

ECOCIDE

2021

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NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL
RESEARCH

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



THE HO CHI MINH
TRAIL

Using
Agent Orange
and
Blanket Bombing
More the 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 Nuremberg 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...



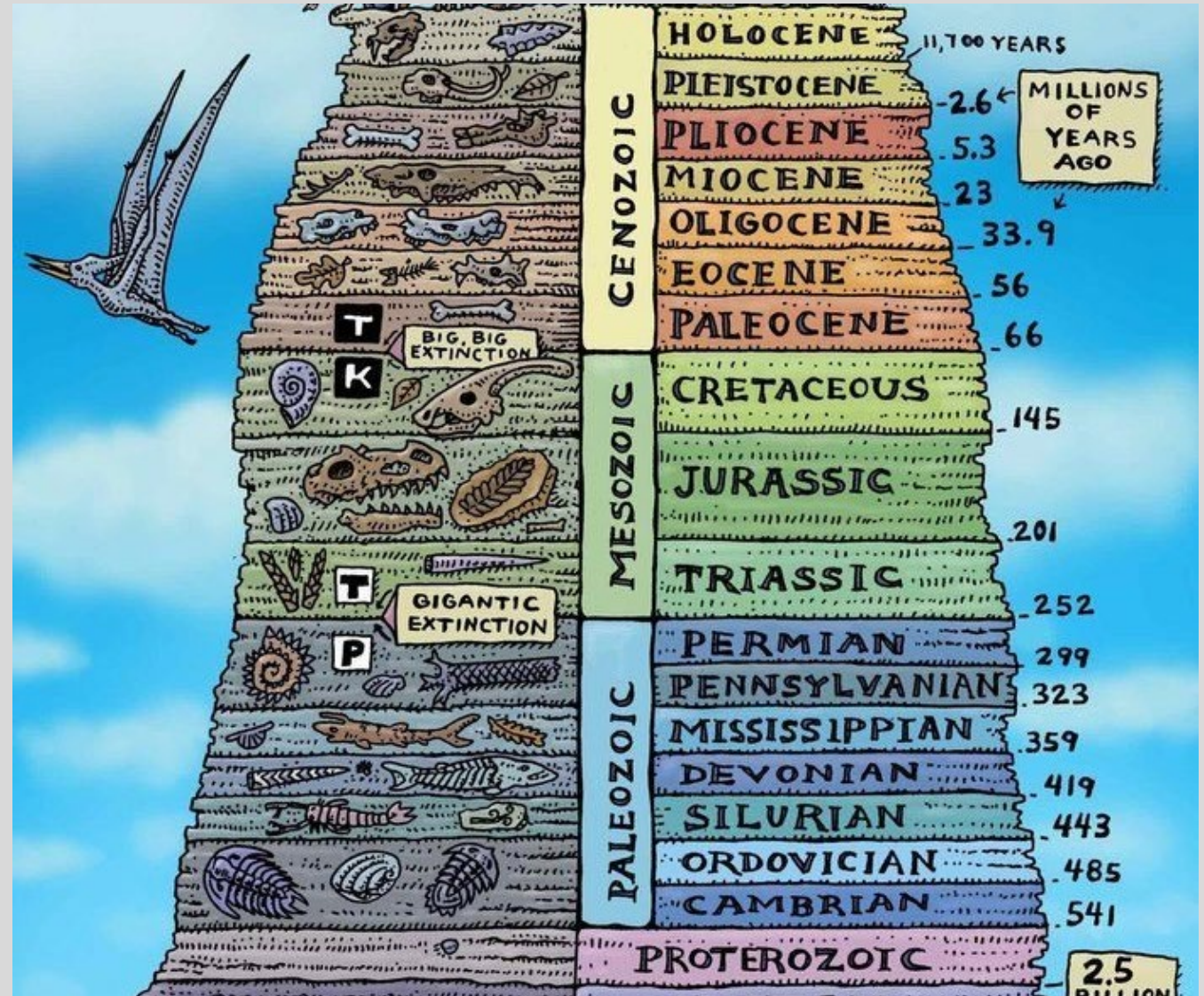
The Almost
Irresistible
Hypothesis:

