

## Clarification re Civil Resistance

A quote that I provided for the book "Times Up!" by Keith Farnish requires clarification. I reproduce below the exchange with Farnish that led to the quote: "Keith Farnish has it right: time has practically run out, and the 'system' is the problem. Governments are under the thumb of fossil fuel special interests -- they will not look after our and the planet's well-being until we force them to do so, and that is going to require enormous effort."

That quote and the way it was used require two clarifications.

First, the brevity of the quote leaves ambiguity about my meaning. As is clearer in the exchange below, and still clearer in the talks that I give, what I mean is that governments are not going to take the actions required to save our climate, the earth we live on, creation, for future generations unless the public applies pressure – enough pressure to overcome the pressure applied by special financial interests. In my talks I emphasize the need for young people to get involved and influence the older generations. I specifically list three strategies to be pursued in unison:

(1) Dialogue with governments, including use of the ballot box

(2) Courts, including common law that today's adults are enjoying use of property that belongs to young people and future generations, use that comes with responsibilities

(3) Peaceful demonstration, specifically "civil resistance". Gandhi makes clear in his writings that his approach (which I agree with) is best described by "civil resistance", even though he sometimes used the more popular phrase "civil disobedience".

Specifically, note that I have not endorsed anarchy. For the sake of clarification of my views I will annotate the charts used in one of my recent talks and make them available on my web site [www.columbia.edu/~jeh1](http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1)

Second, I failed to make clear in the exchange with Farnish that he could not use my government title in connection with the quote. We have since informed Amazon.com that they must remove that title.

I accept full responsibility for the both of the above problems. I will try to be less hurried and more careful in providing future quotes.

Jim Hansen

Below is my exchange with Keith Farnish:

30 December 2008

Dear Jim

Thanks for reading beyond the subject line - seriously, I know you probably get lots of requests to look at books so I would be *very* grateful if you could spend a little time on mine.

Time's Up! is going to be released in February by Green Books in the UK (and later in other countries) as an attempt to bring a small but significant chunk of the population into understanding that working with the system to prevent ecological meltdown is doomed to failure - the system *is* the problem and we are the solution.

Really all I'm looking for is a short review or comment that I can use for publicity material - your name will certainly be an incentive for certain people to buy the book (or read it on the website if they don't want to buy it, I don't mind).

I've attached some advance information from the publisher; if you would like a copy of the book, even if you don't get round to reviewing it, then please let me know.

Many thanks  
Keith Farnish

30 December 2008

Keith,

well I do not have time to read it -- but I would certainly be willing to state that your thesis is correct, something like "Keith Farnish has it right: time has practically run out, the 'system' is the problem, and we must force our governments to look out after our interests, rather than the interests of the fossil fuel industry."

31 December 2008

Dear Jim

Thank you for responding so quickly. I'm very grateful for a quote, especially coming from you - the only thing is that I don't think governments will give us any of the answers either, except maybe in the very short term, as they exist (almost without exception) to serve the economy, not the interests of the people, and certainly not the interests of nature. It's not very positive, I know, but I've lost all patience with politicians, and hold no hope that they will ever change, so long as we are being brainwashed to think growth and consumption is good.

I think this probably clashes a bit with your synopsis of the situation: I admire the faith you still have in the potential for government to do good; I really don't think it will happen, though. But, we need your work more than ever to make us \*all\* realise what is happening, and how pathological civilization has become - if you find the time to read anything, then this is as good a summary I can create as any: <http://earth-blog.bravejournal.com/entry/27929>.

In summary, I really would like a quote I could use, but I don't think I can use one that suggests governments hold the key.

I hope you understand.

Kind regards  
Keith

31 December 2008

Keith,

you may have misread my quote -- but others may read it as you did, so I try again below -- it is true that I do not believe in anarchy, but I do not expect governments to respond on their own - - probably the people will have to go to the streets.

"Keith Farnish has it right: time has practically run out, and the 'system' is the problem. Governments are under the thumb of fossil fuel special interests -- they will not look after our and the planet's well-being until we force them to do so, and that is going to require enormous effort."

Jim

31 December 2008

Thanks, Jim. That's a much clearer, and more hard hitting quote - I like it a lot, as much for what it doesn't say as for what it does. Anarchy is a tricky thing to address - I prefer to think of it as collective process that runs: rejection of the system > community > tribalism. We need each other.

Have a very Happy New Year, certainly one time governments don't mind people taking to the streets :-)  
Best wishes

Keith