrial agriculture. For them, the Earth is the epicentre of life and the basis of social organisation, under slight variations, they preserve, as in the remote past, mutual aid and reciprocity.

In prehistory, around 3500 and 4000 years BC, the nomadic groups and the current not contacted in the Amazon have depended on hunting, fishing, and the harvesting of fruits offered by nature, and between them, collaborative relationships and Coordination of simple activities have ensured their survival. Since pre-Columbian times, in the cosmogony of Amerindian peoples, the human being has been and is part of nature. In Jaquenod (2014) "The observation of the sun and stars combined with the study of Nature and behaviour of animals, allowing the prediction of phenomena such as drought, frost or rainstorms"(p. 145).

Indigenous peoples, unlike capitalist societies, do not identify with the notion of progress in industrial agriculture. For them, the Earth is the epicentre of life and the basis of social organisation; under slight variations, they preserve, as in the remote past, mutual aid and reciprocity; the economy is based on agricultural practices regulated by natural cycles of Mother Earth. The more ties native peoples and certain social groups create with nature, the more the care and protection of common goods in the field of cultural knowledge and beliefs intensifies. In this sense, Marx and Engels have affirmed that "[parting] from a materialistic or realistic ontology of nature as a precondition of human existence, and the production of means of subsistence were, in turn, a precondition of human life in all its multiple determinations and, therefore, of human society"(Foster, 2000, p. 183). Therefore, since the human being has a notion of himself, nature has been a *sine qua non* condition of his very existence and permanence on earth.

Capitalism centred on agriculture since the 16th century, and so far this century the industrialised countries have turned nature into exchange values. Deforestation is followed by intensive agriculture at the rate of population growth, consumption of fossil fuels, pollution in the name of progress. Hence, capital concentrated in transnational corporations

¹ ↪ Associated with the New York Botanical Garden in the United States and the Royal Botanic Garden in the United Kingdom.

and large national companies, in complicity with governments and financing banks, have pushed terrestrial ecosystems to the limit of large-scale agricultural exploitation. The metabolic alteration in "critical points" of biodiversity, after the clearing of tropical rain forests, fires and chainsaws accelerate the expulsion of countless intermediate organisms between plant and animal species, which interact and share the same ecosystem. Just one small anthropic mediation is enough to trigger irreversible alterations, both in nature and in humans.

Fragments of fragile ecosystems generate stress incidents and interdependent outcomes between intermediate species of plants and wild animals with the capacity to create new and natural conditions in the variations of the virus, new infectious diseases unknown in the coronavirus family: SARS, avian influenza, the current covid-19, Ebola. Similarly, laboratory analyses indicate that rodents and some species of bats are closely related to the spread of zoonotic diseases

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associated with the destruction of ecosystems by human activities. Hence, scientists go beyond the intermediate link of the pangolin or a bat in the creation of the last virus, the covid-19. They infer negative impacts produced by human or capital interference in economic terms on biodiversity, as the cause of this zoonosis, which hardly constitute the tip of the iceberg. This context of bio-ecological investigations has led to the publication of results of the origin of covid-19. In Millán (2020), Robert E. Garry from

Tulane University, USA, member of the research team led by Kristian Andersen stated:

If it were engineered in a laboratory, a virus previously known as a template would have had to be used. "The closest virus to SARS-CoV-2 is a bat virus that was sequenced after the pandemic started," Garry noted ... Plus, that bat virus is only 96% similar to SARS-CoV-2. It is not possible to complete that genetic distance (4%) in a laboratory, 'added the scientist (...). We were able to establish that, based on the genetic characteristics of SARS-CoV-2, it is impossible for anyone to have created it in a laboratory.

In accordance with the aforementioned statement, the substitution of humid tropical forests and their ecosystems by intensive agriculture in millions of hectares of monocultures of palm oil, cereals, extensive cattle ranching or the extraction of wood for consumption in industrialised countries, is detrimental to the Global South. This has also involved the indiscriminate devastation of rural economies and traditional ways of life, as well as the destruction of tropical rain forests, peatlands, mangroves and wetlands of global significance in the reduction of GHG in the planetary sphere. In this sense: where does this cause of climate crisis become visible? In the processes of emergence of global pandemics and increasingly lethal diseases such as covid-19, rated "10 or 19 times more deadly than A (H1N1) influenza" as declared by the WHO (2020). Other studies warn that the health emergency "will probably last between 18 and 24 months, that is, until June or December 2021" (Hernández, 2020, May 7). Similarly, the report from the University of Minnesota Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy indicates that the ravages of the new coronavirus could last up to two more years and it is expected that up to 70% of the population could become infected worldwide: Cortés (2020, 2 May).

Practical Conception of Nature at the Origins of Human History

Marx and Engels praised Morgan for the publication of unpublished evidences on the primitive condition of man, "of the gradual evolution of his moral and mental faculties through experience and of his prolonged struggle with the obstacles that he faced in his quest for a path to civilisation"(p. 21, 1972). In a prodigious investigation, he elaborates

the prehistoric basis of humanity in ethnic periods, distributed in three stages of savagery, passing through barbarism until reaching civilisation. At each stage, it produces subperiods, characterised by arts, inventions, and discoveries that define an economic base, regulated by institutions of forms of family, property, and government, linked together by notions of *progress*, developed from germs of thought, discovered in the tribes of the Indians of North America with particular features among the Iroquois. Throughout this writing, property, power and territory have been essential themes in the course of history, as well as ruptures and modifications in the human appropriation of nature. In Morgan (1972), the idea of property remained flimsy for immense periods of time. It gained life and experience during the periods of savagery and barbarism, as well as in the preparation of the human brain to submit to its dominion. The evidence of "his empire as passion over all other passions, which marks the beginning of civilisation, is accentuated. This led man not only to triumph over the obstacles retarding civilisation, but also to establish the political society on the basis of territory and property "(Morgan, 1972, p. 23).

Hence, in this long historical process, Terray (1971), coincides with Morgan in reference to the origin of private property, "because of the massive growth of production and the quantity of available goods, wealth and property replace natural selection and become (...) the dominant forces of society and govern the public spirit "(p. 65). Early society in its advanced stage in North America, with the iron plow, shovel, and ax in optimising horticulture, made possible the tillage of fields, and, for the first time, "unlimited subsistence" (Morgan, 1972). In this way, the idea of reducing the forest to the benefit of large areas of crops and the concentration of more or less dense populations in limited areas arises. Population and food growth intensify the burning and felling practices of native vegetation forests in metabolic exchanges between human groups and nature. This expansive trend has traveled human history. From this time to the second decade of the 21st century, the intensity of land use has depended on the physical, chemical, and biological properties of the soil; of the climate, population density, economy and availability of subsistence resources, of sedentary, nomadic and migratory populations.

