

JUNE 25

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Of course, better hope than no hope. But hope without a strategy, hope without power, without using that power to act, will end up in the worst forms of romanticism.

Take a look at the environmental movement, but with a cool eye. Around the globe, tens of millions of people, filled with a mixture of hope and despair, are engaged in tens of thousands of specific campaigns to save one thing or another. And with them are hundreds of thousands of engaged specialists – the technocrats of hope – each arguing their tight corners with endless reports, campaigns and conferences. All of this represents tens of millions of hours dedicated by volunteers to hope – to environmental change.

The result? Almost no progress. Certainly no broad change in habits. There have been some breakthroughs, almost all of them very specific and narrow. But many things are worse. Why?

Because real change does require hope, just as it does outrage and determination, but it requires a great deal more. Above all, change requires ideas

and plans. And only the possession of real power gives these meaning. Over the last four decades the forces of humanism have raised their voices, but from within the heavy fog of global optimism. Generation after generation has largely stayed clear of old-fashioned politics in the name of this new global lobbying.

But democracy – the power of citizens – lies within constituted structures. Governments hold the real power to make broad, long changes. Why has so little progress been made? Because governments have refused to make changes. Why? Because political parties and legislative bodies have not been invested by environmentalists.

The history of change is clear about this. Those who don't believe in global warming have gone out and occupied as much power as they can. Power and therefore politics is the mechanism of change. That is how we got public education and public healthcare. We can lobby all we want, but if environmentalists do not seek real power, change will not come.

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