



laetus in praesens

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The "Saving of Humanity" framed by "Sinking of the Titanic"

Rising sea of discontent engendered by warming climate of opinion

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Introduction

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Introduction

The [COP21 agreement](#) reached at the UN Climate Change Conference (Paris, 2015) constituted the epitome of authoritarian excellence and expertise -- like the *RMS Titanic* in 1912. It was witness to gatherings of the best, the brightest and the most wealthy -- as with the first class passengers on the Titanic. It was also witness to a high degree of exclusivism -- as with the lower classes in steerage on the Titanic -- despite claims of a unique participatory process (Akshat Rathi, *This simple negotiation tactic brought 195 countries to consensus*, *Quartz*, 12 December 2015).

The unprecedented agreement in Paris has been the subject of widespread commentary on its remarkable achievement -- again recalling that with respect to the Titanic. Examples include:

- Peter H. Gleick: *The Historic, Unprecedented, Landmark Climate Agreement*, *The Huffington Post*, 15 December 2015
- Fiona Harvey: *Paris climate change agreement: the world's greatest diplomatic success*, *The Guardian*, 14 December 2015
- Jeffrey Sachs: *Let's hail the Paris climate change agreement and get to work*, *The Financial Times*, 13 December 2015
- Coral Davenport: *Nations Approve Landmark Climate Accord in Paris*, *The New York Times*, 12 December 2015
- Joby Warrick and Chris Mooney: *196 countries approve historic climate agreement*, *The Washington Post*, 12 December 2015
- Stefanie Spear: *World Leaders Agree to Historic Global Climate Agreement*, *EcoWatch*, 12 December 2015
- *COP21: UN chief hails new climate change agreement as 'monumental triumph'*, *UN News Centre*, 12 December 2015
- *The Paris agreement marks an unprecedented political recognition of the risks of climate change*, *The Economist*, 12 December 2015

The question here is whether there is more to be learned from comparison with the RMS Titanic, most notably with respect to the tragic failure to recognize the risks to its ability to survive on the high seas when faced with an unexpected iceberg (Jasper Copping, *The 30 seconds that sank the Titanic: fatal delay in order to change course doomed liner*, *The Telegraph*, 4 December 2011; Samuel Halpern, *She Turned Two Points In 37 Seconds*). As a metaphor, the comparison has been variously recognized (Nathan Thanki, *The Titanic Failure of Paris Climate Talks*, *The Huffington Post*, 11 December 2015; *Already Sinking? COP21 Climate Talks Hit Negotiating Iceberg*, *Clean Technica*, 7 December 2015).

Does the focus on climate change, as conventionally understood, obscure recognition of related issues, most notably the changing climate of opinion and the rising sea of discontent? The latter was exemplified in Paris by the unprecedented security measures which provided the context for the negotiations -- and by the unprecedented prohibition of popular demonstration on that occasion. Ironically many of these measures naturally remained invisible to participants and observers -- for security reasons in relation to undeclared threats (*Optimal measures for ensuring the security of COP21*, *Gouvernement.fr*, 26 November 2015).

From this perspective climate change merits consideration as a metaphor, as suggested on the occasion of the earlier COP14 summit in Poznan (*Climate Change as a Metaphor of Social Change: systemic implications of emissions, ozone, sunlight, greenhouse and overheating*, 2008; *Climate of Change Misrepresented as Climate Change: insights from metaphorical confusion*, 2008).

Exploring the parallels

Hailed by the UN Secretary General as uniquely critical to "saving humanity" -- if not "saving the planet for humanity" -- its participants seemed blithely unaware of the efficacy of the conditions of governance of such an enterprise, as evidenced by past experience. As with the Titanic there was considerable arrogance and blinkered awareness of the surprises potentially offered by the immediate future. The collective confidence lay in the unquestionable belief that the quality and integrity of the construction of the agreement was guarantee

against any foreseeable failure. The Titanic was held to be unsinkable for analogous reasons. Fundamental design flaws were only subsequently recognized.

The emphasis on the Titanic, as the largest passenger ship ever constructed, is curiously reminiscent of claims regarding the Climate Change agreement as constituting the largest global consensus ever achieved. Given the preoccupation of the Paris summit with combustion of coal, this is furthered echoed by the dependency of the Titanic on use of 600 tonnes of coal per day -- hand shovelled into its furnaces by a team of 176 men. Some 100 tonnes of ash were ejected into the sea each day.

