



FOSSIL FUEL
DIVESTMENT STUDENT
NETWORK (DSN)

ORANGE SQUARE

Issue #2 | Feb. 10, 2014

*notes from the student fossil
fuel divestment movement*

3 DIVESTMENT CONVERGENCE 2014

5 DSN WORKING GROUP REPORTBACKS

**6 TAKING THE MIC: WHY STRUCTURAL
AND ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM MATTER**

by Peaceful Uprising

**8 WEST VIRGINIA CHEMICAL SPILL:
A PREDICTABLE WATER CRISIS**

by Angie Rosser

**9 "THIS IS MY TOME TO 2013; MY POEM
TO THE YEAR OF MY DREAMS"**

by Phillip Agnew

10 WHAT IF?

by Hazlett Henderson & Laura Rigell

**11 HONORING 20-YEAR ANNIVERSARY
OF THE ZAPATISTA UPRISING, WORDS
FROM SUBCOMANDANTE MARCOS**

12 WHO BENEFITS FROM CLIMATE PANIC?

by Jimi Patalano

Orange Square is produced by the Publications Working Group of the Divest Fossil Fuels Student National Network
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Inside

3 Divestment Convergence 2014

4 Getting ready for the Fossil Fuel Divestment Convergence 2014!

Lydia Miller-Jewett, Earlham College

5 Divestment Student Network Working Group Reportbacks

5 Excerpts from the Solidarity Organizing Toolkit

6 Taking the Mic: Why Structural and Environmental Racism Matter

Peaceful Uprising

8 West Virginia Chemical Spill: A Predictable Water Crisis

Angle Rosser

9 "This is my tome to 2013; my poem to the year of my dreams"

Phillip Agnew

10 What if?

Hazlett Henderson & Laura Rigell
Swarthmore College

11 Honoring 20-Year Anniversary of the Zapatista Uprising, Words from Subcomandante Marcos

12 Who Benefits From Climate Panic?

Jimi Patalano, George Washington University

13 Divestment Campaign Toolbox

What is Orange Square?

Orange Square is the national publication of the Divestment Student Network (<http://studentsdivest.org/>). Borrowing its name from the fossil fuel divestment symbol that rose to prominence in Spring 2013, Orange Square seeks to be a student-run outlet for campaign updates, political analysis, reportbacks, poetry, artwork, and strategic visioning of the student fossil fuel divestment movement.

The first issue of Orange Square was released at Power Shift 2013, and we continue in this second issue to experiment with the organization and content of the publication in order to fit the needs of our movement. This time around, submissions were sought through an open call sent through the students-divest email listserv and Facebook by the Publication Working Group of the DSN. The issue that follows is a combination of student submissions and content re-printed from the web that aims to engage and enrich the divestment movement.

If you're interested in joining the Publication Working Group and collaborating on the next issue of Orange Square, email diveststudentnetwork@gmail.com. We also encourage you to send submissions for the next issue, including but not limited to political analyses, campaign updates, visual art, short stories, archival stories/documents, letters to the movement, etc.

Divestment Convergence 2014

To apply to the Convergence, please visit:
<http://studentsdivest.org/registration/>

About

From April 4th to 6th, 300 students from over 75 colleges and universities from across the United States and Canada will gather at San Francisco State University for the 2nd annual student-led Fossil Fuel Divestment Convergence. The first convergence was held in February 2013 at Swarthmore College, and was the first student-led forum to discuss and strategize about the role of the campus fossil fuel divestment campaign in moving forward for climate justice. Out of that convergence, students created the Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network.

This year's convergence will be an important step in strengthening the power of students through national and regional networks, while also growing the network's geographic and institutional reach to public and private schools across the nation. While 9 campuses have committed to full or partial fossil fuel divestment, including the hosts at SFSU, many college administrations have largely been resistant. In 2013, over a dozen schools received an official "no" from their administrations. Far from giving up, students stand strong in the face of administrative resistance. Students have already taken first steps towards escalation by coalition-building and direct action, gaining attention nationwide with sit-ins, petitions, rallies, public art displays, referenda, and growing alumni and faculty support.

At one year old, this is a crucial moment for the divestment campaign; it has the potential to regain the explosive momentum that drove it in 2013 by coordinating student efforts to spark coordinated, bold, escalated action. This convergence is designed to be another spark. In order to confront the overwhelming crisis of climate change, we must not only build our organizing skills and leadership, but also build relationships and coalitions with others fighting the same forces; all of which is part of the founding principles of the convergence. Fossil fuel divestment is just one piece of taking on the fossil fuel industry, and will ground our conversations in the role of the divestment campaign in the larger Climate Justice movement.

Why the convergence?

Mentorship and Training: Preparing Students for the Long Haul
 The convergence provides the infrastructure for peer-to-peer mentorship within the divestment campaign. Students can learn from each other's stories and skills in building power on campus, working with university administrations, collaborating with local

grassroots organizations, and escalating to win on divestment. Not only will this lead to a longer-lasting divestment campaign, but it will also train leaders who will continue to organize after graduating.

Strategy and Escalation

While we have seen some phenomenal successes in the divestment campaign over the past year, it is also clear that we need to start escalating and putting pressure on our administrations and boards. Escalating strategically is a carefully cultivated skill that can be honed through workshops, mentorship, and sharing stories. The convergence will be a space for students to do just that. Campuses that have escalated will share their successes and their lessons learned, students will learn about creative direct actions that will put pressure on their boards and win on-campus support, and each campus will be connected long-term with other campuses who are looking to escalate.