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

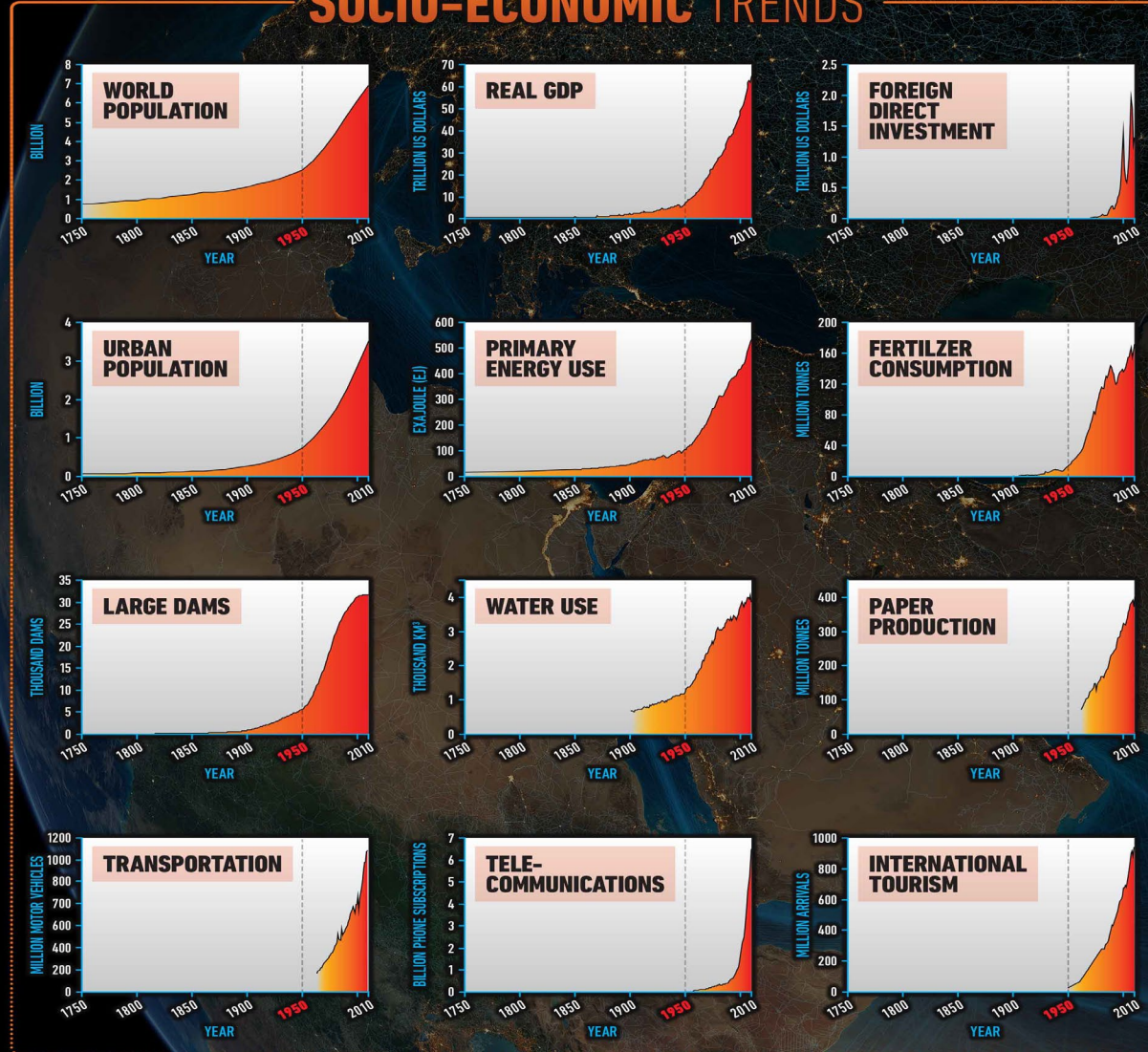
BUT THE COST OF
PROGRESS
HAS BECOME
IMMENSE
BEGINNING
IN THE INDUSTRIAL
AGE

Manchester, c. 1850

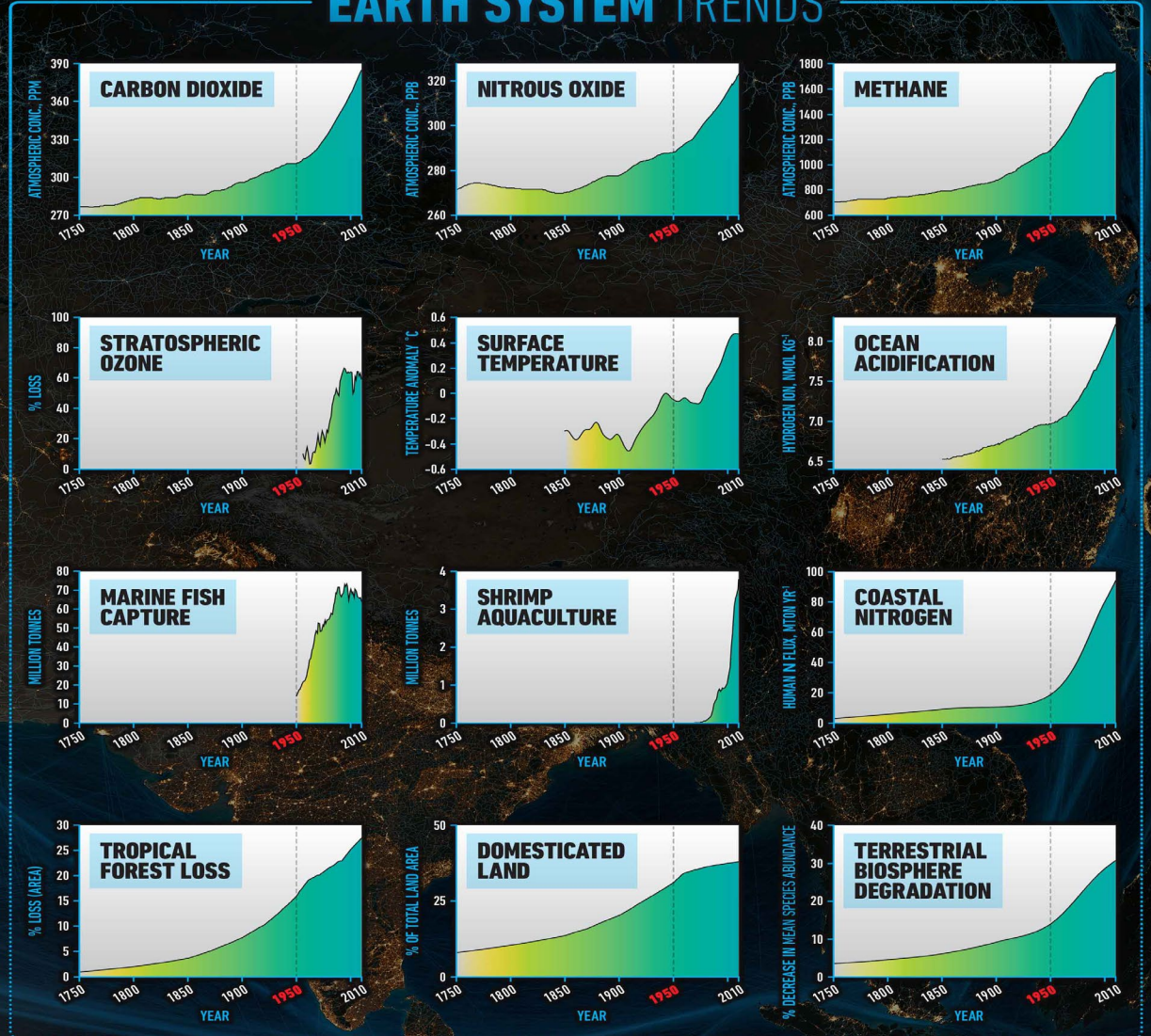
The Anthropocene Arrives

THE GREAT ACCELERATION 1950

SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRENDS



EARTH SYSTEM TRENDS



REFERENCE: Steffen, W., W. Broadgate, L. Deutsch, O. Gaffney and C. Ludwig (2015), The Trajectory of the Anthropocene: the Great Acceleration, Submitted to *The Anthropocene Review*.

