

WAR IS NOT THE ANSWER



Editors Letter

BRUCE GIUDICI

In many different ways, we are seeing how small groups of individuals are able to effect change. Headlines have featured both ends of the peace and justice spectrum. For the positive, we see the Keystone XL pipeline project rejected by the Obama administration, after seeming to be a sure thing up until a few months ago. College students in Missouri, whose concerns were long-ignored by the college administration, used the tools of protest and civil disobedience to force a presidential resignation.

And looking ahead, growing groups of protesters are now focused on the Trans Pacific Partnership trade deal, attempting to keep it from becoming law in the spring. The tunnels Governor Brown stubbornly insists must be built are facing stiff local resistance. And calls for an increased minimum wage are being heard nationwide. All these

movements for change started small and grew, as the larger public became aware of the issue. Unfortunately, the same can be said of destructive movements.

Terrorist attacks (that have routinely struck civilians in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan) have now visited France and Lebanon, also started by small groups of motivated individuals. At this point, we should know what the terrorists want: for them, the desired reaction to these events, as in the 9/11 attacks, would be for Western powers to blindly strike at Muslim enclaves in the Middle East and elsewhere, providing a major recruitment tool for still more terrorists - in the same way the Iraq war created Al-Qaeda and the current ISIS.

We know this, and yet the war-is-always-the-answer crowd is regrettably and predictably repeating calls for "boots on the ground," air strikes and the like. Mainstream media outlets reflexively, exclusively and fawningly interview military and "intelligence" sources who never see a situation that war won't solve. It's only years later, after the emotion has drained away and memories fade, that we realize the presumed benefits were grossly oversold and the costs massively under-estimated. We then wait a few years and see the cycle begin anew. Our collective wisdom must stand up and refuse to go down this path again.

Short-term, our new small group of leaders must stand up for diplomacy in Syria, arms control in Middle East and an understanding of the decades-long suffering these people have endured. Longer-term, we must refashion an economy that leaves so many destitute, with no hope for a future. It is not coincidental that a people without hope take extreme measures to effect change - a suicide bomber making his death mean something. A terrorist acts out of desperation, because all other means of change have failed. The gross inequality of wealth, income and opportunity in this world is the basic fuel that powers terrorist acts. If we as a humane society embrace a more equitable sharing of the world's resources and opportunities to succeed, we will have eliminated the source and motivation for acts of inhumane barbarism - and will have moved to isolate the true sociopaths.

To effect lasting global security, we need to understand the true magnitude of opportunity and wealth differentials in our world today. In the United States, the top 1/100th of the top 1% makes \$10.2 million; the top 1/10th of the top 1% make \$1.9 million a year; and the top 1% percent makes \$968,000. The median income of a US baseball player is \$4 million. Almost half of the 60 million who make up the world's richest percentile (around 29 million) live in the US. Meanwhile, the bottom 99% in the US makes \$44,000. Worldwide, to be in the top 1%, you'd have to make about \$34,000. World median income is \$2,920 annually. The world's 85 richest individuals are worth as much as the 3.5 billion poorest. In the US, 95% of the post-financial crash wealth generated went to the richest 1%. And so on.

The gap is intensifying - so much so that I would posit that this gross inequality is the reason for all the fighting and terrorism we see today - religion, race and national origin having been long-standing and reliable tools used by savvy leaders to motivate people to take action - whether in their self-interest or not.

As advocates for peace, we need to push for a more

equitable sharing of the world's resources, if only to preserve our own security and the global environment. In this fight, war is not the answer - and never will be. And as we have seen, change starts with small groups speaking truth to power. Happy holidays.



Peace & Justice Network's 29th Annual

PEACEFUL HOLIDAY FAIRE

Friday, December 4th
4:00pm to 9:00pm

Saturday, December 5th
10:00am - 2:00pm

CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton

The 29th annual Peaceful Holiday Faire is an annual gathering of the peace community in the season of giving, at the Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave in Stockton. Come enjoy the time that we remember the past year, celebrate the present and anticipate a more peaceful future. The thoughtful gifts you select helps local vendors and supports your Peace and Justice Network.

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Fanciful aprons and pot holders
The Beadfool
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Jewelry and fair trade chocolate...and more

Of course there will be soup, bagels, bread and cookies as well as hot cider and coffee. Bring your friends and family. We'll see you there.

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Delta tunnels

Strong voices, speaking out

BARBARA BARRIGAN-PARRILLA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESTORE THE DELTA:

"Today we are proud to announce that 30,000 Californians, from every background, have submitted public comments against the Delta Tunnels! Governor Brown, the people of California are not convinced. We have done our homework and read the 48,000 pages you asked us to when you told us to "Shut Up." We have decided we do not want to spend \$60 billion to export more water from the San Francisco Bay-Delta estuary to the top one-percent of big industrial growers and special interest water districts. We do not want a project that does not meet Clean Water Act or Endangered Species Act standards. We do not want a project that will decimate our regional economy. What we do want is sustainable solutions to California's

water challenges based on recycling, conservation, stormwater capture, groundwater recharge, and local water projects that create jobs."

STATE SENATOR CATHLEEN GALGIANI

"Notwithstanding the recent changes to the tunnel plan, I must remain opposed to it for both economic and environmental reasons. The research has convincingly demonstrated how the tunnel plan is not economically justified and is financially infeasible without a substantial taxpayer subsidy. Many of the reported benefits of the "WaterFix" project include unrealistic and inaccurate comparisons of conditions without the tunnels. It is imperative that we look at many options with regards to long-term water policy. Any long-term plan including Delta tunnels will need to provide much more compelling economic,

environmental and increased water supply arguments in order to be beneficial to the Delta and the State."

ROBERT WRIGHT, SENIOR COUNSEL, FRIENDS OF THE RIVER

"This is an emergency. The San Francisco Bay-Delta is in peril. Extinction is forever. This Tunnels project must either be dropped, or the 'Water Fix' agencies must issue new, honest documents under the

National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Policy Act that will disclose the cons of the Water Tunnels as well as tout the claimed pros and thus serve as a basis for meaningful review and consideration by the public. The lying has to stop."

TIM SLOANE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE PACIFIC COAST FEDERATION OF FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS:

"It's not rocket science: our salmon and our Delta Estuary need fresh water to survive. The Tunnels would hijack that water and deprive all but a fraction of Californians of its benefits. It's just a big straw with public trust resources on the Delta end, and industrial agribusiness sucking on the other."

CONNER EVERTS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL WATER CAUCUS:

"We have shown through mandatory conservation we can achieve permanent reductions. Since 1978, despite millions of new residents, Californians have reduced urban water consumption by almost 25 percent. When people learn water conservation strategies, those reductions become permanent. We have existing solutions – local projects with local jobs that will increase efficiency while reducing

demand and leave more water for the environment. In preparation for El Niño, we should deploy water capture programs that provide thousands of local jobs and build local water supplies."

ESPE VIELMA, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY GROUP FOR THE SAN JOAQUIN AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT:

"It's sad that there were few public comments from the Environmental Justice community. Forty percent of Californians speak languages other than English at home. Our communities cannot comment on what they cannot read. Did the Delta Tunnels agencies refuse to translate the plan because too many Spanish speakers would join the fight to stop the tunnels?"

Source: *Restore the Delta 10/30/15*
<http://www.restorethedelta.org>

Taking action at Livermore

Editor,

In 1996, my family moved to Tracy because we loved the safe, small town feel and the rural location. But after living in Tracy for several years, imagine my surprise to discover that my beloved city was bordered by one of the most poisoned sites in America—Lawrence Livermore Lab's high explosives testing facility called Site 300, located west of Tracy along Corral Hollow Road, and bordering the new Tracy Hills housing development!

Site 300's activities caused hundreds of documented toxic and radioactive releases to our soil, ground and surface water. Since 1990, Site 300 has been included on the Environmental Protection Agency's "Superfund" list.

I was shocked to discover that I was raising my three children so close to a site whose operations included open air blasts of high explosives and multiple hazardous materials used in nuclear weapons, including uranium!

One of the open-air firing tables used to detonate nuclear weapons experiments with uranium-238 is located almost directly over an earthquake fault. Prevailing winds blow contaminants towards Tracy and into the Central Valley.

As a parent and community member, I'm concerned that the Lab has done very little to inform the Tracy community about the cleanup of this toxic mess!

According to Tri-Valley CAREs, a non-profit organization that monitors the Lab (and on whose board I now serve) officials have acknowledged they are uncertain when the cleanup will be completed. I am concerned that without public input, the Lab will continue to do

too little cleanup due to budget restraints and public ignorance.

Please join me at the next Letter to the Editor Writing Party, at the Tri-Valley CAREs office, 2582 Old First St, in Livermore, on Thursday, December 3 from 5:30 - 7 to learn more about Site 300 pollution and the status of its cleanup. The health, safety, and future of our children depend on it!

GAIL RIEGER

Church needs to embrace change

Editor,

We are facing many difficult choices. We must decide what to do about immigration, birth control, violence, up-coming elections, and the current world order. These are difficult issues and require those not infected with the illness of politicians to make changes.

We must also be vigilant for those speaking out against change, while protecting the status quo. Change is difficult, sometimes unpleasant and usually unwelcomed, but without it, we'd still tolerate the Confederate battle flag. Without past brave leaders, women would not be allowed to vote, and America would still be segregated.

Recently, our Bishop (who hid convicted criminals and denied gays equal rights, but urged reduced damages to molestation victims) spoke against Susan Eggman's recently passed assisted suicide bill ABX2-15. Throughout the years of watching my family go into debt caring for a dying loved one, I never saw a priest offer to raise

funds, or reach into their pockets for groceries: as our family awaited the inevitable and went bankrupt, the church offered empty well-rehearsed condolences. The problems of tomorrow will be equally as difficult and unpleasant. Each of us will have to make tough choices for ourselves and loved ones. We will require brave leaders like Susan Eggman, and genuine outsiders to break ground and lead the way. There is time for ancient idealistic arguments or evangelical grandstanding.

The church has denied contraceptives to single women with twelve kids, but has never offered scholarships or protection to her children. Amazingly, like all members of the clerical hierarchy, he purports a higher knowledge, but thinks little of man's ability to decide for himself.

Some of us would like to see the rewards of living well on this plane.

GEORGE MARTINEZ

Volunteer Needed!

A great opportunity to spread the progressive words of Connections! Every other month, we need someone to deliver 600 copies to two locations in Lodi. Please call Deane Savage, 209-242-2254



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Keystone a big step in shifting political landscape



BILL MCKIBBEN

The key passage—the forward-looking passage—of President Obama’s speech rejecting the Keystone XL pipeline came right at the end, after he rehashed all the arguments about jobs and gas prices that had been litigated endlessly over the last few years. “Ultimately,” he said, “if we’re going to prevent large parts of this Earth from becoming not only inhospitable but uninhabitable in our lifetimes, we’re going to have keep some fossil fuels in the ground rather than burn them and release more dangerous pollution into the sky.”

DRILL BABY

This is a remarkable evolution for the president. He came into office with “Drill Baby Drill” ringing in his ears from the 2008 Republican convention, and baby did he drill. Before his first term was out, he gave a speech in front a stack of oil pipe in Oklahoma in which he laid out his accomplishments: “Now, under my administration, America is producing more oil today than at any time in the last eight years. That’s important to know. Over the last three years, I’ve directed my administration to open up millions of acres for gas and oil exploration across 23 different states. We’re opening up more than 75 percent of our potential oil resources offshore. We’ve quadrupled the number of operating rigs to a record high. We’ve added enough new oil and gas pipeline to encircle the Earth and then some. So we are drilling all over the place.”

Obama believed he could balance all this drilling with an effort to cut demand for fossil fuels. In his first term he used the Detroit bailout to skillfully exact big increases in auto mileage, and in his second term he’s employed EPA’s regulatory authority to imperil coal-fired power plants. And his team carefully negotiated an agreement with China that pledges rollbacks in the emissions of these superpowers. These were not exactly easy lifts, but they’re the kind of step politicians like to take: They work in fairly hidden ways, and they really bite later, once you’re out of office.

Oh, and they would have been more or less enough—25 years ago. Back then we had plenty of steps we could still take that would have moved us gradually on to a new energy trajectory—low but rising prices on carbon, say. But we didn’t take those steps, in part we now know because energy giants like Exxon

simply lied about what they knew, and bred a quarter-century worth of phony debate that prevented real action. Now we’re in literal hot water (hot enough that an international team of scientists recently confirmed that a worldwide wave of coral-bleaching is underway). Which means that the president’s suite of policy initiatives were by definition too little too late. Not unimportant, but by themselves clearly insufficient to lead the world in the race to catch up with physics.

Keystone, by contrast, was the kind of decision politicians hate to make. Here was a big project with lots of money on the line, a clear priority for important players. (The Koch Brothers, never forget, are the largest foreign leaseholders in Canada’s tar sands). So on the one side was the conventional power of the fossil fuel industry, which literally Never Loses. And on the other side was—at the outset—a slightly motley environmental crew of scientists, indigenous people, farmers and ranchers. That small fight eventually attracted lots of others, who saw an opening for venting their great fear of climate change. They were willing to go to jail, and on the back of that commitment came the big green environmental groups, media attention, and the resulting dilemma for the president: Who do I disappoint?

After holding off for four years, the answer was: the oil industry. Which is a very new development. As recently as this summer he’d been willing to give them permission to go drill in the Arctic. But that permission was met with true outrage, enough so that when Shell slunk away in September the administration said it would be giving out no more permits for the Arctic Sea.

One thing that’s changed is the economics of energy. It’s beginning to look like the drop in oil prices is more than just the usual boom-bust cycle. Instead, it’s starting to reflect the dramatic, exponentially accelerating rise in renewable energy. Over the course of Obama’s decision-making on Keystone XL, for instance, the price of a solar panel dropped more than 80 percent. All of a sudden the oil companies look a little tiny bit less mighty.

And the other thing that’s happened is heat. Obama’s term turned out to be the moment when global warming became undeniable to everyone who hadn’t blinded themselves for the sake of ideology or profit. 2015 will be the hottest year ever measured, smashing the record set in ... 2014. We’ve burned more of America this year than ever before. Our biggest, richest state is in a drought like none that’s been measured before.

KEEP IT IN THE GROUND

The realization that we had no more time to wait became mathematical in 2012, when a few of us started spreading what at the time seemed like a fringe idea: that the data showed the fossil fuel companies had four or five times as much carbon in their reserves as we could ever safely burn. This argument was fringe at first, but a mushrooming divestment movement spread it across the globe. By this fall it was the governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, speaking on the floor of Lloyds of London, who was making the case that we faced “huge risk” from “unburnable carbon”

that was likely to become a “stranded asset.”

In this new world, the political equation begins to shift. Four years ago neither Obama nor Romney even mentioned climate change during their presidential battle. This year Bernie Sanders has made it one of the two centerpieces of his campaign (alongside inequality), and he’s skillfully pulled Hillary Clinton along with him. She has so far ended up opposing Keystone and Arctic drilling, but also lifting the ban on crude oil exports. Meanwhile, with polling showing that even 59 percent of Republicans take climate change seriously, the GOP candidates are scrambling to figure out some middle ground that both satisfies the Kochs and doesn’t make them look like loons.

All of this is to say: Read President Obama’s decision as the decision of a weathervane. That’s not an attack—that’s pretty much the way politics work. The (interlocking) combination of a strong movement, strong alternative sources of energy, and the strong signal from the natural world make it easier for him to reject Keystone than approve it. There are other signs of the direction this political wind is now blowing: New York attorney general Eric Schneiderman, for instance, has issued subpoenas to the world’s richest and most powerful company, asking Exxon to explain its catalogue of deceptions over the last quarter century. That’s a gutsy move—but in

this new context not a suicidal one. Maybe it’s even a brilliant one politically, which could end up making him a hero in the mold of Teddy Roosevelt breaking up the Standard Oil trust.

As to where it blows next, remember the president’s words in announcing his Keystone decision: “We have to keep some fossil fuels in the ground.” With Keystone he kept some Canadian fossil fuels in the ground, but the pressure builds to do the same at home. Without asking Congress, he can exercise his jurisdiction over public lands in the U.S.—an interesting test will come later this year when he decides whether to lease the offshore Atlantic Ocean for oil drilling. Perhaps they’ll even give up offering up the vast coal deposits of the Powder River basin.

Don’t expect President Obama (or President Clinton) to be out in the lead, and don’t expect Congress to do a damn thing. They’ll need that same kind of movement out there pushing them (as Sen. Sanders (I-Vt.) and Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) pointed out last week when they launched the Keep It in the Ground Act on Capitol Hill). The job of movements is to keep brewing up the gale-force winds that shifted our political landscape last week—and to hope we can do it before hurricane-force winds, drought, flood and sea level rise shift our landscape.

Source: *EcoWatch* 11/15/15 <http://ecowatch.com>

Thousands file opposition comments on giant tunnels

KYLE JONES

More than 30,000 Californians, including thousands of Sierra Club members, filed comments with the Natural Resources Agency last month, opposing the Brown Administration’s proposed San Francisco Bay Delta tunnels project. The project would build a pair of giant, four-story-high tunnels to move water out of the San Francisco Bay Delta system to parts south. The effect of the tunnels construction and operation would be to further damage water quality in the Bay Delta and rivers that feed into the Delta. They would destroy habitat for already endangered species, and likely destroy certain key fisheries. The tunnels project would also divert tens of billions of dollars of investment that would be better spent on smart water projects that would increase regional resilience and help Californians better respond to changing rainfall and drought patterns.

The overwhelming

number of public comments opposing the tunnel came in response to the combined Draft Environmental Impact Report/Supplemental Environmental Impact Report. That report is a key document required before the state can begin to apply for permits for building the tunnels. Federally, the tunnels must get permits from the Army Corps of Engineers under the Clean Water Act because it involves dredging of waters. The tunnels must also pass the muster of the Fish and Wildlife Service’s duties under the Endangered Species Act.