Reinvestment and the Just Transition

In order for us to truly confront the climate crisis, we need to not confront the fossil fuel industry, but also create community-owned alternatives to a fossil fuel-based economy. At this year's convergence, we will be connecting students with community organizers who are not only fighting the fossil fuel industry in their backyards, but also working to transition to a local, sustainable, and just economy that empowers and employs members of their community. Students will have the opportunity to learn by volunteering with these groups, learning about social justice as it relates to the environment, and in some cases, by pushing for community reinvestment in local renewable projects. Not only does this sort of collaboration support essential transition work, but also connects students with work that has longevity and is grounded in long-term community-building.

Why are we seeking funding?

Successes from last year: We organized last year's convergence on a budget of under \$25,000. The majority of the funding went to honoraria for speakers and trainers from underfunded grassroots organizations, as well as travel scholarships for students so that no one was barred from coming based on their financial situation. Students are able to make money stretch in creative ways - we are used to roughing it. Last year, students stayed on the floor of a church, we were fed by an activist cooking cooperative, and we used campus vans and other available resources to transport people. This year we are working to replicate this model, while doubling the number of attendees. We received overwhelming feedback from students and speakers that the convergence was a transformative experience that heightened their commitment to the movement.

Supporting Underfunded Organizers: As was the case last year, we are prioritizing bringing in organizers from grassroots and frontline organizations to share their struggles and build relationships with students. These are organizers that students do not often have access to through their relationships with paid organizers, but are none-the-less essential to learn from and build with. When we can provide honoraria to frontline organizers, we are not only assisting them financially to do the work they do,

but are also bringing them into spaces that are not often accessible to them.

Supporting the Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network: The Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network, a national body of students that came out of the first convergence, is working to build student power through fossil fuel divestment, to create peer-to-peer mentorships structures between campuses, and to provide a space for students to strategize and exchange ideas on a national level. The organization is entirely volunteer, and does not receive funding for organizers or events, which allows the organization to be dynamic and nimble, and to deftly respond to student needs. However, in order to further build up the student network and student leadership in the divestment campaign, students need to be able to come together in person, which requires funding.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED IN PLANNING, PLEASE CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUP BLURBS AND CONTACT PERSONS :)

Outreach

Outreach is making a registration page and planning to register 300 students from across the US and Canada! We have also been talking to lots of students who want to join the convergence planning team. Contact Will Lawrence at lawrence.will@gmail.com to get involved.

Off-Campus Logistics

Off-Campus Logistics is working on ensuring that funding is secured and travel is coordinated for the convergence. The team is actively working on a fundraising campaign that includes applying for grants, grassroots fundraising, and providing students with tools to get their campuses to fund their travel. They are also coordinating transportation to and from the airport as well as carpools. Finally, they are dealing with travel scholarships; assigning recipients and cutting reimbursement checks. For any questions, or if you wish to join the working group, please contact Emily Williams (emily@sustainabilitycoalition.org).

On-Campus Logistics

On-Campus Logistics has worked to secure a space to hold the Fossil Fuel Divestment Convergence and is actively working on housing students activists from around the country, as well as supplying a plethora of delicious foods for attendees to enjoy throughout the weekend. If you want to get involved with this working group, contact Marli Diestel (mdiest12@gmail.com) or Jason Schwartz (j44son@gmail.com)!

Programming

The Programming Working Group is working on developing the schedule for the convergence, selecting speakers and trainers, designing workshop sessions and plenaries, and generally steering the content of the weekend. Contact sarablazevic@gmail.com if you want to get involved!

Communications

The Communications Working Group is working on keeping updates available on the website including blurbs from participants of the 2013 Swarthmore Convergence about their experiences. They are also keeping the social media up-to-date,

blasting out information to interested parties, and rallying media to tell the story of the Convergence this year. Contact dbmaste13@earlham.edu if you want to get involved!

There are plans to have a “training track” at the convergence that aims to train 20 committed individuals in a wide geographic range to become peer mentors for the divestment movement at large. The “track” will take place during regular workshop sessions at the convergence and will help prepare folks for this new role in the movement. Workshops in this track will focus on active listening, being reliable, understanding various campaign contexts, and working with individuals and small groups to develop leadership. Contact lawrence.will@gmail.com if you are interested in this wonderful opportunity for skill-building, or check the designated box on the convergence registration form!

Getting ready for the Fossil Fuel Divestment Convergence 2014!

Posted on January 30, 2014

By Lydia Miller-Jewett, Earlham College REInvestment

[originally posted on <http://earlhamreinvestment.wordpress.com>]

This January I returned to my school, Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, from a semester abroad program. There are innumerable differences that one suddenly notices upon returning to a familiar campus after a while away. They are of varying degrees, from brand new buildings, to subtly changed decoration. But few changes can be as exciting as hurrying across campus for a class and suddenly seeing orange squares go by, pinned on back packs and coats!

The orange square has become more and more visible on our campus and I have been lucky enough to watch this happen. What has made this even more exciting is that I remember at the Power Up Convergence 2013 when the orange square was presented to us with the hope that it would become a symbol of the movement — a movement that is connected, not separate from others. It is always important to remember that having a solid symbol doesn't mean everything else is also just as solid, but it is quite an amazing step. And this step toward solidarity is just one of many.

To have a Fossil Fuel Divestment Convergence happening again, sure to be only better than before, is another of these steps. A lot of good happened during our time on Swarthmore's beautiful campus. We started the weekend out in what was probably the

best foreshadowing for what we have been focusing on so much more during this past year – we stood in solidarity with Swarthmore's team as they confronted a trying board meeting, something we all can certainly relate to. And this is what I mean. We started it out by supporting others, recognizing that we are all in this together, and that we understand each other. But throughout the weekend we also had the unique and necessary opportunity to learn what differences we were all facing... different tactics, thoughts, starting places, and emotions...

We began some incredibly important conversations that are imperative for the success of this movement. We set the space to start looking critically at ourselves: the inclusiveness (or lack there of) in the movement, the privilege... the marginalization. We must continue to constantly check our selves... ask if we are working with or detrimentally speaking for our brothers and sisters. These are the things that we must continue to tackle as this movement solidifies. Because it is solidifying. It is making progress. WE are making progress. And with the Fossil Fuel Divestment Convergence 2014 as proof, the space for coming together and continuing to make this progress will just keep growing with us.