Alongside the emergence of new production techniques in agriculture, livestock and handicrafts, the primitive European communities managed to maintain their subsistence resources and ways of life in two ways: "that of the extension of the possession and individual property of the goods on the one hand and, on the other, that of the transformation of old family ties "(Godelier et. al., 1972, p. 20). In contrast, the Asian mode of production was differentiated by surpluses, economic self-sufficiency, limited use of currency and the harmonisation of crafts with agriculture. For Marx this type of economy is natural. In contrast, major construction works were followed by ruptures in collective property with the emergence of a minority of individuals who dominated and centralised their administration. They turned it into the efficiency of technical work of general interest on a large scale in the "particular communities" (as Godelier defines the new power groups), as a result to the emergence of new productive forces in hydraulics, desiccation or irrigation works in large alluvial valleys of Egypt or Mesopotamia, with large-scale human intervention in biogeochemical cycles with fractures in the upper layer ground.

In Godelier et al (1972), the transition from the Asian mode of production to feudalism, a true class society, was more frequent than in western evolution. Thus, a singular and, at the same time universal, force arises: "namely, the domination of man over nature and the exploitation of man by man" (1972, p. 62). Among the diversity of historical approaches, this writing adheres to Moore's theoretical position: "the historical geography of feudalism was shaped by agrarian class relations that enwrap the mass of the population" (2003, p. 7). In the struggle for agrarian income, peasant roots in the land prevailed, without the landowner himself being able to overcome the limitations imposed by a subsistence economy, low agricultural productivity, increased deforestation, depletion of forest land and the reduction of pastures; increased erosion and flooding; fractures in local ecosystems and, therefore, the predominance of low yields in

corn crops; and little or no investment in supplies to feed the animals. This scenario unleashed a true ecological and population crisis.

Urban growth underwent successive fragmentations in smallholdings. This phenomenon is still reproduced in medium and small properties in the Global South. Around 1300, Moore (2003) asserted, the socioeconomic situation worsened with declines in manorial income; high taxes and in-kind or monetary rents without investments, which, far from being invested in fertilisers for soil improvement, became the “central problem (...) engendered by the class contradictions of feudalism” (Moore, 2003, p. 10), by becoming the engine of the uprising of the peasant class; hence creating a fertile ground in the spread of epidemics, famines and deaths of thousands of inhabitants. Therefore, 'the crucial feature ... [is] production for use' (Sweezy) '(...) put simply, the lord-farmer relationship was fundamentally antagonistic to long-term ecological sustainability’ (p. 8).

In summary, in the evolution of the primitive community in North America, the Asian mode of production, feudalism and the phases of financial capitalism, land ownership has been a *sine qua non* condition of the source of power,

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wealth, economic and political domination of big capital. In this way, human history in the spiral of progress unfolds unity into two contradictory elements of social reality: “a) the general development of the means to dominate nature and to ensure the survival of an increasingly numerous species, and b) the progressive dissolution of communalist solidarity and the general development of inequalities between individuals and groups ”(Godelier, et al. pp. 55-56). Currently, in South American countries, there are ejido lands for rural use, without being confused with vacant land owned by the municipalities or the state. Nonetheless, customary inheritance endorses peasant

property, although the lack of title to the properties has made it easier for the states, in complicity with landowners and transnationals, to expel peasants from their territories without any compensation.

In the Americas, European colonisation was imposed with a global impact. In the face of European economic stagnation, the first global intercontinental centre-periphery gap opens. In Galeano (2004) the Renaissance distanced both worlds in asymmetric tendencies of development, where "America appeared as just another invention, next to gunpowder, printing, paper and the compass at the booming birth of the Modern Age" (2004, p. 33). The infernal tragedy in the regions of the Americas cruelly colonised by the old continent: “A single bag of pepper was worth, in the Middle Ages, more than the life of a man, but gold and silver were the keys that the Renaissance used to open the doors of Paradise in heaven and the doors of capitalist mercantilism on earth ”(Galeano, 2004, p. 30). Koch, Brierley, Maslin, & Lewis (2018) assessed the devastating impact of European epidemics with the elimination of 90% (IQR 87–92%) of the indigenous population in the following century. It is inferred from a secondary succession of 55,8 Mha (IQR 39,0–78,4 Mha) of abandoned land with the seizure of 7,4 Pg C (IQR 4,9–10,8 Pg C), equivalent to one decrease in atmospheric CO₂ of 3,5 ppm (IQR 2,3–5,1 ppm CO₂).

In the collective memory of the Americas, the European invasion left the historical traces of the massacres and the disappearance of 55 million indigenous people from the face of the earth and the secondary succession of 56 million hectares of land. The magnitude, extent, and timing of the subsequent successive growth of vegetation and the resulting

carbon sequestration impacted the Earth's global system, which is known as the "Cold Little Ice Age," based on records of the ice core in the Antarctica. It is the beginning of the Anthropocene, centuries before the Industrial Revolution. On the other hand, it brought unknown diseases: "[the] bacteria and viruses were the most effective allies. Europeans brought with them, as biblical pests, smallpox and tetanus, various lung, intestinal and venereal diseases, trachoma, typhus, leprosy, yellow fever, cavities that rotted mouths" (Galeano, 2004, p. 35). In the Americas, at the end of the 15th century and beginning of the 16th century, in the Caribbean islands, the indigenous population paid tributes until their final extinction in the gold pans; "they relentlessly stirred the gold sands with their bodies half submerged in the water or plowing the fields above the limits of their physical resistance, dragging heavy tillage instruments brought from Spain" (Galeano, 2004, p. 31).

Since the start of the European invasion, gold and silver have fuelled European economic growth. In less than three centuries, the sugar from the invaded continent was transformed par excellence into agricultural products; it extended from the Brazilian northeast, the Caribbean islands, Cuba, Veracruz, Puerto Rico to the Peruvian coast. In the United States, the slave labor force brought from Africa in Dutch ships was incorporated. With the expropriation of fertile land by small farmers, the soils turned into eroded large estates, and the aggravation of discontinuous fractures in the water currents, the proliferation of fires associated with the clearing of forest and plant populations and the disappearance of millions of wild boars, tapirs, rabbits, bales and tattoos, among other native species. Ultimately, the soil was suitable for monocultures of sugarcane, cereals and the industrial cattle ranching of Holland, France, England and the United States (Galeno, 2004).

