SEVEN

Transformative Politics

The emergence of environmental justice networks such as the Indigenous Environmental Network represents a transformation of national environmental advocacy. Such networks reflect a move from the centralized, top-down approach taken by traditional environmental groups to a decentralized, geographically scattered but highly organized and mutually self-conscious approach—in other words, from a pyramid to a web in terms of organizational structure. Because of this transformation, it is possible to operate an effective national organization out of Bemidji, Minnesota, a locale far from the "power centers" of New York and Washington, D.C., where other environmental groups have located.

The changes in advocacy strategies that we have charted in the chapter on the IEN represent just one of the many ways in which environmental justice activism has transformed individuals, communities, institutions, and national policy over the past two decades. These transformations are sometimes subtle, sometimes dramatic, sometimes ephemeral, sometimes permanent; taken together, they may be the most important legacy of the grassroots movement for environmental justice in the United States. In this chapter we describe and analyze the transformative nature of the movement.

Individual Transformations: Power and Agency in Grassroots Struggles

On a personal level, thousands of people across the United States have experienced the transformation that takes place when one moves from being a bystander to being a participant in a struggle. This transformation has occurred through the creation of spaces for people to come

together and take power over their lives. Environmental justice activism has created what Harry Boyte and Sara Evans call *free spaces*, "settings which create new opportunities for self-definition, for the development of public and leadership skills, for a new confidence in the possibilities of participation, and for wider mappings of the connections between movement members and other groups and institutions."[1] Part of what sustains these free spaces—in which ordinary people move from victims of to participants in the processes that govern their lives—is the realization that power relationships within a decision-making structure are fluid, contestable, and mutually transformative.

Many people who become involved in community struggles for environmental justice have never been active in their communities before and do not have, or perceive themselves as not having, the courage and skill it takes to be a community leader. Robert Bullard notes that the decision to either take action or tolerate a particular situation "often depends on how individuals perceive their ability to do something about or have an impact on the stressful situation."[2] However, through the process of the struggle—becoming aware of environmental threats in the community and then becoming involved in ameliorating those threats—countless individuals have come to realize that they can speak out and take action, perhaps even become leaders.

There comes a moment in many activists' lives when the feeling "I could never do that" is replaced with the realization—called by some the "aha! moment"—that "I can do that!" In the Buttonwillow struggle, discussed in chapter 4, community leader Rosa Solorio-Garcia came to this realization at a large rally in a neighboring town. At the rally, a woman from the community was exhorting the crowd, shouting from the stage. Solorio-Garcia turned to Lupe Martinez, the community organizer, and said, "God, how can you do that? I'm never going to do that. Don't you expect me to ever do that." Martinez responded by putting Solorio-Garcia next on the agenda to speak to the crowd. "Just like that. And here I was at the rally yelling at everybody and telling them about all the stuff in Buttonwillow. It's made me a totally different person. More outgoing, more positive about a lot of things."

> I would take something on because it had to be done, and then you learn how to do that. . . . I think that some of those were empowerment pieces

> along the way—you accomplish something you never thought you could do. It gives you something inside that says—when a new challenge comes on—"confidence." It gives you the confidence to say, "I don't know how it will be, but I'll give it my best shot," and then you get through that, you overcome that and you have the confidence again to go on.
>
> —Jackie Warledo, Indigenous Environmental Network

Achieving confidence is an often intangible outcome of taking part in an environmental justice struggle. On a more tangible level, participants in local struggles acquire skills and information that increase their capacity, or "personal efficacy,"[3] to become active in crucial decisions that affect their lives. Many individuals, through environmental justice struggles, gain expertise on several levels. On a skills-building level, for example, they may learn how to hold a press conference or speak in public. On a substantive level, they often become sophisticated about the process or industry they are challenging, emerging as "citizen experts" on hazardous waste incineration, sludge dumping, or pesticide spraying, for example.

These two elements—self-confidence and increased capacity—dialectically build on each other in a way that transforms the personal and collective experiences of power relations by ordinary residents in otherwise disenfranchised communities. The experiences of grassroots environmental justice activists hint at a much more complex view of agency and power than has generally been offered in the social justice context.[4] The traditional dominant-subordinate model of power relations is ill suited to environmental justice activism. It is true that grassroots environmental justice struggles pit low-income communities and communities of color against private developers, facility owners, and state environmental agencies. By virtue of their social status, low-income persons of color, in particular, are vulnerable to more powerful interests in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, grassroots successes have demonstrated to many individuals in embattled communities that they are not powerless in the sense of having no ability to affect change. Indeed, individuals in many vulnerable communities come to wield some degree of power, as is illustrated by the countless examples of overburdened communities that have successfully defeated siting efforts by private and public interests.