Working Group Reportbacks

People of Color Caucus

The POC Caucus is a place for divestment organizers who identify as people of color to meet, share experiences/analysis, and engage with the broader national divestment network. The POC Caucus has not formally convened since Power Shift last October. If you're interested in jumpstarting the conversation, have ideas, or just want to learn more please get in touch. contact: zein.nakhoda@gmail.com

Mentorship/Training

The Mentorship/Training Working Group is working more closely with the Convergence planning team to put together a training track for the event. The hopes of this program is to create a team of approximately 20 mentors for the divestment network. Contact: lawrence.will@gmail.com if you are interested in learning more!

Vision Council

The Facilitation Working Group of the Divestment Student Network is morphing currently into a Visionary Council that will be a collection of students from campaigns across the country who are working on divestment related issues. The group will work to keep the DSN movement cohesive by addressing the multiple needs and desires of the various divestment groups that are in the process of running their campaigns. The team hopes to reach approximately 8-12 students from various types of schools (public, private, religious, 10,000 students +, campaigns that have existed for less than a year, etc.) and from various regions of the country. The Visionary Council will be putting together announcements for the new Assembly Calls, which will replace

the previously named "spokescouncil" calls for the network. The Assembly calls will invite students and alumni from all campaigns to join in conversations about the national network and discuss ways in which the divestment movement can move forward as a force for change. More will be announced about this model in the coming weeks. If you are interested in learning more about the council or feel drawn to join, please contact dinah.dewald@gmail.com or lelandbug@gmail.com

National Publication: ORANGE SQUARE

Edit and distribute web/print Orange Square publication created by and for the student divestment movement, including analyses, campaign reportbacks, interviews, announcements, etc. (contact: a.ross1520@gmail.com)

Frontline Connections

The Frontline Connections working group is excited to announce the Solidarity Organizing Toolkit, a guide to using our divestment campaigns to work for justice with frontline communities. This toolkit was made possible by contributions from many students, and we hope it will be useful to many campus campaigns interested in reaching out and working with frontline communities.

We are continuing our work to create a map and database of frontline communities near and affected by our colleges. All interested in learning more about environmental justice impacts and take steps to work with communities against those injustices can join the work. There are many levels of involvement, from a few hours of research, to help with GIS mapping, to connecting with community activists—contact dinah.dewald@gmail.com to get involved!

Excerpts from the Solidarity Organizing Toolkit

Using Student Power to Work for Climate Justice - A project of the DSN Frontline Connections Working Group

Why...Organize in solidarity and allyship with frontline communities?

1. We must build power together in order to win this fight. Climate injustice, at its root, is caused by a fundamentally flawed economic system that demands economic "growth" over people's basic needs. It operates on the assumption that there must be sacrificial people on sacrificial lands. Such a system functions in concert with racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and imperialism to shut out and oppress the Global South, people of color, women, and the working class. This system thrives on pitting these

groups against one another. We will only see climate justice once all of these populations come together. Our commitment to a system change must be bound with a commitment to each other.

2. We need to remember why we do this work. Organizing in partnership with communities who are the most impacted reminds us just how urgent our work is, what has already been lost, and what is being lost every day.

3. We have much to learn from these communities. Many organizers and activists in frontline communities have been in struggle against the fossil fuel industry for years and years. These activists have developed incredible organizing skills, understand policy around resource extraction, and are very familiar with how the fossil fuel industry operates. They have a knowledge base that has been built on decades of work, and the young divestment movement has a lot to learn from honoring this knowledge.

4. We must learn models to organize effectively across difference. Often the forms of organizing used within frontline communities look very different from mainstream climate organizing. For instance, the type of on-the-ground community organizing (door-knocking, potlucks, deep relationship-building) that is often crucial in impacted communities is not a form of organizing that the climate movement has historically used. However, it is imperative to learn this type of organizing if we want to build a movement across differences.

5. We cannot win unless we work with a broad base. Our movement has historically catered to those who are supported by the political and economic status quo (mostly white middle and upper-middle class people). These populations have less incentive to withdraw from the system that has given them power, material security, and cultural and political dominance. There is much more transformative potential to be found outside of the current dominant climate movement demographic.

6. Impacted communities see what is just, and what is not. Working in coalition with directly impacted communities informs our understanding of what real solutions look like. More specifically, it helps to differentiate between initiatives that move us toward climate justice, and initiatives that continue to treat certain communities as sacrificial.

Taking the Mic: Why Structural and Environmental Racism Matter

By Peaceful Uprising

Date of Publication: February 4, 2014

<http://www.peacefuluprising.org/TakingTheMic>

There is a phrase used again and again when people bring up something uncomfortable about the environmental movement. We are told that we are being “divisive.” The people who make themselves vulnerable by vocalizing their concerns, or worse—their dissent, are vilified and told they are “fracturing” the movement. Why is pointing out where there’s room for growth so threatening? But more importantly: can you fracture something that was broken to begin with?

On January 25th, thousands of people gathered at the Utah State Capitol to protest the state’s horrible air quality. On the surface, this event was a great success. The turnout was amazing, with the front grounds of the capital flooded with people. Behind the scenes, something was happening that needs to be addressed: the lack of frontline voices, specifically those most impacted by multiple oil refineries in the Wasatch Front.