Relative to the confrontation between European invaders and the populations of the Americas, in Volume 1 of Capital, Marx analyses the capitalist mode of production and appropriation, which allows us to discover both the obstacles to property obtained by man with his own labour power in his own benefit instead of enriching the capitalist. That is, "The contradiction between these two diametrically opposed modes of production and appropriation exists here in a practical way"² (Marx, n.d., p. 724). In the following centuries, in countries of the Global South, the transnational economic model has intensified the expropriations and destruction of tropical ecosystems with a high value in soil protection, moisture conservation, storage and generation of carbon dioxide for the benefit of the climate on Earth. In the colonies, the capitalist endorsed by the crown, snatches the native lands by violence. As can be seen, the expropriation of the land for the benefit of capitalism, turns the small owner into a pieceworker, plagued by hunger, disease and malnutrition in his own territories. This same contradiction, and taken to the limit, has been perpetuated in Countries of the Global South, through the unlimited expansion of palm oil plantations.

The Industrial Age

At the end of the 18th century, the English government issued a law prohibiting the installation of steel companies near London and on the banks of the Thames. The law reduced metal production; yet, blast furnaces did not stop consuming huge amounts of charcoal, making the fuel more expensive. "Meanwhile, the very rich deposits of mineral coal remained intact" (Mikhail, 1983, p. 36). At the same time, machine tool was driving the manufacturing sector towards the English Industrial Revolution, then it expanded into Europe and the United States. Likewise, it allowed the replacement of renewable energies from water, wind, the muscle of the animal and humans with coal, gas and oil, which are still irreplaceable for capital. Thus, "Steam energy created the potential of the industrial age, but mass markets made it necessary" (Ferris, 2000, p. 6).

² ↪ The underlining is from Marx.

In England, in Marx (n.d.), much of the county of Lincolnshire on the island of Axholme and in other parishes located on the bank of the Trent, the steam engine has worked miracles in drying out these lands, as well as the artificial creation of alluvial lands destined to the production of great extensions of wheat and of high earnings for their owners. Agricultural work required the hiring of day labouring crews, between 10 and 50 people, distributed among men, women and children from 6 to 13 years old, led by the gang-masters or foremen; the latter unlike the gang masters, recruited day labourers in the shortest time possible, with piecework contracts and a small salary difference from the rest of the gang. In Marx's analyses, in times of temporary labour shortages, women and children entered the field and there was a tendency to lower the age limits in hiring, until the exploitation of women and children became a new spin to eliminate male and adult braceros, hence the reduction of wages (n.d., p. 608-609).

The Journey Through the Global South of Dispossession Capitalism

Marx in Volume I of Capital, analyses the original contradiction of Capital, in the first European invasion in the Americas, since the 16th century, where it does not stop expanding and deepening in the Global South, with differences, similarities and nuances in forms of the dispossession of nature and lands of entire communities of small landowners, based on strategies of blood and fire and the market of free trade agreements imposed on the rhythms of capital, which, en passant, does not shy away from the exacerbation of environmental conflicts in the capital-nature relationship. For Harvey, this phase corresponds to capitalism by dispossession, described in diverse accounts of economic, political-social, environmental and climatic alterations of great magnitude, which in contrast with the "Cold Little Ice Age" (Koch, Brierley, Maslin, & Lewis, 2018), UN scientists forecast by 2030 a multidimensional escalation of global impacts on Earth.

Since the end of the 16th century, the transatlantic expansion of mercantile capitalism altered biogeography, and deepened the economic dependence of submitted countries with combined forms of slavery and feudalism, regulated by financial banks in Asia, Africa and in the Americas. Hence, the extensive history in the two colonial periods has transformed exuberant landscapes of dense rainforests of humid tropical climates into arid, dry and burning lands. They have fractured and contaminated river beds and streams for the benefit of large palm oil plantations, with irreparable damage in uses and practices of planting traditional crops, water conservation and biodiversity that have their own styles of solidary economies anchored in the standards of a sustainable quality of life. West and Central Africa represent the original epicentre of palm oil cultivation. The plant has deep cultural roots in the economy of most countries in the region. It is used in cooking food, beverages and medicines, in animal feed, in textile manufacturing, in construction materials, and in cultural and spiritual ceremonies (Grein and The Alliance against Industrial Plantations in West and Central Africa, 2019). For multinationals, the production and processing of palm oil has countless advantages; it is the cheapest compared to that of soybean or rapeseed; it responds to the demand for food products, hygiene, cosmetics and agro-fuels for the European population and for emerging countries in a path of growth.

As can be seen, the history of dispossession repeats itself in Ecuador³ and in the rest of the producing countries of the Global South. The biodiverse landscape of native vegetation has turned into monotonous and repetitive scenarios of hundreds of thousands of hectares of palm oil. Soil fertility succumbed to unproductive aridity, hence the name of green deserts. O'Connor (2002, p. 33) predicted: "at some point in the future of nature it will become unrecognisable (...) it will be, rather, a physical nature treated as if it were governed by the law of value and the process of capitalist

³ ↪ Aguilar (2017) "This, based on the Interministerial Agreement 189 of July 2015 (...), expanded the agroecological map for the expansion of palm oil from 332,775 hectares to almost 9,2 million hectares. (...), which is equivalent to a third of the extension of the Ecuadorian territory that is 25,6 million hectares. It also exceeds the entire agricultural area of the country, which in 2016 was 5,39 million hectares." The official calculation is 370 thousand hectares; in Guatemala there are 130 thousand hectares of palm in plantations.

accumulation through economic crises, likened to the production of pencils or fast food ". In Inderena (1986): "It is calculated that each centimetre of soil is formed in a time span of 100 to 400 years. Therefore, the productive soils that sustain the agriculture of the land took between 3.000 and 12.000 years to become productive "(p. 1). In this way, O'Connor's vision is clearly displayed in Central America, where the expansion of palm oil plantations has crossed borders and governments as if it were a single business project of great magnitude. According to data from the National

Monocultures spread throughout Honduran territory, protected by feudal practices, since the government delegated social functions to the goodwill of private companies. For example, the Jaremar Group—acting akin to archetypical feudal lords—converted the inhabitants of the surrounding villages into servants, to the extreme of denying them electricity and minimal subsistence conditions.

Chamber of Palm Producers, 50 percent of the palm planted area in Costa Rica is in the possession of 3 percent of the producers (Guillén, 2017).⁴ In Central America "experimental dates and pilot plans coincide as in the 1950s and 1960s, in Costa Rica and the Pacific Ocean coast." In Honduras,⁵ palm monoculture leads deforestation and the loss of territory for the Garifuna and Miskito communities. On the other hand, El Pulso, (2017), serious ecological damage shows the effects of

climate change due to incalculable losses of the forested areas that already "announces a reckless future. African palm crops and livestock are the great devourers of national forests."