MAP & DESIGN: Félix Pharand-Deschênes / Globaia

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



Costa Rican
Golden Frog



Rabbs' fringe-limbed treefrog

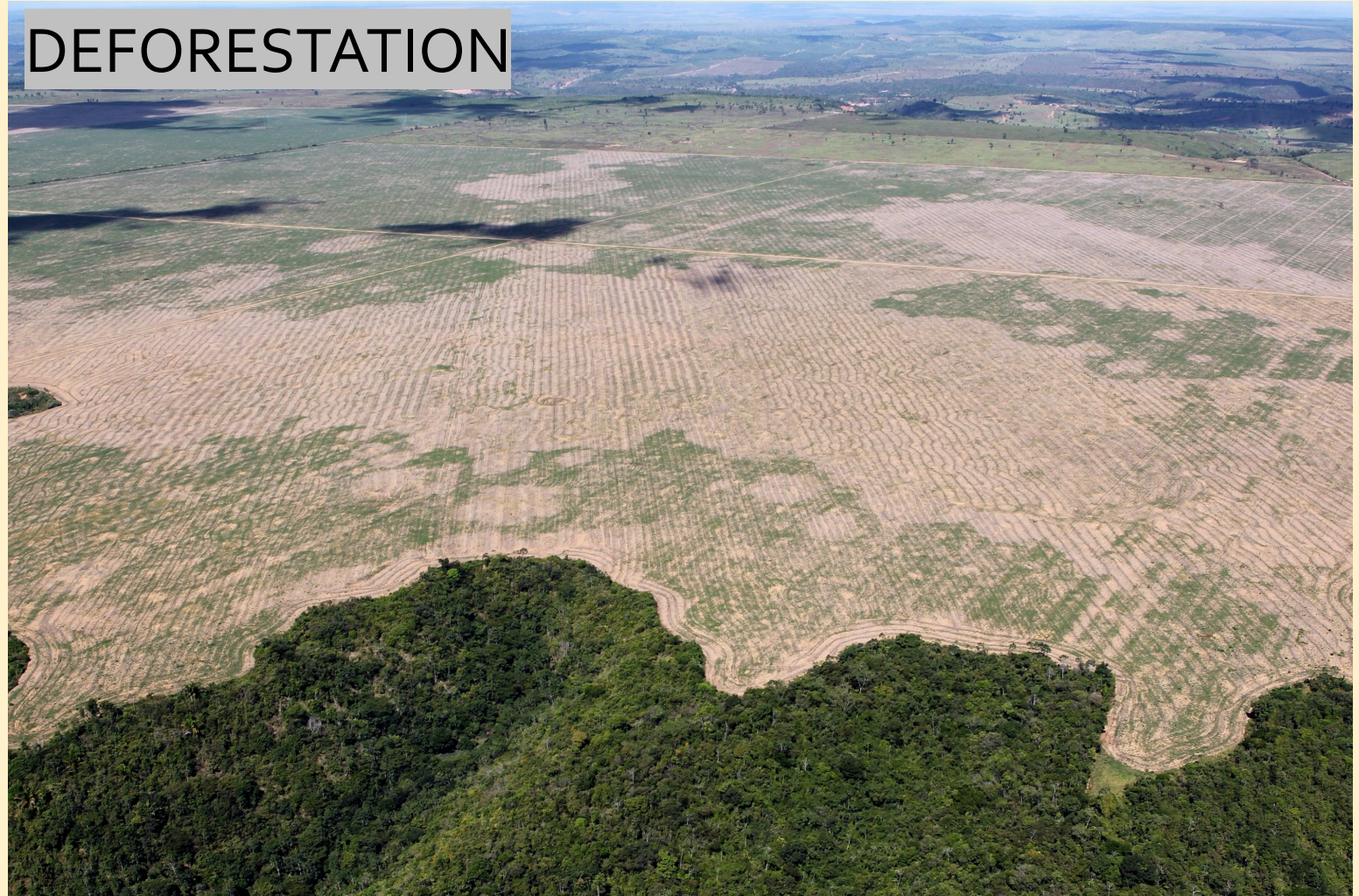
ABOVE ALL:

ECOCIDE

ECOCIDE

ECOCIDE

DEFORESTATION



ABOVE ALL:

ECOCIDE

ECOCIDE

ECOCIDE

AIR POLLUTION



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

ECOCIDE

ECOCIDE



ECOCIDE: PLASTIC POLLUTION

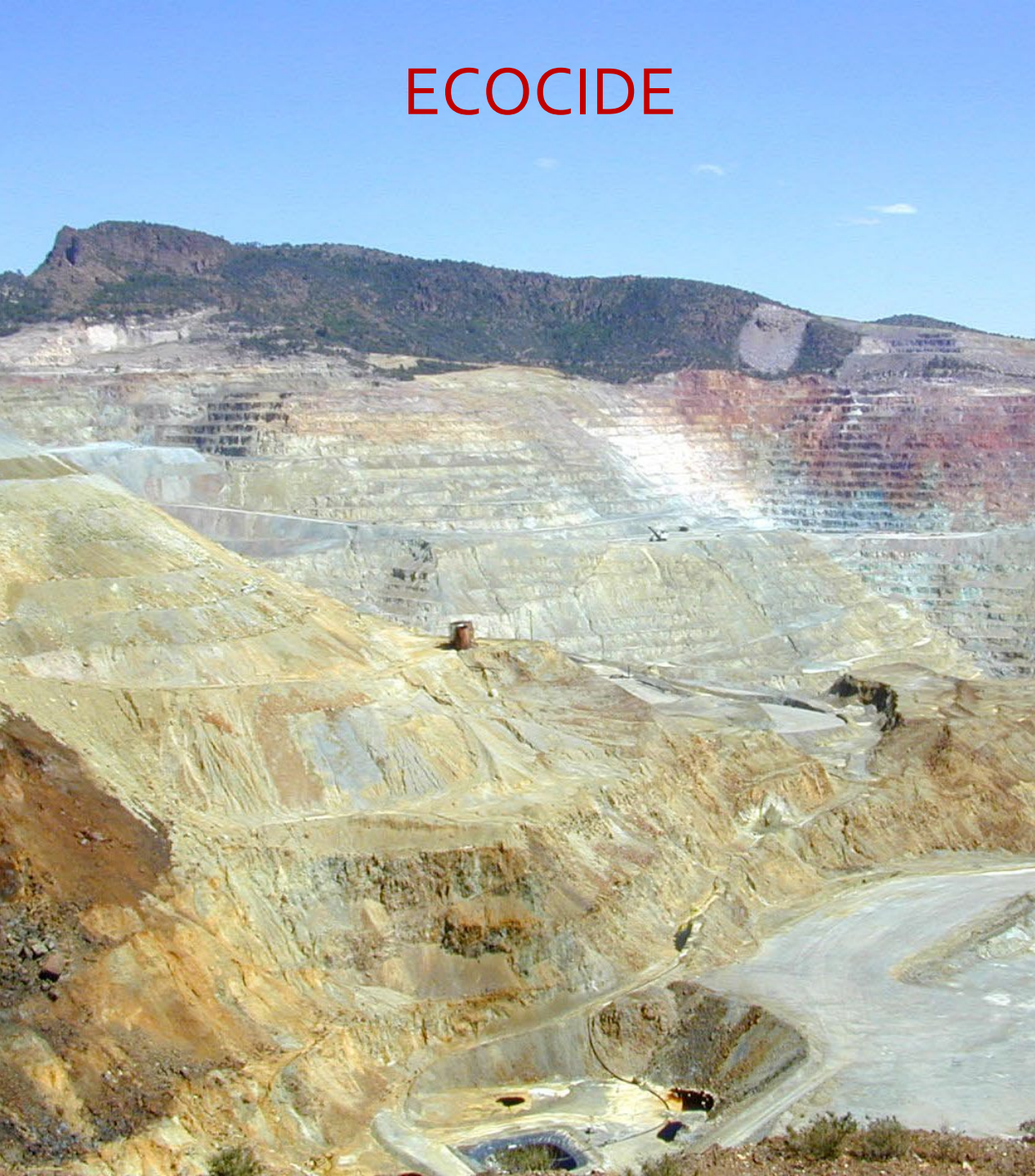
The 2017 United Nations Ocean Conference estimated that the oceans might contain more weight in plastics than fish by the year 2050 and it might be irreversible