As Steven Winter has written, power should be viewed within a

system of social relations, as a shared resource that can be activated from many different positions within that system.[5] Once power is understood as relational, "it becomes apparent that at least some of what the dominant 'have' must already be available to the subordinated." Hence, as Winter explains, "[t]o the exact degree that this understanding of power diminishes the agency of the dominant, it amplifies the agency of the subordinated. What it subtracts from one part of the network it necessarily redistributes to the other."

Feminist legal scholars have recently articulated a view of power and agency that goes beyond the traditional dominant-subordinate model and that is more applicable to grassroots environmental justice struggles. Collective resistance in the communities profiled in this book, amid social and structural constraints, reflects individuals operating with what Kathryn Abrams terms "incomplete agency."[6] Poor people of color's agency under oppression "is necessarily partial or constrained" because of "structures and practices that operate to deny or mitigate that capacity." Nevertheless, such agency reveals itself in the efforts by vulnerable individuals to resist those structures and practices. Hence, the choices and actions of individuals in grassroots struggles are "neither fully free nor completely determined."[7] Instead, they are influenced by independent self-conceptions, or internal agency, and by the reality of broader patterns of oppression.[8]

What accounts for the resistance to seemingly dominant social structures and practices by some of the most vulnerable members in our society? Sometimes the catalyst is merely seeing someone in a similar social situation take an action that is, for the individual observer, both unthinkable and immediately possible; this was the case for Rosa Solorio-Garcia at the rally. Taking action by itself may change the consciousness of those taking the action. As John Gaventa notes in the context of actions taken by previously disenfranchised residents of rural Appalachia, "[t]heir conceptions of themselves and their situation seemed to change with increased participation. . . . [Their] success, in turn, led to broader ideas for action."[9]

Other times, by coming together as a group and networking with others, vulnerable individuals feel less isolated, and more empowered. Individuals begin to understand their problem as a common problem, one that affects dozens or hundreds in their community (and, perhaps, thou-

sands nationally and internationally). The individual realizes that the obstacles she is facing are not the result of her own behavior or station but the result of a system or structure of society. In Kettleman City, profiled in the Preface, this realization occurred when residents met in one anothers' homes to discuss the proposed toxic waste incinerator and discovered, through their conversations, that they had many concerns in common; their isolation in, and in some cases shame about, having a particular fear dissolved in the understanding that others had identical fears.[10] Coming together as a group not only develops a new consciousness among those gathering; the group itself finds that it has more power as a collective than the individuals who make it up.[11]

Seeing firsthand how, and why, environmental decisions are made is an eye-opening experience for many, who come to distrust the government or solidify a healthy skepticism toward it. The idea that "the government is on our side" is a strong one, with deep roots in the American psyche; it is a myth, however, that is debunked through the process of struggle for environmental justice.[12] In Buttonwillow, the experience of a local farmer, Dennis Palla, a self-described "white, conservative Republican," illustrates the phenomenon. When he first began opposing the toxic waste dump, in 1985, he made sure not to ruffle any feathers at the Board of Supervisors. "We were confronted with the idea of protesting and going out with [picket] signs," he explains. "We felt no, that's not the thing to do. We need to make sure to stay on the good side of the supervisors." Through taking part in the latest fight against the dump expansion, Palla came to a different understanding. "Well, you know, since then we've learned that that's been pretty futile. So we've been open to a lot more radical viewpoints." This included, in Palla's case, embracing the progressive environmental group Greenpeace, something heretofore unheard of in the farming community of rural Kern County.

Understanding their own community struggle as part of a larger movement, and as part of a larger social and economic structure, can (and often does) lead community residents to an ***institutional understanding*** of pollution and environmental laws, one that posits that the normal functioning of the social political economy generates not only environmental hazards but an unequal distribution of such hazards.[13] This institutional understanding provides the groundwork for making

broader connections to environmental issues beyond the community that is the locus of the immediate struggle, and to other social justice issues. When individuals begin to make these connections, this often leads to a shift in the community's consciousness as well.