The aggressiveness of Honduran agribusiness has been linked to the political-military and drug trafficking powers. Under this perspective, Rauda, Villagrán, & Sánchez (2017) assert that 61 percent of palm oil production is controlled by the Dinant Corporation, Grupo Jaremar and Aceydesa in permanent territorial expansion, whether on the slopes and on the shores of a river, the Kawas forest reserve, the edge of a highway or in Valle de Aguán. Monocultures spread throughout Honduran territory, protected by feudal practices, since the government delegated social functions to the goodwill of private companies. For example, the Jaremar Group, acting akin to archetypical feudal lords, converted the inhabitants of the surrounding villages into servants, to the extreme of denying them electricity and minimal subsistence conditions.

In the rest of the countries of the Americas, governments, companies, peasant farmers and processing plants of palm oil and its derivatives, act outside the law when it comes to the accumulation of profits and illegal plantings by landowners at the service of politicians and drug traffickers. On the other hand, the rural population is at risk, as it has been relegated to the sowing of family subsistence crops, completely unaware of the impact of climate crisis on biodiversity, access to water sources, and the permanence of nutrients in the soil and food security. In countries of the Andean area (South America), the land dispossession model is replicated to replace the traditional use and cultivation practices model with so-called strategic alliances, whose only purpose is to remove the peasantry from its territory or subject it to neocolonial forms of slavery or feudalism. Let's see some examples: Colombia⁶ is the first producer of palm oil on the continent and the fourth worldwide.⁷ The government, through the vertical model of strategic alliances, leverages Indupalma, Manuelita Aceites and Energy in Colombia in the outsourcing of the peasant labour force through the

⁴ ↪ The officially registered figures exceed 370 thousand hectares. They are on the rise due to aggressive global expansion. Central American exports are destined for Mexico, the United States and the European Union (Guillén, 2017)

⁵ ↪ The palm oil monoculture devours the country's forests. Between 2004 and 2017 it reached 150,000 hectares equivalent to the size of Mexico City due to its high economic yields, without anticipating soil contamination, replacement of native trees, stagnation or the disappearance of water due to the voracity of the profits of well-endowed businessmen and farmers (El Pulso HN, 2017). In Honduras, crops are spread over more than 250.000 hectares, inside or outside the protected area of the Jannete Kawas National Park. 79.381 hectares have at least 3.478 hectares planted and a total of 7.000 hectares in national parks. In Rauda, Villagrán, & Sánchez (2017) three companies control 61% of the oil production in the country: Corporación Dinant, Grupo Jaremar y Aceydesa

⁶ ↪ This country has the largest extensions of palm oil monocultures, about 450.000 hectares in 2012 (Fedepalma). In Palo Altico, located in the mountainous sub-region of Marialabaja, (Colombian Caribbean), palm oil replaced food crops of rice, corn, cassava and plantain, replicating this trend in other departments of the country. The chronological time of expansion coincided with the bloodiest years of the armed conflict. Between 1998-2002 in Marialabaja and in Catatumbo, the paramilitaries entered, executing the most ruthless massacres, with territorial forced evacuation and massive land purchases; this is how the arrival of palm trees is inaugurated ((Rodero & Rado, 2017).

⁷ ↪ In 2014, the main agro-industrial export destinations for palm oil were the Netherlands (48%), followed by Mexico (13%), which is often among the most violent countries in the world, and Spain (8%).

Associated Work Cooperatives (CTA). With the signing of the contract, it limits labour rights and social obligations, compounded with the practice of immediate dismissal if workers try to organise unions or claim wage rights (kill & Overtet, 2018 and Vasquez, 2017).

On the other hand, the intermediary allies promote strategic alliances, a land appropriation mechanism, and the enslavement of the labour force, and force the peasant to mortgage the land—the only source of financing for the purchase of inputs—, and to cover payments for technical advice and transportation. Meanwhile, the debt grows exponentially until the final default and the transfer of property to the palm grower businessman takes place. In the

It is 'a model that multiplies hunger, frustrations and abuses of all kinds', which range from persecution for the production and sale of palm oil itself, to other crimes such as physical or sexual assaults in the plantations of the monoculture.

escalation of pressure and deceit, the peasant is also denied the right to associate as a co-owner of the extraction plants, which was a promise of engagement at the start of the strategic alliance negotiations. The fraudulent chain is unstoppable, bearing production costs with interest that double the debt: 8 percent gross on the income the company

charges. In Sabana de Torres, the initial debts of the peasants associated with Indupalma, amounted to \$ 7.940 million. However, due to the “logistics operation” they will end up paying an additional \$ 9.918 million to the initial loan in the 18 years of the contract. Nonetheless, the gavel of expropriations do not end with the robbery of the peasantry: “the company (whose main shareholder is a company located in Panama) mortgaged the land of peasants with the GMG Master Found company, located in the Cayman Islands, another tax haven”(Vásquez, 2017).

In Cameroon, plantations have been established in territories where women already lived and worked in small and productive businesses. With the arrival of the palm, other resources that gave life to the forest have disappeared: wood, medicinal trees and biodiversity (...). As agricultural land has been reduced, market prices have increased. It is 'a model that multiplies hunger, frustrations and abuses of all kinds', which range from persecution for the production and sale of palm oil itself, to other crimes such as physical or sexual assaults in the plantations of the monoculture, according to Ngobo, coordinator of the Network of Sustainable Development Actors in Cameroon (Castro, Moreno A., & Villadiego, 2018).

In RIAO-RCD et al. (2016), in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Feronia Inc. in 2015, registered in Canada, replicates the same economic model, denying all labour rights to workers: two dollars of salary per day (1.921,58 CDF, franc Congolese) and part of it is paid in kind. The contracts last a few months; after the dismissal, between the current and the next hiring they allow idle time before re-linking with workers. By the same token, they deny the right to personal and family health care and sanitary support. The ikotoma system, consisting on delaying the payment of wages,

Ethnic peoples, peasant societies, environmental and human rights leaders and nomadic groups in permanent isolation in the Amazon, Asia and Africa, survive and fight from their social and ethnic organisations, despite state repression and violence by private armies of multinationals.

is exerted. This subterfuge forces workers to apply for loans with high interest rates to the company. This system “is so integral to Feronia's operations that the managers of the company's union, as it happens, grant ikotoma loans at the same facilities as Feronia Inc., near the area where workers collect their wages... while managers earn millions of dollars”(RIO-RCD et al., 2016, p. 9). Ultimately, the money stays

and circulates in Feronia's coffers whilst the worker is indebted for life.

