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Listening to Young People: Philadelphia Youth Organizers' Perspectives on 2020 and Sustaining the Movement(s) Beyond

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Listening to Young People: Philadelphia Youth Organizers' Perspectives on 2020 and Sustaining the Movement(s) Beyond

Dr. Hannah Ashley Convener, WCU Rustin Urban Community Change Axis (RUCCAS) with Ananiya Jones (WCU Political Science student), Lilah Saber (POWER organizer, WCU Yes-Social Work alum) and Mayana Ashley-Carner (CCP student, former Sunrise organizer)

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Otro Mundo Is Possible... Being Taken--Maybe

*"Young black people have exploded in rebellion over the grotesque killing of George Floyd. **We are now witnessing [the broadest protest movement in American history](#)**. And yet the response of ...elected officials has been cautious and uninspired." Prof Keeanga Yamahtta Taylor, historian, housing organizer*

*'Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or **we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.**' [Arundhati Roy](#), author*

*"Growing up, my father told me, **don't beg for your rights, you organize, and you take them**. So, to the young people fighting in this movement for change, here is my charge: march in the streets, protest, run for school committee or city council or the state legislature. And win." --Ed Markey, Massachusetts Senator and original sponsor of Green New Deal legislation, after fighting off primary challenger Joe Kennedy with backing from Sunrise Movement and other youth organizations*

"Environmentalism without class struggle is just gardening" Chico Mendes, union leader fought for the Amazon

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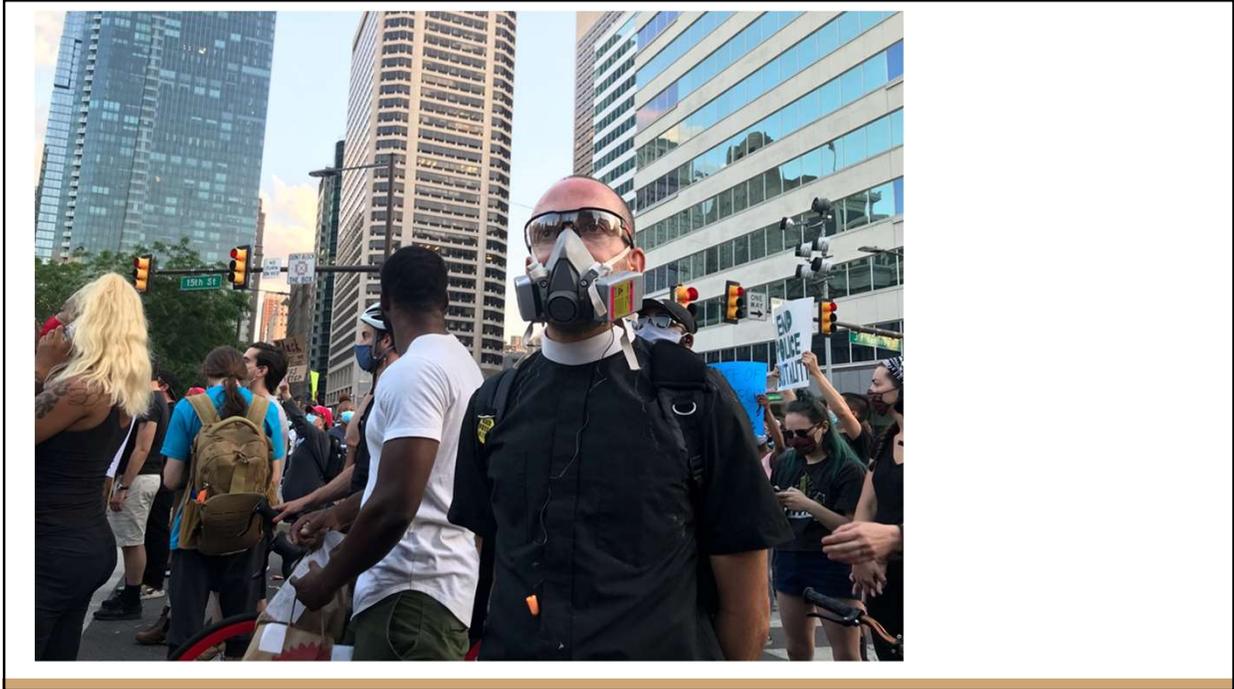
Lilah Saber POWER organizer



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What sustains me now: Lilah

- Support team
- Taking large breaks-longer than a weekend!
- Understanding that I cannot run the movement
 - The Golden rule of organizing: "Never do for others what they can do for themselves".
- Grounding myself in history

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Sustaining the movements: Lilah

- Organizing vs. Activism
- Intergenerational organizing is a non-negotiable
 - Dream, vision, long-term--youth
 - Skills, strategies, literal tools--movement elders
- Violence as a strategy/tool vs. an outburst of emotion

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Emotion Turned to Organizing

- Activist since birth
- George Floyd and Minnesota triggered action
- I began organizing protests on 202
- Like everywhere, the response was great for the first couple of weeks
- After that second week, the crowds had dwindled and conversations slowed
- I began doing lots of research
- Read, Revolutionize, Repeat Book Club

Ananiya Jones

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What Keeps Me Going?

- My beautiful, black family
- My beautiful, black self
- The people that came before me
- Learning
- Collaboration with like-minded people

Ananiya Jones

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Sustaining the ~~Movement~~ Revolution

- Community-based organizing
- Broaden our perspective
- Intentionally cultivating our generation's leaders
- Inspire the people
- Understand the goal

Ananiya Jones

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Sunrise Organizer Radicalized

My story: entry into community change work as a high school student and development, disillusioned with some community organizing efforts

- Started organizing with Sunrise Movement last year
- Became slowly radicalized
- Realized only the abolition of capitalism will solve the climate crisis

Mayana Ashley-Carner

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What Sustains Me Now?

- Reading theory
- Learning about successful movements of the past
- Connecting with other socialists in real life

Mayana

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:Sustaining The Movement

- Class solidarity
- Organize for class struggle
- Organize for alternative structures

Mayana

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Q&A: Connections, questions, discussion?

What does "JUSTICE FOR ____" really look like?

Who decides what is "just" and how?

What does it mean to be concerned with justice versus freedom?

Ultimately, how are we getting closer to these things by just appealing to a system that is inherently unjust and unfree? --tweet

@BlackSocialists 8/16/20

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