At the beginning of the year, the State Water Resources Control Board will hold hearings on the Department of Water Resources request to move the tunnels project’s water diversion from the current pumping

facilities in the southern part of the Delta farther upstream to the Sacramento River. The Board will also handle the permitting for water quality

under the Clean Water Act. The environmental documentation has been done poorly, with much information missing as proponents attempt to fast track the process. Even so, it also clearly demonstrates that species and habitat will be seriously harmed. Sierra Club California continues to oppose the tunnels. We believe the Delta should be restored and that ratepayer funds are better spent improving local water supplies through more sensible programs, including conservation, efficiency, recycling, stormwater capture, and groundwater cleanup. The tunnels are a distraction from the real issues facing California’s water supply and the Delta ecosystem, and should be dropped in favor of a plan that is sustainable.

Source: *Sierra Club California* release 11/1/15 <http://www.sierraclub.org/california>



How taxes have kept wealth white



SAM PIZZIGATI

The concept of institutional racism, thanks to the Black Lives Matter movement, is moving right onto America's political center stage. The institution under the brightest spotlight? That has to be America's criminal justice system. But considerable attention has also focused on other institutions as well, most notably education and the financial industry. But one institution hardly ever comes to mind when talk turns to institutional racism: our tax system. Most of us simply do not think about racism when we think about taxes. Andre Smith does. Smith currently teaches at the Delaware Law School, and he has a new book out - *Essays on the Relationship Between Tax Law and Racial Economic Justice: Black Tax* - that just may redefine what we mean by institutional racism. Smith shared his perspectives last month with *Too Much* editor Sam Pizzigati.

TOO MUCH: At its core, American slavery before the Civil War operated as a system of forced labor that expropriated the wealth that people of African descent created. But that expropriation, your new book relates, had a powerful tax component as well. How did taxes intensify the exploitation that slavery represented?

ANDRE SMITH: Suppose we play *Monopoly* and one of us isn't allowed to move around the board while everybody else can make money and buy up the best properties. Then, after twenty rolls of the dice, the other players allow the excluded player fully into the game. Is the game suddenly fair? Of course not. The privileged players would have, by then, more wealth and property at their disposal. The disadvantaged player would have to somehow make do with low-value properties like Baltic and Mediterranean — and will likely end up bankrupt and out of the game.

Slavery and Jim Crow-style peonage after the Civil War essentially represented a 100 percent tax on black labor, the proceeds of which were redistributed to every corner of American society. Then, after segregation, blacks were finally allowed to play the game under substantially the same rules as everyone else, but without the financial, intellectual, and social capital whites in the United States had accumulated over the previous several hundred years.

Slavery as a 100 percent tax on labor remains a principal reason why blacks in America remain disproportionately without wealth to this day. The billions of dollars extracted from slave labor represent tons of missing wealth from the black balance sheet.

TM: What happened to those billions?

SMITH: Those billions of dollars did not disappear. Local, county, and state taxes on the profits from slavery redistributed those billions throughout American society. The proceeds were spent on schools, roads, and other programs that, of course, excluded blacks from their benefits. Even the federal tariff on foreign goods before the Civil War had a racial component. With this tax on imports in place, New York manufacturers could "overcharge" the South for the goods the region needed. Slave-owners complained bitterly that at least half of the profits from slavery were ending up in the North.

Remember, slaveowners had the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision in their pocket, as well as the Fugitive Slave Act, and Congress had not actually threatened to end slavery in the South. Therefore, the federal tariff was perhaps the only significant reason for the Confederate states to secede.

Free blacks before the Civil War, meanwhile, faced prohibitive and oppressive taxation. Whites feared that free blacks like Denmark Vescey and Nat Turner would inspire slaves to revolt. And poorer whites considered free blacks labor competition. So whites taxed them heavily and often called for special taxes dedicated to shipping free blacks back to Africa. Many abolitionists, for their part, wanted to tax slavery out of business, and they petitioned state legislatures for such tax laws. But almost uniformly they also wanted to use the proceeds from such taxes to return freed slaves to Africa.

Those free blacks who couldn't pay their taxes were often re-enslaved. Many impoverished free blacks in that position sought out another free black or a friendly white person to "buy" them at auction. But most states had laws prohibiting free blacks from owning slaves, else that ownership would put them on the same social status as whites.

Taxes reflected the new social, racial order. Discriminatory state poll or head taxes, for instance, imposed the highest flat rates on black men, with black women second and white men next. America's first instances of affirmative action, in fact, involved exemptions from tax laws designed to attract white men to the South to serve as overseers, vigilante patrolmen, and the like. There were other laws that required a certain number of white men to be hired per certain number of slaves purchased or utilized.

TM: After the Civil War, poll taxes would help lock in place a new system of labor relations that kept African Americans from accumulating wealth. How did these poll taxes work?

SMITH: Atiba Ellis at the West Virginia University School of Law has done tremendous work in this area. During Reconstruction, right after the Civil War, blacks voted in droves. But the backlash beginning in the 1890s - represented most obviously by *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Birth of a Nation*, and Woodrow Wilson's presidency - sought to remove blacks from the political process and eliminate the means by which blacks could correct markets rigged against them.

A truly free market requires that everyone is a profit maximizer, everyone can enter or leave markets they choose, everyone has the same access to information and either no or equally burdensome transaction costs. Using poll taxes in the early 20th century to remove blacks from the political process meant that whites in the Jim Crow South could exclude blacks from all lucrative markets (market and housing segregation), exclude blacks from education (educational segregation), and heap society's externalities on blacks (criminalization, drug and violence zoning, environmental racism, etc.). In a sense voting rights are the ultimate precept towards the fair distribution of transaction costs.

Jim Crow poll taxes would sometimes be cumulative and often came with no advance notice. Officials would sometimes refuse to accept payment, and blacks also had to worry whether lawless whites would allow them to vote even if they paid their poll taxes. State laws often required blacks who wanted to vote to pass literacy tests and other hurdles. But poll taxes weren't actually invented for the exclusion of blacks. They were originally designed to exclude the poor. Slaveowners in the 18th and 19th centuries didn't want poor whites voting because they tended to want to vote to tax slavery out of business.

Again, slaves were market competition to poor whites. If a slaveowner is hiring out a slave to be the town blacksmith, then the poor white guy can't be the blacksmith, because slave labor will almost always be cheaper. Slaveowners with big plantations also ate up all the land and made buying land more expensive for yeomen farmers. So slaveowners insisted on "security" clauses in state constitutions to prohibit legislatures from taxing slave ownership any higher than other articles of commerce.

Twentieth century poll taxes, by contrast, exempted poor whites for the most part. After the Civil War and Reconstruction, poor whites in the Jim Crow South aligned themselves with property owners to subordinate black economic and social and political aspirations. That alignment promised Southern poor whites social superiority, while wealthy whites maintained their superior economic status.

TM: The civil rights movement in the mid 20th century added just one amendment to the Constitution, the 24th amendment prohibition against poll taxes. Do you see the recent state surge of "voter suppression" laws as a reincarnation of the poll tax?

SMITH: Absolutely. In one court case, in Indiana I believe, a \$10 fee for a voter ID card has already been disallowed as an unconstitutional poll tax. But some of our Supreme Court justices do not see heavy administrative burdens and incidental costs relating to voting as a tax. So state legislatures, especially in the old Jim Crow South, are pushing further and further to see how onerous they can make voting for blacks and the poor and sometimes the elderly. We now have states like Alabama requiring state IDs for voting and then closing down, in minority areas, the government offices that issue them. Yet the right to vote is supposed

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Acknowledging "whiteness" and "white fragility"



ALEXIS EASTON

I tend to trust the police. That statement most likely tells you something: The odds are the person making that statement is a self-identified White Person. And here's something else: My own tendency to trust the police does not imply that everyone else should have the same viewpoint. I cannot expect that People of Color (POC) – especially self-identified African-Americans – will or should have the same attitudes in regard to the police that I do.

I tend to trust the police because growing up in a white culture in the Midwest, we were nearly all white. Citizens, cops, rich and poor: we never had to think about

race. We assumed being white is what life is all about, and today we white folks (whatever backgrounds we grew up in) still tend to assume that we appropriately set the standards for everybody, disregarding that our life experiences and historically dominant status are all contextual and related to our color: Pride and presumption are a core part of the white legacy from slavery and racism.

Now, however, for the first time in U.S. history, we who identify as white are beginning to talk about our experiences as white folks. We are beginning to recognize and acknowledge that our heritage, like that of POC, is particular and partial, that our knee-jerk reactions to violent confrontations between white police and young black men,

for example, usually reflect -- at least to some degree -- this white perspective. We are beginning to ask versions of this crucial question: "How has the legacy of slavery and racism in the U.S. shaped and damaged me as a white-identified human being?"

Most white folks have never considered that we too have been shaped and damaged by the legacy of slavery and racism. We have not realized that we carry unexamined wounds which perpetuate endemic racial tensions and conflicts. The question evokes feelings of guilt and shame, anger and defiance, defensiveness and self-justification, fear and vulnerability. All these responses are expressions of what has been called "white fragility." The term is gaining attention

through the writing of Robin DiAngelo and others; the phenomenon has long been apparent to many black folks, but until now it has seldom been acknowledged among us.

This white legacy question is a really daunting one for us, and we have avoided asking it for the entire history of this country. Nevertheless, it is a question whose time has come, a question we need to process with other white family, friends and acquaintances. This is work we white folks need to do foremostly among ourselves initially, work that acknowledges our attitudes and feelings and confusions so that we will become able to support more powerfully and compassionately the efforts for justice among POC such as the Black Lives Matter movement and others.

Yes, certainly there is heroism in white history, and it is so much more comfortable for us to celebrate only that. But by doing so we serve the blindness and injustice of the status quo. Becoming whole and healthy – as an individual or as a group – occurs when we also acknowledge and work to transform the darkness of our legacies. As reluctant as we may be to sincerely engage this issue, doing so will enable the healing of wounds we hadn't known we had and nurture a humility we hadn't known we needed.

White folks need to do this work. There is information on "whiteness" and "white fragility" on the internet. Acknowledging that our presumption "white makes right" does not serve democracy is a good start.

ALEXIS EASTON IS A RETIRED UNITED METHODIST PASTOR AND A FORMER PRESIDENT OF STOCKTON METRO MINISTRY/INTERFAITH COUNCIL OF SAN JOAQUIN.

How taxes have kept wealth white

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

to be a "fundamental" right in the United States.

It causes one to consider how important racial subordination and the privileges associated with being in the majority is to some, that they would demean the very concept of democracy to obtain it. This is partly what exposes racism as economically driven.

TM: The Congressional Black Caucus is advocating a stronger estate tax. How do you feel repealing the estate tax would impact the racial wealth gap?

SMITH: Repealing the estate tax would exacerbate the *Monopoly* game situation I described earlier. A player who has amassed considerable cash and property has a distinct advantage over a player who was just let into the game and only collects \$200 every time he passes go. For capitalism and meritocracy to go hand in hand, we must have freedom of movement from top to bottom and bottom to top. In a just society, deservedness has to be the major factor in this movement. The estate tax is a mechanism for restricting the ability of the non-meritorious to rest on the laurels of their recent ancestors.

Or in terms of a truly free market, intergenerational wealth hoarding assails free competition, because some have much more capital to enter markets than other. Some can afford information, while others can't.

Some can use their wealth to avoid transaction costs and externalities, while others can't. These are market failures, the rents of which inure to wealthy, of which black people constitute a disproportionately small percentage.

TM: What sort of changes, beyond the estate tax, could make our current tax system an instrument for narrowing the racial wealth divide?

SMITH: Because African American and Latinos rely more on ordinary income than the wealthy, reducing or eliminating the tax code's preferential treatment for capital gains income could narrow the racial wealth divide. Critical race tax scholars also typically identify deductions -the home mortgage deduction, for one - that subsidize white households more than black. There is an argument that eliminating many or all deductions unrelated to the production of income would make the tax code both simpler and fairer to

racial minorities, who are in the aggregate less wealthy than whites and, as a result, less subsidized by the deductions and other tax benefits in the code....

This piece originally appeared in Too Much, the Institute for Policy Studies weekly on excess and inequality.

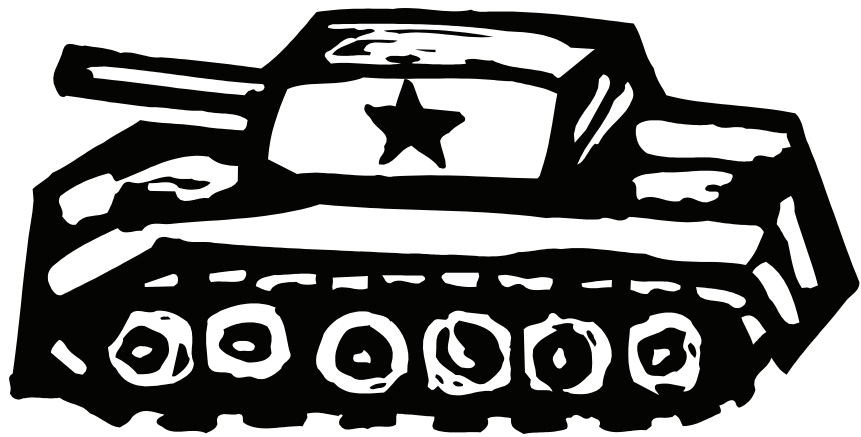
SAM PIZZIGATI EDITS TOO MUCH, THE ONLINE MONTHLY ON EXCESS AND INEQUALITY PUBLISHED BY THE WASHINGTON, D.C.-BASED INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES. TOOMUCHONLINE.ORG

Source: Truthout 11/8/15 <http://www.truth-out.org/>





It's always the same war



AMY GOODMAN & DENIS MOYNIHAN

"To understand the nature of the present war — for in spite of the regrouping which occurs every few years, it is always the same war — one must realize in the first place that it is impossible for it to be decisive." — **1984** by George Orwell

Barack Obama originally ran for president as the anti-war candidate. Now, as his second term winds down, the two George W. Bush/Obama wars are winding up, with a third in Syria. U.S. military forces are deployed elsewhere around the globe, as in drone striking in Yemen and Somalia, adding to the global conflagration. The United States is engaged in endless war.

The crisis of war and the millions fleeing these infernos has reached levels unprecedented since World War II, prompting the United Nations and

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to issue what they called an "unprecedented joint warning" for states to end wars, respect international law and aid the 60 million refugees made homeless from recent conflicts.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said: "The continuing violence is a clear indication that a political solution to the conflict in Syria is desperately needed. The fighting must stop now. There is no military solution to the crisis, not in Syria or anywhere else. From Afghanistan to the Central African Republic, from Ukraine to Yemen, combatants and those who control them are defying humanity's most basic rules."

ICRC President Peter Maurer added: "When humanitarian law and principles are disregarded, when humanitarian needs are trumped by political agendas, when access to the wounded and sick is denied, and when security concerns lead to a suspension of operations, people are abandoned, the notion

of protection loses its meaning, and humanity is flouted. We ask that states reaffirm our shared humanity by concrete action and uphold their responsibility to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law."

The joint plea of these leaders came shortly after U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter mentioned that the U.S. military would be engaging in "direct action" in Iraq and Syria. White House press secretary Josh Earnest confirmed in a briefing that troops had been deployed to Syria. He said, "The president did make a decision to intensify that support by offering a small number of U.S. special operations military personnel to offer them some advice and assistance on the ground as they take the fight to ISIL."

The conflict in Syria has become one with numerous internal actors and an increasing number of outside participants, waging proxy wars with conflicting interests. The U.S. and Russia are there, as is Iran and Shiite militias under their control, and their allies from Hezbollah. U.S.-backed Kurdish peshmerga are being attacked by Turkey, a U.S. ally. ISIS, the so-called Islamic State, is fighting the Assad government, but it is also fighting al-Qaida-linked groups like the Khorasan Group and the al-Nusra Front.

"Only by taking stock of the full magnitude of our military failure can we come to an appreciation of the imperative of beginning to think differently about our approach to the region," Andrew Bacevich told me on the "Democracy Now!" news hour. Bacevich is a retired colonel, Boston University professor and Vietnam veteran. "The alternative, it seems to me, is to

recognize that there are some wars that are unwinnable and should not be fought. If there is a solution to the problem, it has to come from nonmilitary means," he added. Like Bacevich, his son was an Army officer. He was killed while serving in Iraq in 2007.

Finding an end to this ever-widening war is the responsibility of us all.

Back in 2001, when the Bush administration sought congressional approval to attack Afghanistan after 9/11, only one member of Congress voted no, California Rep. Barbara Lee. "September 11th changed the world. Our deepest fears now haunt us. Yet, I am convinced that military action will not prevent further acts of international terrorism against the United States," she said in her two-minute plea from the House floor. "As a member of the clergy so eloquently said, 'As we act, let us not become the evil that we deplore.'" It is much more difficult to wage peace than to wage war.

AMY GOODMAN IS THE HOST OF "DEMOCRACY NOW! [HTTP://WWW.DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG/](http://WWW.DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG/)," A DAILY INTERNATIONAL TV/RADIO NEWS HOUR AIRING ON 1,100 STATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA. SHE WAS AWARDED THE 2008 RIGHT LIVELIHOOD AWARD, DUBBED THE "ALTERNATIVE NOBEL" PRIZE, AND RECEIVED THE AWARD IN THE SWEDISH PARLIAMENT IN DECEMBER. DENIS MOYNIHAN IS A WRITER AND RADIO PRODUCER WHO WRITES A WEEKLY COLUMN WITH/DEMOCRACY NOW/'S AMY GOODMAN.

Source: Common Dreams 11/5/15 <http://www.commondreams.org/>

As mission creeps in Iraq and Syria, lawmakers ask: will we ever vote on war?