As its most distinguished passengers celebrated their self-appreciation in luxury with an 11-course dinner, the Titanic struck an unforeseen iceberg with unforeseen consequences. The magnificent consensus on climate change may well be expected to strike an iceberg of popular discontent and fury, frozen or otherwise -- effectively emerging from the night of systemic negligence. The unprecedented security provisions at the Paris conference venue implied just such a potential threat. The iceberg metaphor is especially relevant because the volume of dissent is rendered increasingly invisible as authorities find it necessary to suppress news about disruption to avoid exacerbating it. The point has been made with another marine metaphor by Pierre Lemoine, introducing a special issue on the *Wave of Dissent* in European elections (*A Tsunami is Threatening Europe*, Europolitics, Spring 2014).

Unknown to most, such threats may even be an indication that the integrity of the vessel of consensus had already been breached and was in a dangerous condition of vulnerability to the sea -- despite the unquestionable assurances to the contrary. Curiously the security threats associated with climate change, as previously noted, were not a feature of the COP21 discussions (Center for Climate and Security, *OSCE Climate and Security Event: Unprecedented Impacts, Unpredictable Risks*, 17 September 2015; Suzanne Goldenberg, *Climate change a threat to security, food and humankind - IPCC report*, *The Guardian*, 31 March 2014; *Climate Change and International Security: paper from the High Representative and the European Commission to the European Council*, 14 March 2008).

Focused as the conference was on rising sea levels around the world as a consequence of global warming, the participants were effectively blind to the rising sea of social unrest around the world as a consequence of increasingly heated social interaction -- partially marked by the security provisions in Paris in relation to popular protest. Global civilization is "warming" in ways which are as readily disputed as global warming has proven to be over past decades. Reference to so-called [anthropogenic warming](#) lends itself to an alternative interpretation.

The seemingly deliberate blindness of the UN Conference, as evident from the focus of the final agreement, offers extraordinary parallels to the much-cited tale of the heroic Vice Admiral [Horatio Nelson](#) during the *Battle of Copenhagen* (1801). He raised the telescope to his blind eye, and declared: *I only have one eye -- I have the right to be blind sometimes. I really do not see the signal*. Curiously it might be said that the processes in Paris were determined to a high degree by the failure of the previous summit in Copenhagen in 2009, as previously described (*Insights for the Future from the Change of Climate in Copenhagen*, 2010).

From a systemic perspective, could it be understood that the UN Conference was effectively blind in one eye and refused even to use its healthy eye to detect problematic signals. Most notably these relate to [population overshoot](#), with the calls anticipated by developing countries on energy resources and their consequences for global warming. Do the Paris negotiations offer a classic example of [tunnel vision](#) as reinforced by an [information silo](#)? Does this suggest that the heroic success of the Paris negotiations may come to be recognized as a [Pyrrhic victory](#)?

Under a cover title, *The Climate Deal's Contradictions*, commentary on the agreement was introduced by *The Economist* in the following terms:

The test of a first rate intelligence... is the ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time. By this standard the 195 countries that gathered outside Paris... to negotiate a new agreement on climate change have to be counted very bright indeed. It is vital, they declared, that the world's temperature does not climb much more than 1.5C above pre-industrial levels; and yet they simultaneously celebrated a new climate agreement that got nowhere close to preventing such a rise ([Hopelessness and Determination](#), 19 December 2015).

For the *New Scientist* (Michael Le Page, [Will Paris deal save our future?](#) 19 December 2015):

History has been made in Paris - but perhaps not the kind of history we hoped. The climate summit in Paris may come to be remembered as the moment when the world's leaders let the last hope of limiting warming to 2 °C slip away from us. The Paris agreement, which covers the period 2020 to 2030, is a better deal than many expected, and if countries stick both to the spirit and the letter of the agreement, it could give us a good chance of limiting global warming to under 4 °C and perhaps even under 3 °C. But this is far from certain. The Kyoto Protocol was hailed as a dramatic turning point when it was agreed in 1997 but most now regard it as a failure.