Another repeated practice in palm oil plantations in Africa is the arbitrary, violent and deadly arrest of workers by Feronia guards, accusing them of stealing some palm nuts. Frequently, serious clashes occur between the communities

and the company. In the Republic of the Congo, in 2015, over 60 traditional chiefs and other community leaders from across the Yahuma district, where more than 90 percent of Feronia's plantations are located, in Lokutu, signed a statement against Feronia and its predecessors for the illegal occupation in the last 104 years (RIO-RCD and others 2016, p. 7). Repeatedly, the communities request "the return of their lands, compensation for years of forced labour, the occupation of their lands, the destruction of their palm forests and the resulting loss of benefits (...) the freedom to use their forests and cultivate their lands as they wish "(RIO-RCD et al., 2006 , p. 18). Also, they demand the fulfilment of the promises related to the construction of infrastructure: schools, hospitals, roads, decent houses and community centres.⁸

Capitalism of Dispossession and Community Resistances

It is worth noting that domestic wars are a violent strategy in the expansions of transnational corporations in countries of the Global South. In each usurped territory, the insurmountable chasm grows between agro-industrial companies and subsistence economies in asymmetric and biodiverse habitats designed by nature itself. Farms and small properties have settled on mountainsides and bushes; valleys and plains on the edge of rivers and ravines, where capitalism of dispossession overwhelms without compassion at the rhythm of the expansion of palm oil plantations. It is the confrontation between capitalism of dispossession and the original populations protected by community rights, also called "special rights" by ancestral tradition. Ethnic peoples, peasant societies, environmental and human rights leaders and nomadic groups in permanent isolation in the Amazon, Asia and Africa, survive and fight from their social and ethnic organisations, despite state repression and violence by private armies of multinationals. To cite an example: in the Brazilian Amazon, indigenous Lawahivas in defence of their lives flee the terror of landowners, loggers, settlers, and drug traffickers. It is emphasised that the domestic war strategy in the Americas is most effective when it comes to expropriations through massacres and forced displacement.

Picado (2017) asserts: in Guatemala, palm farmers through the financing of private armies, have expelled peasant populations, Afro and indigenous peoples. This has happened in the South of Petén, Izabal, Alta Verapaz, Quiché, Q'eqchí, Escuintla, Suchitepéquez, Quetzaltenango, San Marcos and Retalhuleu; 4 percent of the total agricultural area of the country is occupied by this monoculture. In Honduras, after the 2009 coup d'état, the palm expansion coincided with aggressive militarisation and violence against peasants. In the Aguán Valley, a large number of assassinations and disappearances have occurred within the plantations. The company DINANT, the largest producer of palm oil in the country, has been blamed.

In 2018 Iberian America led the infamous list of assassinations and the, criminalisations of civil lawsuits with the intimidation of leaders, families and communities of activists in defence of territorial agrarian rights after the deployment of private, legal and paramilitary surveillance armies or drug traffickers, business lawyers expert in legal battles, allied with politicians, businessmen and government officials. In Colombia, for example, feudal and unproductive landowners are the intellectual authors of internal wars in almost sixty years of history. It is the most successful strategy in the violent redistribution of land for their benefit. The armed confrontation has also made it easier for transnational corporations to seize wood, coal, and oil in the Amazon and in strategic areas in the biodiverse regions. Now, they are voraciously falling on gold, coltan, precious and rare stones, among others. Impunity in crimes of extermination and enforced disappearance represents the added value delivered by the national states to the great predators of the land.

⁸ ↪ Feronia in 2015 occupied more than one hundred thousand hectares. Furthermore, "Feronia has not shared crucial information regarding finances or documentation concerning land concessions. The communities know that they have not benefited from the operations of the company, but they do not know how much the owners and managers of the company have benefited from these operations or how they have spent the 118 million dollars that the IFDs have provided to Feronia " (RIO-RCD et al., 2006, p.18).

Indepaz (2019), has denounced in Colombia, since the signing of the Peace Agreement (2016) shattered by the government of President Iván Duque (2018-2022), a record of more than 620 assassinations of male and female social leaders and defenders of human rights, labeled criminal activists in 87,5 percent of cases in Colombian regions. Between 1 January 2016 and 8 July 2019, in 521 cases, the social leaders assassinated were part of peasant, indigenous, Afro-descendant, environmental and community organisations. Agrarian conflicts over land, territory and natural resources represent 70,98 percent of homicides; meanwhile, capitalism of dispossession continues to expand throughout the Global South. This terrifying scenario is repeated in the other countries of the Americas with different statistics on persecutions, homicides and massacres.

In the Americas, however, community organisations resist forced eviction from land. In the face of death, sentiments and convictions are strengthened, having nothing to lose and everything to gain. They decide, regardless of the price, to develop different strategies of legal, cultural, political and information resistance for as long as necessary. Frequently they affirm in denunciations, social mobilisations and signboards: (...) *we are seed, if a leader falls, two rise or as many as necessary*. In permanent community resistance, the legitimate right to the expulsion of multinationals and large companies from territories hindered by environmental and socio-cultural devastation is defended. For Harvey (2014), capital is not intimidated in the face of environmental crises generated by access to "natural" resources, the absorption of polluting substances, the degradation of habitats, biodiversity, among others.

GRAIN, WRM et l'Alliance reportlle against the plantations industrielles d'huile de palme in Afrique centrale et occidentale (2019) in Indonesia, the Roundtable on Palm Oil (RSPO) certified PT Asiatic Persada, the largest palm oil producer, associated with Wilmar, and at the same time, is part of the RSPO Board of Directors, involved in the expulsion of entire communities from their lands, the destruction of their homes without judicial authorisation; serious violations of human rights and the right to work, using armed groups and the complicit silence of the authorities of their respective governments. In Salva la Selva (2008):

Many of the RSPO member companies have continued to destroy large areas of rainforest in flagrant violation of human rights, as is the case of Wilmar International on the Island of Bugala (Uganda) and in Indonesia, PT SMART, Agro Group and IOI Group in Indonesia, FEDEPALMA in Colombia, or Unilever in Indonesia, Malaysia and Ivory Coast.

In southern countries, the capitalism of dispossession, from 2017 to date, uses similar violent methods against a range of defenders of land, water, the environment and food security, especially in the Philippines, Colombia, Brazil, Guatemala and Mexico. In contrast, in Kill & Overbeek (2018) in Southeast Asia, palm oil plantations in Malaysia and Indonesia have concentrated world production by 85 percent, albeit outdated figures prevail.⁹ Unlike Asia and the Americas, the report by Grein and The Alliance against Industrial Plantations in West and Central Africa (2019) points out:¹⁰ 27 large-scale palm oil plantation projects over the past decade "were either abandoned or failed (...) other projects were reduced or stagnated", land occupation estimates hover at more than 3 million 100 thousand hectares of land. For the most part, palm oil plantation projects located outside of Central and West Africa have been abandoned or curtailed.¹¹

⁹ ↪ In Malaysia, an expansion, equivalent to more than 50 percent of the total—some 14 million hectares in 2012—took place at the expense of the expropriation of community lands and the occupation of rainforests, jungles and peatlands. The majority of palm oil plantations are located in Southeast Asia globally. "Thirty percent of Indonesian palm oil is produced in the Indonesian province of Kalimantan (the rest in Sumatra), while half of Malaysia's palm oil is produced in Sabah and Sarawak" (Hance, 2019).