SARAH LAZARE

Amid intensifying U.S. military operations in Iraq and Syria, a group of 35 bipartisan House lawmakers issued an open letter on Friday calling for Congress to fulfill its responsibility by voting "as quickly as possible" on whether to authorize a war that is well over a year old. The missive calls for new

Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.) to immediately force a vote on Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) "that clearly delineates the authority and limits, if any, on U.S. military engagement in Iraq, Syria, and the surrounding region."

The letter is signed by stalwart war critics, such as Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), as well as members of the

conservative Freedom Caucus, in what one reporter called an "unusual coalition." Reps. Lee, Jim McGovern (D-Mass.), Tom Cole (R-Okla.), Walter Jones (R-N.C.), Peter Welch (D-Vt.), and John Lewis (D-Ga.) are leading the charge. The initiative comes amid ongoing U.S. military escalation. In late October, President Barack Obama ordered

50 Special Operations soldiers to be deployed to Syria and also announced expanded ground operations in Iraq—where U.S. troops will embed with Iraqi and Kurdish forces and engage in combat. Also late last month, Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced that the U.S. is planning to escalate its attacks in Iraq and Syria. "We won't hold back from supporting capable partners in opportunistic attacks against ISIL or conducting such missions directly," Carter told the Senate Armed Services Committee. "Whether by strikes from the air or direct action on the ground."

"We do not share the same policy prescriptions for U.S. military engagement in the region," Friday's letter states. "Taken all together, these represent a significant escalation in U.S. military operations in the region and place U.S. military

personnel on the front lines of combat operations. "As long as the House fails to assert its constitutional prerogatives and authority," the lawmakers continue, "the Administration may continue to expand the mission and level of engagement of U.S. Armed Forces throughout the region."

The only AUMF offered by the Obama administration was submitted in February and called for expansive presidential war powers, including a green-light for open-ended and geographically limitless military operations. Then in June, a bipartisan group of senators proposed another UAMF that also called for broad war powers, in some ways going beyond Obama's failed AUMF proposal. As both of these efforts stalled, the Obama administration continued to escalate military operations in Iraq and Syria, claiming authority from two

pieces of legislation passed in 2001 and 2002—a highly controversial position.

"The Obama administration acknowledges that there is no military solution," Robert Naiman, policy director for Just Foreign Policy, told /Common Dreams/. "But they keep escalating anyway, apparently believing this will increase their leverage in negotiations with Russia and Iran. No one has yet been held accountable for explaining what the U.S. and Saudi Arabia will gain at the negotiating table with more killing, and how many Syrian lives that is worth. "The question now," Naiman added, "is what else these members of Congress are willing to do to compel a vote—like invoke the War Powers Resolution to force one."

Source: Common Dreams 11/7/15 <http://www.commondreams.org/>

When honoring the warrior sanctions war



JASON ESPADA

As American soldiers returned from Vietnam in the late 1960's and early 70's, they were met with scorn, spat on in airports, and called "baby killers". The anger directed towards them came from an enraged and educated opposition that had gradually become aware of the injustice and sheer criminality of the wars being waged.

In their passion, progressives in those times went too far in blaming the soldiers, yet were entirely right in insisting that the men and women who pulled the triggers, who opened the bay doors of the planes and dropped the napalm, were also responsible. Carnage doesn't just happen by itself, and the criticisms and accusations back then were calls to awaken the conscience of the soldier and the nation- they were cries for justice, for humanity, and for an end to the cruelty and abomination of wars of aggression.

Many veterans themselves, aware that they had been deceived, turned into activists against the war. The picture that emerged over time was then one of a public, reunited with the foot soldiers, against the American empire that had used our resources and men and women's lives for geopolitical ends, in immoral and unjustified wars. There was a period of grief and remorse for blaming the soldiers, for criticizing them so harshly when they too were among the manipulated. The administration didn't care about their lives either. Looking back, we can say that those in the armed forces during that time were victims as well. These military men and women, however, were not held up then as heroes, or exalted for their sacrifice.

Fast forward to 2015. Since the end of the Vietnam War, the United States government has continued its role as the aggressor in one war after another, and there is now a new extreme in what remains of the American Left. Whereas before we had soldiers vilified for their actions - today there is no criticism of them at all. Instead, many of the leading voices of the public Left are either silent, or have nothing but reverence for the modern soldier. They praise their courage and sacrifice, as if these were virtues all by themselves. In the American Left, there is now a vast gulf between opposing modern wars and any sense that the military men and women are responsible for heinous, criminal acts. The pendulum has swung in the opposite direction -from condemnation of deceived victim-soldier all the way to praise and honor and

deference being given them for their dedication, as separate from the particular wars we are now engaged in in the Middle East.

Look at Michael Moore, or listen to everyone from Cornel West to Rachel Maddow and Jon Stewart - the public voices of the Left. They extend unconditional respect to the people in the military while supposedly being against war. Things were clearer when Bush II was president, yet even then, there was little to no denunciation of soldiers or of the armed forces as a profession.

When wars are wrong, each action of the military is an extension of that injustice. It is possible to point to an action and say unequivocally that it is wrong, unjust, immoral, without condemning the person, and I think that is the lesson to be taken from the protests of the 60's and 70's. The American Left, as it is now, has lost its voice, its courage, and its moral clarity. It sees no connection between benighted foreign policy and the actions of the young men and women today who are in the armed forces. When we are not willing to speak out against their destructive acts, we have lost some part of our souls.

Educated or not, believing in American superiority, or remaining steadfast in allegiance, the men and women in the Marines and Navy, Air Force and Army today all have a moral responsibility for their actions. We must oppose the wars in which this country is now engaged, seeing them as unjust and barbarous and as extensions of empire. While our political leaders deserve the greater part of the blame, the manipulated and deceived of this generation have also earned their share.

The real danger in this new extreme of military praise is that another generation will find nothing wrong with this profession, and that it is in fact something to be celebrated. A new generation will follow and fall victim to the predator class we've always had with us. They will carry out acts of aggression as their predecessors did. They will proceed without knowledge, without conscience to their mission, and innocent men, women, and children will die and be maimed because of it.

American Sniper was the highest grossing film of 2014. This jingoistic tale of a psychopath was seen by millions of people with a radically different national history in their minds- one in which a killer such as Chris Kyle deserves to be celebrated. These same people either think Vietnam was justified, or they don't think about it at all; they think all of our current wars on the people of the Middle East are righteous as well, and once you cross that line, then anything can be justified. Right here we can see that history is literally a matter of life and death. We forget history that isn't told to each generation, and when we forget, we have no reference point for where we are now.

What is this country about now? Where have we been these last decades, and have we been on the right side of history? The American war in Vietnam was sustained through a succession of lies to the American public. Eventually a collective opposition brought that tragic and criminal chapter to a close, but this is not how it is always taught.

Our country can learn from how South Africa has tried to reconcile with its past. An American Truth and Reconciliation Commission would go a long way toward healing the divisions in this country over its past wars. We can also learn from how Japan and Germany regarded their soldiers who fought in their wars of aggression- since the Second World War, both countries have turned away from Nationalism and uniformly renounced the extremism of that generation.

By comparison, time and again, America has not come to terms with its past. Unbelievably, Columbus Day remains a national holiday. Andrew Jackson is still on the twenty-dollar bill. We still have memorials to Confederate soldiers and Confederate flags- "the American swastika"- all over the South, and there is still disagreement about the morality of what was done in Vietnam. We remain a divided nation when it comes to that history, and it's one reason men and women have been willing to fight in subsequent wars, still naively believing the United States to be a force for good.

In Japan stands a war memorial, the Yasukuni Shrine,

and whenever a Japanese Prime Minister visits to pay his respects, there are protests from Singapore to Korea, Taiwan to China. Not only are the soldiers who fought and committed atrocities on the aggressors' side denied praise, but also those who would give them respect, such as media figures and politicians, are repudiated.

Wars are and have always been a descent into madness. Time and again, ordinary people become capable of great brutality. If violence is necessary, it should only proceed as a last resort when every other effort to secure peace has failed. That is the standard on which the entire spectrum from left to right agrees. Where we part ways now is in the struggle over telling our history. This is what brings us to where we see ourselves today, and to what we feel is either justified, or a grave violation of human rights.

One biography of the humanitarian photographer W. Eugene Smith is entitled /Let Truth Be the Prejudice/, and it is only if we can arrive there in our dialogue that all of our interests would be served. We do not have a venerable tradition of debate in this country of ours - instead we have the left and right each preaching to their committed choirs, so sure of themselves and having nothing but insults for the other side.

I've given up on trying to change anyone's mind about anything politically. In all my years, I've never seen someone change his or her point of view because of an argument. Instead, what I continue to hope for is that people will make an effort to become educated and not just cling to their opinions or blindly believe what they have been told. In each generation, where there is disillusion about what the government sold us, we advance. There is anger first, yes, and there is grief, but there is finally redemption.

Praising the modern soldier faces in exactly the opposite direction; it faces away from justice, away from healing. By this action, the left has become the right in its support of war carried forward by innocent hands. This new extreme, well-intentioned but misguided, is a cataract, a moral blindness that serves neither the soldier nor his or her victims. It is the opiate of Nationalism that needs the radical cure of respect, love, and care for all humanity. Through this healing, true scales are set; we teach, and actions have consequences on every level, from president to private.

Source: Tikkun 10/1/15 <http://www.tikkun.org>



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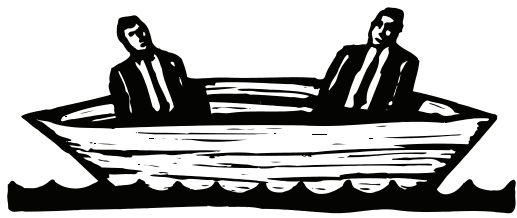
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BROKER





Spiritually rudderless



ROBERT C. KOEHLER

Another deep cry, followed by a shrug. The world is at war, at war, at war. But it only hurts them, the helpless ones, the anonymous poor, who absorb the bombs and bullets, who bury their children, who flee their broken countries. Sixty million people have been displaced by the current wars, the highest number of uprooted since World War II. But who cares? "In the face of blatant inhumanity, the world has responded with disturbing paralysis." The words are those of Ban Ki-Moon, executive-secretary of the United Nations, who, along with Paul Maurer, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, issued a joint cry of anguish last week: Things are worse than they've been in a long time. Not only are wars tearing apart Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Nigeria, South Sudan and other countries, but the conflicts seem to be increasingly lacking in moral constraint. "Every day," said Maurer, "we hear of civilians being killed and wounded in violation of the basic rules of international humanitarian law, and with total impunity. Instability is spreading. Suffering is growing. No country can remain untouched."

These words may be factually accurate, but you can't really call them a "warning." A warning can only be addressed to someone with the power to change course, make different decisions, sidestep the looming disaster. "... the world has responded with disturbing paralysis." What else has "the world" ever done? The momentum of human annihilation cannot be interrupted.

Oh, I hope such a statement is inaccurate, but in this moment, all I can see is that we're trapped in the geopolitics and economics ... of Armageddon. The world's national leaders are inadequate stewards of humanity and the needs of Planet Earth. Politically, the world is sliced into nation-states, which fiercely prowl their perimeters, guarding their own interests from both external and internal threats. This behavior is called war, and war, in point of fact, has no rules, humanitarian or otherwise. Peace has rules. War has only a goal: victory.

Stir in economic interests – the force called money – and the pot really starts to boil. The interests of money transcend national borders. Its agents and stewards, the global corporatocracy, serve only the interests of economic growth, which has even fewer moral constraints than nationalism. Unchecked economic growth is tantamount to the consumption of the planet, not just physically (using up its resources, ravaging the environment), but culturally and spiritually as well.

Once upon a time, the planet was festooned with local cultures: sociocultural systems on a human scale. People had a participatory relationship with the world in which they lived. Under such conditions, perhaps the words of Ban Ki-Moon and Paul Maurer could constitute a real warning. People

could take heed and rein in manifestations of blatant inhumanity. They could assume a sense of behavioral responsibility that reached seven generations into the future. This is not the world we live in now.

Writing about the crushing impact of global economic development/exploitation on local cultural integrity, Helena Norberg-Hodge, founder and director of the organization Local Futures and co-director of the documentary, *The Economics of Happiness*, talked about the changes she has witnessed in a region of northern India called Ladakh. "In part, the Ladakhis' confidence and sense of having enough emanated from a deep sense of community: people knew they could depend on one another," she wrote at *Common Dreams*. "But in 1975 ... the Indian government decided to open up the region to the process of development, and life began to change rapidly. Within a few years the Ladakhis were exposed to television, Western movies, advertising, and a seasonal flood of foreign tourists. Subsidized food and consumer goods – from Michael Jackson CDs and plastic toys to Rambo videos and pornography – poured in on the new roads that development brought."

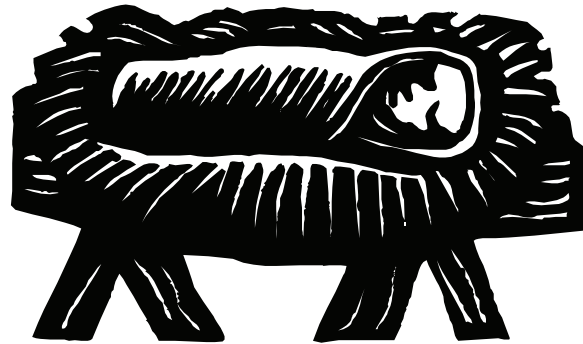
The local economy and the local culture got swallowed, over the course of several decades, by what she called "the consumer monoculture." The resulting changes were more than just superficial. People, you might say, started to become spiritually rudderless. She described what this can look like: "For more than 600 years," she wrote, "Buddhists and Muslims lived side by side in Ladakh with no recorded instance of group conflict. They helped one another at harvest time, attended one another's religious festivals, and sometimes intermarried. But over a period of about 15 years, tensions between Buddhists and Muslims escalated rapidly, and by 1989 they were bombing each other's homes."

And so we begin to get at the deeper forces at work in today's world. Consumer monoculture centralizes the power to act. We can consume the news – read about war, read about climate change – but where then in our distress, if indeed this is what is aroused, do we turn? What do we do? Perhaps we blame "them." At both the macro and the micro levels, humanity turns to violence. This is the all-purpose solution of the powerless. And the world convulses at what may be the dawn of World War III. Sixty million people have been displaced by the current wars. We reach into our souls, looking for the force that is larger than war.

*Robert Koehler is an award-winning, Chicago-based journalist and nationally syndicated writer. His new book, *Courage Grows Strong at the Wound* is now available. Contact him at koehlercw@gmail.com or visit his website at commonwonders.com.*

Source: *Common Dreams* 11/5/15 <http://www.commondreams.org/>

Support emergency funding for Syrian refugees



As we grapple with increasingly devastating and heartbreaking reports of Syrian refugees seeking refuge from violence, it is paramount that the United States respond with leadership. FCNL, echoing the calls by more than one hundred organizations, including Refugee Council USA, a coalition of refugee resettlement agencies, has recommended that the United States government resettle 100,000 Syrian refugees in FY 2016.

The White House recently announced that the United States will resettle an additional 15,000 refugees in FY2016 and an additional 30,000 refugees in FY2017 (up from a total of 70,000 refugees in 2015). While this is a proportionally small increase in the context of the global need and the robust responses of other countries, it is critical that this increase is met with adequate funding to ensure local communities have the resources they need to help refugees integrate as they rebuild their lives.

Congress must pass an appropriations bill to fund all government agencies by December 11, so now is a perfect time to let your Senators know that you care about displaced people overseas and refugees resettled in the United States. It is time to act with historic leadership and compassion and stand with those seeking safety and the opportunity to build a new life.

Take action today: Urge your senators to cosponsor the Graham-Leahy Emergency Supplemental for Syrian Refugees

1) Tell them on social media: Look up your senators' twitter

handles <<https://twitter.com/gov/lists/us-senate/members>> and tweet at them your support of the legislation. Here's a sample tweet (make sure to fill in your senators and your hometown):
@SuzySenator @SenatorJoe I'm a constituent from Chalfont, PA. Please cosponsor S2145, Graham-Leahy Refugee Supplemental.

2) Call to Congress: Call your Senators TODAY and every

day until Congress passes a bill. You can reach the Capitol switchboard at 1-877-429-0678. Urge your Senators to co-sponsor the bipartisan bill, S. 2145, *The Middle East Refugee Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act* introduced by Senators Graham (R-SC) and Leahy (D-VT). Here's a sample of what to tell your Senator's staff when you call: "I'm a constituent from [City/State] and I urge the Senator to CO-SPONSOR S.2145, the Graham-Leahy supplemental to provide vital help for Syrian refugees abroad and ensure that refugees resettled in the U.S. have initial assistance to rebuild their lives."

Source: *Friends Committee on National Legislation* release 11/6/15. FCNL, 245 Second St. NE, Washington, DC 20002 800-630-1330

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Hillary Clinton attacks Bernie Sanders' plan for single-payer healthcare



ANDREA GERMANOS

Hillary Clinton took aim on Tuesday at Bernie Sanders' plan for a single-payer healthcare system. She did not mention Sanders by name at a rally at a Dallas community college, instead saying, "One thing we should not do is follow a proposal that has been made by one of my opponents."

"I was actually the only one on that debate stage on Saturday who will commit to raising your wages and not your taxes," Clinton said, referring to the presidential debate. "I can't see how you can be serious about raising incomes if you also want to slap new taxes on them, no matter what the taxes would pay for."

The Clinton campaign pointed to legislation Sanders introduced in 2013, and said it would meantax increase on working families; while a strategist for his campaign team said that details for how his current proposal would be funded is delayed until they have a "fully costed analysis," his, and many health experts', position is that a single-payer plan would ultimately reduce inequality and ultimately save taxpayers money by putting healthcare security above corporate profits.

Clinton spokesman Brian Fallon added in a statement Tuesday, "If you are truly concerned about raising incomes for middle-class families, the last thing you should do is cut their take-home pay right off the bat by

raising their taxes." But the Sanders campaign shot back against that framing of the issue. Sanders spokesperson Michael Briggs said Tuesday, "On Medicare for all, the middle class would be far better off because it would save taxpayers money."