Peaceful Uprising threw our support behind the Clean Air, No Excuses rally, because air quality in the Salt Lake valley is the worst in the nation, and has at times this year surpassed pollution in Beijing. We supported the rally because in our work to stop tar sands and oil shale mining, we are demanding that Tesoro and Chevron stop their current refining of Canadian tar sands, and that Salt Lake pass a moratorium on all tar sands refining in the future. Salt Lake’s oil refineries and industry polluters must be held accountable, and stopped, if clean air is to be attained. Most importantly, however, we supported the rally because frontline communities, those marginalized and neglected folks so often made invisible, are disproportionately impacted by pollution and extraction. It appeared that the clean air movement in Utah was just that—a movement, and a movement that invited, supported, and included the voices of all those involved and affected.

Two days before the rally, we learned the line-up of speakers did not include any voices that represented the refinery neighborhoods, and not one person of color. Salt Lake City is a place divided, racially and economically. On the east side of the city, the population is predominantly white; on the west side, predominantly people of color. It also happens that Tesoro, Chevron and Big West Oil refineries are located on the west side. That a rally called to demand clean air would not include one voice from these communities is not only unthinkable, but neglectful.

Organizers from the rally were contacted multiple times in the days leading up to the event. Rebecca Hall, an African-American

scholar who has written prolifically on issues of climate justice, environmental racism, and frontline communities, and works in Rose Park, offered to speak on these issues and relate them back to Utah's clean air issue by talking about tar sands and the refineries. We asked also that someone living in the refinery neighborhoods be allowed to speak about their experience (and offered to help organizers to line up such a person). Alternatively, we asked that the rally organizers make mention at the event about this oversight, and that they publicly voice their desire to include the voices of the front lines moving forward. These resolutions were declined.

Instead, we had some very troubling conversations. We were told race had nothing to do with clean air in Utah, and were asked to supply "proof" that the neighborhoods surrounding the refineries were disproportionately affected. Requiring communities of color to "prove" that they are being poisoned more than the rest of the population before including them in the rally is unacceptable. What gives the owner of Lewis Stages, a private bus company, more authority than a family living next to the refinery to speak about clean air, and why was he not only invited to speak, but courted? Are celebrity and social capital more important than lived experience?

Event organizers decided at the last minute to add "diverse" voices, represented, for the most part, by individuals from the LGBTQ community. These speakers were invited under the condition that they only read the white organizers pre-made material. Practices such as these do not build an inclusive movement, but result in the tokenizing of individuals and communities that should instead be at the forefront of our organizing. Inviting people to participate, but not contribute, and instead using them as proof of inclusivity, is incredibly harmful; not only is it offensive and isolating to the people involved, but it continues to hide that the voices of these very people are absent from the narrative to begin with.

Reaching for whatever diversity event organizers could find behind the podium during the event, Rebecca was "allowed" to approach the podium if she could promise not to "disrupt" the rally, and told to only read text that was being pointed to by a white organizer on a sheet of paper. A woman yielded her speaking time to Rebecca, who spoke briefly. Rebecca's intent was never to disrupt the rally, but instead to provide an important addition to the narrative being created that day.

The questions we keep asking are, "Is clean air for all lungs, or only for the lungs of the privileged? Is a life free from pollution and extraction something we all deserve, or is that a right reserved only for white communities?"

As a white person in this world, you are either complicit in, and benefiting from, systemic racism/white supremacy, or you are actively, overtly and explicitly pushing back against a system that fosters racism while acknowledging the privilege you can't help but receive. When we talk about race, and racist behaviors, there is often a knee-jerk response: "But I'm not racist!" And while an individual may not have intentionally engaged in racist behaviors, wounds caused unintentionally are still wounds. When the race you were born into has all the institutional power, social capital, credibility, and resources, you benefit whether you are aware of it or not. Put another way: when the rules are set up to benefit you, they are stacked against someone else, whether you are aware of

their experience or not. The question is: When inequity is made known to you, how will you react?

Though some mainly white communities, like the one by the Stericycle medical waste incinerator, are affected seriously by pollution—especially if they are low-income—environmental hazards disproportionately impact communities of color. This is what we mean when we talk about environmental racism, something that even the EPA regards as a serious issue. Communities of color are more likely to live beside sources of pollution, like refineries and mines. Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment state that the air inside homes by refineries like Tesoro is more toxic than the air outside, since emissions accumulate there over time. These communities have a large percentage of non-white residents. Likewise, people of color have less access to housing, fair wages, and health care than white people, making them often less equipped to cope with severe pollution.

Communities everywhere are experiencing the deadly effects of fossil fuel refining. In Manchester (Houston, TX), Richmond, CA, Detroit, MI, and elsewhere, neighborhoods are being treated as sacrifice zones, given over to the fossil fuel industry, and the residents made invisible. The same holds true for communities on the frontlines of extraction.

The same weekend of the clean air rally, members of Peaceful Uprising were working with communities living on the Diné Reservation, visiting uranium mines and other extraction sites in the area, and helping plan for a spring gathering. Others are waiting for Obama to make his final decision on the northern leg of the Keystone XL pipeline (as the southern leg is already in the ground), and will journey to Lakota territory to stand with them as they fight to protect sacred sites. Taking the lead from, and physically standing with, frontline communities is not only important to our work, it is necessary if we have any hope of succeeding.

Peaceful Uprising's efforts toward Climate Justice are a work in progress. We make mistakes—many of us have white and class privilege and are often confronted with the blind spots these privileges create or enable. We are learning through trying, sometimes failing, and constantly trying to do better. As the Zapatistas say, "Caminamos preguntando": "We are asking while we walk". But we want to build communities where these mistakes and blind spots are addressed—not next year, not next action, but as soon as possible. We recognize that failing to address white supremacy and other oppressions means doing harm: excluding, ignoring, and marginalizing people who have been kept out of the movement. We also recognize that when we confront unintentional racism, sexism, classism and other marginalizations, we are becoming more inclusive. It is disturbing these efforts towards sincere, self-aware inclusion are seen as "divisive." We call attention to our failures in the climate movement because we want to move forward together, with strength, ready to win.