¹⁰ ↪ According to the GREIN et al (2019) database, they currently have 49 concessions for large-scale palm oil plantations covering 2 million 740 hectares.

¹¹ ↪ The expansion of industrial palm oil plantations in Africa is dominated by five companies that control three quarters of the area planted on the continent. Some of these big companies in Southeast Asia like Sime Darby, Golden Agri, KLK, Salim Group and Olam Wilmar, based in Singapore, have plantations in five countries in Africa (Ivory Coast, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Uganda) with 83,714 ha "(Grein and The Alliance against Industrial Plantations in West and Central Africa 2019, p. 4). The companies SOCFIN of Luxembourg and SIAT of Belgium have built their plantation empire on the ruins of the World Bank for the development of palm oil and rubber plantations in various countries of West and Central Africa, between 1970 and 1980 (Grein and The Alliance Alliance against Industrial Plantations in West and Central Africa 2019, p. 3).

Two different contexts are mentioned as the reasons for the failure: (i) Within companies, due to little or no experience in the large-scale agriculture sector, the tendency to usurp large tracts of land is added, then they cede them for lease or concessions, after little or no investments and resell the usurped lands to other companies. And, (ii) The most relevant and definitive reason is the resistance struggles of the communities and the organisations that support them in defence of their territories.

In Grein and The Alliance against Industrial Plantations in West and Central Africa (2019), several cases of resistance from agricultural communities are reported. In the Rufiji District of Tanzania, they stopped a 20.000-hectare palm oil plantation project by the company Infelsa African Green Oil Ltd "(p. 4). Southwestern Cameroon, with national and international support, local communities have forced the government to reduce the concession awarded to the Herakles Farms firm from 73.000 hectares to less than 20.000 hectares. The communities of Cameroon have slowed the expansions of the SOCFIN subsidiary SOCAPALM. In Liberia, the JOEGBAHM Clan prevented the UK's EQUATORIAN PALM OIL company from taking over their land.

Salazar (2020) relates this successful experience in the populations of the Aru Islands, in Indonesia, where organised communities prevented the entry of the Menara Group concession. It was discovered that the national government had issued 28 permits to different Menara-controlled companies in the sugar cane plantations, with dozens of different directors registered at fake addresses in Jakarta. Activists suspected that this fraudulent strategy evaded the limits of the area of territory that a single company could control. The project was going to destroy the livelihoods of thousands of people, due to the drastic generation in GHG emissions, not to mention that in Indonesia they reach the highest levels in the world. The communities had the participation of academics, religious, groups in social networks, journalists, traditional media and NGOs, managing to overcome all kinds of obstacles and taking the story out to international spheres. The novel strategies in the "information war" gave them the final victory. In short, it is feasible to assert that agro-industrial corporations will be expelled from the Global South.

On farmlandgrab.org (2020): Feronia Inc and its donors have returned various areas of plantations to local communities in the Lokutu, Boteka and Yaligimba areas in the DR Congo. In this way, the owners of the lands have recovered them after 100 years of illegal occupation. So far, the company has abandoned several hundred, including the 420 hectares of palm oil plantations of the MWANDO group, LWETE Sector, ISANGI Territory, Tshopo Province. In this sector:

Local communities have installed eight machines for artisanal oil production using a crisis management system whose teachers, unemployed after the covid-19 pandemic, and other intellectuals have improvised themselves to act as engineers, factory chiefs, production managers and a personnel and accounting department that manages to respond to the water shortage in the affected communities and other nearby communities that come to get petroleum (...). Mr. Ebambola, manager of a factory in crisis stated: "With access to these lands,

It becomes evident that, the smaller basic natural needs are and the nicer the climate is, the less labour time required in the conservation and reproduction of the producer and the greater the remaining work time delivered to others after workers meet their own needs.

we can resume our production of palm oil, which was violently interrupted by colonisation. Since the beginning of the week I have sold 15 cans of oil on my own account, which gives me 300,000 Congolese francs (US \$ 150) in profit, which is seven times more than we could earn working for the company per month, under great difficulty (Farmlandgrab.org. 2020) "

And, in this line of resistance, the communities are rescuing the legitimate ownership of their lands, ways of life and traditional agricultural systems at high costs for the multinationals, due to situations of instability and economic losses. If the “final chapter for industrial palm oil plantations in Africa” is not approaching (Grein and The Alliance against Industrial Plantations in West and Central Africa, 2019, p. 6), resistance in the South, at the cost of hundreds of lives. Even if they do not succeed in evicting the transnational corporations, the social organisations are not discouraged in their final expulsion, they are aware that the territory belongs to them and they have inter-generational time with various forms of resistance.

Consequently, irrespective of the perspective used to make an assessment, “the transfer of work and nature of the global South is necessary for the economies of the global North.” And, coincidentally, the imperial and consumerist way of life of the global North contributes decisively to hierarchically structuring societies elsewhere “(Brand & Wilssen, 2019). In opposition to the waste and unlimited consumption of financial capitalism, in remote regions of the Global South, it becomes evident that, the smaller basic natural needs are and the nicer the climate is, the less labour time required in the conservation and reproduction of the producer and the greater the remaining work time delivered to others after workers meet their own needs (Godelier et. al., 1972, p. 129).

The Value of Forests in the Global South Versus "Green Makeup" and GHG Emissions

For the communities of the Global South, the care and conservation of forests and rain forests are integrated into agricultural activities: they protect the ecosystems formed in the roots and other parts of the trees; keep the weather cool; supply fresh water and control erosion. It is the natural store in the healing of diseases, among other functions. "All forests are high-value forests," according to one village in Indonesia. In contrast, for transnational corporations, a forest of *haute valeur de conservation* or *haute valeur carbone* (Grein, WRM et l'Alliance informelle, 2019 p. 68), is simply another high-yield business, certified by the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), an NGO created with “principles and criteria”, validated by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), apparently sustainable, when in reality it conceals the increase in production and shareholder profits.

RSPO also manages bank loans for plantation development. On the other hand, the RSPO label diverts attention from environmental conflicts in agri-food plantations, after delimiting and mapping the "high conservation value forests" or "high carbon value", in response to reducing GHG emissions.¹² It has also been interpreted as "green makeup" or "green washing" of the agro-industrial business, associated from the shores of the Global South, to food crises in countries severely affected by continental disruptions of ecological balance. In the Americas, with special emphasis on Brazil and Colombia, the fires in the Amazon initiate the advance of the agricultural frontier pushed by monocultures in the food industry.¹³ Multinationals promote plantations from selection to certification and isolate and prevent the access of the inhabitants to the roads of servitude with similar arguments: the forest *must be protected (...) to save the climate (...), to save biodiversity.*

The large extensions of monocultures and low production costs are possible due to serious violations of human rights, food security, the extinction of biodiversity and global climate justice. Since the 1992 Rio summit, the boost to carbon markets has not only worsened the climate crisis on Earth, but has also widened the economic gap between the Northern and Southern Countries.