"More people would get better care at less cost," he stated. Briggs added that Clinton supports a system that "props up private insurance companies and pharmaceutical companies which have given so much money to her campaigns." The Vermont senator has long advocated for a single-payer healthcare system, and reiterated that position during the debate Saturday. "I want to end the international embarrassment of the United States of America being the only major country on Earth that doesn't guarantee healthcare to all people as a right, not a privilege," he said.

"We end up spending—and I think the secretary knows this—far more per capita on health care than any other major country, and our outcomes, health-care outcomes are not necessarily that good," he added.

Sanders' embrace of a single-payer system—also widely backed by the American public—earned him the endorsement of the National Nurses United (NNU), the nation's largest organization of nurses. NNU Executive Director RoseAnn DeMoro said in August that his "issues align with nurses from top to bottom," including his "insist[ance] that healthcare for everyone is a right not a

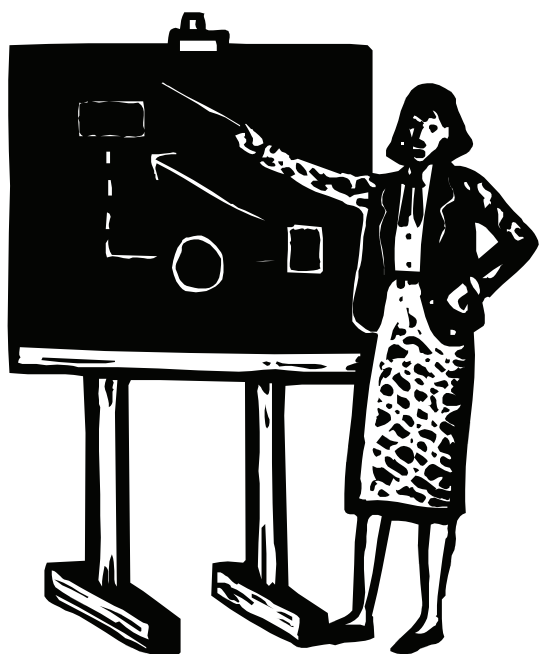
privilege."

In a statement released Wednesday, the NNU condemned Clinton's attack on single-payer. "While the Affordable Care Act corrected some of the worst injustices in our insurance, profit-based healthcare system, the work of healthcare reform is far from done," stated NNU Co-President Jean Ross. "Today, 33 million Americans remain uninsured. Tens of millions more remain uninsured, facing bankruptcy due to unpayable medical bills or the choice of getting the care they need or paying for food or housing for their families."

"The only fix for our broken system once and for all is the prescription Bernie Sanders has so eloquently presented—joining the rest of the world by expanding and updating Medicare to cover every one," Ross said. John Geyman, a doctor with the Physicians for a National Health Program, wrote in September that a single-payer system "would bring our entire population more protection against the costs of healthcare, at a lower cost than we now pay, with more efficiency and fairness, while eliminating today's narrow networks that restrict our choice of physicians, other health professionals, and hospitals. Opponents who decry its costs are distorting the issue as they try to perpetuate profit-driven markets at the expense of patients, their families, and taxpayers."

Source: Common Dreams 11/18/15 <http://www.commondreams.org/>

Elizabeth Warren: corporations, taxes and fairness



DEIRDRE FULTON

Denouncing a "rigged" system that favors corporations over middle-class Americans, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) said in a speech on Wednesday that any reform of the U.S. corporate tax code must force big businesses to "substantially increase" the amount of federal tax they pay.

Warren's address at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. "staked out the left-wing position on corporate tax reform," *Politico* said, an issue Congress is expected to take on in 2016. She lambasted three proposals currently getting attention on Capitol Hill, including one supported by President Barack Obama.

She described that "deemed

repatriation" plan—which would allow U.S. companies to pay less tax on profits generated abroad if that money is repatriated to the U.S.—as "a giant wet kiss for the tax dodgers who have already parked \$2.1 trillion overseas."

"When I look at the details, I see the same rigged game," she said, "a game where Congress hands out billions in benefits to well-connected corporations, while people who really could use a break...are left

holding the bag." Warren pushed back on corporate claims that U.S. taxes are too high, citing a White House study that found companies' contribution to government tax revenue had dropped from \$3 out of every \$10 in the 1950s to \$1 out of every \$10 today.

"Only one problem with the over-taxation story: It's not true," she said. "There is a problem with the corporate tax code, but that isn't it. It's not that taxes are far too high for giant corporations, as the lobbyists claim. No, the problem is that the revenue generated from corporate taxes is far too low." For example, a recent analysis by the coalition Americans for Tax Fairness showed that drug giant Pfizer,

in a bid to justify a Big Pharma mega-merger that would allow it to dodge taxes through what's known as a corporate inversion, had dramatically overstated its corporate tax rates and was in fact paying just a fraction of what it claimed.

As *Common Dreams* has previously reported, America's Fortune 500 companies are notorious for "playing by different rules" when it comes to the federal tax system—adept at manipulating that system to avoid paying even a dime in tax on billions of dollars in U.S. profits. The *Huffington Post* reports: "With Washington enamored by the idea of reforming the U.S. tax code in a bid to jump-start economic growth—a top priority of business interests—Warren's proposal represents one of the few offered to date by a top elected official that would significantly increase corporations' tax bills."

Meanwhile, the *Wall Street Journal* suggested that Warren's entry into the debate "may put pressure on Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton to either side with her or with Mr. Obama." As *Politico* reports, Clinton "has

supported higher corporate taxes, but has mentioned the subject little yet on the campaign trail during this presidential run...Bernie Sanders, Clinton's closest competitor for the Democratic nomination, has been more vocal about collecting more money from corporations."

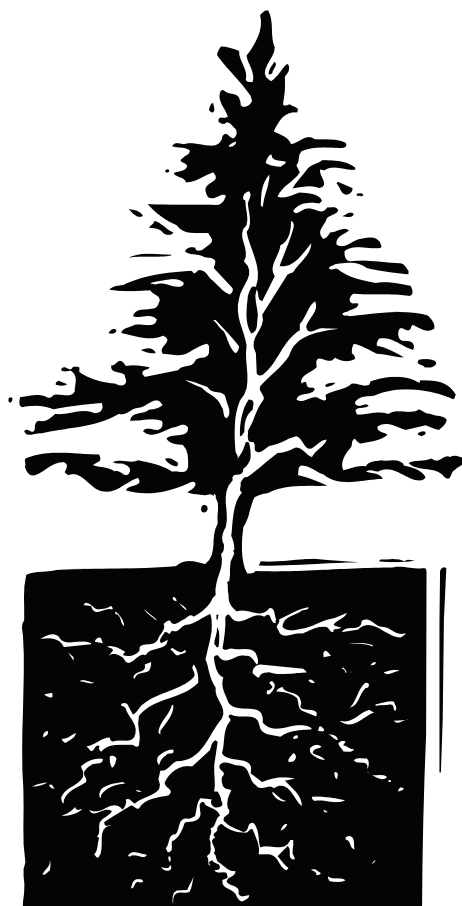
In the end, Warren said, "what this tax battle is really about" is fairness. "Who does this country work for?" she declared. "Is it just for the rich and the powerful, those who can hire those armies of lobbyists and lawyers? Or can we make this country work for millions of hard-working people?"

"This isn't a fair fight," she concluded. "The corporate giants are lined up to make sure tax changes tilt their way. America's working families don't have a zillion-dollar PR team to counter the false claim that corporate taxes are too high. Small businesses don't have a zillion-dollar lobbying organization to fight back against tax giveaways for giant corporations."

Source: Common Dreams 11/19/15 <http://www.commondreams.org/>



How Occupy Wall Street paved the way for Black Lives Matter and Bernie Sanders



ARUN GUPTA

One of the more puzzling aspects about Occupy Wall Street is not that there was a moment when millions of people hoped or feared it might overthrow the rule of the banks, but that so little is said about it four years on. Its anniversaries come and go without comment: Occupy's founding on September 17, 2011, the high-water mark of the Oakland general strike on November 2, the eviction of the New York camp on November 15, the creation of Occupy Sandy after the superstorm walloped the Northeast on October 29, 2012.

Occupy lost its luster because most people concluded it was a failure. It failed to articulate demands, failed to create a lasting impact, failed to spark a revolution. The haters dismiss Occupy as the "Frenzy that Fizzled." True believers maintain Occupy triumphed for shifting the conversation from economic austerity to inequality, while ignoring the lack of infrastructure to carry its work and ideas forward. Many who joined or were inspired by it would up feeling confused, bitter, or disappointed at losing a once-in-a-generation opportunity to upend the status quo. Others blame Occupy's dissolution on police forces that aggressively swept out all the major encampments. But it's defeatist to say Occupy was vanquished "by a concerted government effort to undo it." State violence is a given, and some radical movements still succeed.

Occupiers tried repeatedly to resurrect the movement after the main bastions in Oakland and New York City were evicted

in November 2011. But it never regained its footing despite the national May Day general strike, protests against a NATO summit in Chicago, the Occupy Our Homes anti-foreclosure movement, Occupy Sandy, and attempted re-occupations of parks, plazas, and buildings across the country.

No, Occupy Wall Street did not fizzle or fail. Its outsized ambitions were destined to crash as there are no left forces strong enough in the United States to keep a mass movement flying high. Occupy is as relevant as ever; the difficulty in coming to terms with it is because of its mixed legacy. When radicals lost the initiative against a bankrupt political system, liberals stepped in to divert energy back into the system.

Occupy's birth in the shadow of and days after the tenth anniversary of the September 11 attacks was a rupture. As the first radical movement of the 21st century in the United States, Occupy revived confrontational politics squelched by the "war on terror." Its use of direct action for wealth redistribution and against state power has been explicitly adopted by today's immigrant-rights, low-wage worker, and climate-justice movements. Occupy popularized class lingo with "we are the 99%" and "the 1%," putting the wealthy on the defensive ideologically. Without Occupy, neither the US\$15-an-hour minimum wage movement nor Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign would have gained such traction.

Activists have tried to anoint successors to Occupy Wall Street, such as Occupy Sandy, the post-hurricane relief effort that was a hybrid of community organizing and charity. But none have matched the spirit or form of Occupy as closely as the Black Lives Matter movement. Now, there is no direct line between the two, as there is with Kshama Sawant. She came to prominence with Occupy, then won election to the Seattle City Council in 2013 on a "\$15 Now" platform, and is running for re-election as a "voice for the 99%" against an opponent bankrolled by CEOs, landlords, and business interests.

Black Lives Matter is the true heir to Occupy because it uses militant protest, digital media, and fluid and opaque leadership structures to challenge state power. The difference is Black Lives Matter began by targeting state force rather than its economic power. Ironically, by early 2012 some Occupy groups were squandering popular capital on "f*** the police" marches that drew only the hardcore. Black Lives Matter has gone the other way, from a cry against the routine killing of unarmed Blacks to connecting police violence to economic violence. Opal Tometi, a leader of Black Lives Matter, told *The Nation* that "violence that's sanctioned by the state" is more than the police. It includes poverty, "attacks on labor unions and what that has done to the standard of living, the employability of our people, the kind of wages that we are making, and the benefits."

Black Lives Matter has had more staying power even as it has experienced growing pains, strategic splits, and conflicts over who is a leader given the ability to use social media

to draw a following. Unlike Occupy, Black Lives Matter is rooted in a community. Black America is shaped as much by the violence that birthed this nation, and sustains it, as it as by the resistive creation that's grown out of the soiled history. But that doesn't make Black Lives Matter immune to attempted co-optation, especially in the crucible of the 2016 election. Just as liberal groups like MoveOn, SEIU, and Rebuild the Dream tried to steal Occupy's thunder with a "99% Spring" linked to their pro-Democratic Party agenda, so too have groups like the Justice League NYC pushed "establishment-friendly reformism" under the banner of Black Lives Matter.

Post-Occupy, the best organizing combines radical politics with leadership and organization. A few unions have waded into the breach created by Occupy. Public-school teacher campaigns in Chicago, Portland, Los Angeles, and Seattle have tied contract negotiations to student education and community issues, while reviving the use of strikes, walkouts, and protests. The SEIU-backed "Fight for \$15" first seized the issue of income inequality in November 2012, just as Occupy had faded, and now 63 percent of Americans support a \$15 minimum wage by 2020. But the fast-food workers struggle is more a march on the media than a rank-and-file movement. Most recently, auto workers rebelled against a fossilized United Auto

Workers leadership by rejecting a contract that would have extended a tiered wage system dividing workers.

The climate-justice movement is fractured by the same confrontation and cooptation divide. Blockades from below have slowed the construction of pipelines, the movement of coal trains, the development of natural-gas export terminals, and the sailing of oil-drilling ships to the Arctic. But the 2014 "People's Climate March," hyped as the next phase of Occupy, was defanged by well-funded liberals who turned it into a corporate P.R. march devoid of politics, instead of the initial vision of a Seattle-style blockade around the United Nations.

This, too, is the legacy of Occupy Wall Street. Amorphous, "leaderless" networks can respond quickly to a crisis but act as quicksand to movement building. Occupiers wound up butting their heads against the state even as they opened up new paths for their successors. These new movements have had more material success than Occupy Wall Street, but the age-old challenge that Occupy put into stark relief remains: will they settle for reform when they came to have a revolution.

Source: teleSUR 11/6/15 <http://www.telesurto.net>

Solar is now affordable for everyone

BARRE STADTNER

Up until now the biggest drawback in going solar was that the only way to do it was a huge initial investment that had to pay for itself over a long period of time. For the solar electrics, it is a big enough investment that most of us are left out in the cold. Most of us can't even begin to think of such a huge investment of ten to twenty thousand dollars.

Now, because of a recent development in technology and the political scene, things are quite different. Now there is a new way to solarize your home. A company will put the solar panels on your home, but they don't sell them to you. You don't pay for them. The company owns them. If they need fixing, you don't worry about it, you don't own them, the company does. They do all the fixing if it ever needs it. Then they provide you with the electricity at a greatly reduced rate. You can go solar without spending a dime up front. All you get is a lower bill.

PG&E charges everyone based on how much they use. With this plan, you have one fixed low rate. You save money without any initial investment. When the time comes to sell the house and move on, the house sells faster because the house will have a lower PG&E bill, but you won't have to raise the price to recoup the price of an expensive outlay.

The commission on the solarizing of a home is quite large. On the average, depending on the size of the installation, it is about one thousand dollars. For each installation, I intend to donate half to the Peace and Justice Network. This means that, if we can get ten installations among this group, the PJN will get about \$5,000. Why give up half? Well, nobody paid me for participating in the anti-nuclear blockades at Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant. Not everybody is a capitalist.

If you are interested in this great opportunity, contact Barre Stadtner at 209-808-2196.



Budget news: Pentagon wins



RUTH FLOWER

Monday night, House and Senate budget negotiators agreed on a deal – a budget that will cover FY 2016 (which started October 1 this year) and FY 2017. Looked at one way, the budget deal has few surprises. Pentagon spending still goes up – from a total of \$585 billion in FY2015 to \$607 billion in FY2016. Non-military spending also goes up, by about \$32 billion. But discretionary spending still isn't equally split between Pentagon and non-defense programs. The Pentagon's "half" is \$74 billion bigger than the total for the non-military programs.

A large chunk of the Pentagon's share is OCO – the "Overseas Contingency Operations" fund that was set up for emergency war-related spending, weighing in at \$59 billion. That's more than should be needed as wars continue to wind

down (considering that this sum is an addition to the more-than-half-trillion dollar "base" budget the Pentagon already gets.) But \$59 billion is less than what it was last year (FY2015): \$64 billion. And it's less than the House approved in its budget resolution (\$92 billion,) and less than was authorized in the (vetoed) National Defense Authorization Act (same number.)

The surprise in the deal is an increase in the small portion of the OCO fund that goes to the State Department – an increase of \$5.8 billion over the amount allocated in FY2015, bringing the total to \$14.8 billion. Budget watchers around town have lots of ideas for this money – assistance for Syrian refugees here and in other countries? Nuclear non-proliferation monies to help implement the Iran deal? Support for nuclear weapons clean-up? Or, best of all, investment

in preventing further wars and atrocities? At this point, no one seems to know. The deal includes a temporary extension of the debt ceiling, until March of 2017. It's a "clean extension" without threatened "policy riders," amendments that advance a policy agenda that is unrelated to how the U.S. Treasury is financed.

To pay for the "sequester relief," the deal leans on, among other sources of savings, two health care programs – Medicare and the Affordable Care Act – and on disability benefits. Mandating new ways to reduce "waste, fraud and abuse" in the disability insurance program, the deal counts on a small level of savings to support other programs. (The Pentagon, which has never been audited, was not required to implement any new programs to reduce waste, fraud and abuse.) Sequester cuts that apply to Medicare – limited to 2 percent – are continued two years longer than other parts of the Budget Control Act, and large employers are excused from automatically enrolling their employees in health insurance.

THE OTHER NEWS IS WHAT DIDN'T HAPPEN.
If Congress had allowed

the Budget Control Act to take full effect in 2016, as expected, non-defense funding would have been cut by another \$37 billion. This deal restores about 90 percent of those cuts for FY2016, and 60 percent in FY 2017, according to Bob Greenstein, founder and President of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Both houses will vote on this deal this week; it is expected to pass with a minimum of controversy. The president will sign it, and appropriations committees in each chamber will then determine how the budget items will be allocated – especially the "new" money, in State Department, Department of Defense, and some domestic and international programs. Within a couple of weeks, Congress expects to have a two-year budget, all figured out. Like the government shut-down that didn't happen a few weeks ago, this budget avoided being the disaster it could have been, leaving open the possibility that we as a nation may yet discover how to build and adopt a budget that fits our actual needs, and leads in the world in a way that makes the heart glad.

