ECOCIDE
is mass damage and destruction of ecosystems – severe harm to nature which is widespread or long-term.
In June of this year a panel of 12 lawyers from around the world proposed a new definition of Ecocide as a Fifth Crime Against Peace.
There are currently four core International Crimes:

- Genocide
- War Crimes
- Crimes Against Humanity
- The Crime Of Aggression

These crimes are dealt with by the International Criminal Court (ICC).
Ecocide

1. For the purpose of this Statute, “ecocide” means unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts.

2. For the purpose of paragraph 1:
   
a. “Wanton” means with reckless disregard for damage which would be clearly excessive in relation to the social and economic benefits anticipated;

b. “Severe” means damage which involves very serious adverse changes, disruption or harm to any element of the environment, including grave impacts on human life or natural, cultural or economic resources;

c. “Widespread” means damage which extends beyond a limited geographic area, crosses state boundaries, or is suffered by an entire ecosystem or species or a large number of human beings;

d. “Long-term” means damage which is irreversible or which cannot be redressed through natural recovery within a reasonable period of time;

e. “Environment” means the earth, its biosphere, cryosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere, as well as outer space.
The Idea of a Crime of Ecocide Derives from the War in Vietnam
Using Agent Orange and Blanket Bombing, more than 12% of Vietnam’s land area was decimated.
Arthur W. Galston’s Proposal

After the end of World War II, and as a result of the Nuremburg trials, we justly condemned the willful destruction of an entire people and its culture, calling this crime against humanity genocide. It seems to me that the willful and permanent destruction of environment in which a people can live in a manner of their own choosing ought similarly to be considered as a crime against humanity, to be designated by the term ecocide.
I believe that the most highly developed nations have already committed autoecocide over large parts of their own countries. At the present time, the United States stands alone as possibly having committed ecocide against another country, Vietnam, through its massive use of chemical defoliants and herbicides. The United Nations would appear to be an appropriate body for the formulation of a proposal against ecocide. (1970)
In referring to autoecocide, Galston was referring to Rachel Carson’s claim that the use of pesticides should be called biocide – the killing of life.

It is the explosion of ever new forms of Autoecocide, of Terracide, that have become The Industrial Capitalist Form of Life Over the past 50 years.
Hence
The Proposal
For an
Ecocide
Convention
Now...
The Almost Irresistible Hypothesis:

Liberal Industrial Capitalism Has Become An Ecocidal, A Terracidal Form of Life
Once upon a time... 11,700 years ago, a new geological epoch arrived:

THE HOLOCENE
THE HOLOCENE brought into being a moderately warm and relatively stable set of climate conditions that enabled the biosphere, living nature, and its ecosystems to develop maximally resilient forms.
THE HOLOCENE’S

Moderate conditions enabled human living to be radically transformed from hunting and gathering to Agriculture which explodes 8,000 years ago involving the domestication of both plants and animals.
Agriculture leads to the emergence of Cities and all the accomplishments of civilization:

HUMAN CIVILIZATION IS (WAS) HOLOCENE CIVILIZATION
BUT THE COST OF PROGRESS HAS BECOME IMMENSE BEGINNING IN THE INDUSTRIAL AGE.

Manchester, c. 1850.
INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM HAS BEEN ECOCIDAL, DESTROYING THE NATURAL BOUNTY OF HOLOCENE NATURE

THE ANTHROPOCENE ARRIVES

Fossil fuels, coal and oil burning, has led to CO₂ rising from the pre-industrial level of 280 ppm to now being 420 ppm – the highest it has been for 11 million years

→ GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE

→ FIRES

The Rim Fire, Yosemite 2013
ECOCIDAL FLOODING

KATRINA (2005)
ANTHROPOCENE
ECOCIDE
The current rate of extinction of species is estimated at 100 to 1,000 times higher than natural background extinction rates.
A SIXTH MASS EXTINCTION
ABOVE ALL:
ECOCIDE
ECOCIDE
ECOCIDE

DEFORESTATION
ABOVE ALL:
ECOCIDE
ECOCIDE
ECOCIDE

AIR POLLUTION
CAIRO
BEIJING
OIL SPILL POLLUTION – DEEPWATER HORIZON
2010: 57,500 square miles (149,000 square km), with an estimated 1,100 miles (1,770 km) of shoreline polluted.
ECOCIDE: PLASTIC POLLUTION

The 2017 United Nations Ocean Conference estimated that the oceans might contain more weight in plastics than fish by the year 2050 and it might be irreversible.
ECOCIDE:
Eutrophication (nutrient pollution from run-offs) leading to fish die-offs
Mining and Mountaintop Removal:
Citizens describe it as like living in a war zone
THE ANTHROPOCENE IS THE KILLING OF HOLOCENE NATURE ENOUGH!

IS THERE ANY DOUBT THAT INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM IS ECOCIDAL?

We are now facing a triple planetary crisis

Climate Change

Biodiversity Loss

Pollution and Waste

ALL LEADING TO THE DESTRUCTION OF Viable ecological habitats

AND AS THE GLASGOW CLIMATE SUMMIT SHOWED BLAH, BLAH, BLAH
AN ECOCIDE CONVENTION
WOULD SEND A MESSAGE TO CORPORATIONS AND STATES:
ENOUGH!

Slender Billed Curlew: Extinct

Glaucous Macaw: Extinct
But “legal norms and rights can and do take on political life [only] through direct action, community consultation and protest.” (Natasha Lennard)
ArtsLink Assembly 2021

Future Fellows

RESPONSE ABILITY*
- a manifesto on ecocide

Etcétera

Dan Perjovschi, 2021