Neglected signals of systemic negligence

Appreciation aside, the significance of the agreement has also been ambiguously questioned in terms such as the following:

- Todd Paglia: [Does the Paris Climate Agreement Mean the World is Saved or That Disaster is Upon Us? The Answer is Yes](#), *The Huffington Post*, 15 December 2015
- John Vidal: [Climate change deal: five reasons to be glad, five to be gloomy](#), *The Guardian*, 15 December 2015; John Cassidy
John Cassidy December 14, 2015
- John Cassidy: [A Skeptical Note on the Paris Climate Deal](#), *The New Yorker*, 14 December 2015

- Nahlah Ayed: *Preparing for a coming storm: Climate deal success hinges on buy-in from ordinary people*, *CBC News*, 14 December 2015
- Coral Davenport: *Key to Success of Climate Pact Will Be Its Signals to Global Markets*, *Business Insider*, 10 December 2015
- Pilita Clark: *COP21: How to judge if the Paris talks are a success*, *FT.com*, 12 December 2015
- Pilita Clark: *COP21: Climate obstacles emerge within hours*, *FT.com*, 13 December 2015
- Bill McKibben: *Falling Short on Climate in Paris*, *The New York Times*, 13 December 2015
- Comments: *A Global Accord on Climate Change*, *The New York Times*, 14 December 2015
- Chris Mooney: *Countries just adopted a historic climate change accord: here's what happens next*, *The Washington Post*, 12 December 2015
- Fiona Harvey: *Paris climate change deal too weak to help poor, critics warn*, *The Guardian*, 14 December 2015
- Naomi Klein: *We are going backwards, COP21 is the opposite of progress*, *New Internationalist*, 10 December 2012

Neglected omissions: Commentators have noted with respect to the agreement that:

- Given that commitments are non-binding, some countries are expected to wriggle out of their commitments (however that may be reframed). For example a spokesman for Paul Ryan, the Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives, told the *Financial Times* (13 December 2013): *This agreement does not bind Congress in any way, and we will continue to focus on an energy policy that promotes America's abundant natural resources.* (*Silence on the Climate Pact From the Republican Candidates*, *The New York Times*, 14 December 2015)
- Not only is the accord voluntary but countries get to set their own targets for carbon emissions.
- If a country fails to live up to what it promised in Paris, there is no obvious recourse beyond naming and shaming.
- While the 1.5C global warming cap is welcomed, a glaring gap remains between this goal and the emissions cuts that countries have tabled. Current pledges would bring the world nearer 3C and there is little hope of the financing needed to achieve global transition to clean energy
- There is no legal responsibility for rich countries to help poorer ones with adapting to climate change; rich countries seem determined to ignore their financial responsibility for the loss and damage faced by people in Southern countries as a result of climate change
- Climate change assistance may be funded by diverting vital development aid
- Carbon markets have been put back on the table under different names, allowing the rich to "pay to pollute" and ensuring countries can actually increase emissions while claiming "net reductions"
- Cutting pollution from shipping and aviation remain out of the text
- The EU has insisted there is no mention of the damage wrought on the climate by the "free trade" model.
- The agreement buys time, but the question is whether it buys enough time
- Although of considerable symbolic significance in terms of consensus between countries at the global level, such consensus needs to become evident within those nations as well -- currently clearly not the case

Various omissions are specifically cited as being the "elephant in the room":

- *COP21: Paris climate summit Is migration the elephant in the room?* 26 November, 2015
- *Elephant in Room at COP21 Paris Climate Talks? Food.* *ARC 2020*, 3 December, 2015
- *COP21: The elephant(s) in the negotiation room: how will differentiation be addressed in the Paris deal?* *Climate Policy Observer*, 5 December 2015
- *COP21: Shipping and aviation emissions are the elephants in the room*, *Transport and Environment*, 27 November 2015
- *No Ocean, No Climate: COP21:s "Big Blue Elephant in the Room"*, *CONERGY*, 9 December 2015
- *Antarctica: The Elephant in The Room at COP21*, *The Take Away*, 27 November 2015
- *Weighing the Climate Elephant*, *Foreign Affairs*, 29 June 2015

Population growth and resource overshoot: The Paris Climate Change conference was remarkable for the lack of reference to population, as was noted in criticism of the previous event (*United Nations Overpopulation Denial Conference: exploring the underside of climate change*, 2009). However, as previously argued, "the elephant" remained very much present (*Climate Change and the Elephant in the Living Room*, 2008).