*Source: Friends Committee on National Legislation 10/27/15
<http://fcn.org/blog/2c/>*

Increase Social Security payouts by taxing corporate execs

PETER SCHROEDER

Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) are teaming up on a bill that would hand Social Security recipients a \$580 check and pay for it by trimming tax perks for corporate executives. The progressive duo unveiled new legislation Thursday that would cut checks for millions of Americans that rely on Social Security benefits, weeks after the Obama administration announced there would be no cost-of-living increase to payments in 2016.

"At a time when senior poverty is going up and more than two-thirds of the elderly population rely on Social Security for more than half of their income, our job must be to expand, not cut, Social Security," said Sanders, who is running for president.

"At the very least, we must do everything we can to make sure that every senior citizen and disabled veteran in this country receives a fair cost-of-living adjustment to keep up with the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs and health care."

Sanders has made expanding Social Security one of the signature issues of his presidential campaign, and has repeatedly called for taxing the wealthy to pay for an expansion of benefits. Under his bill with Warren, Americans who receive benefits from Social Security, veterans benefits or equivalent state or local programs would receive a one-time payment. The pair noted that the check would equal 3.9 percent of existing benefits, the same percentage that CEO pay rose in 2014.

The senators want to pay for the supplemental payment by killing a tax code provision that allows companies to deduct a portion of executive salary, so long as it is "performance based."

Under current tax law, companies can only deduct the first \$1 million in executive compensation, but performance-based pay, like stock options, is exempted from that restriction. Noting that CEO pay is still on the rise while Social Security benefits are flat, Warren said it's clear top executives could chip in. "While Congress sits on its hands and pretends that there's nothing we can do, taxpayers will keep right on subsidizing billions of dollars' worth of bonuses for highly paid CEOs," she said. "Giving seniors a little help with their Social Security and stitching up corporate tax write-offs isn't just about economics; it's about our values."

Democrats have targeted that part of the tax code in the past to raise revenue, and Warren's office says repealing that language would raise more than enough to cover cutting those supplemental checks. Repealing the tax break was also floated by former Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp (R-Mich.), when he drafted his own tax reform proposal in 2014.

Under the Warren-Sanders bill, the rest of the revenue raised by killing that corporate tax break would go toward shoring up the Social Security and Disability trust funds, which got a much-needed cash infusion as part of the most recent budget agreement.

Source The Hill 11/6/15 <http://thehill.com>



Mainstream Media = Truth? Check out the Alternatives and Find out for yourself!

If you tap in to some of the alternative media, you will get a very different perspective on events. Especially now, when the mainstream media often acts as a cheerleader for whatever the administration does, it's necessary to go a little further to get your news. An internet connection is helpful.

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Talking Points Memo

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<http://www.tpmuckraker.com/>

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Congress Matters

<http://www.congressmatters.com>

Think Progress <http://thinkprogress.com>

Down With Tyranny

<http://downwithtyranny.blogspot.com/>

Crooks and Liars

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Mother Jones <http://www.motherjones.com/>

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<http://www.corpwatch.org/home/PHH.jsp>


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COLE MELLINO

The International Energy Agency's (IEA) latest report found that "in advance of the critical COP21 climate summit in Paris, there's a clear sign that an energy transition is underway." The World Energy Outlook 2015 report, published today, found that "renewables contributed almost half of the world's new power generation capacity in 2014 and have already become the second-largest source of electricity (after coal)."

More than 150 countries have submitted climate pledges ahead of the Paris climate talks, and they are "rich in commitments on renewables and energy efficiency," says the IEA. The report also found renewables are set to become "the leading source of new energy supply from now to 2040." And renewables will overtake coal as the largest source of electricity generation by the 2030s.

The IEA projects "turbulent times" ahead for coal: "Coal has increased its share of the global energy mix from 23 percent in 2000 to 29 percent today, but the momentum behind coal's surge is ebbing away and the fuel faces a reversal of fortune." China's coal use will "plateau at close to today's levels," says the IEA, but India's energy demand will grow to 2.5 times its current rate.

It remains to be seen whether India will pursue the coal-heavy track that China followed. Coal demand is set to triple in India and Southeast Asia by 2040, reports the Guardian. At the same time, India is one of many countries aiming to become a so-called

"solar superpower," making a huge commitment to renewables at its first big renewables trade convention earlier this year. And India lays claim to the world's first airport powered entirely by solar energy.

"Renewables-based generation reaches 50 percent in the EU [European Union] by 2040, around 30 percent in China and Japan, and above 25 percent in the United States and India," according to IEA estimates.

The rapid growth in renewable energy will help emissions to slow "dramatically," says the IEA, but the current emissions trajectory shows we are still heading for 2.7 degrees Celsius warming by 2100.

The IEA warns that a "major course correction" is still required to keep warming below the two degrees Celsius target. "As the largest source of global greenhouse-gas emissions, the energy sector must be at the heart of global action to tackle climate change," said IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol.

"World leaders meeting in Paris must set a clear direction for the accelerated transformation of the global energy sector," she added. "The IEA stands ready to support the implementation of an agreement reached in Paris with all of the instruments at our disposal, to track progress, promote better policies and support the technology innovation that can fulfill the world's hopes for a safe and sustainable energy future."

Yesterday, two reports found the Earth's climate has passed two new milestones. The World Meteorological Organization's report found that

greenhouse gas concentrations hit yet another new record in 2014. Globally averaged CO2 levels above 400 parts per million will soon be "a permanent reality," the WMO Secretary-General Michel Jarraud said.

Meanwhile, the UK's Met Office report found that global warming is on track to exceed one degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels by the end of the year.

But several groups are outlining how we can rapidly transition to a low-carbon future by expediting the deployment of renewable energy worldwide. Just yesterday, NextGen Climate America released a new

report showing that the transition to a clean energy economy will drive economic growth for decades, create well-paying jobs and increase household incomes. And in September, Greenpeace outlined a path for the world to transition to 100 percent renewable energy by 2050.

"The impossible is becoming possible. The global breakthrough of renewable energy has happened much faster than anticipated," said Emily Rochon, global energy strategist at Greenpeace International.

"The IEA is catching up on renewable energy trends, but it is still failing to see the full potential of change," said Rochon. "We believe that with the right level of policy support, the world can deliver 100 percent renewable energy for all by 2050."

Source: Ecowatch 11/10/15 <http://ecowatch.com/>

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FDA approves GE salmon



facilities outside the U.S. have dealt with an accidental disease outbreak, an accident that lead to "lost" salmon, and a \$9,500 fine from Panamanian regulators who found the company in breach of that country's environmental laws.

The FDA is supposed to protect public safety, yet the agency's environmental review was done in the form of an environmental assessment instead of a more thorough environmental impact statement that would fully consider the threat this controversial new fish could pose to wild fish populations and ecosystems. Canadian researchers found that GMO salmon readily breed with a different species of fish, a potential risk that FDA never addressed in its risk assessment.

To add insult to injury, this product will be hitting store shelves without labeling, making it impossible for concerned consumers to distinguish GMO from non-GMO salmon. Not only does this ignore consumers' fundamental right to know how our food is produced, it is simply bad for business, since many consumers will avoid purchasing any salmon for fear it is genetically engineered.

Food & Water Watch will be examining all options to stop this controversial and unnecessary GMO fish from reaching the marketplace. We urge President Obama to overturn FDA's approval and stop GMO salmon from reaching consumers' dinner plates.

Source: EcoWatch 11/19/15
<http://ecowatch.com>



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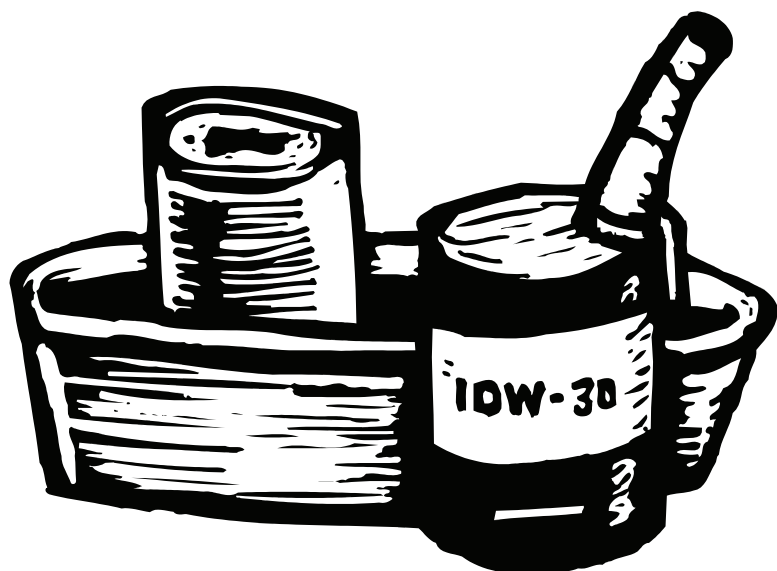
Today, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first genetically engineered food animal, AquaBounty's genetically engineered salmon, despite insufficient safety testing and widespread opposition. This unfortunate, historic decision disregards the vast majority of consumers,

many independent scientists, numerous members of Congress and salmon growers around the world, who have voiced strong opposition.

FDA's decision also disregards AquaBounty's disastrous environmental record, which greatly raises the stakes for an environmentally damaging escape of GMO salmon. In recent years, AquaBounty



Why the investigation of ExxonMobil matters



KEN KIMMELL

Sometimes simple truths lie dormant for a long time until they are powerfully brought to our attention. But, once our understanding is kindled, the implications—and changes in public attitudes—can spread like wildfire, gathering momentum at a breathtaking pace.

That is what seems to be happening right now with a simple, but powerful idea: that, for decades, the world's largest fossil fuel companies knew all about the harm their products posed to the planet, yet many chose to deceive the public about climate science and block meaningful reform. Now that this information has been so forcefully brought out, momentum is building fast to hold these companies accountable.

The Union of Concerned Scientists'

pathbreaking report *The Climate Deception Dossiers*, augmented by subsequent investigative reporting by *Inside Climate News* and the *Los Angeles Times*, have set off a whirlwind of activity, including calls for investigation by three presidential candidates, statements by a former tobacco prosecutor noting the parallel between the tobacco companies and fossil fuel industry, and op-eds in various national newspapers decrying this conduct. Even the *Dallas Morning News*, the hometown paper of Exxon Mobil, has jumped in to the fray with an editorial critical of the company's behavior.

In the latest development, the New York state Attorney General has now begun an investigation into whether one company—Exxon Mobil—deceived its shareholders and

the public. This is a very significant step. The New York Attorney General has subpoena power, meaning he has the ability to require Exxon Mobil to turn over documents even without a lawsuit pending. And, because the investigation centers on deception (broadly defined as the disparity between what Exxon Mobil knew and what it told its shareholders and the public), the scope of the document requests are likely to cover a wide range of conduct spanning many decades.

It seems quite likely that this investigation will unearth new information that goes well beyond what is currently known, and this new information may, in turn, fuel shareholder resolutions, divestment, and litigation. It should be remembered that the tide turned on tobacco companies when state attorneys general banded together and through the legal discovery process, obtained previously confidential documents that starkly exposed tobacco companies' intentional deception on the dangers of smoking.

It also seems probable that New York will not stand alone in this effort. Just as the tobacco litigation was ultimately brought by many state attorneys general, I would anticipate that a number of other states will follow suit in this matter as well. A sufficient number would also likely impel a federal investigation.

WHY DOES ALL OF THIS MATTER?

All companies, including fossil fuel companies, operate with a social license. That social license makes it possible for companies to sell their products to consumers who trust them, and gives them the ability to advertise and otherwise operate in the public sphere, even influence public affairs. But once

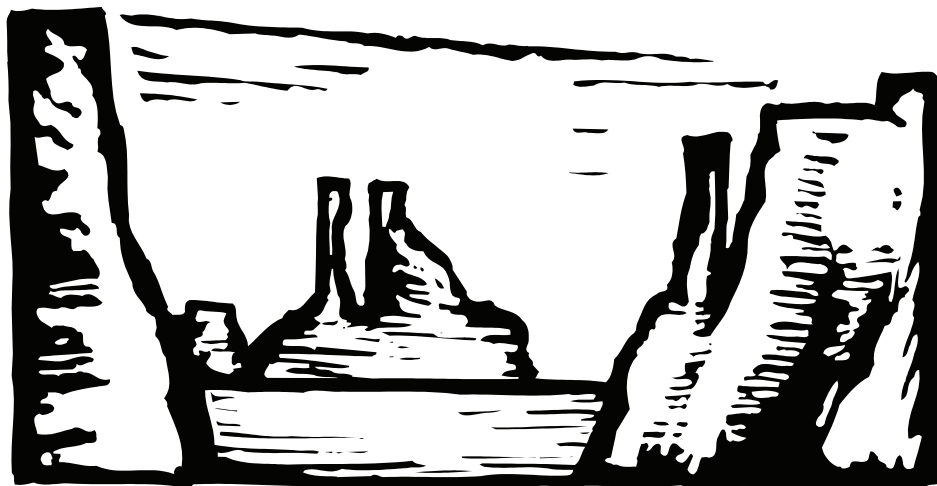
that social license is lost, consumers may abandon such companies (provided there are alternatives), and their power to shape policy can either erode or be curtailed.

The New York state AG investigation threatens to expose many new details about Exxon Mobil's apparent efforts to mislead the public about climate science and climate policy and may expand to other companies as well. We will have to wait and see how this develops, but it seems increasingly likely that this investigation, at a minimum, will finally force fossil fuel companies to halt further deceptive acts while this gets sorted out. In the longer term—and this is likely a way's off—it may encourage some companies to really put their muscle behind needed reforms, such as carbon pricing. Some companies have already called for this, but have not spent political capital to achieve it, because up to now there has been no incentive to do so. The air is remarkably fresh and clear on the precipice of a tipping point.

KEN KIMMELL IS PRESIDENT OF THE UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS AND HAS MORE THAN 30 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN GOVERNMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY, AND ADVOCACY. HE IS A NATIONAL ADVOCATE FOR CLEAN ENERGY AND TRANSPORTATION POLICIES AND A DRIVING FORCE BEHIND UCS'S "POWER AHEAD" CAMPAIGN TO BUILD A LARGE AND DIVERSE GROUP OF CLEAN ENERGY LEADERSHIP STATES.

Source: *Union of Concerned Scientists Blog*
11/6/15 <http://blog.ucsusa.org/>

Landmark climate bill would end new fossil fuel leases on federal lands



Senators Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), Bernie Sanders (D-Vt.), Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) announced landmark climate legislation today to end new federal fossil fuel leasing on public lands and oceans, and cancel existing offshore

federal oil and gas leases in the Arctic.

By ending new federal fossil fuel leases, the Keep Fossil Fuels in the Ground Act of 2015 would remove up to 450 billion tons from the global pool of potential greenhouse gas pollution—an

amount vastly greater than any reasonable U.S. share of the global carbon budget to avoid 2 degrees Celsius degrees of warming.

"If we're going to solve the global climate crisis, we have to keep fossil fuels in the ground, and this brave

legislation puts us on the right path," said Randi Spivak, public lands director at the Center for

Biological Diversity. "Developing our last publicly owned fossil fuels would cripple our ability to avert worst-case climate impacts."

If enacted, the legislation would sever the Obama administration's "all of the above" energy policy, which, despite a worsening climate crisis, has continued to expand leasing of federal oil, gas and coal on public lands and oceans. In September, more than 400 groups and leaders called on the Obama administration to end its federal leasing program.

"U.S. climate policy must curb supply and demand," said Spivak. "Regulating smokestacks and tailpipes isn't enough; fossil fuels that are extracted will

be burned. The natural place to start phasing out supply is on our public lands and oceans."

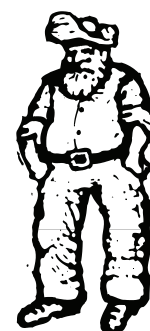
Over the past decade, the combustion of federal fossil fuels has resulted in nearly a quarter of all U.S. energy-related emissions. In August, a report by EcoShift consulting, commissioned by the Center for Biological Diversity and Friends of the Earth, found that the remaining federal oil, gas, coal, oil shale and tar sands that have not yet been leased to industry contain up to 450 billion tons of potential greenhouse gas pollution.

As of earlier this year, 67 million acres federal fossil fuel were already leased to industry, an area more than 55 times larger than Grand Canyon National Park containing up to 43 billion tons of potential

greenhouse gas pollution.

"The U.S. government has already leased decades' worth of federal fossil fuels—more than ever can safely be burned," said Spivak. "Each new lease walks us closer to climate catastrophe. This legislation would end that dangerous policy while protecting our natural heritage of public lands, oceans and biodiversity."

Source: *Center for Biological Diversity*
11/5/15 <http://ecowatch.com>





Time to stop worshipping economic growth

BRENT BLACKWELDER

There are physical limits to growth on a finite planet. In 1972, the Club of Rome issued their groundbreaking report—Limits to Growth (twelve million copies in thirty-seven languages). The authors predicted that by about 2030, our planet would feel a serious squeeze on natural resources, and they were right on target.

In 2009, the Stockholm Resilience Center introduced the concept of planetary boundaries to help the public envision the nature of the challenges posed by limits to growth and physical/biological boundaries. They defined nine boundaries critical to human existence that, if crossed, could generate abrupt or irreversible environmental changes.

The global economy must be viewed from a macro-perspective to realize that infringement of the planetary boundaries puts many life support ecosystems in jeopardy. Without functional ecosystems, the very survival of life forms, as well as human institutions, is put in doubt, including any economy. There is no economy on a dead planet.

These boundaries apply to the economy because the economy is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the ecosystems that make life on earth possible. (Some understanding of ecology should be a prerequisite for an advanced degree in economics.) Scientists are concerned that we have already overstepped the boundaries on biogeochemical flows (nitrogen) and biosphere integrity (genetic biodiversity).

Today's global economy and the various regional and national economies regularly

neglect planetary boundaries. Crossing a boundary is tantamount to crashing through a guardrail and plunging over a cliff.