Community Transformation: Breaking the Cycle of Quiescence

When many people have individual epiphanies through a common experience, the result can be community transformation, as well—a collective emergence of solidarity, action and rebelliousness that builds on itself in an organic manner. John Gaventa has chronicled the shifting consciousness of Appalachian residents who fought powerful coal-mining interests that had stifled all change in their rural Tennessee community. For decades, the residents had been docile and uncomplaining in the face of severe oppression and deprivation, including "loss of homeplace, the contamination of streams, the drain of wealth [and] the destruction from the strip mining all around."[14] After several incidents—and an organizer—sparked their community into action, the residents began to exert their own collective power. This shift is what we describe here as *community transformation*. Gaventa describes the transformation in action:

> In the space of about five years, through a process of deciding upon and carrying out actions, definitions of interests shifted from those involving little conflict against the existing order (garbage collection) to the development of alternatives to that order (a factory, clinics) to the notion of challenging the order itself (land demands).[15]

As R. Gregory Roberts notes, "[b]y its nature, community empowerment transforms personal efficacy into group efficacy, which enables communities to take charge of the struggle, and eventually take charge of their respective communities."[16]

A community may come to be quiescent when its residents repeatedly experience individual or group oppression, or lose local struggles, as illustrated by Gaventa in his path-breaking studies of Appalachian mining communities.[17] Quiescence is the feeling among community residents that they are powerless to address perceived injustices, a "sense of inevitability, a prevailing belief that nothing can be done."[18] In many ways,

this very quiescence is historically what has drawn industry to powerless communities, as the path of least resistance; industry's powerful presence then serves to perpetuate the powerlessness felt by residents. Feelings of powerlessness are common in disenfranchised communities, from urban enclaves to rural towns. "Colonialism has been very effective in our communities, to the point that a lot of our community members feel disempowered; they feel that they don't have the strength to make their own decisions," says Tom Goldtooth, of the Indigenous Environmental Network, of his experience on Indian reservations. "Very often, we give that power over to the government agencies that are in our communities, whether that's Indian Health Service or Bureau of Indian Affairs or the school systems."

As with the struggle of Appalachian mining communities, a successful environmental justice grassroots campaign or struggle may break the cycle of quiescence and transform a community's mood from a feeling of hopelessness to one of empowerment. For example, environmental struggles in the 1980s changed the political disengagement of many individuals in the Ironbound community of Newark, New Jersey.[19] An industrial magnet and once a thriving urban area, Ironbound has hosted iron forges, plastic and jewelry production factories, machine shops, and chemical manufacturing and waste disposal facilities.[20] Years of industrial occupation, the threat of incoming waste facilities, and other sources of environmental degradation slowly led to a decline in the quality of life in the Ironbound community and fostered a general attitude that "you can't fight City Hall."[21]

Two early struggles helped to break the Ironbound community's state of quiescence in taking on environmental threats. The community's first major public action on an environmental issue began in 1980, when community residents organized in response to noise pollution caused by caused by airplanes flying overhead. The flight paths of many aircraft, including the Concorde, brought them directly over Ironbound on their way to landing at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York. The community's goal was clear: the airport must change the flight paths. In a battle that lasted almost a year, residents became a common, and vocal, presence at the airport. The Ironbound residents succeeded in getting the flight patterns changed to redirect the bulk of the flights so that they avoided Ironbound entirely. Though the rules were never

completely obeyed, and the noise continues, that struggle became the impetus for the establishment of a base of citizen action in Ironbound to address quality of life issues.

In 1981, using the momentum gained from its battle against the airport, as well as from other efforts in areas such as housing and elderly rights, the community formed the Ironbound Committee against Toxic Wastes (ICATW). ICATW solidified the newfound political engagement of many individuals in the Ironbound community in a struggle against what was popularly referred to in the 1980s as "ocean incineration" of toxic waste. Under the ocean incineration plan, incinerator ships would dock and fill their holds with waste, then transport the waste offshore, where the ships would burn it a "safe" distance from land. The company, At-Sea Incineration, proposed constructing containment and transfer facilities, which would store the waste destined to be burned at sea, in the Port of Newark. At-Sea's proposed operations also involved having large trucks bring various toxic substances, such as dioxin, from neighboring states to be processed in the incinerator. The trucks would have to pass through densely populated areas of Newark, including the Ironbound neighborhood, on their way to the Port, where the wastes would be loaded onto two incineration ships to be carried out to sea for burning. Community residents worried about the health effects of the various hazardous chemicals that would be held on land, and those that would pass through their neighborhood.

