

Dangerous Years: Climate Change, the Long Emergency, and the Way Forward

David W. Orr

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Environmental policy wonk and sustainability pioneer David W. Orr pulls the proverbial fire alarm on American complacency and apathy in his rousing new polemic, *Dangerous Years*.

Front and center is the physical reality of climate change and America's inability to deal with it effectively. Even if emissions were curtailed dramatically in the near future, increased amounts of carbon dioxide will remain in the atmosphere for thousands of years and affect global climate systems in unpredictable ways, Orr explains. In other words, the time to act was years ago, though act we still should.

Pulling from some of the best minds in science, economics, political thought, and philosophy, Orr delivers a deep and thorough critique of the psychological and cultural underpinnings of modern industrialism that ultimately facilitated the climate crisis. Insular, selfish, undemocratic corporate cultures come under heavy fire, as do some top-down models of governance impervious to needs of specific bioregions. Without structural political changes that connect economics and ecology at the local, national, and global levels, human civilization will outstrip available resources, heat the planet to dangerous highs, and destroy itself.

The book is much more than a cautionary indictment, however. *Dangerous Years* posits real, proactive solutions involving the best aspects of business and government—a holistic approach to public policy that accounts for complex, interrelated ecological systems. Orr is like a twenty-first-century James Madison, reframing basic political precepts to better serve democracy and the long-term prospects of humanity.

SCOTT NEUFFER (Winter 2017)

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