¹² →RSPO started by certifying palm oil companies in Indonesia, one of the top palm oil producing countries. One of the companies that has been awarded the RSPO label is called PT Asiatic Persada. This company is linked to Wilmar, the world's largest palm oil company, which is a member of the RSPO Board of Directors (...). There are many similar examples in which palm oil companies involved in serious human and labour rights violations have received RSPO certification that they produce "sustainable" palm oil GRAIN, WRM and the Informal Alliance Against Industrial Plantations of palm oil in Central and West Africa (Grein, WRM y la Alianza informal, 2019, pp. 65-66).

¹³ →The negative consequences of palm oil monocultures are a reality not only in Colombia, but also in Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Cameroon, Uganda, Ivory Coast, Cambodia and Thailand, as well as in Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Costa Rica” (Salva la selva, 2008).

Nevertheless, neither tactics of evasiveness nor RSPO certifications can hide the consequences of global agro-ecological fractures, nor they can hide the transfer to populations and the nature of the ecological costs with irreversible alterations of the basic functions of forests in the conservation of ecosystems and subsistence resources in communities. All this together generates changes in land use followed by huge amounts of carbon. However, from the rhetoric and power of capital, they have built deadly traps in apparent climate benefits through food and agro-fuel industries. When included in the calculation of low carbon emissions, the use of palm oil transformed into fuel produces 25 percent more CO₂ than fossil fuel (Kill & Overbeet, 2018, p. 6).

Governments and companies in palm oil producing countries push 2.0 of carbon markets (REDD + and the MdC); mechanisms of adaptation to climate change that have bet on the increase of complementary benefits with the sale of carbon credits, under the assumption of belonging to the renewable energy sector. As evidenced in this writing, the large extensions of monocultures and low production costs are possible due to serious violations of human rights, food security, the extinction of biodiversity and global climate justice. Since the 1992 Rio summit, the boost to carbon markets has not only worsened the climate crisis on Earth, but has also widened the economic gap between the Northern and Southern Countries. The application of the principle “the polluter pays”, based on the cost-benefit ratio, far from preventing the reduction of emissions on the established dates, have increased them.

In Oettli, Behera, & Yamagata (2018), the best performances require optimal climatic conditions, 2.000 mm of minimum rainfall throughout the year, distributed evenly, around 167 mm / month, with minimum temperatures between 22 and 24 ° C and maximum temperatures between 29 and 33 ° C; relative humidity greater than 85%. Solar radiation of at least 16 or 17 MJ m⁻¹ d⁻¹ has surpassed current ones, especially in the southeast of Borneo, with the possibility that the production of palm oil is not viable; thus generating the danger that plantations extend into peatland areas, defined as large water tanks or lake basins, saturated with semi-decomposed plant material in the swamps. Consequently, if these vast carbon sinks become disrupted, devastating carbon dioxide emissions could be triggered where hot temperatures or drought degrade intact peatlands. Sheil (quoted by Hance, 2019) warns that "Borneo could go from a humid to a dry climate [the most disturbing thing] and that parts of the immense island could no longer be able to support the rainforests." In summary, Kill & Overbeek (2018):

(i) Deforestation is preceded by fires in jungle areas to “clean” the land and replace it with palm oil monocultures. They appear among the main causes of the loss of global biodiversity and the generation of insurmountable environmental and social conflicts and the generation of GHGs. (ii) The massive replacement of tropical forests destroys fertile soils and depletes water sources; soils are exposed to rain, erosion and the destruction of ecosystems; they frequently divert the course of rivers and open drainage channels to obtain and regulate optimal water flows in plantation areas. (iii) The use of agrochemicals and fertilisers guarantee high economic yields with serious consequences for the health of communities and workers. The POME effluent (Palm Oil Mill Effluent) from the processing plants contaminate rivers and streams, vital resources for the support of life and domestic activities of the populations; the expansion of the monoculture makes the water unusable; farmers work without protective equipment, permanently exposed to serious respiratory diseases due to the effects of pesticides. In West Sumatra, for example, on 50,000 hectares they dump between 1,4 and 1,6 million litres per year; the increase in the level of nitrogen in the water causes the accelerated growth of algae on the surface with alterations in the microclimate, reduction of the oxygen level of the water and therefore, in the decrease in river biodiversity. To cite an example, the Toxicology Laboratory of the University of San Carlos (USAC), recorded in more than 150 kilometres of the La Pasión river in Guatemala, the massive death of fish and delicate health problems in more than eleven thousand people by the high degree of contamination caused by Malathion, a pesticide used in the elimination of flies on palm fruit. Ecosystem fractures lead to radical changes in the climate, obliterate pre-existing vegetation and shorten the range of mobility of wild species in the Amazon to the North.

The UNEP report (2019, p. 4), "Total GHG emissions in 2018 - which include those resulting from the change in land use - reached an unprecedented figure: 55,3 GtCO₂e". Likewise, it coincides with the assertion of the resounding failure of COP25 (Madrid). The G-20 countries are far from showing climate actions aimed at reducing global GHG emissions, during the years of the Kyoto Protocol (1997-2020). In addition, these countries are behind by nearly 75 percent in Global GHG emissions (including land use), which "largely determine global emission patterns and to what extent the disparity in emissions will be eliminated by 2030" (UNEP, 2019, p. 6) .

The report of CO₂ emissions from the same territories of GHG emissions to the place of consumption—the carbon footprint of the countries of the South to the industrialised ones—does not include emissions resulting from the change in land use. In the reduction of territorial emissions in developed countries, the import of incorporated carbon means that, per capita emissions from the European Union, for example, rise above those from China when calculating emissions due to consumption, without adding the costs in money and in human lives for forced displacement and usurpation of lands, the destruction of biodiversity in tropical forests and entire villages. As for Indonesia, arguably, there is a lack of concrete data on emissions from land-use change and forestry (UNEP, 2019). On the other hand, in palm oil plantations, traditional systems of cultivation and the manufacture and sale of products based on palm oil, use traditional methods of agro-forestry or are interleaved with low environmental costs in countries of western and central Africa and in one region of Brazil, where they contribute greatly to local and regional economies. Under this perspective, "in Africa, between 6 and 7 million hectares of palm oil use traditional farming systems, especially in Nigeria, where it represents approximately a third of the global area of the planet" (Kill & Overbeet, 2018, p. 12).