Through coalition building and networking with local and national groups that were waging similar battles, concerned Ironbound residents discovered that they could influence decisions that affected their environment. Using the organizations' newsletter, *Ironbound Voices,* and the mainstream press, ICATW "got the word out" and intensified its efforts to organize the community and to voice its opposition to the proposed plan.

ICATW also built coalitions with other groups, locally and nationally, to increase the power of voices in opposition to ocean incineration, expanding the focus beyond the proposed Port Newark facility to ocean incineration nationally. ICATW quickly secured the involvement of a broad coalition of community and environmental groups[22] and ran a successful campaign to get nearby municipalities to oppose ocean incineration: "At one point we had every town inside of Essex and Hudson

Counties in a competition to pass resolutions opposing the facility," recalls ICATW member Arnold Cohen. Throughout ICATW's fight against incineration proposal, the government agency responsible for the permitting of the storage facility at the Port Newark site, the Newark Port Authority, refused to grant a permit to At-Sea, which ultimately withdrew the proposal in defeat.

The import of ICATW's victory over At-Sea was aptly summed up in an edition of the *Ironbound Voices*: "This victory over At-Sea is one of the greatest examples of people who saw a problem and then organized together to do something about it. The story of this victory should be put down in a book, as an inspiration to other people all over the United States to show them that they can do the same thing."[23]

Eight years after ICATW's initial involvement in the regional and national fight against ocean incineration, the waste industry ceased its efforts to make ocean incineration a reality in any community. ICATW's victory over At-Sea also had broader reverberations. ICATW's coalition-building and educational efforts helped to ensure that the banning of ocean incineration became a goal for international treaties.

"What we have learned from this fight is that we have power," concluded ICATW member Bob Cartwright, "As long as decisions get made by a small number of people behind closed doors, we lose. But when we force them to discuss their plans out in the open, and when people know the facts and can organize to do something about it, then we have power. And we can win!"[24]

Institutional Transformation

The community transformation that occurred in the Ironbound neighborhood had a ripple effect felt far beyond Newark, New Jersey: in part as a result of Ironbound residents' actions, national policy on ocean incineration shifted from full steam ahead to a complete abandonment of the idea. This type of impact of the Environmental Justice Movement—which has reached both the traditional environmental movement and national policy—is what we call *institutional transformation*. Institutional transformation takes several forms: institutions allied with the movement have been significantly changed, and institutions hostile to the movement have also changed. Here, we note the institutional transformation

of a major environmental group and of national environmental policy as a result of environmental justice activism.

The Traditional Environmental Movement

Some traditional environmental groups, most notably Greenpeace USA, have been transformed by their interaction with the movement. As mentioned in chapter 6, on the Indigenous Environmental Network, Greenpeace restructured not only its national policy but its personnel as a result of its involvement with IEN and the Environmental Justice Movement. Because Greenpeace, one of the largest environmental groups in the world, became involved at formative stages of IEN, high-level Greenpeace leadership attended early conferences and learned about environmental issues on Indian lands. Their raised consciousness, combined with pressure from Native Americans and Greenpeace staffers, helped push Greenpeace executives to commit resources to IEN and to Native American issues; dialectically, the more Greenpeace got involved, the deeper its understanding of and commitment to these issues became.

The involvement of Greenpeace, which had a decidedly mixed reputation in Indian country because of its opposition, in the 1970s, to the hunting of fur seals by Native peoples, was greeted with skepticism by early IEN participants. To overcome that skepticism, Greenpeace leaders devoted considerable resources to a new environmental protection effort, the Native Lands campaign. The group hired the respected Indian leader Jackie Warledo as a full-time organizer on Indian issues. It also hired the Indian activist Nilak Butler to work on nuclear issues—a mainstay of Greenpeace's traditional advocacy—but to connect that work with nuclear issues on Native lands. And, in perhaps the greatest show of inclusion, the Native activist Winona LaDuke was elected to Greenpeace USA's five-member Board of Directors.