Angie Rosser: West Virginia Chemical Spill: A Predictable Water Crisis

By Angie Rosser

Date of Publication: January 12, 2014

Source: Sunday Gazette-Mail

<http://www.wvgazette.com/Opinion/OpEdCommentaries/201401120013>



WV Clean Water Hub mobilized amidst the crisis to deliver water to communities like this one in Nitro, West Virginia who depend on the Elk River for their tap water.

(Photo credit: <https://www.facebook.com/WVCleanWaterHub>)

I'm one of 300,000 West Virginians who learned their water had been contaminated by a chemical leak just upstream from the state's largest drinking-water intake. Predictably, politicians and the public are clamoring for heads to roll – most notably those of managers at the Freedom Industries plant responsible for the leak.

Freedom Industries should be held accountable, but that won't fix the problem. That's because the Elk River spill wasn't an isolated accident. It was the inevitable consequence of weak regulatory enforcement over many years, made possible by our collective failure to uphold the values we profess.

We all say we value clean water, so why do we accept pollution as the status quo, as a byproduct of everyday life? In public opinion polls, Americans routinely and overwhelmingly say it's the job of government to ensure clean water. And yet we continue to let elected officials off the hook when it comes to clean water laws. In this light, the Elk River leak could be the future of many American cities – a future in which systems failures cause local catastrophic events, leaving taxpayers to foot the bill to clean up after polluters.

Since the earliest days of the chemical industry, it has been a major part of West Virginia's economy. We live every day with the potential for toxic leaks into our waterways, knowing the consequences can be devastating. We shouldn't have to live this way.

Since the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, industry has worked diligently to weaken the law's enforcement and oversight.

As director of an organization that advocates for clean water, I regularly witness the audacious influence of industry as it cajoles lawmakers and regulators to lower production costs by lowering the bar on public health. I review the same data as the politicians do on the risks to public health posed by weakening clean-water standards. But when it comes to environmental stewardship, data and facts are no match for industry's sway over government.

At times like these, I see the irony of politicians scapegoating a company whose pollution is enabled by government's failure to adequately regulate. We've allowed them to foster a culture of neglect instead of one of oversight and accountability.

The Mountain State enjoys an abundance of water, but year after year we have seen access to clean water diminish. Our water has paid the price for our legacy of mining, gas drilling, coal-burning power plants and chemical production. We have seen the steady chipping away of our water quality standards to help reduce costs to big coal. We have seen the injustices of people's right to clean water usurped by industries. Indeed, there are parts of West Virginia that will never have access to clean water, where industrial pollution has caused irreparable harm to water supplies.

I hope the West Virginia water crisis reminds us about how dependent we are on clean rivers for our health and security. Now is the time to take a critical look at how to better protect our water sources. We can do this only by acknowledging that the Elk River spill is not a story about an isolated leak. This is about the need for systemic changes in industrial practices and our national responsibility to establish and enforce adequate protections.

We need to look at ourselves and remember our values. We need to be true to our relationship with water by expanding our expectations of elected leaders. And industries and consumers need to accept the costs of safer, more environmentally sound production of certain goods and services. That's the price of clean water.

Clean water is essential for life. It is also essential for our national and global security. I hope that once the immediate crisis is over, serious thought will go into meaningful reforms and investment in protecting our rivers and streams that are our lifeline.

Phillip Agnew: “This is my tome to 2013; my poem to the year of my dreams”

Author: Phillip Agnew

Date of Publication: January 1, 2014

Source: Youngist

<http://youngist.org/post/71882453326/phillip-agnew-this-is-my-tome-to-2013-my-poem-to-the>

For 364 days, at least, I found myself in a constant state of conflict.

Almost daily my alarm clock awoke me at the corner of a crossroad: asking that I decide

... And every day I oscillated away.

*I was readiness & unsteadiness, joy & sadness,
deletion & depletion, Completion;
I was cool confidence in a cracked case.
I was the reluctant leader, the forlorn follower.*

*I was a horrible mentor, a deplorable mentee.
Always kept it together, rarely kept in touch.
I was here, there, everywhere and no where.
I longed for home and grew restless for the road.
I moved too fast and proceeded with much caution.
I served and rarely felt deserving.
I was selfishly selfless.
I spread love and squandered it.
I sailed in the sure serenity of certainty & in the swaying seas of insecurity.
Found purpose, missed calls.
I sparred with Self.
Battled with Me & I and
Eyes wept:
Tears of joy from my right,
Tears of loss from my left.
I was introduced to some old friends.
I lost contact, made excuses
I felt full of empty sometimes.
I decided to be indecisive.
I was spontaneous when I planned to be.
I longed, liked, and left.
I felt guilty for having a good time.
I expended endless amounts of energy.
Eager to exceed external expectations,
I ended up abandoning internal ones.
Effortlessly executed
trapeze tricks while tiptoeing the tightrope. no trouble.
Tried to rodeo the uncontrollable. Still can't juggle.
I felt too old,
And felt too young too.
I missed some of the old times,
And some of the new ones too.
I disappointed myself. I astonished myself.
I felt the weight of the World: in my palms and my arms.
I jumped at opportunities,
I mis-timed some leaps of faith.
I felt Big in the Big Times and small in the small ones.
(And it's all about the small ones)....
I watched my words and bit off more than I could chew.
I went to an emotional island, with few ferries, from or to...
I saw miracles.
I saw the alchemy of anger catalyzed to action.
I saw evolution, transformation, and a rising revolution.
I saw the country catch fire, clenched fists of collective fury.
Scholars students and artists in communal catharsis.
Children unchained. Hearts opened. Lines drawn.
I felt blessings pour down from the Heaven inside us.
I saw Light consume Darkness whole.
I watched us construct a collective future in 2 minutes.
I watched Power build, grow, and Shift.
I write this...
Feeling better.
Filled to the brim with anxiety and anticipation.
This is my tome to 2013. My poem to the year of my dreams.
To my season of Resolution fever; turning fears to Ether.
The writer in me says it was the best of times & the worst of times,
My intuition tells me I haven't seen enough of either.
2014 is Ours.*