The blind encouragement of economic growth that does not respect these boundaries is setting up human civilizations for collapse. Two of the most harmful types of growth are ruthless and futureless.

Ruthless growth benefits a few at the top but does nothing for the middle class. One of the reasons that Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign has attracted larger and larger audiences is that he says the

most crucial issue facing the United States is the gross discrepancy between the middle class and the billionaire class.

Futureless growth destroys resources, such as water, forests, fisheries, and farmland that will be needed by our children and grandchildren, and by wildlife. Futureless growth directly conflicts with common family values. We tell our children to save for the future rather than squander their money. We don't tell them to outspend their peers. We don't tell them to judge the quality of their lives based on material possessions and quarterly financial reports.

To remain within the nine planetary boundaries, nations must shed the fetish of economic growth and transition to a true-cost, steady state economy. Some of the critical transition steps include:

1. Replacing the GDP as a measure of well-being (lots of work has been done on coming up with an index of sustainable productivity).

2. Getting the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to require corporations to disclose their

pollution externalities (the SEC is not hopeless, as can be seen by its recent decision to require CEOs to publish their salaries along with those of the average workers at their companies).

3. Going to a four-day work week to secure fuller employment (this has happened in some European countries; Canadian economist Peter Victor has papers on why this is a crucial transition step).

4. Dematerializing the economy (i.e., so that it's cheaper to repair an appliance than it is to buy a new one).

5. Identifying the areas in which the economy should grow—and those where it should shrink or degrow (i.e., the usage of fossil fuels must shrink sharply, and in so doing, rooftop solar will grow to become a much larger part of the global economy).

6. Identifying the most heinous types of economic growth (ruthless and futureless) and showing how their costs exceed their benefits.

7. Stabilizing population to keep humanity from further transgression of the nine boundaries.

There are about seven billion people on earth today, and forecasts indicate there will be nine billion by 2050. Already, almost one billion malnourished people are feeling the squeeze, as they painfully bear testimony to the truth of what Malthus predicted two centuries ago. Key first steps to stabilizing population in a progressive way are:

1. Empowerment of women.

2. Requiring all foreign assistance to be designed so that women will be better off as a result.

3. Making contraceptives widely available.

Our global economy is treating the planet as if it were a business in a liquidation sale. Even environmental organizations—devoted to environmental protection—have been slow to acknowledge the major causes of environmental degradation, such as perverse economic incentives encouraging raw resource extraction and non-renewable energy use. We need environmental leaders to speak out for a new, just, and true-cost economy; and to challenge the mindless embracing of economic growth—even ruthless and futureless growth. Environmental leaders should be driving the push toward refocusing economic thinking on the changes that we will have to make if we are going to move to a healthier economy that exists within the nine planetary boundaries. Only if humanity stays within these nine boundaries can it continue to develop and thrive for generations to come.

BRENT BLACKWELDER, A PH.D., IS PRESIDENT EMERITUS OF FRIENDS OF THE EARTH U.S. <[HTTP://WWW.FOE.ORG](http://www.foe.org)>, A NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE HEALTH AND DIVERSITY OF THE PLANET FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Source: *The Daily News* 103115 <http://steadystate.org>

Paris climate talks unlikely to deliver the world we need

JANET REDMAN

We need to leave more than 80 percent of known oil, coal, and gas reserves in the ground to avoid triggering catastrophic climate change. That means shifting away from an economy driven by digging, pumping, and burning fossil fuels to one that puts people and the planet first. On this the science is simple, but the politics are fraught. The upcoming UN summit in Paris, where governments from almost every country on Earth will meet to hammer out a new global climate deal, would seem the logical place to set that change in motion. These forums are the only place where nations sit together as equals, at least ostensibly, to address what's truly a global problem.

So can these talks deliver an agreement that moves us into a post-fossil fuel world? The simple answer is no. For starters, the draft agreement they'll be using as the basis for discussion makes no reference to fossil fuels at all. Perhaps that should come as no surprise, given that dirty energy companies and their financial backers are among the sponsors of the summit.

In the absence of a concrete plan to roll back our reliance on coal, oil and gas, governments are kicking around climate "solutions" that let countries keep on burning them. They're entertaining ideas like carbon

capture, use, and storage, or CCUS — a technology that would allow facilities like power plants to pump carbon emissions into the ocean or underground geologic formations. The approach is unfeasibly expensive, risky, and unproven at scale, but the U.S. and China favor it as an option that would preserve the role of dirty fuels.

The emerging concept of "net-zero" emissions goes a step further. Under that scheme, countries would be allowed to "offset" their carbon pollution with technologies that are meant to pull carbon dioxide out of the air, like producing vast quantities of charcoal and adding it to soils. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that 6 billion hectares of biomass — that's four times the total land used today to grow all the world's food — would be needed to match our fossil fuel use.

In other words, even as governments are talking about setting climate targets, they're working hard to *expand* the extractive global economy with measures that could deepen the climate crisis. That's ridiculous.

We need to cut carbon, not find new places to bury it. More fundamentally, we need a new economy — and sharing it better.

Luckily, tens of thousands of people will also converge in Paris this December in spaces like the World Village of Alternative

Solutions. They'll share their visions of systemic change and offer concrete examples of places where people are experimenting with new forms of enterprise, energy systems, mechanisms for wealth distribution, and governance.

Workers from India's Solid Waste Collection and Handling cooperative, for example, will be on hand to share their experiences providing grassroots, front-end waste management services in the city of Pune. The 2,300 worker-members, mainly women from marginalized castes, have on average tripled their income since joining the cooperative. And through improving recycling rates and diverting organic matter from landfills, they've mitigated 640,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually and minimized pressure on forest resources.

To challenge undemocratic corporate influence in the climate talks, meanwhile, civil society groups are also proposing that a new climate deal follows the example of the international Tobacco Treaty, which bars tobacco companies from participating in treaty negotiations or interfering in national public health policy. Proponents say it could go a long way to protect climate policy from the stranglehold of Big Oil, Big Gas, and King Coal.

New ways to distribute wealth, especially

by disrupting the concentration of money and power at the top, are being brought to the table, too. A movement across Europe has already succeeded in pushing 11 countries to agree to a small tax on financial transactions (aka the Robin Hood Tax) that could pull down €5 billion from the big banks each year to invest in climate solutions in the hardest hit communities.

These are just a few concrete actions to help build a new economy that puts more control in the hands of the communities most impacted by climate change — and gets to the heart of the relentless drive for growth that's causing it. Any decision emerging from the Paris climate summit will almost certainly fail to confront the real problem: a global economic model that relies on fossil fuels to power the engine of expansion. Luckily, people in communities all across the planet are willing to take the lead.

JANET REDMAN IS CO-DIRECTOR OF THE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY & ECONOMY NETWORK (SEEN) PROJECT AT THE INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES. IPS IS A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS AND ORGANIZERS LINKING PEACE, JUSTICE, AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE U.S. AND GLOBALLY. [WWW.IPS-DC.ORG](http://www.ips-dc.org)

Source: *Foreign Policy In Focus* 11/13/15 <http://fpif.org>



A global shift to 100% renewables is not just cleaner – it's about equality

ANNA LEIDREITER

As the world's energy system shifts from fossil fuels to renewable sources, the question is no longer if the world will transition to sustainable energy, but how long it will take and whether the transition can be made in ways that maximise the benefits today and for future generations. Changing our energy system is about more than replacing fossil resources with sun and wind. In fact, the economic model for renewables is completely different: 100% renewable energy can lead us to a more equal distribution of wealth. The differences start in the way our energy system is structured. The fossil fuel-based energy system is characterised by complex, centralised infrastructures where the fuel is transported to the power plant, and energy production and distribution is controlled by very few entities. The supply chain is vertical, and the benefits are shared only among a few stakeholders.

Most renewable energies offer opportunities for more decentralised energy production and consumption. They have a horizontal supply chain and require innovation in infrastructure and energy markets. New stakeholders – including citizens, farmers and small businesses – are entering

the system. They claim ownership rights and have direct impacts on the implementation. While many energy experts and governments see citizen participation and the involvement of communities as a necessity to ensure acceptance and avoid nimbyism, the benefits go much beyond this. In fact, adopting a people-centered approach and empowering citizens, farmers and small businesses to invest in renewable energy projects, is a tool for socio-economic development and wealth distribution. Some countries have begun to realise the benefits. A recent German study reveals that some € 5.4bn was generated in Germany in 2012 through projects that were partially or fully owned by local investors, including citizens. Local private investments created a total of around 100,000 jobs that year in both the construction sector and operation.

Here are three examples of how local economies can be strengthened by transitioning to 100% renewable energy.

FRANKFURT, GERMANY: €100M SAVING IN ENERGY COSTS

By 2050, Frankfurt will produce 100% of its energy consumption from local and regional renewable

sources bringing down its current energy import costs from €bn a year to zero. Thanks to its public local utility which drives this transition, the city not only benefits from these savings but generates additional income in the form of revenues and tax incomes. By prioritising energy production from within the city and the surrounding region – while still being connected to the larger national grid – the money will stay in the region. Energy efficiency measures have saved Frankfurt €100m in energy costs, a number that is projected to rise. The city has also reduced emissions by 15% between 1990 and 2012, while its economy grew by 50% for its 715,000 inhabitants.

VANCOUVER, CANADA: 80% REDUCTION IN GREENHOUSE GASES

One city leading the movement in North America is Vancouver. Widely recognised as the most livable city in the world, its environmental footprint is currently three times larger than it can sustain. Mayor Robertson and his team are committed to changing this, by putting the city on track to become the greenest in the world. By 2050, Vancouver will obtain 100% of the energy it uses from renewable sources <<http://vancouver.ca/>

green-vancouver.aspx> and emit 80% fewer greenhouse gases than in 2007. It is not only the environment that motivates the government to take this action; Vancouver is a great example of how climate and environmental protection, and economic growth, can complement each other. A study by Brand Finance estimates that Vancouver's brand is valued at \$31bn due to its reputation as a "green, clean and sustainable" city. Steering the city towards 100% renewable energy and focusing on local sustainability, has helped create more than 3,000 new local green jobs in only five years.

KASESE, UGANDA: SUPPLYING 130,000 HOMES WITH RENEWABLE ENERGY

The district of Kasese in Uganda (of approximately 130,000 households) is radically transforming. By 2020, Kasese will supply the energy needs of its population by only renewable sources. This ambitious target will be achieved by adopting a people-centered approach, with a wide variety of renewable sources such as biomass, solar, geothermal and mini-hydroelectric technologies. This will help the region overcome health issues strongly connected to the uncontrolled use of charcoal,

firewood and kerosene, the main energy sources used for cooking and domestic electricity production. By implementing a decentralised renewable energy system in the region, several clean energy businesses have been started since 2012, creating jobs for locals. They sell solar equipment, construct solar hubs, build biogas systems, improve cook stoves and deliver mini-hydro projects. The number of businesses in the local green economy has increased from five to 55 since 2012, and at least 1,650 people have been trained in the process. With the international community starting to implement the new sustainable development goals, there is an urgent need for standards and indicators that allow policies and implementation to be measured and assessed, to provide guidance on a sustainable transition to 100% renewable energy. But as these case studies show, decentralised renewable energy technologies have the biggest impacts locally and regionally.

ANNA LEIDREITER IS POLICY OFFICER ON CLIMATE AND ENERGY FOR THE WORLD FUTURE'S COUNCIL.

Source: The Guardian 11/4/15 <http://www.theguardian.com/>

Bassem Tamimi: from the West Bank to Stockton



GLORIA FEARN

On October 1st Bassem Tamimi spoke in the afternoon at Delta College, and in the evening he addressed an audience of about 30, mostly appreciative listeners at Central United Methodist Church. The event was co-sponsored by the Peace and Justice Network. Bassem gave personal testimony to his many years of non-violent resistance to the nearly fifty years of oppressive Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem—an

occupation that kindles anger within him and other Palestinians. He was open about how he came to be a follower of Ghandi, Mandela and Martin Luther King, and that he, like the others was not always in that space. Today he is convinced that the peaceful path is the only way that peace and justice will ever become a reality in his homeland.

This peaceful path has cost him and his family dearly. He has endured long imprisonments, usually without charge or trial. He was once beaten so badly in jail that

he was unconscious for a week and didn't recover for months. He has seen members of his family shot and killed in front of him. His wife was pushed down a flight of stairs when she came to visit him in prison and still suffers disability. Most recently his young son, wearing a cast on his arm, was seen on FaceBook around the world when he was tackled by a soldier and wrestled free by his sister and the women of the village. PM Netanyahu said they should have been shot.

In spite of the personal cost, Bassem persists. He laments that somehow the Palestinian activists who are resisting an occupation that has cost them their homes, trees, farms, and too often their lives have become the terrorists in the eye of Western media. But he also sees a growing solidarity among the Palestinian people. In a conflict where pictures, videos and stories are the only real weapon that the Palestinians have, social media is changing the narrative in ways that even main stream media has difficulty resisting.

When I speak to friends about Bassem's presentation, I realize that they didn't hear the message. What they heard was that there was disruption. And there was. About four of the thirty people present were not there to listen. I rather knew that would be the case. My home phone, and the phone at the church

(which was not a sponsor of the event) had been ringing off the hook every few minutes for two days, many calls coming from out of state numbers. The calls continued the following day.

So, what is this really about? The effort to silence a voice that was calling for justice for Palestinian people was clear. There was intimidation directed at supporters here, and also intimidation directed at Bassem and his family back home. My sense is that such intimidation is an expression of fear. Fear that the world is turning away from the story that has dominated the press since 1948. Fear that Israel has lost its moral high ground in this conflict. And fear that another voice is gaining credibility. When the story changes our response to it changes and public policy that supports that story changes.

What's really at stake in our nation's support of the Zionist enterprise is millions of dollars in tax breaks for donations to non-profits that support the settlement endeavor and more (soon much more) than \$3 billion every year in military aid to an oppressive apartheid State that is the largest recipient of US foreign aid. I would urge Americans not to be intimidated. This is the peace and justice issue of our time and central to the whole issue of peace in the Middle East.



Some winter reading suggestions

REFERRED BY CHRISTIE KELLEY

Black Lives Matter!

This statement has motivated many community and religious groups to step up to the absolute need to understand the depth and meaning of racism in the United States and more particularly in their community. Beyond reading, study groups and discussions lies the work of making deep personal and social changes. Included here are just a few of the resources available for beginning this process. If you have other resources, please share them with Connections, so the Peace & Justice community can be a part of the positive changes in your life.

The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, Michelle Alexander, 2011

A stunning account of the rebirth of a caste-like system in the United States, one that has resulted in millions of African Americans locked behind bars and then relegated to a permanent second-class status—denied the very rights supposedly won in the Civil Rights Movement.

Just Mercy, a story of Justice and Redemption, Bryan Stevenson, Biography

A powerful telling of Bryan Stevenson's experiences with the most disenfranchised in our justice system, along with a historical explanation of judicial practices, policies and abuses. See the NYTimes Sunday book review at <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/19/books/review/just-mercy-by-bryan-stevenson.html>

Black Faces, White Spaces, Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors, Carolyn Finney, 2014

Bridging the fields of environmental history, cultural studies, critical race studies, and geography, Finney argues that the legacies of slavery, Jim Crow, and racial violence have shaped cultural understandings of the "great outdoors" and determined who should and can have access to natural spaces.

Courageous Conversations About Race, A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools, Glenn E. Singleton, Curtis Linton, 2006.

"Conversations" to create a learning community that promotes academic parity.

We Can't Teach What We Don't Know, White Teachers, Multiracial Schools, Gary R. Howard, 1999

Gary Howard takes his readers on a journey of personal and professional transformation. From his 25 years of experience as a multicultural educator, he looks deeply into the mirror of his own racial identity to discover what it means to be a culturally competent White teacher in racially diverse schools.

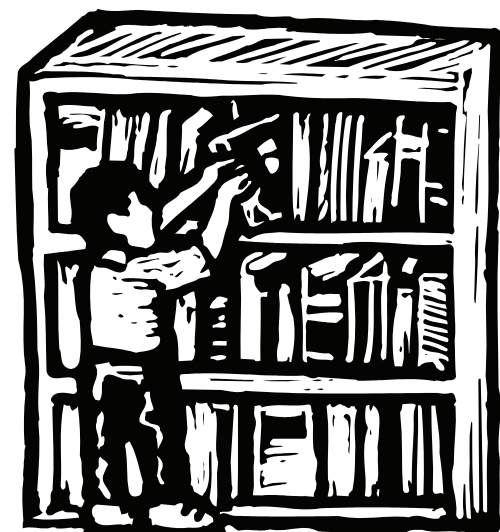
OTHER

Re-Thinking Schools <http://www.rethinkingschools.org>

Re-Thinking Schools is firmly committed to equity and to the vision that public education is central to the creation of a humane, caring, multiracial democracy. While writing for a broad audience, Rethinking Schools emphasizes problems facing urban schools, particularly issues of race. Many publications available on-line and print.

"Notes from the Field Doing Time in Education, The California Chapter," Anna Deavere Smith Theater/Berkeley Repertory/Study Guide 2015

Playwright, actor, and educator Anna Deavere Smith garnered a 2012 National Humanities Medal from President Obama and a MacArthur Award for her incisive and astounding theatrical investigations—from racial tension



with law enforcement (Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992) to the deficiencies in our health care system in Let Me Down Easy. Now she turns her attention to "the school-to-prison pipeline," which, by pushing children out of the classroom into the criminal justice system, has created a lost generation of youth from poor communities. In act one, Anna performs striking portraits culled from interviews she conducted with nearly 150 individuals in Northern California and elsewhere in the nation, affected by the pipeline's devastating policies—capturing the dynamics of a rapidly shifting social issue through her trademark performance technique.

"White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" Peggy McIntosh essay from Working Paper 189 White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies (1988).

