

Moving Forward on Climate

by The Corner House
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'Billions wasted on UN climate programme'

'European Union's efforts to tackle climate change a failure'

'UN effort to curtail emissions in turmoil'

'Truth about Kyoto: huge profits, little carbon saved'

These recent newspaper headlines tell the story. The world's dominant approach to dealing with the climate crisis - carbon trading, the centrepiece of the Kyoto Protocol and the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme - isn't working.

Yet, as if sleepwalking, international agencies and government authorities around the world continue to squander millions of taxpayer dollars trying to build or repair carbon markets.

As country after country undertakes its own complicated efforts to partition the world's carbon cycling capacity into saleable commodities, and entrepreneurs flood news media with unverifiable claims that they are increasing that capacity, fossil-fuelled industries are getting a new

lease on life.

As speculators seek quick profits in a fast-growing 'wild west' marketplace, the need to find reliable ways to promote the structural change that would allow fossil fuels to be kept in the ground is being ignored or forgotten.

Why is this happening? What lies behind the belief that carbon markets can somehow be 'fixed' or 'regulated'? What can be done to move climate politics onto a saner path?

The Corner House has recently posted nearly a dozen new items on its website that shed light on these and related questions. We hope you find them useful and informative.

Best wishes from all at The Corner House

NEW ADDITIONS

ARTICLES FOR ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

1)

'Carbon Trading: Solution or Obstacle?'

<http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/pdf/document/Indiachapter.pdf>

More and more commentators now recognise that carbon markets are not helping to address the climate crisis. But more discussion is needed of: how carbon markets damage more effective approaches; whether carbon markets could ever work at all; and why carbon trading has been successful in political terms despite failing in climatic terms.

2)

'Carbon Trading, Climate Justice and the Production of Ignorance:

Ten Examples'

<http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/pdf/document/Ignorance.pdf>

Carbon trading schemes have helped mobilise neoclassical economics and development planning in new projects of dispossession, speculation, rent-seeking and the redistribution of wealth from poor to rich and from the future to the present. A central part of this process has been creating new domains of ignorance. What does the quest for climate justice become when it is incorporated into a development or carbon market framework?

3)

'Toward a Different Debate in Environmental Accounting:

The Cases of Carbon and Cost-Benefit'

<http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/pdf/document/EnvAcctg.pdf>

Many mainstream environmentalists suggest that calculating and

internalising 'externalities' is the way to solve environmental problems.

Some critics counter that the spread of market-like calculations into

'non-market' spheres is itself causing environmental problems. This

article sets aside this debate to examine closely actual conflicts,

contradictions and resistances engendered by environmental accounting

techniques and suggest what the long-term political and environmental

consequences are likely to be.

4)

'Gas, Waqf and Barclays Capital:

A Decade of Struggle in Southern Thailand'

<http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/pdf/document/Waqf.pdf>

Slowing and halting new fossil fuel developments must eventually move to

the top of the global climate change agenda. But what are the obstacles

to, and resources for, such a project? The 10-year struggle against a large natural gas development project in one corner of Southeast Asia offers lessons in some of the relevant themes of global politics: the use of military force to secure and transport fossil fuel resources; the regulation of international finance; sectarian violence; corporate social responsibility; intensely locally-specific yet internationally-reinforced, forms of class conflict and racism; and the question of how a more tenacious solidarity for the defence of community and commons might be built among diverse and all-too-often isolated movements in different geographical and cultural locations.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

5)

'Pictures from the Carbon Market, Part 2'

<http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/pdf/document/OffsetsMarket2.pdf>

This slide show of photographs continues a series portraying the practical, on-the-ground effects of the trade in carbon credits through the United Nations' Clean Development Mechanism and the voluntary 'offset' market.

6)

'How Carbon Trading Undermines Positive Approaches to the Climate Crisis'

<http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/pdf/document/CTvsPos.pdf>

Carbon trading proponents often assert that trading is merely a way of finding the most cost-effective means of reaching an emissions goal. In fact, carbon trading undermines a number of existing and proposed positive measures for tackling climate change. These include the survival and spread of existing low-carbon technologies, movements against expanded fossil fuel use, and well-tested green policy measures. Carbon trading also undermines public awareness and political participation, as well as creating ignorance.

VIDEO PRESENTATIONS

7)

'A Chicago Conversation on Carbon Trading' (at De Paul University)

<http://www.blip.tv/file/778753>

A discussion hosted by the Climate Justice Chicago Coalition at De Paul

University examines how carbon trading creates transferable rights to dump carbon, slows social and technological change, promotes socially and ecologically destructive practices and is ineffective and unjust.

8)

'Carbon Trading: A Lecture at Brigham Young University'

http://www.tni.org/detail_page.phtml?act_id=17937&username=guest@tni.org&password=9999&publish=Y

WRITINGS BY KEVIN SMITH OF CARBON TRADE WATCH

9)

'The Limits of Free Market Logic' (published in 'China Dialogue')

<http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/pdf/document/LimitsFML.pdf>

Carbon trading, its backers claim, reduces emissions and brings sustainable development in the global South. But in fact it may do neither, and is harming efforts to create a low-carbon economy. A Chinese version is appended.

10)

'Pollute and Profit' (published in Parliamentary Brief)

<http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/pdf/document/ParlBrief.pdf>

When will it be publicly admitted that the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme is not working? Industries are not switching to clean energy technology. The Scheme's guiding principle seems to be 'polluter profits' rather than 'polluter pays'.

11)

'The Carbon Neutral Myth: Offset Indulgences for Your Climate Sins'

(published by the TransNational Institute)

<http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/pdf/document/CarbonNeutralMyth.pdf>

Buying 'carbon offsets' to 'neutralize' your carbon emissions is all the rage in middle-class society in Europe and North America. This book explains why offsets are not a constructive approach to climate change.

For a full listing of climate-related documents, go to:

<http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/subject/climate>.

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