All of these developments indicated a profound transformation in the organization, which moved from being vilified by Native activists for its ethnocentric anti-seal-hunting policies to being praised by Indian leaders for its strong support of Native struggles. More than any other traditional environmental group, Greenpeace grappled with the issue of environmental justice, owned up to its past mistakes, and brought Native Americans into the fold, as staff and as decision makers. The institution

was transformed at the policy, staff, and board levels. The Environmental Justice Movement changed the course of Greenpeace USA's activism for almost a decade. Unfortunately, funding problems in the late 1990s forced Greenpeace to abandon its Native Lands campaign (as well as to lay off 50 percent of its staff and to close all of its U.S. offices except the one in Washington, D.C.).

"It did have a big impact," notes Warledo. "It's historic, actually. We didn't get as far as we wanted to, but Greenpeace moved farther than anyone else did." She pauses for a moment. "But, you know," she continues thoughtfully, noting the paucity of Native American staff at Greenpeace today, "I'm the one Native lands toxics campaigner, so, on the one hand, yes, we made great steps, but, on the other hand, it was never really fully accepted." Although Greenpeace's transformation proved impermanent, it was significant nonetheless; it resulted in the application of significant resources to community-identified issues and struggles, resources that would not have been available to those communities otherwise.

Turning the Ocean Liner: Transforming National Policy

One lasting success of the Environmental Justice Movement is that its goals and principles have been institutionalized as federal policy, representing a profound institutional transformation on the widest scale. This institutionalization has occurred within individual federal agencies and across the executive branch of the federal government.

The Environmental Justice Movement reached what may have been its apogee of transforming national policy on February 11, 1994, when President Bill Clinton signed the Executive Order on Environmental Justice,[25] making environmental justice the policy of the federal government. This Order, among other things, directs each federal agency to "identify and address" the "disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects" of its programs, policies, and activities on people of color and on low-income communities. The Executive Order was a concrete realization of the Movement's goals of influencing decision makers; many Movement leaders were invited to the Oval Office to watch the signing ceremony.

The Executive Order was the result of dozens of local environmental

justice struggles, and it is possible to trace the agency of individuals involved in those local fights to specific changes in federal policy through the Order. The struggle of Latino Kettleman City residents for translation of environmental documents into Spanish, noted in the Preface of this book, for example, led—through the national publicity their struggle received and the networking of environmental justice activists across the country—directly to the provision in the Executive Order, at Section 5-5(b), that "[e]ach Federal agency may, whenever practicable and appropriate, translate crucial public documents, notices, and hearing relating to human health or the environment for limited English-speaking populations."[26] Thus, an idea first discussed in the living rooms and kitchens of Latino farm-worker activists in a small California town was transformed, through the movement for environmental justice, into national policy.

The transformations throughout the federal government go far beyond the Executive Order, however; they affect law and policy across a broad spectrum of agencies and in Congress. Some of the impact of the transformation was sudden and unexpected: the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, for example, cited the Executive Order as the basis for its denial of a permit for a uranium-enrichment facility in rural Louisiana, the first permit ever denied in the NRC's history, because of significant questions raised over the racial fairness of the siting of the plant in an African American community.

Elsewhere, the transformation has been slower, and deeper. Nowhere is the movement's transformation of national policy more evident than at the Environmental Protection Agency, which has undergone a profound shift in perspective in the past eight years. Beginning with several tentative and uncomfortable meetings between environmental justice advocates and the then administrator of EPA, William Reilly, in 1991, movement pressure has transformed the EPA into an agency that pays significant attention to the idea of environmental justice. As noted in chapter 1, activists pressured Reilly to respond to their findings of disproportionate impact. Reilly set up the Office of Environmental Equity and directed agency staffers to study the allegations of disproportionate impact. The results of the agency's efforts, found in the Environmental Protection Agency's *Report from the Environmental Equity Workgroup*, have been roundly criticized as myopic and superficial.[27] These first mis-

steps, however, paved the way for a more active role for environmental justice advocates and ideas within the EPA.

When Bill Clinton defeated George Bush in the 1992 presidential election, two national environmental justice leaders, the Rev. Benjamin Chavis and Dr. Robert Bullard, were named to Clinton's transition team. As part of the "natural resources" cluster, Chavis and Bullard had direct input into the policies the new administration would attempt to implement, and thus environmental justice became a cornerstone of the Clinton EPA's stated program. Clinton's choice to head EPA, Carol Browner, announced, in 1993, that environmental justice was one of four priorities for her administration at EPA. One of the first changes made was in the name of the Office of Environmental Equity, which was changed to the Office of Environmental Justice. Browner also created the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (known by its acronym NEJAC, pronounced "knee-jack"), a group of twenty-five "stakeholders" from the movement, government, academia, and industry who advise the EPA on how to best achieve environmental justice.