McIntosh explains how we are often blind to the ways we are privileged in comparison to others. McIntosh distributes only paper copies of this article as she uses the copyright fees to support the SEED project (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity). If you are interested in receiving a copy of the full article or in supporting SEED, please contact McIntosh's assistant, Marguerite Rupp, at mrupp@wellesley.edu.

CHILDREN BOOKS

Painting for Peace in Ferguson,

Carol Swartout Klein tells the story of the hundreds of artists and volunteers who worked to transform boarded up windows into works of art with messages of hope, healing and unity in the days after the Aug. 9, 2014, shooting of Michael Brown. The book had its first printing in February 2015, and was recognized in May 2015 as one of nine "Outstanding Books of the Year" in the "Peacemaker" category by the Independent Publisher.

YOUNG ADULT/ADULT FICTION

Chains, Laurie Haulse Anderson, Simon & Schuster, 2008

In this a young adult novel, the main character is Isabel, a thirteen-year-old slave who works for the Locktons, a Loyalist family in Manhattan with her sister, Ruth.

Forge, Laurie Haulse Anderson,

This novel is about the American Revolution and colonial-era slavery, a sequel to her prize-winning "Chains."

To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee

Go Set A Watchman, Harper Lee

You Have the Right to Remain Silent - A Know Your Rights Guide for Law Enforcement Encounters National Lawyers Guild www.nlg-npap.org Pamphlet,



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Busting six free-market fictions

FRANCES MOORE LAPPÉ

The following is drawn from the new book, **World Hunger: 10 Myths**, by Frances Moore Lappe and Joseph Collins.

Being "free" sounds great—like being free to eat or to have a job at a living wage; so surely a "free market" is the way to ensure these important human freedoms. Right? Unfortunately, what we call a free market can't protect essential freedoms because it's trapped in six enduring fictions. So let's free ourselves, one fiction at a time.

ONE: A "FREE MARKET" WORKS BEST TO MEET HUMAN NEEDS.

If by "free market" we mean one unbounded by rules, it does not exist. All market economies are governed by rules. In ours, no one is allowed to sell babies, trade with terrorists, or sell liquor across the street from your kid's school. While market rules are plentiful, one key, unspoken rule drives most economies today: Do what brings highest return to existing wealth—what garners the corporations' executives and shareholders the greatest immediate gain. By this rule, wealth accrues to wealth until we end up in the United States with inequality more extreme than in Turkey or India; and in a world with two-thirds of adults trying to survive on 3 percent of global wealth. In such a world, no matter how much food we grow, hunger is inevitable.

TWO: GOVERNMENT NECESSARILY IMPEDES A VITAL MARKET.

In truth, a market economy cannot thrive without government. Think of the essentials to economic success that government provides, from legal structure to infrastructure. As for government being bad for business, this can

hardly be true if in economies ranking among the world's most successful, government spending contributes a big part of the GDP. Take three of the five countries deemed most economically "competitive" by the business-oriented World Economic Forum: Switzerland, Finland, and Germany. In each, government spending accounts for about a third to more than half of the country's GDP. And in the United States, which ranks fifth in global competitiveness, make that 40 percent.

A lot of government spending directly benefits an economy. Take Brazil. Each month, the government transfers a modest sum to poor women, if they keep their kids vaccinated and in school, directly addressing hunger. Every dollar spent on the program generates almost twice that amount in economic activity.

THREE: A FREE MARKET SERVES INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM.

In the 1980s, at UC Berkeley, I had the opportunity to debate perhaps America's most celebrated "free market" champion, the late Milton Friedman, coauthor of *Free to Choose*. He claimed that the market serves freedom by enabling people to make choices based on their values. I then pointed to the obvious. If true, the market serves human freedom *only on one condition*: that people have purchasing power to express their values in the market. Thus freedom, using Friedman's own definition, actually expands as societies set rules ensuring that wealth is widely and fairly spread. By the same logic, a market operating without rules to prevent wealth from amassing at the very top denies most individuals' "freedom to choose." And, in many societies that includes the freedom to choose to eat.

FOUR: A FREE MARKET GIVES US ALL THE CHOICES WE NEED.

Before we celebrate too much, let's consider some choices our market economy denies, illustrated in a metaphor borrowed from political philosopher Benjamin Barber:

In our market economy, we get to join a giant cafeteria line with plentiful dishes where—if we have the money—we can grab whatever appears appetizing. Great choices! But notice what we don't get to choose. We cannot enter the kitchen and select the menu. For example, we don't get to say, "No, it's not more choices among processed foods that I want. I want more plentiful, and less expensive, fresh fruits and vegetables."

True, our supermarkets typically carry thirty thousand items. Wow. But without "menu making" power via democratic government providing citizens a voice in public decisions, my choices—including those protecting my family's health as well as healthy soil and water—are extremely limited.

FIVE: A FREE MARKET MAXIMIZES A NATION'S EFFICIENCY.

Few would call it efficient to put up new walls using stones plucked from the foundation, yet our farming practices result in almost two billion tons of topsoil being washed or blown away from U.S. cropland each year. Here and in too many other ways, our food economy is destroying the essentials our progeny will need tomorrow. Or ponder the extreme inefficiency of a world food economy in which only 3 percent of the calories in feed going to cattle end up returning to consumers in beef.

If we define efficiency as getting the most benefit from resources, human and natural, while ensuring their ongoing health, most modern-day economies are not "efficient."

SIX: THE MARKET IS "VALUE NEUTRAL."

In the United States we say we value "democracy" and "life." Yet, we leave access

to food largely to a person's capacity to buy food in a market that drives purchasing power into ever fewer hands. Thus 48 million Americans, lacking in purchasing power, live in households facing food insecurity.

But wait! Democracy means a voice for every citizen, and no one chooses uncertainty about where her or his next meal is coming from. Logically then, hunger and food insecurity belie democracy as a core value of our society. In America we also say we value "life," but we then tolerate a market with wages so low that poverty is implicated in a death rate of US babies more than twice that of several Western European countries.

A society's market is an unmistakable expression of its values.

So here we are, trapped in six dangerous fictions creating a highly *unfree* market, one that leaves many of us denied freedom, the freedom to realize our full potential on a healthy planet. They blind us from understanding that a well-functioning market—one able to end hunger—is impossible without democratic government. Ironically, the market-is-all-we-need dogma ends up destroying the very conditions necessary to realize the market's prized strengths—openness, competition, and transparency.

In large part as a consequence of this dogma, now spreading far and wide, one-quarter of humanity now suffers nutritional deprivation in world of vast food abundance. This is what I mean by "dangerous" fictions—ideas that are literally killing us that we can crack open and leave behind.

FRANCES MOORE LAPPÉ IS THE AUTHOR OF *ECOMIND: CHANGING THE WAY WE THINK TO CREATE THE WORLD WE WANT* (NATION BOOKS) AND 17 OTHER BOOKS INCLUDING THE ACCLAIMED *DIET FOR A SMALL PLANET*. SHE IS ALSO A YES! CONTRIBUTING EDITOR./

Source: *Common Dreams* 11/5/15 <http://www.commondreams.org/>

Five reasons why TPP ought to have you worried

The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement is a wide-ranging free trade agreement between 12 countries: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the US, and Vietnam. It intends to promote economic integration across an area comprising 40 percent of the world economy, by liberalizing trade and investment rules, including the elimination of 98 percent of tariffs between the 12 members. The complex full text of the agreement was finally released on Thursday, and so far critics have been able to highlight several areas of concern.

MEDICINE FOR THE POOREST GETS MORE

Chapter 18 on intellectual property strengthens copyright protection, trademark and patent law. For example, the rules on 'biologics' state that pharmaceutical companies can seek up to eight years of market protection for medicine they make from biological sources, which are much more expensive than chemical drugs. Some of the countries party to the agreement, such as Brunei, previously had no bar on cheaper medicines that copy such drugs, and patients there will now have to wait at least five years before they can be treated with such medicine.

LONGER COPYRIGHT PROTECTION

The agreement mandates the extension of the minimum copyright term for artistic and literary works to 70 years after the death of the author, rather than the current rule of 50 years, enshrined in the Bern convention. As a result, the public will have to wait another 20 years before works pass into the public domain.

INDIVIDUALS' PERSONAL INFORMATION CAN BE TRANSFERRED OUT OF THEIR COUNTRY

Chapter 14 of the agreement on 'electronic commerce' reads, "Each Party shall allow the cross-border transfer of information by electronic means, including

personal information, when this activity is for the conduct of the business of a covered person." The wording raises fears that TTP may be used to override laws in individual countries which keep government data on individuals, such as health information, on servers inside their borders countries. In addition, the chapter looks to prevent member countries from requiring companies to localize computing facilities on their territory, in order to prevent the misuse of citizen's information.

COMPANIES CAN GO TO A TRIBUNAL OF CORPORATE LAWYERS AND SUE GOVERNMENTS

In Chapter 9, the agreement describes the

Investor State Dispute Settlement mechanism, which allows foreign companies operating in a member country to pursue its interests in independent tribunals, rather than that country's court system. Companies and investors will be able to sue national governments for damages, if the government passes a law which has a negative impact on their investments. In particular, such a system would allow financial institutions to demand compensation in a tribunal of corporate lawyers, for government measures that impair their profits.

CLIMATE CHANGE DOESN'T WARRANT A MENTION

Nowhere in the agreement is there any

mention of a changing climate, and ways to stave off the threats of climate change. Instead, the chapter on the environment vaguely refers to the need to transition to a low emissions economy. "The Parties acknowledge that transition to a low emissions economy requires collective action," according to Chapter 20. However, "each Party's actions to transition to a low emissions economy should reflect domestic circumstances and capabilities," it reads, providing no specific measures to do so.

Source: *Sputnik International* 11/7/15 <http://sputniknews.com>



Friday, December 4

Jagged Lines of Imagination Winter Art Show & Open House

For 10 years now, the Jagged Lines of Imagination Academy has been offering participatory art opportunities for Stockton. At our Art Show & Open House, we'll be looking both back and forward as we offer a retrospective art show, and introduce a new studio space at the Teen Impact Center. All artists, young and old, beginning and experienced, who have participated in JLI classes, art club, or workshops are invited to add their artworks to this effort. Got something left from your days as a student? Or perhaps

something utterly awesome that hasn't been shown yet? Drawing, painting, cartoons to landscapes, portraits to anime, small sculpture, portfolios, sketchbooks, we want to show off the fruits of your creative genius. Works should be framed, matted or otherwise prepared to show. We will be accepting artwork at the Teen Impact Center on Dec. 1, between 4 and 6:30 pm. For more information watch our Facebook page or call 209-38ART4U (209-382-7848). More information at website JLIacademy.org.

Saturday, December 19

The Nutcracker comes to Stockton

Experience the beauty and artistry of ballet through Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker performed live by Capitol Ballet Company with students from Stockton Ballet School. Originally choreographed by Marius Petipa and first performed in Russia over a century ago,

The Nutcracker has become an enduring holiday classic captivating the imaginations of all ages. Celebrate Christmas Eve with Clara at her family's grand celebration at the Stahlbaum manor. Herr Drosselmeyer amazes the children with his magical inventions, a life-size doll and bear, which seemingly come to life. Then dream with Clara as her courageous Nutcracker Prince and his toy soldiers boldly battle the villainous Mouse King and his army of mice. Victorious in battle, Clara's Nutcracker becomes a handsome prince and leads her away on a magical journey. Travel with them as they pass through the beautiful land of snow and on to

the Kingdom of Sweets, where they are welcomed by the Sugar Plum Fairy and delighted by dances performed in their honor, including the Waltz of the Flowers and the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier.

The Nutcracker will be performed on Saturday, December 19, 2015, 2:00 p.m. at the San Joaquin Delta College Warren Atherton Auditorium, 5151 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, California. Tickets are \$20-\$25 for adults; \$14-\$16 for children (17 and under), seniors (60+), and military with ID. Tickets may be purchased at www.capitolballet.com or by calling San Joaquin Delta College Box Office at (209) 954-5110. Capitol Ballet Company is a non-profit organization funded in part by the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission Cultural Arts Awards with support from the City and County of Sacramento.



Call for artists - March show

Not One More: Art Against Violence exhibit coming

The Call for Artists is out for the March 2016 exhibit "Not One More - Art Against Violence" at the San Joaquin County Fairgrounds. Artists of all ages, working in all media, are invited to create pieces that explore how violence impacts their family, neighborhood, school or community, and ways to change a culture of violence to one of tolerance.

The show will exhibit original two and three-dimensional art including painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, video, garden art, and fabric art such as quilts, needlepoint, banners, flags and wearable art. All pieces submitted will be displayed. Music, dance and spoken word pieces

are also sought, and will be featured at special programs. The Call For Artists is available online at the Draw It Out tab on the website clevelandschoolremembers.org or on the Facebook page for Draw It Out. The "Not One More" exhibit will run for the entire month of March in the Plants and Flowers Building at the Fairgrounds.

Admission is free, and guided tours are available for groups, such as local schools and colleges, religious organizations, retirement communities, veterans' posts and service organizations. The show will feature four special events: an Artists' Reception on March 6, a Spoken Word Event on March 11, an Afternoon of Music and Dance on March 20, and a Panel on Art Activism on March 31.

The "Not One More" exhibit is sponsored by Draw It Out, a local non-profit group that creates art events to raise awareness of the effects of violence

in our community. Draw It Out is best known for its Wish Flag Project that works mainly with children using block prints to create small flags to which the children add their individual wishes for things to improve their school or neighborhood. Over a thousand wish flags made by children and adults are being sewn together for display throughout Stockton.

Draw It Out is affiliated with Cleveland School Remembers, an organization primarily composed of teachers and others who experienced Stockton's 1989 Cleveland Elementary School playground shooting, which left five young children dead and 30 injured. It was one of the first mass school shootings in the nation, and CSR was formed to work toward a reduction of gun violence in our community and nationwide. For further information, phone (209) 910-3461.

Sunday, January 14

Jim Hightower in Sonora for MLK celebration

Music and mind tickling commentary will be featured at this year's annual Motherlode Martin Luther King Jr. event on Sunday, January 24, 2:30 pm at the Sonora High School Auditorium. The free event will host National radio commentator, news writer, public speaker, and author Jim Hightower, and the musical talents of the Gwen Amey Choir, and Michelle Allison and Dennis Brown. In his Gettysburg Address President Abraham Lincoln touted "that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the Earth." Jim Hightower, "America's most popular populist," believes that statement and is coming to Sonora to share his ideas with you.

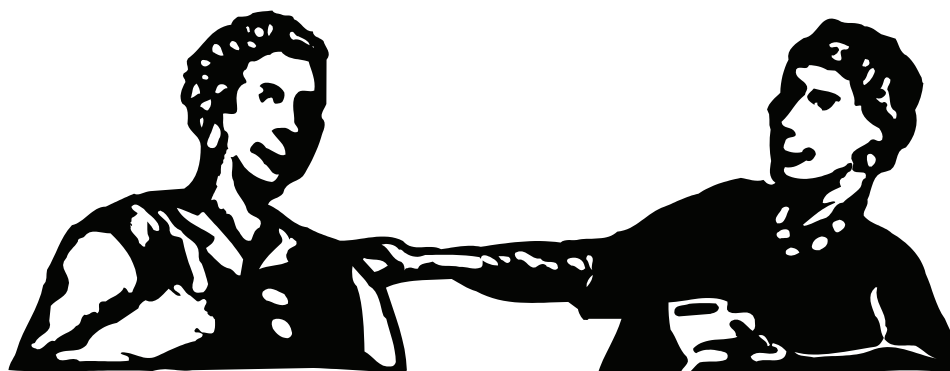
Populism is a political philosophy which focuses on standing up for the rights and positions of the common people as opposed to the elite and the government. Hightower believes that the true political spectrum is not right to left but

top to bottom, and he has become a leading national voice for the 80 percent of the public who no longer find themselves within shouting distance of the Washington and Wall Street powers at the top. He is known for his fiery wit and is often introduced as a modern day Will Rogers. Twice elected Texas Agriculture Commissioner, Hightower has spent four decades battling the Powers That Be on behalf of the Powers That Ought To Be - consumers, working families, small businesses, and just-plain-folks.

This is the 21st year the Motherlode MLK Jr. Committee has organized the free annual King Birthday celebration which will also feature the Gwen Amey Gospel Choir from Merced, and singers Dennis Brown and Michelle Allison. You are invited to also attend a reception following the program. For more information contact MLK Committee member Pat Cervelli at patcervelli@frontiernet.net, or call 928-3494.

Saturday, December 5

Stockmarket returns



Indoor/outdoor makers, vintage and street food market

This December marks the 1st birthday of Stockmarket. We are ecstatic and extremely thankful for the support each and every one of you has shown. Share the news with your friends, family & colleagues ~ they do not want to miss out on..

69 Vendors
Food trucks
3 live bands + 1 DJ
Live ceramic + sketch demos
Artisan food + dessert stalls
Craft beer by Highwater Brewing
Holiday cocktails
Gift wrapping

Kids area
Free parking
Dog friendly

SHOP
A curated selection of vendors will be selling locally made & designed goods including: clothing, furniture, custom leather goods, jewelry, body products, original art, and home & garden decor. There will also

be a variety vintage vendors.

SIP & SNACK

Sample the tasty treats from our selection of local artisan caterers and food trucks. Quench your thirst with craft beer & fun drinks!

SOCIALIZE

Come listen to local bands, make new friends, and soak up the atmosphere!



DEC 2015 / JAN 2016 CALENDAR

Editor's note: if your event isn't listed, let us know. Send all copy to: bgiudici@caltel.com by the 10th of every month.

FRI - SUN

NOV 18 - DEC 13

Disney's The Little Mermaid. Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 7:30 pm, Sun 2:30 pm (Dec 5, 12 1 pm). Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton. \$15 - \$25. 473-2424. www.sctlivetheatre.com

NOV 19 - DEC 11

Delta Center for the Arts LH Horton Jr Gallery presents Border Identity: Experiences of Refugee, Diasporic and Migrant Communities. . SJDC, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. T 11am-4pm, W-Th 11am-6:30pm, F 11am-1pm. The exhibition features works by Pete Pin, Ruth Prieto Arenas and Sgtan Rapada. Free and open to the public. 209-954-5507.