The implications of population growth for climate change are typically minimized as irrelevant and reframed in terms of optimistic estimates of progressive reduction in growth rates and the challenge of replacement levels. Arguments include:

- Joseph Chamie and Barry Mirkin: *Climate Change and World Population: still avoiding each other*, *Pass Blue: covering the UN*, 16 September 2014
- Robert Engelman and Samuel Codjoe: *Hey, U.N.: Climate change and population are related*, *Grist*, 18 September 2014
- Paul B. Farrell: *Climate change isn't the problem: a population bomb is killing us*, *MarketWatch*, 23 September 2014
- Anup Shah: *Global Warming and Population*, *Global Issues*, 5 December 2010
- Arthur H. Westinger: *Overpopulation and Climate Change*, *The New York Times*, 17 February 2010
- Laurie Goering: *Experts Say Birth Control Access Key To Curbing Climate Change*, *The Huffington Post*, 3 February 2015
- Jeremy Hance: *Unrelenting population growth driving global warming, mass extinction*, *Mongabay*, 26 June 2014
- Judith Stephenson, Karen Newman and Susannah Mayhew: *Population dynamics and climate change: what are the links?* *Journal of Public Health*, 2010
- Stefano Gennarini and Rebecca Oas: *Climate Summit Frustrates Population Control Groups*, *C-Fam*, 3 December 2015
- John Seager: *Population Growth, Climate Change Putting More People at Risk*, *The Huffington Post*, 18 November 2013
- Jason Plautz: *The Climate-Change Solution No One Will Talk About*, *The Atlantic*, November 2014
- Eric McLamb: *Overpopulation Ranks Above Global Warming as Top Environmental Issue, say University Scientists*, *Ecology*, 22 November 2009
- *Overpopulation a serious threat says Bertelsmann Report*, *Population and Sustainability Network*, 13 December 2007
- *Human Population Growth and Climate Change*, *Center for Biological Diversity*
- *Why we need to address population growth's effects on global warming*, *Los Angeles Times*, 25 January 2015
- Fred Pearce: *It's not overpopulation that causes climate change, it's overconsumption*, *The Guardian*, 19 September 2014
- *Does Population Growth Impact Climate Change?* *Scientific American*, 29 July 2009
- *Which is worse, overpopulation or climate change?* *Daily Kos*, 16 October 2015
- Joe Barry: *Over-population is the real cause of climate change: it's killing us all off*, *The Independent*, 23 April 2014
- Brian C. O'Neill and Michael Dalton: *Global demographic trends and future carbon emissions*, *PNAS*, 2010

The latter study is significant in its focus:

Substantial changes in population size, age structure, and urbanization are expected in many parts of the world this century. Although such changes can affect energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, emissions scenario analyses have either left them out or treated them in a fragmentary or overly simplified manner. We carry out a comprehensive assessment of the implications of demographic change for global emissions of carbon dioxide.

Overpopulation was specifically highlighted with respect to the Paris event by [Stephen Emmott](#) (*Though climate change is a crisis, the population threat is even worse*, *The Guardian*, 4 December 2015) who argues:

The perennial cry: we need to talk about climate change. And this week, with world leaders in Paris, we have been. But only up to a point. For the likely impact of the rising global population is almost entirely absent, not only from the debate about climate change, but also from that about loss of biological diversity, food and water security, disease, pollution and energy. Let's just remind ourselves of the population statistics of the past half century. In just over half my lifetime, the world's population has more than doubled, from 3 billion people to now more than 7 billion. The ability to feed some of this growing population has in no small part been a consequence of the advent of the green revolution: that is, the industrialisation and intensification of agriculture and the entire food production system.... Demand for energy by our increasing population over the past half-century has led to an accumulation of atmospheric carbon dioxide, the concentration of which - now 400 parts per million - has not been present on this planet for several million years.

It is therefore of relevance to note recent commentary in *The Economist* with regard to mistaken underestimation of population growth -- in the week in which the Climate Change agreement was adopted:

Alarming, population growth in Africa is not slowing as quickly as demographers had expected. In 2004 predicted that the continent's population would grow from a little over 900m at the time, to about 2.3 billion in 2100. At the same time it put the world's total population in 2100 at 9.1 billion, up from 7.3 billion today. But the UN's latest estimates, published earlier this year, have global population in 2100 at 11.2 billion -- and Africa is where almost all the newly added people will be. The UN now thinks that by 2100 the continent will be home to 4.4 billion people, an increase of more than 2 billion compared with its previous estimate.

If the new projections are right, geopolitics will be turned upside-down... Although much could change in the next 85 years, none of those countries is a byword for stability or prosperity... If nothing else, the number of Africans seeking a better life in Europe and other richer places is likely to increase several times over (*The Young Continent*, 12 December 2015)

If erroneous estimates of this nature can be made by UN experts, what other errors might be prudently anticipated -- as with respect to climate change?