NEJAC raised the stature of the Environmental Justice Movement to new heights and institutionalized the movement's transformative power over agency policy. Although some—including members of NEJAC—have openly doubted its power and influence, NEJAC has succeeded in its five years of existence in suffusing environmental justice thinking into many of the agency's offices. It has also provided a vehicle for community groups seeking increased attention to their local struggles; hundreds of community residents have testified before NEJAC on issues ranging from birth defects to garbage dumps to pesticides to federal military facilities. NEJAC has passed dozens of resolutions calling on EPA to investigate or resolve particular local problems. Although it serves in an advisory capacity only, NEJAC has had sufficient input into EPA decision making to effect specific changes in policy, both on a national and at a site-specific level.

In some cases, NEJAC was able to support the efforts of agency staffers who had tried, unsuccessfully, to bring environmental justice concerns to the fore in their work, by raising the issues with their supervisors or even the leadership of EPA itself. Some offices within EPA now operate with environmental justice as part of their approach; others are still actively hostile to it. However, the work that hundreds of EPA

staffers have undertaken to push the idea of environmental justice has slowly borne fruit.

Larger Transformations: Movement Fusion

An institutional transformation at a different level is the important power building that is occurring between the Environmental Justice Movement and other social justice activism, what we call "movement fusion": the coming together of two (or more) different social movements in a way that expands the base of support for both movements by developing a common agenda. As we explained in chapter 1, environmental justice advocates, like their predecessors in the civil rights and the anti-toxics movements, understand that environmental problems are a manifestation of other, larger problems endemic to our social and economic structure. In addition to the fusion of civil rights and anti-toxics concepts and strategies that are evident in the Environmental Justice Movement, other examples of movement fusion offer a glimpse of the transformative possibilities of this fusion.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, the women's organization Breast Cancer Action has shifted from focusing on a *cure* for breast cancer to focusing on *prevention* of the disease. Its members are women who have had breast cancer, and they recognize that the cure can be as devastating as the disease for many women. In a fusion that has national implications, the group is linking up with environmental justice activists to challenge the use of endocrine-disrupting chemicals by industry. Breast Cancer Action has worked with Bay Area environmental justice groups like Greenaction and Communities for a Better Environment to sponsor an annual "Cancer Industry Tour" of downtown San Francisco, including stops at Chevron (accused of dumping dioxin, a carcinogen, into San Francisco Bay), Bechtel (accused of constructing polluting nuclear reactors), and the EPA (accused of not stopping pollution).

This movement fusion is bringing together other (perhaps unlikely) allies. Members of the Environmental Justice Movement and the immigrants' rights movement formed a coalition to beat back an attempt by right-wing environmentalists to have the Sierra Club oppose immigration on environmental grounds. The United Farm Workers has fused the two issues of labor rights and environmental toxicity for the past three

decades, calling attention to the effects of pesticides on workers. The recently formed Just Transition movement, bringing together the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union and environmental justice networks like IEN and the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, continues this fusion. Workers and environmental justice activists recognize that steps taken to protect workers also protect the communities that surround industrial facilities or fields. Workers want sustainable, clean, and safe jobs; residents want safe neighborhoods, and neighbors.

Movement fusion is a necessary ingredient for the long-term success of the Environmental Justice Movement because, put simply, environmental justice advocates do not have a large enough power base to win the larger struggle for justice on their own.[28] But this fusion is transformative, not only for its possibilities of generating the power necessary to win policy debates but because cross-fertilization brings new ideas, such as pollution prevention and more democratic decision-making processes, to the fore.

The Environmental Justice Movement remains one of the most active social movements in the United States today. The individual transformations—the "aha! moments"—that take place across America every day are the energy that drives countless local struggles, struggles that are transforming our communities and the nation. The movement fusion that occurs as a result of this activity not only changes the terrain and terms of the debate, but also offers a glimpse of the possibilities for broad-based, progressive coalitions of women, workers, immigrants, people of color, and environmentalists, working together to transform society, in a way that could both lead to, and transcend, environmental justice.