Twitter Thread by tadzio_mueller



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Longthread: Who motivates the motivators?

#Nospin: I've been a part of the movement for #climatejustice since 2007, telling stories about how we can prevent #climatechaos.
Today, I'm tired. So tired. Please: tell me a motivating story.

1/x

transl. from:

2/x

Fighting & doubting.

"The constant fight for climate justice requires a mental effort that sometimes feels impossible."

May I step out of the role of climate justice agitator, political party basher, and movement romantic for a moment, and be completely honest with you?

3/x
I'm so tired. So very tired, from nearly 13 years of climate justice activism that has accomplished far too little, or come too late. I'm tired of demonstrating and blockading, of giving loud speeches and yelling at people on panels, in newspaper articles, and on twitter.

4/x
So today, in contrast to my usual take-no-prisoners-style, no attacks on the capitalistist fundamentalist within the Green Party and big Greens, or the completely inadequate climate positions of the German Left in general, and Sahra Wagenknecht in particular.

5/x
Today no degrowth propaganda and no #DanniVive-pathos. Today for something completely different, namely, a critical

reflection on the style of language and argumentation that I, as a highly privileged bourgeois white male, use in public, and usually also in this column.

6/x
This bout of introspection was prompted by a tweet by my friend and fellow climate fighter @j_stolzenberger: "You know what I find really dangerous? Macho leftists who think their own perspective is the only truth, without considering that others may be right too."

7/x
So first, a "mea culpa": my considerable frustration with the defeats suffered by the anti-coal and climate justice movements over the past year (in this country: the so-called "coal phase-out" in 2038 and the ridiculous climate law;...

8/x
globally:The fact that emission rates rise and rise and only fell in the globally hated lockdown)-combined with my bourgeois male socialisation & a good pinch of arrogance sometimes, probably too often, tempt me into exactly the kind of discussion Jess describes in her tweet.

9/x
This rhetorical style might make my texts punchy, even a bit funny - but they end up more as agitprop than honest invitations to a discussion. And the one such invite I issued to the trade unions?

10/x
That was completely dishonest, because I am absolutely convinced that the German industrial unions are structural opponents of the climate justice movement. It sounded nice, but was basically a tactical lie.

11/x
This aggressive style of discussion is not only a result of the processes and structures described above. It is also (a hopefully not all too transparent) means of concealing my deep despair about the state and direction of the world: Shouting is easier than speaking softly.

12/x
And sentences like "If anyone is going to protect the climate it's not going to be governments, or big corporation - but THE MOVEMENT" sound much more convincing when I shout them into the huge crowd at a demo, than when I write them down in this medium.

13/x
All this in spite of these two certainties: First, the probability that we can prevent climate collapse (i.e. the global climate system tipping over into an unstable, chaotic state) is somewhere in the lower tenth of a percent range. Wow, I've never written that down before.

14/x
Nobody is doing anything, anywhere, to really protect the climate. Second, all previous climate protection strategies have therefore failed - the "moderate" ones (emissions trading, etc.) as well as the "radical" ones (disobedience to achieve a rapid coal phase-out).

15/x
Each side (or each wing of the movement) has explanations for the failure, which in the end always amount to confirming their own previously-held convictions.

16/x
As an, if you will, „representative“ of the disobedient, degrowthist wing of the climate movement, I have to explain "our" strategy internally, and represent it externally. That means that, every day that I communicate politically, I have to bridge the distance in my mind

17/x
between my knowledge of the near 100% probability of climate collapse, and my hopeful speeches. My means to do this: magical movement realism.

This is an incredible mental effort that I don't always manage.

18/x
On days like that, I like to yell at more powerful Others (people, institutions). Because that's easier than doing magic, casting spells. And because it drowns out my despair. Afterwards, however, I am usually even more tired than before.

19/x
Normally, this is where you'd find an encouraging, uplifting final sentence. Not today though. Have a good one.