**Phillip Agnew is the Director of Dream Defenders.
You can keep up with him on Twitter @PhilofDreams_.**



Photo credit: marsmet526

Source: <http://bit.ly/1nqGNAr> License: <http://bit.ly/1c13EBZ>

What if?

by Hazlett Henderson and Laura Rigell
Swarthmore College

What if fossil fuel companies no longer existed? What if fracking, mountaintop removal, and tar sands were relics of the past? What if humanity actually averted runaway climate change? What if we saw our work as intertwined with the broader pursuit of social justice? What if acting as allies to our sister movements were central and never accessory to our work? What if, through a transition away from fossil fuel dependence, we made our political system more participatory? What if communities became more self-sufficient and resilient?

By December 2015, we want no extreme fossil fuel extraction happening on US soil - for our own well-being and as a signal for the global community. We want an absolute end to the construction of fossil fuel infrastructure and exploration for new reserves. We demand the elimination of subsidies or tax breaks to fossil fuel companies.

To be clear, we will end extreme energy extraction. In the interest of climate stability and human health, corporations must stop fracking for natural gas, digging for tar sands, and flattening mountains for coal. These are the most carbon-intensive and toxic processes of getting carbon based fuels out of the ground.

As we approach tipping points in the climate system, corporations are still exploring for new fossil fuel reserves and building new infrastructure. By allowing the fossil fuel industry to maintain and intensify its efforts, our nation is condoning the industry's violence. In doing so, we are hindering our ability to transition away from fossil fuel dependence and towards a future powered by the sun, wind, and other cleaner sources. We are locking ourselves into a future of climate instability and poisoned water

and soil. New reserves simply cannot be burned and new infrastructure cannot be used if we value human life.

Subsidies to fossil fuel companies must be eliminated. In the long-term, it makes no sense to continue supporting an industry that is doomed to failure. We are eager to see the economic stability of fossil fuel companies threatened by the removal of these subsidies. Many of these companies consistently endanger their workers and violate regulations. Thus, we reject the substitution of the fossil fuel industry with a similarly negligent renewable energy industry. This transition must not abandon communities reliant on oil, gas, or coal for jobs. Instead, we want a transition that enables communities to take control of their energy production independent of corporate manipulation.

If we mobilize the collective strength of the climate justice movement, we believe that by 2020 we can eliminate the fossil fuel industry. We believe this to be both physically possible and imperative.

We have chosen December 2015 as a closer benchmark - for eliminating extreme extraction- because it corresponds with the United Nations Climate Conference (Paris, COP21). At this conference world governments will sign a climate agreement to replace the Kyoto Protocol. We must escalate our opposition to the fossil fuel industry to set the stage for a treaty commensurate with the climate crisis. It is necessary that the 2015 treaty delegitimize the fossil fuel industry and facilitate a just transition toward renewable energy. Our timeline is reinforced by the science around tipping points in the climate system. Scientists say we only have until 2015 to have global carbon emissions on the decline, in order to prevent runaway warming.

Though 2015 may be a relevant threshold, thousands have already died from climate related catastrophes or are daily suffering the effects of an unstable climate. Those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate disaster have been systematically marginalized on the basis of race and class, and similar lines have been drawn with regards to the siting of industrial activity. People living in the sacrifice zones around fossil fuel plants, mines, wells, and refineries spend an inordinate amount of time in the hospital with sick loved ones. Clean drinking water is far from a guarantee. Corporations endanger communities with oil train explosions, fuel spills, and diesel fumes. Rural America is being stripped and fracked to pieces while urban America suffocates from heat waves and diesel fumes.

We realize there could be a tension between our urgency and the intentionality necessary to create a more just future. Fear of impending climate catastrophe can overshadow the pain felt as a result of other social crises: the degradation of public education, mass incarceration, deportation, discrimination, and foreclosure, among other injustices. Indeed, in the words of Idle No More leader Leanne Simpson, the world has already ended for too many.

We therefore reject reactionary solutions to the "climate panic" that reinforce economic inequality or burden a marginalized community with costs. Real solutions must shift power from corporations to the people and facilitate a just transition to local resilience. We see this transition as an opportunity to challenge

conventional schooling, pursue restorative justice, rethink citizenship, create truly welcoming communities, and make food, water, shelter, and security universally accessible. We realize that this vision requires commitment for the long haul.

At this moment, we pledge to take action for climate justice this summer. This summer 2014, we will take actions that match the scale of the climate crisis. We commit to resisting the fossil fuel industry, working for sustainable solutions, and organizing for community resilience. Climate justice is intertwined with the struggle for racial and economic justice, so we pledge to act in solidarity with many movements for social justice. We invite you to join us in this pledge.

Find it at: <http://www.goo.gl/KSiWhr>

Honoring 20-Year Anniversary of the Zapatista Uprising, Words from Subcomandante Marcos

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN) celebrated the 20th anniversary of their armed rebellion on January 1, 2014. We can honor the Zapatistas by learning about their resistance, and in this translated essay by Subcomandante Marcos entitled 'Them and Us,' Marcos distinguishes between those who have power and those organizing on the ground. The following is an excerpt from Part I of the essay, 'The Lack of Reason from Above.' The original Spanish version can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1bQ5T9J> The English translation: <http://bit.ly/1dDtxmu>

Those from above say:

We're the ones who make the rules. We're more powerful, although there are fewer of us. We don't care what you say-hear-think-do, as long as you are mute, deaf, immobile.

We can impose halfway intelligent people in the government (although they're already getting to be difficult to find within the political class), but we chose one who can't even pretend to know what he's talking about.¹

Why? Because we can.