THUR, NOV 26

11th annual Run and Walk Against Hunger, Stockton Ports Ballpark, Fremont & Van Buren, Stockton. 8 am. 464-7369.

SUN, NOV 29

Xmas Comes Early, 3 - 5 pm. Hutchins Street Square, 125 S. Hutchins Street , Lodi. Christmas comes early to Lodi with the Valley Concert Band. Back by Popular demand, the joyous sounds of the Valley Concert Band with Director Chris Anderson will get you in the holiday spirit! \$29 (209) 333-5550

WED, DEC 2

SJDC Jazz Concert 7:30 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, Stockton. Adult \$8, student/senior \$5. 209-954-5209

THURS, DEC 3

Clean Up Stockton, 3-5 pm, Fremont Square, 450 N. San Joaquin St., Stockton. Come out and help beautify downtown Stockton with 300+ student-athletes from San Joaquin Delta College. Gum removal, trash pickup, and brush clean up - and more. Join these future leaders as they work to make Downtown Stockton sparkle. Free.

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, John Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 6:30 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

FRI,-SUN DEC 4 - 6

Shrek the Musical JR, Fri/Sat 6:30 pm, Sun 2 pm. Based on the popular movie. KUDOS Children's Theatre, 1943 W. Lucile Ave, Stockton. \$15. (209) 507-6996

FRI, DEC 4

29th annual Peaceful Holiday

Gift Fair, featuring peace gifts. 4 - 9 pm. Entertainment, refreshments and a good cause. Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free admission. 462-3489.

Jagged Lines of Imagination Winter Art Show & Open House, 5:30 - 7 pm. Teen Impact Center, 725 N El Dorado St, Stockton. Free. 209-382-7848 or JLLacademy.org.

Pacific Holiday Concert, 7:30pm, Faye Spanos Concert Hall 3511 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Jenny Wong, director. \$8 general, \$5 senior, student free with ID.

SAT, DEC 5

9th Annual SJDC Jazz Festival with over 40 middle schools, high schools and colleges competing from throughout California. 8 am - 5 pm Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, Stockton. A full day for only \$10. 209-954-5209

29th annual Peaceful Holiday Gift Fair, featuring peace gifts. 10 am - 2 pm. Entertainment, refreshments and a good cause. Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free admission. 462-3489.

"It's a Big Band Christmas" 2 pm, Columbia College Dogwood Theater. Guest Patrick Hogan on piano, jazzy versions of all your holiday favorites, plus lots of vocals \$15 reserved. Advanced tickets at Mt. Bookshop or Columbia College Bookstore @ 588-5126.

Stockmarket: indoor/outdoor makers, vintage and street food market. 630 E. Weber Ave, Stockton. Free. (see p 18)

Stockton Tamale Festival, 10 am - 8 pm. San Joaquin County Fairgrounds, 1658 S. Airport Way, Stockton. Bringing together the spirit of live music and great plated foods with locally inspired cuisine and wines from California. Fun activities for the whole family. Live entertainment throughout the day for adults and children on two stages. Professional cooking demonstration, and arts and crafts car show, DJ's, and much more. 18 and over: \$10; students, seniors & teens 13 - 17: \$7; under 12 free. 209-688-6918

City of Stockton Annual Tree-Lighting Ceremony, 5:45 pm. Weber Point Event Center, 221 N Center Street, Stockton. Gates open at 4pm. Christmas caroling, holiday activities, a

visit from Frosty the Snowman, and hot cocoa, rain or shine. Santa will also be making his grand entrance just before the tree becomes aglow with lights at approximately 5:45pm. Free. (209) 937-8206

SJDC Jazz Festival presents the Donny McCaslin Group. 8 pm Tenor saxman McCaslin received a Grammy nomination for Best Jazz Instrumental Solo in 2004. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, Stockton. \$15 - \$20. 209-954-5209

SAT-SUN, DEC 5-6

24th annual Festival of Trees, with over 60 uniquely decorated trees, kids activities, entertainment, make-and-take crafts and more. 10 am - 4 pm. SJ County Historical Museum, 11793 N Micke Grove Rd, Lodi. \$10 general, \$1 kids 2 - 12, under 2 free. All funds raised benefit youth education. 331-2055. www.sanjoaquinhistory.org

MON, DEC 7

Campaign for Common Ground meeting, 7 pm. Family Resource & Referral Center, 509 W. Weber Ave., Stockton.

TUES, DEC 8

Delta College Fiesta Barroca: Choral Music of the Mexican Baroque /CA Missions 7:30 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 5100 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Adult \$8, student/senior \$5.

89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 5:30 - 7 pm, Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

WED, DEC 9

SJDC Concert Band concert. 7 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, Stockton. \$8 adult; \$5 student/senior over 61. 209-954-5209

THUR-SUN DEC 10-13

Delta Drama presents "It's A Wonderful Life", directed by Ashlee Temple. 8 pm, Sun 2 pm. Tillie Lewis Theater, SJDC, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Join us for this delightful stage adaptation of the beloved film classic. Suitable for the whole family. A wonderful holiday treat. \$10/\$12. 209-954-5209

FRI,-SUN DEC 11 - 13

Shrek the Musical JR, Fri/Sat 6:30 pm, Sun 2 pm. Based on the popular movie. KUDOS Children's Theatre, 1943 W. Lucile Ave, Stockton. \$15. (209) 507-6996

SAT-SUN DEC 12-13

Symphony Holiday Pops: A Gospel Christmas Celebration" featuring Tramaine Hawkins, vocalist and Andre Raphael, guest conductor. Sat 6 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$25-\$66 209-954-5209

SAT, DEC 12

All Aboard the Polar Express - free movie at the Civic: 1 - 5 pm. Stockton Memorial Civic Auditorium, 525 N. Center Street , Stockton Children are encouraged to wear their favorite holiday pajamas, bring pillows and blankets, and celebrate the story of a boy who truly believes in Santa - Polar Express. First 250 families will receive their very own BELIEVE bell. Bring your camera or charge your phone and take family pictures against holiday backdrops! (209) 937-8206

MON, DEC 14

Environmental Holiday Gathering Delta Sierra Club meeting, 6:30 pm. Fireside Room, Central United Methodist Church Fireside Room, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Local environmental groups are coming together to share updates and challenges at a festive end-of-the year event. There will be: information about local environmental groups, video clips and music by the fun-loving Mom's Chili Boys. Free. All welcome. 209-670-4442.

THURS, DEC 17

Holiday concert at the Haggin Museum. 6:30 - 9 pm. Victory Park, 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton. Enjoy an hour of holiday music performed by choir students from Lincoln High School and the Stockton community. Under the direction of Paul Kimball, the evening will feature performances from the sublime to the ridiculous and a potpourri of Christmas carols. This presentation is included with regular admission, as part of the museum's 1st & 3rd Thursdays series. (209) 940-6315 or education@hagginmuseum.org.

FRI, DEC 18

LREA present Navidad en Delta College, 7 pm. Tillie Lewis Theater, SJDC, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8-12. 4 & under \$1. 209-954-5209

SAT, DEC 19

The Nutcracker performed by the Capitol Ballet Company with guest dancers from the Stockton Ballet School. 2 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$14 - \$25. 954-5110.

www.capitolballet.com 954-5110. (see p 18)

"Winter Wonderland" 2015 Showcase - Rising Stars Dance Co. presents their winter dance show. Tillie Lewis Theater, SJDC, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$14. 209-954-5209

SUN, DEC 20

Christmas Cheer" - Stockton School of Performing Arts presents their winter show of 2015. 5:30 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$20. 954-5110.

MON, JAN 4

Campaign for Common Ground meeting, 7 pm. Family Resource & Referral Center, 509 W. Weber Ave., Stockton.

THUR, JAN 7

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, John Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 6:30 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

TUES, JAN 12

89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 5:30 - 7 pm, Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

THUR - SUN JAN 13 - 31

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike. Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 7:30 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton. This very recent hit on Broadway was nominated for six 2013 Tony Awards, winning for Best Play. It is one of the most lauded and beloved Broadway plays of recent years. Vanya and his adopted sister Sonia live a quiet life in the Pennsylvania farmhouse where they grew up, but their peace is disturbed when their movie star sister Masha returns unannounced with her twenty-something boy toy, Spike. A weekend of rivalry, regret, and raucousness begins. \$15 - \$25. 473-2424. www.sctlivetheatre.com

SAT, JAN 23

Stockton Symphonia Misadventure

mer Night's Dream featuring Nicolasa Kuster, bassoon, plus a cast from University of the Pacific, Women's Chorus and dancers joining the Stockton Symphony—nearly 100 performers in all. Semi-staged excerpts from Shakespeare's play join Mendelssohn's remarkable A Midsummer Night's Dream, op. 21 & 61. 6 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$25-66. www.StocktonSymphony.org 209-951-0196

FIRST MONDAYS

Campaign for Common Ground meeting, 7 pm, Towers Building, 509 W Weber Ave, Stockton. cggmemb@gmail.com

Fourth Mondays (except Dec) Delta Sierra Club meeting, 7 pm. Central United Methodist Church Fireside Room, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 7 pm program with social time following. All welcome.

SECOND TUESDAYS

89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 7 - 9 pm, Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

FOURTH TUESDAYS

89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 7 - 9 pm, Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

THURSDAYS

Peace demonstration, 5-6 pm, edge of Delta campus on Pacific, across from Macy's. Free parking at mall. Weekly since 2003. We have signs, or bring your own. We get LOTS of honks! Info 464-3326.

Take Five Jazz club, 7 - 9 pm, Valley Brew

SATURDAYS

Crosstown Freeway Farmers Market, under the freeway between El Dorado & San Joaquin, Stockton. 7 - 11, or when sold out. 943-1830

A big thanks to our long-serving distributors!!

Monday, December 14

Come celebrate with the holidays

You are invited to our Second Annual Environmental Holiday Gathering Monday, December 14, 2015 6:30 pm, Fireside Room, Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton, across from the UOP Tower.

Our local Sierra Club is hosting a collaborative Environmental Holiday Gathering to share updates and challenges at a festive end-of-the year event. Featuring:

Information about local environmental groups

Video clips

Entertainment by the fun-loving

Mom's Chili Boys

Light snacks will be served and this meeting is open to everyone whether you are a Sierra Club member or not. We hope to see you there.

Millennials can no longer be silent

YONG JUNG CHO, WALEED SHAHID, DEVONTAE TORRIENTE & SARA BLAZEVIC

It's election season. One side promises incremental reforms without a plan for how they would get an agenda passed through a gridlocked Congress. The other side uses thinly-veiled racist language about immigrants to talk about plans to bring our country back to a fictionalized, lily-white version of our nation's history. Too often, both parties put the demands of big money over the hopes of real people. Despite the campaign rhetoric and the noise of the 24-hour news cycle, most Americans will tell you that they think our political system is broken. 83 percent of young people say they have no faith in Congress.

Today we face a true crisis of democracy: the will of the people is no longer the priority of our political system. Our government is failing us. Democrats keep letting us down. Republicans are terrifying.

Politicians continue to blame each other, failing to act on the most pressing issues of our time. It's no surprise why: from every side, we see cynical pitches to Americans' worst instincts and modest solutions proposed to big problems. Common sense measures on immigration, student debt, gun safety, incarceration, policing, and climate change have no chance of passing our broken system. Any visionary piece of legislation is threatened by a small number of Tea Party members refusing to pass any laws or gets stuck for years bouncing back and forth between closed-door committee hearings. As democracy is thrown to the wayside, we have ended up with the clearest signs of plutocracy: government by and for the wealthy determined to preserve the status quo and emboldened by procedural gridlock.

Meanwhile, politicians continue to throw away billions of dollars incarcerating people, deporting mothers and fathers, and polluting our people and our planet. They continue to saddle us with student debt. They aren't helping create real jobs that can sustain us. They stand by as many of our friends live in daily fear of police and immigration enforcement. And they continue subsidizing polluting fossil fuel companies who destroy the land we live on and the air we breathe.

We are running out of patience. After years of political inaction and failure, young people are taking these crises into their own hands. The Occupy movement, Black Lives Matter, the climate justice movement, the immigrant rights movement, Moral Mondays led by people of faith, and fast food workers on strike have captured the attention of the American people, but not of Congress. Now our movements are starting to come together to begin to speak with one voice.

On November 9, one year ahead of the presidential election, hundreds of young people will have taken part in the largest-ever civil disobedience for racial, climate, and immigrant justice. The choice is clear: politicians are failing to take our country to where it needs to go, so a movement of young people will lead us there. While politicians and the media continue to talk about left versus right, the Millennial Movements are talking about a different direction: forward.

We are not talking about some sort of beltway consensus between the parties and big business where the interests of the American people are compromised. We are talking about something completely outside the current confines of political debate.

It takes courage and dramatic action from ordinary people to do that. As politicians risk away our lives, we risk jail time to inspire urgency and courage from our elected leaders. We are taking to the streets of Washington, D.C. to demand that we keep fossil fuels in the ground; protect and respect the dignity and lives of immigrants, and black, brown, and poor communities; reinvest in healthy jobs, renewable energy, and an economy that works for all of us.

Politicians aren't the only voices with power. We have power, too. And we have more power when we act together. Young people don't live single-issue lives. We live at the intersection of the most pressing problems today. Our



movements are connected and our purpose is huge. Martin Luther King described the civil rights movement as a time when the "people moved their leaders, not the leaders who moved the people." If enough of us push together toward a new vision, the world will begin to move.

Young people aren't just the future – we are the present. We are at the forefront of the fight for a more just, equitable, and stable world. Throughout history, a country founded to maintain the wealth and privilege of a few has been transformed by powerful movements that have expanded the meaning and practice of the "we" in "we the people." Now, it is our turn.

The average age of a Senator is 62. Today's Congress is the most diverse it has ever been: 80% white, 80% male, 92% Christian. But a coalition of millennials, people of color, unmarried women, immigrants, queer and trans people will make up a majority of voters for the first time in 2016. Young people are at the forefront of movements for social change, and are becoming increasingly engaged in the political process. And we are already winning. After years of action, our issues were at the forefront of the first Democratic debate. Candidates now have to speak on their plans to take on climate change, racial injustice, mass deportations, and economic inequality.

But shifting the debate won't be enough. If politicians won't lead this country forward from an economy in crisis to a society that works for all people, then we will. We take action to tell the American people: let's get it done together. Our generation. Our choice.

YONG JUNG CHO IS THE CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR FOR 350.ORG, A GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION ORGANIZATION. WALEED SHAHID IS THE POLITICAL DIRECTOR OF PA WORKING FAMILIES PARTY AND A MOVEMENT-BUILDING TRAINER WITH MOMENTUM.

DEVONTAE TORRIENTE IS THE CAMPUS ORGANIZER OF MILLION HOODIES, A NATIONAL RACIAL JUSTICE NETWORK, AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN WASHINGTON D.C. SARA BLAZEVIC IS THE CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR FOR THE FOSSIL FUEL STUDENT DIVESTMENT NETWORK.

Source: Common Dreams 11/2/15 <http://www.commondreams.org/>

John McCutcheon returns to Modesto Jan. 12

Six-time Grammy nominated folk musician John McCutcheon performs in his 15th annual benefit concert for the Modesto Peace/Life Center on Tuesday, Jan. 12 at 7 pm at the Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave. John entertains, moves and inspires with his music, his stories and his humor. Johnny Cash called him "the most impressive instrumentalist I've ever heard." John is a master of a dozen different instruments, including guitar, banjo, hammer dulcimer, piano and fiddle. He writes socially and politically conscious songs but has also written and recorded music for children.

John just performed his one-man play "Joe Hill's Last Will" on the 100th anniversary of Joe Hill's death in Salt Lake City, the site of his execution. Last June he presented the play to a sold-out audience in Modesto. A note from John: "May your lives eclipse your dreams, may your cellars be full, your sweaters moth-free, your woodpiles high and dry, and may you get out to hear some live music in your hometown. Always sounds sweeter there. See you soon!"

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$23 at the door and youth 18 and under are \$7. Tickets can be purchased in person by check or cash at the Brethren Church, 2301 Woodland Ave., 523-1438 or at Beads of Contentment, 1028 J Street, Modesto, 523-6335. Online tickets sales are at <http://mccutcheonmodesto2016.eventbrite.com>. For information, contact Ken Schroeder 209-480-4576.



Local boxing comes alive in new book

Local filmmaker, musician, and writer Jorge Martinez has dedicated his life to boxing. In his recent book, *Boxing Heroes: Fighters, Amazons and Fools of Central and Northern California*, Jorge covers boxing controversy, amateur & professional matches, and interviews in a 500 page volume that includes over 300 photos. *Boxing Heroes* is a must read for lovers of boxing, especially in Central and Northern California.

Jorge's encyclopedic

knowledge and descriptions transport fans inside the ring and into a world most will never see. He offers fans a bloody slice of reality, stripping away myths of hometown heroes and boxing politics. His heartfelt messages, accompanied with hundreds of photographs, will teach fans secret formulas used by promoters to get easy victories via careful maneuvering and selective matchmaking. After years working as a referee and coach, he was ostracized for

exposing the use of topless ring girls at an amateur event in Stockton's historic Memorial Civic Auditorium. Although overlooked by the Central California Association, the incident outraged national officials.

This work is an overwhelming triumph, standing as a testament to the discipline, dedication, character, and heart of a fighter. Fans will be entertained and critics will stand in awe, as this book lives on in the annals of boxing

lore. Meet the warriors, amazons, and fools. Be introduced to know-nothing coaches seeking personal glory, and grasp why George never pulls his punches. And understand why boxing is dying of self-inflicted wounds and discover the controversy.

This book makes a excellent gift for the holidays or birthday for the person who has everything, available on amazon.com.