

Can Climate Change Cure Capitalism?

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DECEMBER 4, 2014 ISSUE

This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate

by Naomi Klein

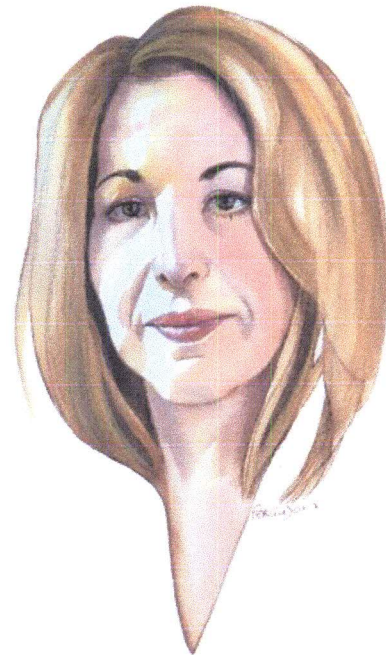
Simon and Schuster, 566 pp., \$30.00

Every fall, an international team of scientists announces how much carbon dioxide humanity has dumped into the atmosphere the previous year. This fall, the news wasn't good. It almost never is. The only time the group reported a drop in emissions was 2009, when the global economy seemed on the verge of collapse. The following year, emissions jumped again, by almost 6 percent.

According to the team's latest report, in 2013 global emissions rose by 2.3 percent. Contributing to this increase were countries like the United States, which has some of the world's highest per capita emissions, and also countries like India, which has some of the lowest. "There is no more time," one of the scientists who worked on the analysis, Glen P. Peters of the Center for International Climate and Environmental Research in Oslo, told *The New York Times*. "It needs to be all hands on deck now."

A few days after the figures were released, world leaders met in New York to discuss how to deal with the results of this enormous carbon dump. Ban Ki-Moon, the secretary-general of the United Nations, had convened the summit to "catalyze climate action" and had asked the leaders to "bring bold announcements." Once again, the news wasn't good. It almost never is.

"There is a huge mismatch between the magnitude of the challenge and the response we heard here today," Graça Machel, Nelson Mandela's widow, told the summit in the final speech of the gathering. "The scale is much more than we have achieved." This mismatch, which grows ever more disproportionate year after year, summit after summit, raises questions both about our future and about our character. What explains our collective failure on climate change? Why is it that instead of dealing with the problem, all we seem to do is make it worse?



Naomi Klein; drawing by James Ferguson