ECOCIDE:
Eutrophication
(nutrient
pollution from
run-offs)
leading to fish
die-offs



ECOCIDE



Mining and Mountaintop Removal:
Citizens describe it as like living in a war zone

INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE



ECOCIDE



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

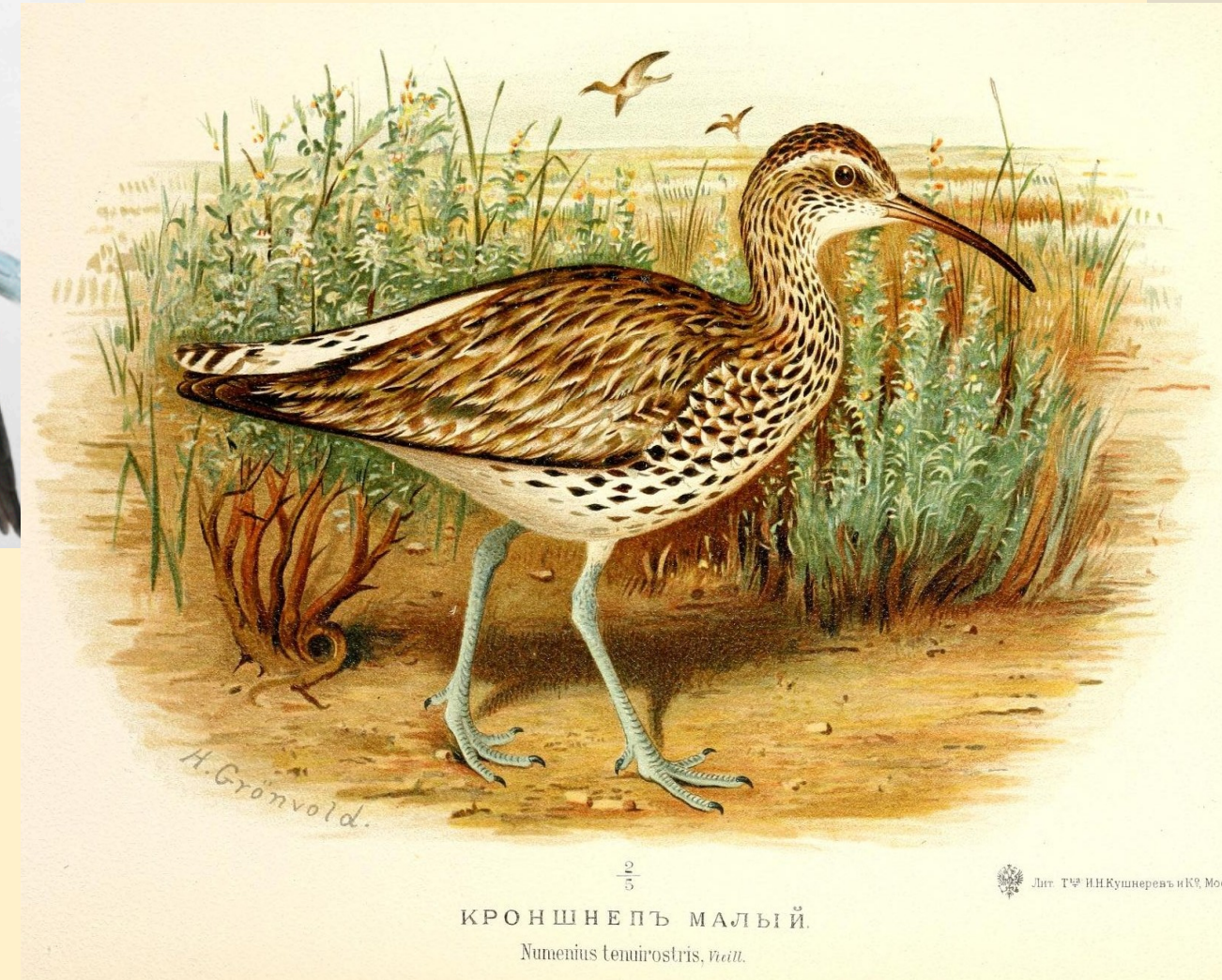
AN ECOCIDE
CONVENTION
WOULD SEND A
MESSAGE TO
CORPORATIONS
AND STATES:

ENOUGH!