We could use the police and military apparatus to persecute and jail real criminals, but those criminals are a vital part of us. Instead, we choose to persecute you, beat you, detain you, torture you, jail you, kill you.

Why? Because we can.

Guilty or innocent? Who cares if you are one or the other? Justice is just another whore in our little black book, and believe us, it's not the most expensive one.

And even if you follow the rules that we impose to the letter, even if you don't do anything, even though you might be innocent, we will squash you.



Zapatista mural

Photo credit: gsz

Source: <http://bit.ly/1faszzk> License: <http://bit.ly/1kovFrv>

And if you insist on asking why we do it, we'll respond: because we can.

That is having Power. A lot is said about money, riches, and those things. But believe us when we say that what excites us is that feeling of being able to make decisions about anyone's life, liberty, and assets. No, power is not money, it's what you can have with it. Power is not just exercising it with impunity, it is also and above all, to do it irrationally. Because having Power is to do and undo without having any other reason than the possession of Power.

And it doesn't matter who stands out in front, hiding us. Right and left are only references so that the chauffeur can park the car. The machinery runs itself. We don't even have to order them to punish the insolence of defying us. Large, medium, and small governments all over the political spectrum — as well as intellectuals, artists, journalists, politicians, and religious leaders — fight over the privilege to please us.

So fuck you, screw you, rot in hell, die, get discouraged, give up. To the rest of the world you don't exist, you are no one.

Yes, we've sowed hate, cynicism, rancor, desperation, theoretical and practical don't-give-a-fuck, conformity with the 'lesser evil,' fear turned into resignation.

And, nonetheless, we fear that which has transformed itself into organized rebellious rage, without a price tag.

Because we control, manage, ration, and feed the chaos that we impose. Our 'law enforcement' forces impose our chaos.

But the chaos² that comes from below...

Ah, that... we don't even understand what they say, who they are, how much they cost.

And they're so rude that they don't beg, await, request, plead – instead, they exercise their freedom. Have you ever seen such obscenity!

That is the real danger. Those who look to the other side, who leave the mold, or break it, or ignore it.

"You know what's really worked for us? That myth about unity at all cost. To only understand oneself with a boss, leader, ruler, or whatever they call themselves. Controlling, managing, containing, buying one is much easier than many. Yes, and cheaper. That and individual rebelliousness. It's so wonderfully useless.

Rather, what's really dangerous in a true chaos is when everyone becomes a collective, group, crew, raza, organization, and they learn to say 'no' and 'yes,' and they reach agreements amongst themselves. Because the 'no' is directed towards those of us who give the orders. And the 'yes,'... jeez... that really is a disaster. Imagine if everyone built their own destinies, and they decided who to be and what to do. It would be like pointing out that we're expendable, excessive, that we get in the way, that we're not necessary, that we should be in jail, that we should disappear.

Translator's notes:

[1] Referring to President Enrique Peña Nieto, who is turning out to be at least as inarticulate and factually challenged as George W. Bush.

[2] Marcos wrote "chaos" with the letter "k" in Spanish: "kaos." Like anglophone anarcho-punks and other rebellious youth, Mexico's young rebels often replace the "c"s in certain works with "k"s in the written language.

Who Benefits From Climate Panic?

Jimi Patalano, George Washington University

It's a way of speaking about climate change that has become so common you probably don't even blink when you hear it: "We only have [x] years to avert climate catastrophe"; "The window of opportunity to avoid runaway climate change is closing rapidly"; etc. A recent article from National Geographic says it this way: "Even Pentagon brass has declared climate change a "threat multiplier" – if not a direct threat on par with terrorism." I call this the "rhetoric of severe urgency" - or, if you like, "climate panic" - and I know I'm not alone in sensing that it is becoming an increasingly popular way of framing climate change.

Often we may feel, as activists, that we must forefront the urgency of climate change in order to overcome the apathy and ignorance we sense is widespread among the American public.

However, the reality is that outside of a tiny remaining fringe of true denialists, most of those who once refused to discuss climate change are no longer ignoring the issue. In fact, governments, corporations, mainstream media, and others now seem to be talking about climate change almost constantly. With that, the goal is no longer to get the issue on the table. The struggle now is over the narrative of climate change that will undoubtedly shape the solutions considered appropriate.

I argue that the rhetoric of severe urgency, the climate panic which I described above, constrains certain possible solutions while enabling others in very concerning ways. A pervasive climate of panic makes it likely that radical possibilities, solutions that would change societal power relations and give birth to a new era of environmental justice, will be wiped off the table in the name of "pragmatism". Meanwhile, a feeling of severe urgency makes it more likely that the "solutions" chosen will involve empowering unaccountable corporations, unleashing dangerous new technologies, increasing government control over our lives, and privatizing resources in the name of efficiency. Global warming might be stopped, but the unjust power relations would remain, and be further enforced.

Take the post-9/11 years, where the threat of an imminent terrorist strike - a similar catastrophe-waiting-to-happen, just like the "climate cliff" - has been used to justify the erosion of democratic process, the suspension of constitutional rights, and unprecedented unethical relations between the government and corporate behemoths. Meanwhile, the possibility that our government will address the underlying issues - anti-American sentiment stemming from underdevelopment, exploitation, and Israel's belligerence in the Middle East - seems further away every year. These solutions just aren't "practical", because we're dealing with an EMERGENCY - the terrorists could strike tomorrow!! If we allow the discussion of climate change to be dominated by similar logic - the climate could collapse tomorrow!! - we will get the similar results.

The danger of climate panic is the possibility that those who brought us to the intolerable situation we are in today are given even more power and authority because of their supposed ability to "save the human race" from going over a "climate cliff". For an example of how international elites are already mobilizing climate panic to shore up their own power and reinforce the status quo, let's examine the World Bank's free online course, "Turn Down The Heat: Why A 4°C Warmer World Must Be Avoided", which began Jan. 27th.