Much has been made of support by the Catholic Church for remedial action in response to climate change, newly triggered by the *Encyclical Letter* of Pope Francis (*Laudato Si' on Care of Our Common Home*, 18 June 2015). This specifically offers a quest for the

"deepest roots" of the current crisis in systemic terms, most notably with regard to the feasibility of remedial action in strategic terms, purportedly informed by the best of scientific analysis in a joint report from the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (*Climate Change and The Common Good: a statement of the problem and the demand for transformative solutions*, 2015).

The inadequacies of that argument have been reviewed separately, most notably with respect to increase in population (*Systemic inadequacies of the Environment Encyclical*, 2015). The Encyclical could not be more explicit in this regard: **demographic growth is fully compatible with an integral and shared development**. From a United Nations perspective, and that of its scientific advisors, there is no envisaged systemic constraint on such growth whatever the level of increase, as can be satirically explored (*Enabling Fruitful Multiplication of Global Population: eliciting massive social consensus by unconstrained reframing of strategic priorities*, 2015).

There is every reason to suspect that support for the UN Climate Change agreement, through the *Encyclical*, was "negotiated" prior to the Paris summit -- with the proviso that no mention whatsoever of "population" should be made in that agreement. There is even the possibility that the support of the Encyclical was achieved in exchange for quashing further pursuit of the inquiries of the UN (Nick Cumming-Brucemay, *U.N. Panel on Torture Presses Vatican Envoy on Abuse*, *The New York Times*, 5 May 2014; *Vatican sexual abuse scandal compared to torture at U.N.*, *CBSNews*, 5 May 2014; *Vatican tries to draw line under clerical sex abuse scandals at UN hearing*, *The Guardian*, 5 May 2014). How then to understand the mid-summit timing of the declaration by one of the architects of the *Encyclical* (*COP21: Cardinal says birth control may offer climate 'solution'* *BBC News*, 9 December 2015)?

The unprecedented consensus in Paris may well have been bought by similar deals with other countries, as can be variously inferred (Randeep Ramesh, *Leave population out of climate talks, Indian minister says*, *The Guardian*, 28 August 2009).

Inspired by the Titanic again, the much-cited comparison of global policy-making with **re-arranging deck-chairs on the Titanic** comes to mind -- with regard to a climate change agreement making no reference to an unconstrained increase in populations on whose buy-in its success depends.

Psychosocial impact: David Suzuki argues that global warming discourse typically ignores our intense feelings and grief in the face of environmental change -- environmental grief and loss (*Healing Humanity's Grief In The Face Of Climate Change*, *Common Dreams*, 10 December 2015).

Suzuki emphasizes that there is a degree of failure of today's social and environmental leaders to understand the psychological implications of a world in distress -- most obviously evident in cultures face with loss of land and habitat with which they have long identified.

Recognized as innovators in the response to climate change, others have noted the complete omission of women in climate agreements (Sabina Zaccaro, *Gender Missing in Climate Agreements*, *Inter Press Service*, 6 December 2009; *Population, gender, and climate change*, *British Medical Journal*, 18 November 2009; *Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change*, *UN Women Watch*)

Weather warfare: It is noteworthy that **weather warfare** was also not on the table at that gathering, as remarked by Michel Chossudovsky (*Weather Warfare: beware the US military's experiments with climatic warfare*, *Global Research*, 29 November 2015; Rady Ananda, *Planetary Weapons and Military Weather Modification: chemtrails, atmospheric geoengineering and environmental warfare*, *Global Research*, 1 December 2015; Sean Adl-Tabatabai, *CIA Admit To Using Weather Modification As A Military Weapon*, *YourNewsWire*, 20 December 2015).

It is precisely such technology, especially the use of **HAARP**, which may feature in high-risk unilateral geo-engineering initiatives in response to the severity of conditions for which the Paris agreement does not provide (*Geo-engineering Oversight Agency for Thermal Stabilization (GOATS)*, 2008).

Track record of problematic implementation of global agreements: Hailed as a major diplomatic success, the achievement needs to be set against that of the 8 **Millennium Development Goals**, articulated by the UN at the **Millennium Summit** (2000) with uneven achievement to date -- now effectively replaced by a set of **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs).