Glaucous
Macaw: **Extinct**

Slender Billed Curlew: **Extinct**





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

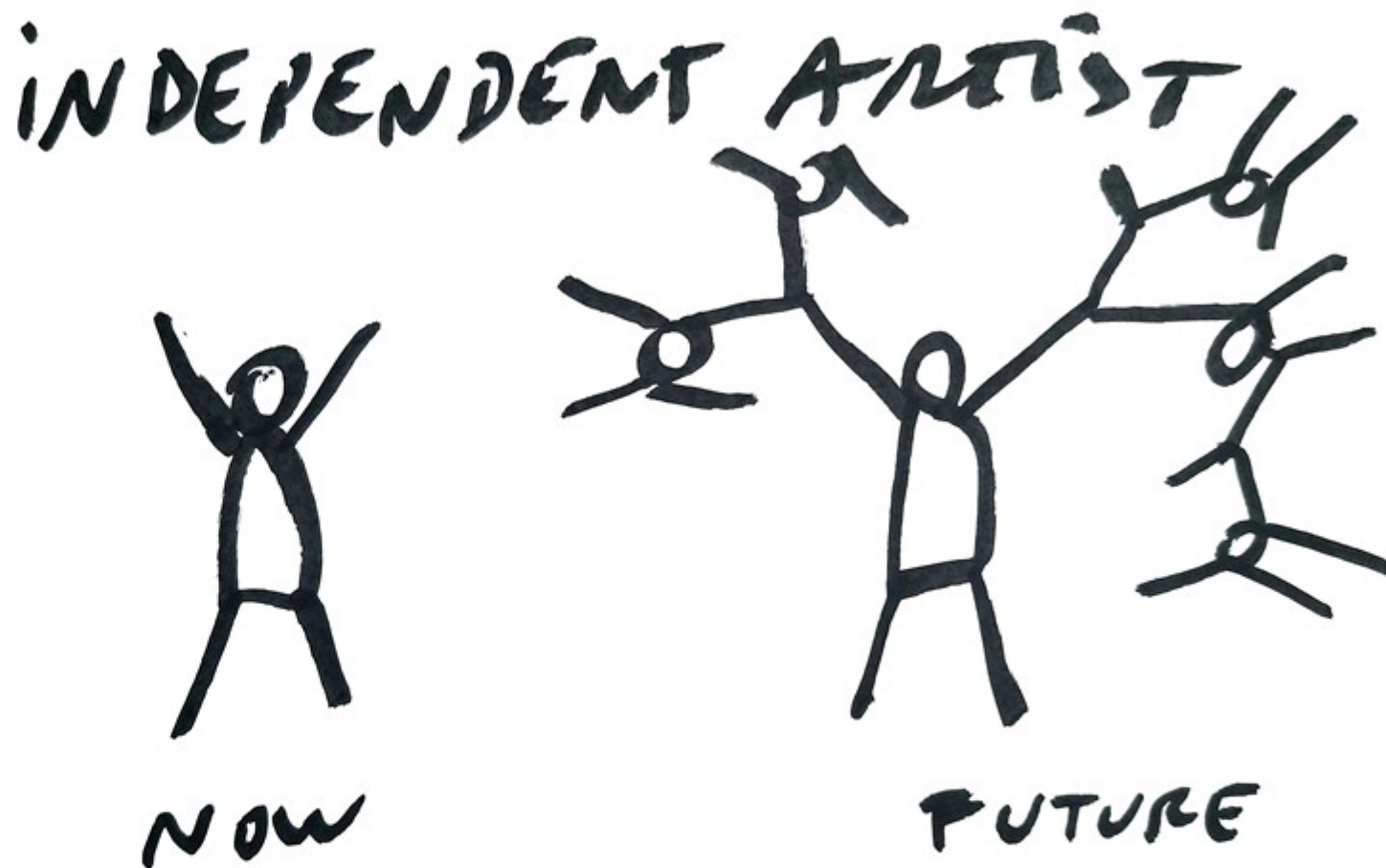


ArtsLink Assembly 2021 *Future Fellows*

RESPONSE ABILITY*

- a manifesto on ecocide

Etcétera



Dan Perjovschi, 2021