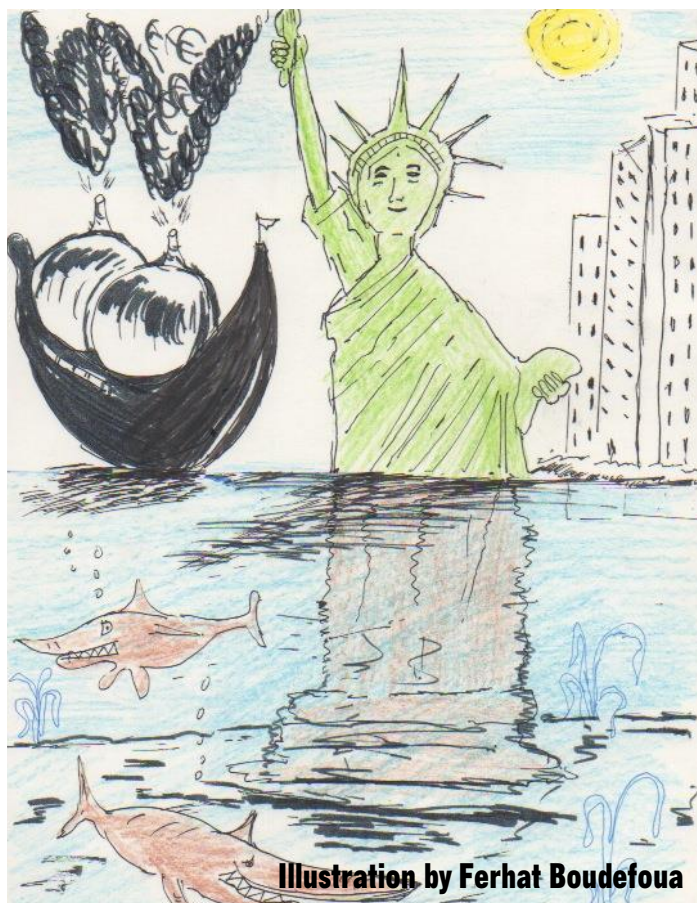
According to the course description, what is lamentable about climate change is the possibility that it "would roll back decades of development progress". "Development progress" is easily recognizable as a code-word for the neoliberal agenda of globalized privatization, debt, and deregulation that is the World Bank's *raison d'être*. Based on that analysis (or narrative) of the problem, the solutions imagined by the World Bank set out to ensure the neoliberal process of "development" emerges strengthened, not weakened, from the crisis.

The outline of the course's content goes on to excitedly describe two separate "tracks" within the course - one for "the general public", and one for "policymakers". During the section of the course titled "What can We Do About It?", the general public will

learn about "lifestyles", while policymakers discuss "effective policies" that can lead to "a low-emissions and climate-resilient development path". Clearly, citizen-driven social movements, grassroots power-building, and bottom-up change have no place in the World Bank's vision of possible responses to climate change. The World Bank instead envisions a future in which political elites call all the shots while ordinary citizens focus on green consumerism.

The perspective environmental justice brings helps us understand the real challenge in this battle over narrative: climate change is not the issue. The real issue is unjust social relations of exploitation. Climate change, with its attendant national, racial and class disparities, is just one of many consequences of this issue.

It is our jobs as activists, as members of a movement, to ensure that the discussion of climate change does not collapse into a merely scientific or technical discussion where the experts tell us exactly how they are going to "solve global warming" - and that's that. If we are committed to honoring the ancestor of climate justice, environmental justice, then discussions of climate change must always include a deep analysis of the power relations, an analysis of the centuries of exploitation and domination, that have created today's world. It also means resisting the urge to panic, and replacing it with the urge to confront, to call-out, to demand justice with the heart and the righteous force of the truly great social movements of the past. We need to demand more than a solution to climate change - we need to demand the future we really want, every little bit of it.



Divestment Campaign Toolbox

Each campus campaign is experimenting with different messaging, tactics, and strategy. Let's grow our movement by sharing approaches towards winning on divestment.

Are the economics and ethics of fossil fuel divestment aligning?

Tired of hearing it's your school's fiduciary duty to invest in destruction? Alex Lenferna at the University of Washington wrote a research paper that turns that sorry argument on it's head.

<http://www.rtcc.org/2014/01/06/comment-the-economics-and-ethics-of-fossil-fuel-divestment-are-aligning/>

DivestNow! Cornell video

Watch this video coming out of Cornell to see what it looks like to have organized faculty support.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAZ4_bf01il

One "No" Won't Stop Bobcats from Fighting for Climate Action

Oh no you didn't! The campaign at Bates vows to continue organizing despite a letter from the president declining divestment as an option.

<http://ssc.org/blogs/one-%E2%80%99Cno%E2%80%99D-won%E2%80%99t-stop-bobcats-fighting-climate-action>



FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT CONVERGENCE

SAN FRANCISCO
STATE UNIVERSITY

APRIL 4 - 6, 2014



"We began some incredibly important conversations that are imperative for the success of this movement. We set the space to start looking critically at ourselves: the inclusiveness of the movement, the privilege, the marginalization. We must continue to constantly check ourselves... ask if we are working with, or detrimentally speaking for, our brothers and sisters. "

*On the 2013 Divestment Convergence
- Lydia Jewett, Earlham College*

DIVESTMENT CAMPAIGNS: HOW DID THEY WIN?

Over a hundred colleges at least partially divested from apartheid South Africa. Now there is a web-based, searchable database that describes 18 campaigns, including a dozen that succeeded. Discover the methods used and allies gained at Spelman, Illinois, Rutgers, North Carolina, Stanford, Mills, Wisconsin, Toronto, Swarthmore, and others.

The Global Nonviolent Action Database

<http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu>

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