Such track records can be explored in terms of the broken promises, and token implementation, by which they tend to be characterized. Concerns have already been expressed in this regard with respect to the Climate Change agreement (Jamie Henn, *COP21: Strong Words from Secretary Kerry, But Will the US Back Them Up?* *Common Dreams*, 9 December 2015)

For **James Hansen**:

It's a fraud really, a fake... It's just bullshit for them to say: *We'll have a [2 degrees Celsius] warming target? and then try to do a little better every five years*. It's just worthless words. There is no action, just promises. As long as fossil fuels appear to be the cheapest fuels out there, they will be continued to be burned. (Oliver Milman, *James Hansen, father of climate change awareness, calls Paris talks 'a fraud'*, *The Guardian*, 12 December, 2015; Daniel Marans, *Legendary Climate Scientist Is Not Impressed With The Paris Talks*, *The Huffington Post*, 12 December 2015)

For **George Monbiot** (*Do little, hide the evidence: the official neglect that caused these deadly floods*, *The Guardian*, 7 December 2015):

Meanwhile the talks in Paris have become a festival of empty gestures. The pledges governments have brought fall short of those required to prevent disasters on a much greater scale, and even they are broken as they are made. By pursuing a new dash for gas, while closing down its carbon capture and storage, renewable power and energy efficiency programmes, David Cameron's government **makes a mockery of its promises**. Worse still, the collective refusal even to discuss keeping fossil fuels in the

groundâ?condemns the talks to futility.

Nothing is learnt, crucial discussions are avoided or buried. We are drowning in ignorance; ignorance manufactured by an illiterate media and a hostile government. Every time disaster strikes we respond with bewilderment. Our understanding of what confronts us seems scarcely to have advanced since we responded to catastrophe by burning old women.

Despite such scepticism, the fact that the much-hailed global agreement is not binding has been questionably reframed by Samantha Page (*No, The Paris Climate Agreement Isn't Binding. Here's Why That Doesn't Matter*, *ClimateProgress*, 14 December 2015)

Neglected role of non-contracting parties: A critical point is that whilst all the world's countries have signed on the dotted line, the world's companies have not. The stark reality is that, by and large, it is companies that run the world, rather than governments. Coal and oil industry executives shrugged off any suggestion the new agreement sealed in Paris on Saturday night would have any immediate impact on their businesses (*FT.com*, 13 December 2015).

Whilst some governments have been making policies to regulate their behaviour, companies like doing things their own way - in their own financial interest, and that of their executives and shareholders. The case of the deliberate [infringement of emissions regulations by Volkswagen](#) -- a founding member of the [UN Global Compact](#) -- is an indication of how [corporate social responsibility](#) is viewed in practice.

What of the rising levels of social discontent and the lifeboats appropriate to the consequences?

Lifeboat facilities? The situation of low-lying countries faced with rising sea levels raises the question of the nature of the lifeboat technology which proved to be of such great significance in the case of the sinking Titanic, limited as it was to 16 lifeboats -- sufficient for only one third of those who might need them (*Lifeboats of the RMS Titanic*).

To what "lifeboats" will the inhabitants of such countries have access in practice? Will the theory of how they should work (as with the Titanic) match the reality when they prove to be a vital necessity?

Delay in effective implementation: Given that it was a delay of only 37 seconds that determined the fate of the Titanic, how many "seconds" will be required for recognition of the systemic challenge faced by humanity? Will that delay prove to have been fatal?

Many of the the most difficult decisions are postponed by the agreement until 2020 at the earliest. For the agreement to have legal force, it must be ratified by at least 55 of the 195 countries that adopted it without objection (Article 21/1). Those 55 countries must represent at least 55% of all global-warming emissions. Issues are already foreseen with regard to ratification in major countries (Rupert Darwall, *Paris: The Treaty That Dare Not Speak Its Name*, *National Review*, 14 December 2015; Demetri Sevastopulo, *Paris climate deal will not be a legally binding treaty*, *FT.com*, 11 November 2015).

The delay in implementation of the UN Climate Change agreement is a reminder of the fact that many appropriately congratulated for their role in bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion may well have passed on to higher functions before its efficacy can be called into question on the basis of hard evidence. Such temporal considerations recall the famous tale of the criminal condemned to death:

A thief, sentenced to the gallows for poaching on the King's land, bargains for his life by offering to teach the King's horse to talk after a year of training. To a sceptical co-prisoner the thief confides his hopes to avoid hanging: *Before the year is up, the horse may die, or the King may die, or I may die... or the horse may talk !*

Animation indicative of rising sea of discontent and civil unrest invisible to those preoccupied with climate change



RMS Titanic (1912)



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