Mitigation of climate change depends on the defence and protection of tropical forests. To destroy forests is to return carbon to the atmosphere and influence increasingly warmer temperatures and irreversible damage on the planet. However, the humid forests of the planet perform other vital functions: they host around 50 percent of the planet's flora and fauna species; they supply fresh water and mitigate erosion, and they have ancient properties that are still unknown in plants to be used for healthcare (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2012).

The main function of forests at the planetary level is the mitigation of climate change. When exploitation is sustainable, forests produce dendro-fuel, which is also another alternative to fossil fuels and, above all, a life option for millions of inhabitants on the continents of Asia, Africa and the Americas. Protecting tropical rain forests is guaranteeing the survival of the human species and ensuring livelihoods for the peasant population in the Global South. Thus, for example, Rodríguez (2020) in Mexico, communities lead a sustainable model of taking advantage of communal forest resources, protect ecosystems and prevent pests, illegal logging or fires. The forestry company owns around 1,392 ejidos and communities; 350 of them have ecotourism infrastructure, but only 50 percent carried out this activity before the covid-19 health emergency.

Conclusions

Since ancient times, nature is Mother-Earth. As a living organism, it simultaneously provides life and subsistence resources, which are two substantial functions of the earth for the social being. However, with the development of the forces of production, little by little, the social being lost, until disappearing in technology, the link that linked its existence to Earth. The "Amazon border of the not contacted" between the limits of Peru, Brazil and Bolivia, the most isolated original groups on the planet still survive, in extreme situations of harassment and violence by national and transnational companies and avid investigators of pharmaceutical companies, dedicated to the misappropriation of indigenous knowledge acquired in legendary tradition by trial and error, with fewer and fewer territories

surviving. In two centuries, technological advance has unapologetically altered the laws and rhythms of nature, still ignored by science, which is focused on 4.0, 5G technologies, robotics and artificial intelligence.

The Global South is torn between two types of conflict and struggle scenarios:

- (i) From the first transatlantic occupation in the Americas, Africa and Asia to globalised capitalism, a handful of agri-food companies have seized millions of hectares and liquidated hundreds of leaders, leaving behind a ballast of environmental and social conflicts. At least thirty leaders have been assassinated in Colombia in defence of lands and natural resources between January and February so far this year; 40 complaints of assassinations against social leaders and the destruction of the Peace Agreement (2016), Torrado & Oquendo (2020). In this country, the disintegration of remote regions—where the Amazon, Orinoquia and rain forests are located—is of extreme concern. Every day a leader is assassinated; so far, the government has not even prosecuted a single one of the intellectual authors, national or foreign, who are the financial funders of ecocides during their time in the country.
- (ii) In the midst of such a gloomy horizon, there have also been successful cases of community struggles and resistance focused on the expulsion of multinationals with the support and consensus of national and international actors and media; for example, the case of the populations of the Aru Islands in Indonesia, Lokutu, Boteka and Yalimba in Africa.

In Foster (2000, p. 232) During the 19th century, in the 1820s and 1830s, soil fertility declined throughout Europe and North America. Since that time, it has been a critical problem comparable to the increasing pollution of cities, deforestation of entire continents and Malthusian fears of overpopulation. Back to the 21st century, we observe the powerful reaction of nature in the face of the unbridled greed of capital, which has not stopped, not even in the destruction of trees over two hundred years old, in exchange for products for immediate consumption. The agricultural engineer Walter Pengue, interviewed by Ecoportal.Net (2020), warns that the ecological footprint grows radically. Each person uses at least two and a half hectares to satisfy their needs. If the available surface of some 14,000 million hectares is divided by the more than 7 billion humans that we are, it is evident that we are devouring the planet. Every year we have less planet.

For five centuries, environmental and socio-economic damages have been revealed in multidimensional variables in global climate crises. Among them, monoculture bears the problems of erosion, soil and ecosystem contamination by the indiscriminate use of pesticides, products and agrochemical fertilisers, resulting in extreme aridity in the agricultural layer with little chance of regeneration in traditional subsistence polyculture agriculture. In the climate crisis, food security and water scarcity followed by migrations of millions of hungry and thirsty people, are variables of enormous proportions, if we take into account their progression without mitigation to half of the cultivable land and the loss of biodiversity in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, India and China. For this reason, the increase in GHG originating in palm oil plantations is extremely serious, at levels above 410 parts per million (ppm). Meanwhile, the climate crisis is increasing.

In the climate crisis, food security, water scarcity followed by migrations of millions of hungry and thirsty people, are variables of enormous proportions, if we take into account their progression without practical intervention of conservation and sustainable development actions, in quest of the return to half of the cultivable soils, at least, and the recovery of biodiversity in the countries of the Global South. For this reason, the increase in GHG originating in palm oil plantations is extremely serious, at levels above 410 parts per million (ppm), while climatic crisis increases.

At COP 25-Madrid, corporations in the fossil fuel industry, the International Carbon Emissions Trading Association and geoengineering, brought two major contradictory positions to the table: that of financial capitalism, led by the United States, Brazil, China, India, Australia, Canada and Russia, the main GHG emitters, and that of leaders of civil organisations, international NGOs and ecological activists under the motto "Let's change the system and not the climate". These are two contradictory positions without a common point. Instead of changing the economic system, the scientists of capitalism have advanced in technological proposals to mitigate climate change, some already in progress: the planting of small-scale volcanic clouds; carbon capture and storage in underground geological formations, at least 1,500 meters in oil wells; in the ocean depths or in certain mineral compounds. Some of these technologies have been used for decades; biochar for the property of storing carbon in the soil; the fertilisation of the sea with iron and the capture of environmental air, among others.

The ecological crisis has hit financial capitalism with the arrival of the covid-19 virus, a totally unexpected actor. While the great powers are looking for culprits and threats of sanctions cross each other for the emergence of the global

Whatever happens, capitalism will be defeated by climatic escalations interspersed with international socio-economic conflicts without return.

pandemic, science along with peasant ethnic, civil, national organisations and international NGOs continue to insist on new opportunities for change towards a sustainable socio-ecological transition from the very own

perspectives and opportunities of the overwhelmed continents.

The confinement of half a planet in the face of fear of death has confronted the individual with his own vulnerabilities, still with unpredictable consequences in the global health systems, the economic depression in the making, the oscillating oil prices and the de-dollarization at the pace of Chinese philosophy supported by Russia and its allied countries. These facts open the doors to the widespread growth of renewable energies and the reflection of consumer societies in the North-South on the type of planet that they could rescue for future generations. Whatever happens, capitalism will be defeated by climatic escalations interspersed with international socio-economic conflicts without return.

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